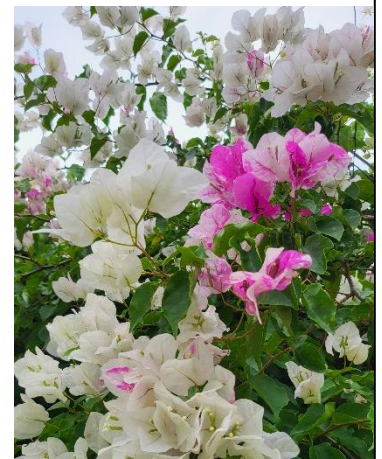


November Home Visit – Mills Garden



Once again we have re-visited one of our favourite gardens for our November Home Visit on 8/11/24. Namely, the home and garden of Dennis Mills. As at our last visit the garden was immaculately presented. The front garden (below) gives a clear picture of two of the plant types that Dennis specialises in. The first obviously is **bougainvillea** that form a hedge giving the house privacy from the busy road out front and second (in that group at the base of the palm trees) a huge collection of **bromeliads** of different types.



The side yard (below) shows more of the broms but also hints at the third love – that of various types of cactus and succulents – including more than a few **euphorbia** and **aloes**.



Once again privacy is secured by that hedge of bougainvilleas – which are pruned often to keep them compact but also to encourage a dense flowering that is most obvious in the quite common 'purple' variety that grows up a front verandah post at the front of the house. The wide variety of different coloured bracts is amazing. As most of we local gardeners know bougainvillea flowers are all white and very small blooms surrounded by a huge display of different coloured bracts. Even the lovely variegated variety at left has the same flowers with 'reddish' bracts. Most spectacular though is the much less often seen two tone variety below. It is especially attractive.





The cacti and succulents mentioned above are found all over the garden. The patterns in their leaves complement the huge variety of different leaf colours and patterns that dominate the back garden where Dennis has literally hundreds of broms in massed pots.



Protected from too harsh sunlight by a shade cloth this massed bank of plants contains an endless number of different types of broms mixed with other leaf plants to add variety. That is not just in the colours and patterns but leaf sizes and shapes as well.



In the midst of all this foliage are two features that many of us add to our gardens. The obvious one in the photo at left is the rock pool with its gently running water adding a vital 'sound' element to the garden. The very observant will notice our other favourite 'trick' – the installation of a large mirror that reflects the plants and adds depth to the scene. In the photo below it is a bit easier to see the mirror just above and to our right of that Buddha's head. (It is one of a couple of other hard landscaping elements that add variety to the garden.)



The other obvious strength of this area is the way that Dennis has graded the plants from low at the front to those large *Alcantarea imperialis* 'rubra' variety at the back. That lets each type shine while still sitting in a carpet of other plants.

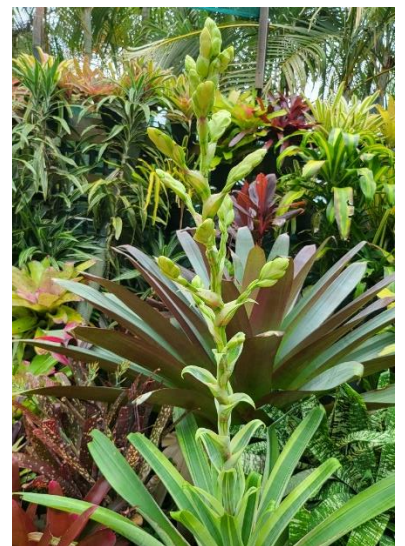




As mentioned earlier this carpet of plants is not just broms. Below you can see one of the lime leaf **alocasia** at the back, a dark reddish **cordyline** just below it, a speckled **croton** in the middle and a **dieffenbachia** on the left. Rather than distract from the brom collection these different leaf types just add to the effect.



Of course with so many different types of brom you also get a great variety in the types of flowers they have. Just a few examples are at left and in the upright tall example at right.



Finally, two other hints from our host **DENNIS MILLS** who we thank for welcoming us so kindly. First, note above right that a bright red **anthurium** is another good addition to broms. Second, is how he avoids constantly bleeding skin on his arms from the spikes so many broms have. Cheap long socks from a cheap shop with the toes cut off! They fit tightly and are easy to put on/off!

