

### CHAPTER THREE: FROM THE CEDARS OF LEBANON TO MORETON BAY FIGS, POINCIANAS AND NORFOLK ISLAND PINES: LEBANESE GARDENS IN AUSTRALIA

*Only the sagging wire fence of our tennis court survived. Behind it my grandfather had a vegetable patch and a dozen noisy chooks.*

*Malouf.1985.4*

*So let me hone in on a particular moment, a Saturday night in 1943 in the very middle of the war. I am nine and I am sitting at the end of my grandfather's bed in the living quarters above my grandmother's shop, at the corner of Melbourne and Edmondstone Streets, South Brisbane, a big corner shop that sells groceries and fruit but also malted milks and creaming sodas from a real American bar. Behind the shop is a courtyard with a scrubbed wooden table where they eat; behind that a garden with a grape-vine and a shed where ropes of garlic hang over sacks of rice and cracked wheat. All this back part of the shop is very odd and foreign. There is nothing like it in our own house, or in the houses of our friends when we go and visit. My sister and I are embarrassed by it, and especially doubtful about eating at our grandmother's; there is something shameful, surely, about eating in the back-yard and from a table with no cloth. They eat cabbage rolls and yoghurt with cucumber and mint, and chopped up salad with oil on it. At home we have proper meals: stew or cutlets with mashed potatoes and peas, all hot, and a nice boiled pudding with custard. Salad is a lettuce leaf and half a tomato, with two or three slices of beetroot and a dollop of bottled mayonnaise.*

David Malouf. 1991.75<sup>1</sup>

This is David Malouf's memory of his grandparents' garden. It is one of three Lebanese - Australian gardens described in this chapter. Although many people think that ethnic Mediterranean migrants' gardens are the same, there are intriguing differences. The differences not only relate to different cultures, they also reflect the changing attitudes held by the Australian population towards migrants over the last one hundred years.

Most Lebanese migrants in Australia have come in one of three waves of migration; the 1890s, the 1950s or the 1970s. Each of these emigrations from Lebanon has been for different reasons. David Malouf's grandparents came in the 1890s fleeing the religious persecution of the Maronites under the Turkish Ottoman rule. His grandfather's garden is remembered in David Malouf's books as a place where bountiful quantities of tomatoes, potatoes and unusual vegetables grew and where traditions from Lebanon were continued. David Malouf's father relinquished these traditions, so they only exist as literature seen through the eyes of a sensitive young boy who did not speak his grandfather's language. Joseph and Wahideh came to Australia after World War II. They came for a better life and yet continue to keep their Lebanese traditions in their gardens, despite moving from Sydney to Brisbane and living in four different houses. Maroun and Najah came to Sydney in 1970s leaving behind a country torn by civil war. Their garden is their first and only one in Australia and is rich in Lebanese heritage. The three gardens not only reflect different times in Lebanon, they also reflect changing attitudes in Australia towards cultural difference. David Malouf grew up in a time when cultural difference was seen as alien and threatening. Joseph and Wahideh came to Australia when migrants were expected to assimilate so their Lebanese gardens were hidden from view. Maroun and Najah came to Australia when cultural difference was beginning to be accepted, so Maroun's front garden proudly displays his difference.

#### ***The Lebanese Landscape***

For Australians, the Lebanese landscape exhibits all the exoticism of Orientalism<sup>2</sup>. Coastal plains are patterned with olive groves, vineyards, date palms, and citrus orchards. In this neat pattern of fields and orchards are dotted dark green Mediterranean pines, mulberry and beech trees. The lower slopes of the central mountains support forests of the giant Cedar of Lebanon while the windswept and snow-covered upper slopes bear stunted pines and firs. The old forests of cedars in Basharre were said to have supplied the timber for the ancient Phoenician ships and they are also said to have supplied timber for Solomon's Temple.

The magnificent Cedars of Lebanon became known to the West when they were planted in the great gardens of Britain in the 18th century. These large, stately trees with their dark green foliage held in overlapping horizontal fans help to reinforce, for the Europeans, all that is exotic about the Middle East. They were also planted in France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Chateaubriand, the influential French

writer of the late 1700s, planted a Cedar of Lebanon in his Parisian garden. It grew into a magnificent tree which graced the Rue Raspail and became known as the symbol of the Left Bank. The tree was so highly valued that the beautiful glass box building, The Cartier Foundation, with its clean modern lines had to be adjusted to ensure that the tree maintained its commanding presence on this busy Parisian street.

The olive tree is also closely associated with the history and culture of Lebanon. Both the cedar and the olive are indigenous to Lebanon and in some places, olive groves are said to be older than the villages themselves. Olive groves are found along the coastal plains, particularly in the north and on the lower slopes of the mountains. The lower slopes also support numerous vineyards, where the grape vines grow over distinctive pergolas made of pipes. In the south, citrus orchards replace the olive groves as distinctive elements in the landscape. The third tree associated with the landscape of Lebanon is the Mulberry. This tree symbolises the long tradition of the silk industry, although now they are only found as remnant trees dotted in the landscape.

Apart from those who live in the major coastal cities of Beirut and Tripoli, most people live in villages scattered in the landscape. Each village has a market place, a church or mosque, clusters of houses and shops built of stone and a fountain which is fed from one of the nearby springs. The houses are closely clustered, separated by narrow winding lanes. They are usually two-storeyed with flat roofs, often staggered, one roof forming the terrace of the upper storey. Trellises, made of metal pipes, are erected on the roofs to support grape-vines. One can move from one roof to another under the shade of the vines, past racks of drying figs and apricots while the perfume of roses wafts up from the small garden beds below.

The fountain is an important focus in the village. As the villagers collect water it spills and splashes into a shallow pool, which provides water for thirsty dogs and the shepherd's sheep. Near the shady trees around the fountain and the pool is the village bakery where women collectively make bread for their family in traditional ways.

#### ***Early Lebanese Migrations to Australia.***

The first noticeable migrants from Lebanon came in the 1890s, however they were referred to either as 'Turks' or Syrians rather than Lebanese. They emigrated for a number of reasons; the collapse of the silk industry, the affect on trade after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and religious persecution of the Maronite and Orthodox Lebanese. Initially, they settled in Redfern in Sydney. Many of the early Lebanese migrants brought with them the Phoenician tradition of trading in silk and cloth, which became known in Australia as 'hawking'. From 1900 to the 1920s Lebanese men carried bolts of fabric and other goods to remote rural towns and settlements. With the advent of cheap cars, rural people were not so dependent on the Lebanese traders, so the Lebanese tended to settle in rural towns, often opening drapery shops. In these country towns it became possible to own a house with a garden. Brisbane in the 1890s and even up to the 1950s, would have been considered a country town, despite the fact that it was the State's capital city. David Malouf's grandfather's garden would have been typical of the early Lebanese settlers in Australia and his grandson's reaction to the garden would have been typical of most Anglo-Australians.

#### ***Second Lebanese Migration to Australia***

The second major migration from Lebanon occurred after World War II. Although Lebanon was not as badly affected as other countries in Europe and the Middle East by the war, it was nevertheless difficult for people in the villages in Lebanon. Before the war, stories had been coming back to Lebanon of opportunities to make one's fortune in countries like America, Australia and Canada. The Lebanese migrants who came to Australia at this time were usually following other people from their villages. This was true for Joseph<sup>3</sup> who came to Australia as a young man of nineteen.

#### ***Joseph's Gardens***

Joseph grew up in the mountains in a village east of Tripoli called Karem-el-mohr. His father and grandfather had always farmed the hillsides outside the village. In the past, the lower slopes had been planted with mulberry trees for traditional silk production, but when Joseph was growing up silk had been replaced by wheat, chick peas, potatoes, beans and tobacco. These were the summer crops on the hillsides, which during the winter were covered in snow. Today, occasional fruit and nut trees such as apricot, cherry and walnut are dotted in a landscape of neatly cultivated fields, each divided by dry stone walls. In the village, grape trellises cover the flat roofs of the stone houses, while fig trees and

small gardens of flowers, herbs and roses are found in the little spaces between the houses. The neat villages and cultivated fields contrast strongly with the magnificent forests of cedars, the Cedars of Lebanon, some of which are said to be over 6000 years old. These forests are part of the heritage of Lebanon and are now protected from wood-cutting.

Although Joseph's village was picturesque, life was hard after the Second World War. Joseph, who was one of eleven children, worked as a young boy assisting his father before and after school, where he learnt how to graft trees and how to tend and harvest crops. In the late 1950s, Joseph's brother migrated to Australia to make a new life for himself as well as seeking to earn money for the family in Lebanon. In 1960, when Joseph was nineteen, he also migrated to Australia, joining his brother in Sydney.

At this time Redfern was the centre of the Lebanese community in Sydney. Redfern and its adjoining suburbs were heavily industrialised areas consisting of factories, which had developed around a rail network of goods lines and passenger services. Interspersed with the factories were narrow streets of terrace houses. Many migrants were drawn to this area because of the cheap housing which was close to the factories where migrants were required to work as part of their 'assisted passage' to Australia. Joseph lived with his brother in a small rented terrace in suburban Redfern, finding work in a glass-cutting factory in nearby Erskineville. Joseph's brother was not happy about this because the work was dangerous, so he approached his boss in the wool cleaning factory in Rosebery which was also nearby, to see if Joseph could join him. The boss was sympathetic but said Joseph would have to prove himself. In no time Joseph was doing the work of two men and earning extra money with shift work, despite the renowned unpleasant smells associated with wool cleaning and the nearby tannery in south-eastern Sydney.

The Lebanese had not come to Australia on assisted passage so, unlike other migrants, they were not forced to work where the government placed them. Nevertheless, most of the work, which enabled migrants to save money, was factory work. As a result, despite Joseph's experience and training as a farmer, he and his brother continued to work in nearby factories. They soon had enough money to buy their own terrace, but, because the suburb of Redfern was the focus of Lebanese life in Sydney, they only moved to the other side of the street. Amid small shops selling Lebanese food and a nightclub where they could be entertained by Lebanese music and belly dancers, Joseph and his brother started to establish themselves in Australia.

They worked hard, sending money back to Lebanon while also saving money for themselves. As a result, they had little time to grow anything in their tiny concrete covered back garden. Sometimes Joseph would work double shifts continuously for seven days. After three years of living in this way, Joseph decided it was time to marry and start a family. He worked long hours to save enough money to go back to Lebanon to find his bride. Meanwhile Joseph's brother used his money to buy their first car, a white FC Holden with pink trim. Joseph's nephews were very proud of this car, considering it one of the highlights of their childhood. The car was used to take the family on traditional Lebanese picnics to places such as Jenolan Caves and the Blue Mountains.

Joseph returned to Lebanon in 1965, where he met and married Wahideh. Wahideh had grown up in a very different environment. She was a city girl who lived in an apartment in Beirut. In the 1960s Beirut was a city of traditional houses with broad terraces and graceful arches. These were interspersed with elegant 1930s apartment blocks juxtaposed against ancient bazaars in narrow lanes. Beirut was considered to be the most sophisticated and exotic city in the Middle East. For centuries it had been the meeting place of many cultures, European and Eastern, all of which overlaid remnants of the ancient Phoenician port, thought to be established in the second millennium BC.

Joseph and Wahideh lived in Lebanon for a year and a half, mostly in Joseph's village, before returning to Australia in 1967. By now Joseph's brother had sold the Redfern terrace and had bought a red brick cottage near a large park in Concord, a pleasant inter war suburb of Sydney. This was a very different setting to the tight inner city living in Redfern. Joseph and Wahideh moved in with his brother and his wife. In typical Lebanese tradition, Joseph and his brother and their respective families continued to live together. Wahideh was only eighteen and pregnant with her first child when they arrived in Sydney. Her sister-in-law, who was in her early thirties, became a caring and thoughtful mother figure for this young bride. Joseph's brother had six children and after a while Joseph and Wahideh also had

six children, so the garden in the Concord house had to accommodate children's play and clothes lines full of washing as well as a productive vegetable garden.

Joseph, now working as a welder for Claude Neon in North Ryde, was busy earning money for his growing family. Despite working all week in the factory, he would catch the train to the upper North Shore on weekends in order to do casual gardening for some of the large homes in the area. With the extra money he earned, they were able to bring Wahideh's parents to Australia within two years.

The garden in Concord, like many migrant gardens, was Australian in the front and Lebanese in the back. The front garden was small with a narrow strip of grass and flowerbeds of roses and dahlias, which were tended by Wahideh's sister-in-law. Wahideh was too busy with her children to garden, but she and her sister-in-law did manage to continue the village tradition of making Lebanese bread. In their back garden in Concord, they were not able to share the pleasure of gossip and laughter in the village bakery; instead they had to be satisfied with sharing the delicious aromas emanating from their traditional oven in a shed in the back garden. Making the bread was a complicated process. It required a special wood-fired oven created from a brick base on which was placed a large flat metal plate. This was hazardous because the bread making oven was in an open shed in the back corner of the garden, and it was important that all the children were kept away during the baking. The recipe for Lebanese Bread conveys how involved the baking process is.

#### **LEBANESE BREAD**

*A fire was set below the plate in a slightly hollowed out ditch below the oven. A domed metal cover, known as the 'saj', about one metre in diameter and obtained from special Lebanese shops, was placed on the hot metal plate. After half an hour, the saj had evenly absorbed the heat from the metal plate and was ready for the bread.*

*While the 'saj' was heating, the two women kneaded and tossed the dough. The dough consisted of wholemeal flour, water, yeast and salt and had been prepared the evening before. When the dough had risen and was ready, a knob of dough about the size of a tennis ball was rolled flat and then flapped from hand to hand to aerate it. The flattened dough was then placed on a circular cushion stretching the ends so that the dough became as thin as possible. By now the metal dome would be hot enough for the circle of bread to be carefully placed on it so that it quickly baked for 4 to 5 minutes into a thin flatbread.*

The rest of the back garden, like many migrant gardens, consisted of rows of cultivated vegetables; corn, tomatoes, silverbeet, peas and Lebanese cucumber. The distinctively Lebanese element in the garden was the large herb bed of parsley, mint, shallots, garlic and oregano, all of which were needed for tabbouleh. The chick peas which were a feature of the gardens in Lebanon did not grow in Sydney. Near the house a concrete area, covered with a trellis, supported a grape vine whose leaves were also used for the tabbouleh. It was here that they would gather with friends and listen to Lebanese music, eating tabbouleh on Lebanese bread. This is Wahideh's recipe for tabbouleh.

#### **TABBOULEH**

*Soak a cup of cracked wheat in water for ½ hour, pour the water off and squeeze the cracked wheat dry. Place in a bowl and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Chop up white part of 8 or 10 shallots and add salt and pepper and mix with cracked wheat. Chop up a large bunch of parsley, about three tablespoons of mint, 20 cms of green part of shallot and 3 large tomatoes. Place chopped parsley mix on top of cracked wheat mix and keep in refrigerator until about to serve. Mix in half a cup of olive oil and about four tablespoons of lemon juice. Mix all together to make a salad. Place washed vine leaves on individual plates and heap salad onto the leaves.*

Around the garden were 4 to 5 edible fig trees and often there was a large bunch of ripening bananas hanging in the shed. These had been grown in Queensland and transported down to Paddy's Market. The banana plantations and the cane-fields in Queensland had been an important destination for many migrants seeking work. Whereas Paddy's Market, the fresh food market in Haymarket, Sydney, was the true meeting place of all the migrant groups from Europe and Asia. There are many wonderful

migrant stories about the original Paddy's Market. Unfortunately, like Covent Garden in London and Les Halles in Paris, this traditional inner city market was lost when the form of produce markets changed in the 1970s. Today boutique markets have replaced the old central markets in Paris, London and Sydney. Only Victoria Markets in Melbourne has kept its role as a central city market and so has also kept its rich migrant history.

The 1970s also marked changes for Joseph and Wahideh. In mid 1974, there was a financial downturn in Australia which affected Joseph's brother's building business. He decided to look for cheaper land and ended up in Brisbane. He liked the town and could see good opportunities. As a result, the whole family moved to Brisbane. By now the families were too big to live together in one house, so Joseph and Wahideh rented a house and bought a fruit shop. Like so many migrants, they worked hard and after a year they were able to buy their first house. This was in Cooparoo, a typically hilly inner suburb of Brisbane with characteristic weatherboard houses nestling amongst luxuriant tropical trees. Joseph's weatherboard house on its corner block was a strong contrast to the brick bungalow in Concord. The house was surrounded by an existing tropical garden consisting of a large Hoop Pine and mango tree planted in closely mown grass and a colourful hibiscus hedge growing along one street frontage. This was a typical 'Queenslander' garden.

Soon after they moved in, Joseph changed to garden to make it feel more familiar. He immediately dug up the grass in the back to establish a vegetable garden. Here he grew his favourite Lebanese vegetables - corn, silverbeet, tomatoes, shallots, garlic and Lebanese cucumber. Wahideh also became interested in the garden. For her, this was their first house and she was excited. She planted long beds of parsley, mint, oregano and basil along the side of the house. These she would use in her tabbouleh. She also grew chillies and fennel to use when preserving olives. By now Wahideh had eight children who kept her very busy, but she had become fascinated by gardening in a tropical climate where everything grew so quickly. She started to grow gerberas in the flowerbeds in the front. These were new plants for Wahideh. Her Australian neighbour, as a welcoming gesture, introduced herself by bearing gerbera cuttings as a gift. Brisbane seemed a friendly and relaxed place and the tropical plants were as exotic to someone from the Middle East as the Middle East was exotic to Australians. Wahideh was so struck by the beauty of the Brisbane trees, especially the jacaranda and poinciana trees that she planted a poinciana in the back garden. It became a huge graceful tree adding to the tropical atmosphere. Soon Wahideh was adding to the tropical atmosphere by planting palm trees in front of the house and sweet smelling frangipanni along the side. This was a very different garden to the garden in Concord and her collection of pots on the balcony in Beirut. Despite this, another bread oven was located in the back near the house and most of the Lebanese traditions were kept, blending with the new tropical place. But still the chick peas would not grow.

The family lived in the Cooparoo house for nineteen years but as the children grew up they needed more space. They converted the garage in the back garden into a bedroom for two of their sons but still Wahideh was not happy. She wanted all her children to be under the one roof. In 1994, the family bought a large house in a recently established suburb of Brisbane called Carindale.

The Carindale garden is also tropical but it still has many Lebanese elements. When they bought the house, it had a well established garden but the children, who were now young adults, had different ideas for the garden; particularly their son, Nader, who was studying to be a landscape architect. Instead of planting, they began to garden by removing shrubs and trees that they did not like.

Unlike their other houses, this house has a small back garden and a larger front garden. Joseph and Wahideh immediately planted beds of parsley and mint in the back and included a few fennel plants and chilli bushes. Wahideh enjoys this garden. The small vegetable garden at the back surprises her with unexpected plants because she digs all of her kitchen waste into the garden. As a result she has a healthy pumpkin vine which just appeared both in the back garden and in the front. It is allowed to grow among the roses in the front and the vegetables in the back.

On one side of the back terrace, Joseph has planted a small vegetable bed in which he grows beans, a lemon tree and basil. Growing on a frame above the beans, is a healthy loofah vine which climbs over a pergola, shading the terrace. In the summer large, long, green gourd-like fruit hang from the vine. They gradually turn yellow and then dry out. Wahideh removes all the seeds and washes off any remaining flesh to reveal fine loofahs, which she pegs on the line to dry.

When Wahideh's daughter became engaged, Wahideh did a floristry course so that she could do the flower arrangements at the wedding. She learned about a number of new flowers in the course. As a result she has planted tuberose in the front garden to create a fragrant pathway to the front door, now bordered by roses, tuberose and gardenias. She has always loved roses, which she remembers growing in pots in Beirut.

Today the garden is a place for Joseph to maintain his culture, while Wahideh and Nader experiment with new things. Joseph grows familiar Lebanese plants, while Wahideh grows the tropical plants of Brisbane and the new flowers she is learning about, and Nader experiments with the new trees he is noticing now that he is a practicing landscape architect. Joseph continues to garden in the back in a traditional Lebanese way, observing the changes in the front garden with scepticism; particularly Nader's bauhinia which is growing close to the house and is getting larger and larger.

### ***The Third Lebanese Migration to Australia.***

The third migration period was characterised by the arrival of the Muslim Lebanese in the 1970s both before and after the civil war in Lebanon. Many of these migrants came from Tripoli or the surrounding villages in the north. Again Sydney was the predominant destination for many of the Muslim Lebanese. They tended to settle in Canterbury, an inner Western suburb, near the area where, in the 1960s, the Sunni Lebanese had established their first mosque in a converted house.

Maroun and Najah<sup>4</sup> came to Australia at this time. They had lived in a village, Bkakafra, on the mountain slopes outside of Tripoli. Although the traditional gardens on the northern coastal plains had olives, citrus, figs, apples, apricots, peaches, cherries and dates, Maroun's garden was too cold for these plants, instead he had forests of spruce and cedar around him. Like Joseph, Maroun's summer crops on the hillside included potatoes, onions, tomatoes as well as wheat, barley, corn and maize. Similarly in the village there were grape vines and flower gardens, especially rose gardens. The roses were grown for their fragrance and for traditional Lebanese rose water. The flowers were also used for religious festivals, including the harvest festivals. In the autumn the grapes were harvested and the villagers made wine together amidst much singing and festivities.

Maroun and Najah established themselves in Australia in 1972, settling in Guildford in Western Sydney. Maroun immediately began to create his fruit and vegetable garden in the back, away from prying eyes. He planted olives, figs, persimmon and apricots and constructed a grape frame to support grapevines. Later he planted bananas and mangoes. Every available space in Maroun's back and side garden contains a fruit-bearing tree. This productivity has been the result of much trial and error as Maroun learned to understand the poor Sydney soils and difficult growing conditions, which are a far cry from the rich basaltic soils around Tripoli.

Maroun is very proud of the quantity and quality of the produce he gets from his garden. He has learned, however, that in the Western suburbs of Sydney his fruit trees are tempting to passers by, so his back garden is enclosed by a high impenetrable fence. The high fence also provides the family privacy for their spiritual worship. The area adjoining the house at the back is concreted for the tradition of rug washing, which is carried out ceremonially with other Lebanese families.

### ***The Front Garden***

In contrast to Joseph and Wahideh's Brisbane weatherboard houses, Maroun has constructed his house in unusual textured bricks which have many characteristics of the stones used to build houses in the villages near Tripoli. The front garden is formal with many decorative features, such as an elaborately arched cast iron gate, opening onto a straight front path which is terminated by two substantial stone columns. The front verandah is tiled in highly glazed burnished brown and ochre tiles, which together with the ornate balustrade form an opulent entry. Maroun and Najah wanted to plant the same plants as grew in the gardens in Lebanon, but it was hard to get similar varieties. They were particularly anxious to recreate the wonderful perfumes of the gardens in Lebanon. They planted numerous bushes of the deep red velvety rose 'Cardinal de Richelieu' which is commonly grown in Lebanon. The petals of the rose are used for traditional rose water used in cooking and for rose petal jam, commonly served with coffee or with sweet rice as a dessert.

### ***Najah's Rose Petal Jam***

*The roses used for this jam are usually the wild roses, however Najah uses the red petals of the Cardinal de Richelieu rose. The red rose petals are picked when they are mature and washed well. About 500 grams of rose petals are simmered in a pint of water until they are tender. This does not take long. About 500 grams of sugar are added to the water along with the juice of 2-3 lemons which have been freshly picked. The syrup is then gently cooked for about 10-15 minutes by which time the syrup should be thick. The syrup may have lost some of the aroma of the petals so some essence of rose water can be added to recreate the perfume. The jam is served as a delicacy with strong black coffee in small silver dishes or decorated ruby glass dishes.*

Another plant which reminds Maroun of the perfumes of Lebanon is the Spanish broom which grows wild in the hills and has a rich vanilla-like scent. Maroun has planted the broom next to the windows so the scent permeates the house. Plants in the front garden are highly colourful and unlike the back garden are set out as a display for passers by. Instead of Cedars of Lebanon, Maroun has planted two Norfolk Island pines as well as some South Sea Island Kentia palms. Maroun and Najah's front garden is the blending of traditional Lebanese flower gardens with the exotic trees of the Pacific.

### ***The Tradition of Symbolic Trees***

The Lebanese landscape is an ancient garden. Apart from the beautiful setting of sea, fertile plains and mountains, there are ancient meanings associated with three particular trees which symbolise this landscape - the cedar, the olive and the mulberry. The biblical Cedars of Lebanon have a noble history. They are considered to have been the timbers of Noah's Ark, and of the fleets of the Egyptian Pharaohs and the ancient Phoenician traders. Their trunks were used to roll the great stones needed to build the pyramids and today they grace the great gardens of England. The cedar has been seen as a gift from the gods. Today the wonderful cedars are rare in their own country, the few remaining trees being protected in National Forests. Few Cedars of Lebanon have been planted in the Lebanese gardens in Australia because of their great size. Instead motifs of the cedar are wrought into the cast iron gates and fences of many Australian Lebanese homes.

The olive is the oldest tree in continuous cultivation. Not only has it been greatly valued for its culinary oil, in ancient times this oil was used as the basis of the exotic Middle East scents. Some of these gnarled and twisted old trees have produced olives in Lebanon for over one thousand years. The black mulberry is also a native tree of Persia and Lebanon. In the ancient tradition of silk production, the Chinese used the white mulberry. The black mulberry, however, was used in Lebanon. With the demise of the silk industry last century, old remnant mulberries remain dotted in the landscape. Their age is evident in their thick knotted trunks and their wide spreading branches. The mulberry is not planted in Australian- Lebanese gardens but Australian trees with similar cultural meanings are.

The Australian landscape is a very different garden. Most of it is wide and flat and dry and brown. It is a beautiful but unwelcoming garden. There are, however, some magnificent trees in the eastern coastal rainforests and on the islands nearby. Some of these trees have become as much a feature of the Australian places as the cedars and olives are of Lebanon. Australian cities are marked by the magnificent Moreton Bay figs in their parks and by stately rows of giant Norfolk Island pines encircling beach promenades. Two introduced trees have also become icons of Sydney and Brisbane - the jacaranda and poinciana.

The Lebanese tradition of respect for beautiful trees has been continued in the Lebanese -Australian gardens in this chapter. David Malouf writes eloquently of the magnificent figs near his parents' house in South Brisbane. Wahideh loved and nurtured her poinciana tree so that now it is an outstanding feature of one of her gardens and Maroun has planted two Norfolk Island pines which are becoming strong sentinels in his front garden.

The richly exotic traditions of the Middle East are evident in even the most humble of Lebanese gardens in Australia, whether as strongly scented roses or richly glazed tiles or the aromatic beds of mint and parsley.

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Endnotes

1. David Malouf is a well known Australian author. His father's parents were Lebanese, but his mother was English so he grew up divided between Lebanese and Anglo-Celt Australian culture. He could not speak Lebanese so much of the unusual culture of his grandparents both fascinated and disturbed him. Much of his writing refers to his childhood and the influence of his Lebanese grandparents.

Malouf, D. 1985. *12 Edmondstone Street*. London: Penguin.

Malouf, D. xxxx. 'A First Place: The Mapping of a World' in *Southerly*. Marrickville: The Wentworth Press.

2. Orientalism is a term coined by Edward Said to explain the West's fascination with the exoticism of the Middle and Far East.
3. Joseph and Wahideh are the parents of one of the students of Landscape Architecture at Queensland University of Technology, Nader Ibrahim. My thanks are extended to 'Ned' for introducing me to his family.
4. Maroun and Najah told their story to Peter Staggs when he was a student of Landscape Architecture at the University of New South Wales. My thanks are extended to Peter.