

# INTRODUCTION

This book is about empowerment, empowering you to take back a measure of control of your food supply. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures indicate that about 35% of Australian households already grow some of the fruit and vegetables they consume. If you are one of the 35%, you are bound to find new ideas about how to increase your production. If you belong to the 65% who, according to ABS information, do not yet grow their own food, this is your starting point – a new adventure in taste, personal satisfaction, better health and money saving is about to begin.

Interestingly, a poll commissioned by the Nursery and Garden Industry of Australia (NGIA) in 2008 showed that 63% of those surveyed had a garden planted with herbs, vegies or fruit trees. Perhaps the large difference between the two sets of figures has to do with the amount of food grown and the higher figure on the NGIA survey included anyone surveyed who grew a pot of parsley. The NGIA survey reported that 80% of respondents were attracted to the idea of their garden being a mixture of decorative trees and plants intermingled with edible plants. This book will show how to achieve such a garden easily.

Just about anyone can grow some of their own food. You don't need a huge garden, though, of course, a large area gives you more options and allows you to grow a greater variety of vegies, herbs and fruit. Do not allow lack of space to hold you back; you'll be surprised at how much you can produce from a small patch

of dirt. Even the patch of dirt is not essential, as long as you have space for some pots.

Through my work as editor of *Grass Roots* magazine I am fortunate enough to share the experiences of thousands of readers throughout Australia. If there is one thing above all others that never fails to amaze and impress me about this diverse readership, it is the amount of food that people with only small spaces at their disposal manage to produce in those small spaces. With a little resourcefulness, even a sunny balcony, courtyard or suitable rooftop can be made productive enough to supply you with salads and culinary herbs.

In 2003, I began a new garden from scratch on a double block in a country town. High on my list of priorities was a kitchen garden. I had been used to growing the majority of my family's vegies and herbs, and a fair amount of fruit as well, on a country acreage. There, I'd had plenty of space and a good supply of the fertiliser and mulch resources usually available on a small farm, but limited water. In the new location I had limited space and few free resources, but a reliable town water supply, or so I thought at first until an extended drought period led to severe restrictions.

Though not far in distance from the old garden, the new one was subject to significant climatic differences and had a different range of pests to identify and contend with, but the main difference was the space available. I had formed many ideas