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CULTURE ART & DESIGN GARDENING

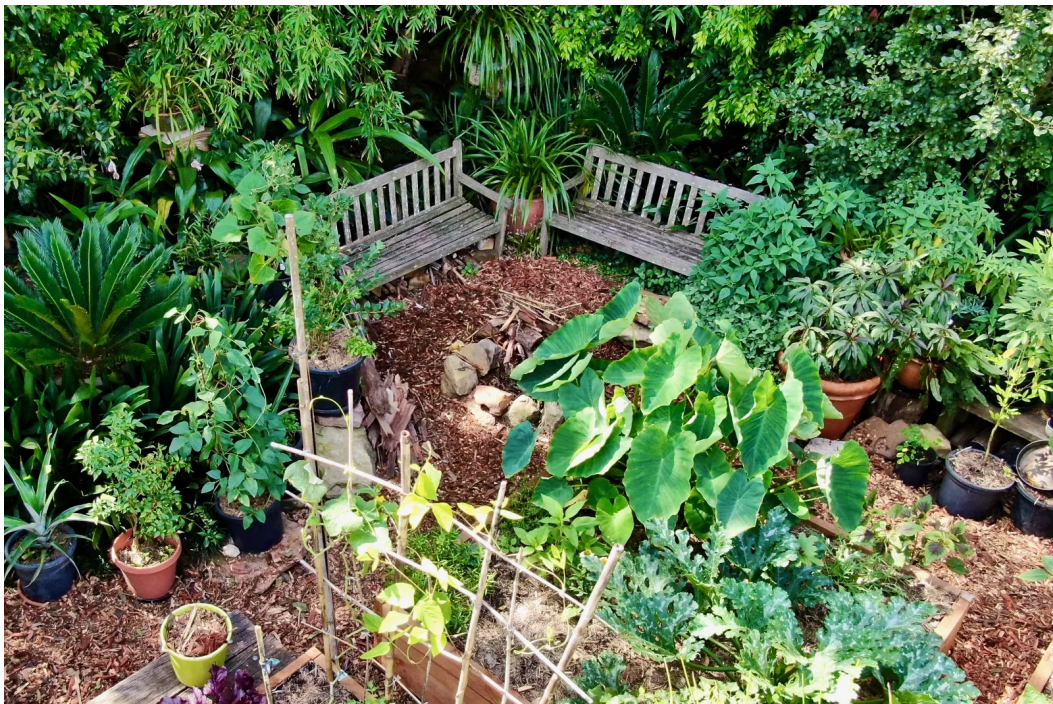
Healthy growth of the edible gardening movement

By Robin Powell

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It's easy to guess which garden on this Lane Cove street belongs to Bridget Kennedy, the founder of Sydney Edible Garden Trail. It's bound to be the one with the verge planted up with a lavender hedge, a lounging mound of rosemary, waving lemongrass and sweet potato scrambling under Natal plum, feijoa and lemonade trees. Sure enough, I find Kennedy deep in the middle of the garden, picking sweet potato greens for her chooks.



Bridget Kennedy in her garden LUKE TORREVILLAS

The jewellery designer is a passionate edible gardener, so her front garden adds to the verge harvest with orange, lychee, pomegranate, coffee and more feijoas. There's also an aquaponics system that grows trout and pumps fish-poo-enriched water through two beds of vegetables; a banana circle, with a huge hand of bananas pointing green fingers to the earth; taro in the shade and finger lime by the steps. Everywhere you look there is something to eat.

Around the back the harvest is even more diverse. I feel like I'm in Italy as I sit on the deck beneath a pergola of passionfruit, with lemons ripening on the tree behind the outdoor table, chokos climbing the fence and the sun catching the big leaves of the tromboncino, a superior-tasting form of zucchini that clambers over the archway to the back garden's four raised wicking beds.



Bridget Kennedy in her garden. ROBIN POWELL.

Sharing is part of her plan. The verge is picked by locals as needed, I'm happy to take home a delicious tromboncino and she admits she's something of a "choko pusher" in her North Sydney gallery, Bridget Kennedy Project Space. "People will come into the gallery and I'll tell them they can buy the earrings if they also take a choko!" Her choko cooking tips: poach them like pears in red wine, cinnamon and honey; roast them with balsamic vinegar; and add young fruits to smoothies to make them as frothy as a milkshake.

Last year Kennedy visited the Blue Mountains Edible Garden Trail, set up in 2018, and was determined to offer similar inspiration and information to Sydney gardeners. "I really believe we need to be growing more food in the urban environment," she says. "We need to be building more resilient communities and growing food connects people through swapping or sharing."

Kennedy was joined by Laurie Green, co-founder of Crop Swap Australia, Nita Lo, co-coordinator of Permaculture North Sydney and Margaret Mossakowska of Moss House to form the not-for-profit Sydney Edible Garden Trail. The trail opens for the first time next weekend [March 21-22] with 67 gardens, from Penrith to



the Northern Beaches, offering opportunities to learn about growing food.

Kennedy says that for her, the garden is "my peace of mind. I get a lot of joy from it: seeing things grow, watching the change, experimenting managing the problem-solving - there's so much to learn."

All that, and dinner too.

Sydney Edible Garden Trail, March 21-22, 9am-4pm, tickets at

<https://sydneyediblegardentrail.com/>



A tromboncino in Bridget Kennedy's North Shore garden. ROBIN POWELL