

THIS SOIL-SAVVY DUO IS HAPPIEST WHEN TALKING THE LANGUAGE OF (PLANT) LOVE.

Georgina Reid and her mother Wendy are two dirt-loving dynamos. Both horticulturists, they've been pottering in the garden together for as long as Georgina can recall.

Growing up on a farm in Orange, in central west NSW, Georgina and her siblings – older sister Alexandra and younger brother Will – spent many childhood hours trailing their mum as she tended her garden. "We were always building cubbies and Mum gave us a patch of the vegie garden so we could grow things for ourselves," says Georgina. "When we got frustrated with vegie growing, we announced we would cultivate a weed garden."

Those escapades sowed a seed for Georgina, who left an early career in journalism to study horticulture and landscape design. "I was nervous telling Mum and Dad I was leaving my job and Mum tried to dissuade me at first because she thought it would be a hard path," says Georgina. "But on the next trip to Orange, I found a little pair of secateurs under my pillow. That was Mum's blessing. They're still my favourite secateurs."

After several years working for high-profile design companies Durie Design and Garden Life, Georgina now runs her own landscape-design business, Reid & Friends. She is also the founder of online gardening magazine *The Planthunter*, conceived out of a desire to make horticulture engaging for a younger generation.

Georgina Reid with her mother Wendy, and Bessie Smith her dog.

While Georgina's target readership is a niche one, she has some ardent older fans from the Orange district. "Mum and her friends are helping me to expand the demographic," she says, smiling.

Wendy, who helped her husband Peter run their sheep and wheat farm, studied horticulture when Georgina was in her teens. She worked for nurseries and Landcare before she found her obsession, propagating natives. Over the past six years, since she and Peter moved onto a smaller rural block, Wendy has been developing a nursery, selling native plants at Orange farmers' markets.

"Mum is a wonder woman," says Georgina. "She just gets stuff done without any fuss. She has taught me so much by example and on a practical level."

Both mother and daughter talk about the contentment they feel in the company of plants. "I just like digging in the dirt. It's where I feel most comfortable," says Wendy. "The little wonders I see in the garden never cease to amaze me."

Georgina, whose courtyard in Sydney's inner west is filled with rare beauties, says her love of plants is primal. "I think there is an element of the divine about plants, an inextricable link to life in its purest form. I mean, it's obvious, but if we don't have plants we don't exist," she says. "Plants are also where I see beauty in its purest expression."

The two women still potter together in the garden. Georgina helped to design Wendy's native garden and when she visits Orange, they always end up digging and plotting together – plots that often involve dad Peter's bobcat and muscles. "We still have a lovely time in the garden together but she's bossier now and she tells me what to do," says Wendy. "And I do it... most of the time!"

www.reidandfriends.com.au

