



**‘We grow these
wherever we live.’
(dragon fruit)**

**Walk 3—
Mapping Edges:
Marrickville**



**‘My babies!’ (gardener
seeing for the first
time her dragon fruit
flowering)**

Walk 3: Dragon Fruit

In Australia, we tend to think of dragon fruit (Pitaya) as a typically Southeast Asian tropical plant. It is actually a desert cactus that originates from Mexico, from where it was transplanted to other areas of Latin America by Europeans and beyond to South East Asia, USA, Israel, Cyprus, Canary Islands, and of course Australia. Like papaya, dragon fruit grows easily from seed and also from cuttings, and has adapted well both to dry and tropical









Dragon fruit plants
can be grown in
pots, but still need
structural support

climate. Pitaya needs a support to climb on. It puts out aerial roots, and once it is around 10 kilos, it starts to flower, and relies on moths or bats for fertilisation.

Dragon fruit also relies on humans, who kindly co-design and build inventive supports, using whatever it is at hand. Sometimes a fence will do, but often wood

planks, metal tubes, and other plants are assembled to provide support following the growth path of the plant. Similarly, dragon fruit's limbs break off easily, and are given from gardeners to other gardeners, generating connections and relations through planty gifts.

Dragon fruit, the way it enrolls humans, things, other plants, animals and insects also leads us to some concluding questions: what happens if we are led by plants into reimagining the tropical, as we have done here looking for instance at banana circles along the railway line; papaya popping up with the help of birds and humans along walls, near gutters, on the edge of parks, on compost heaps; dragon fruit—which is not tropical but behaves as if it were—creating sharing circuits and co-designing with their humans' fantastic structures? Can plants help us imagine a different Marrickville, and ways in which it can co-exist with urban renewal projects?



'Even though they haven't flowered yet —they will eventually, but I like the way they're now part of the fence. It's also a possum highway.'

The dragon fruit
flower is striking

'I just put wires and tied it up...then it can move around and grow along there.'



Mapping Edges – Marrickville

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