



Q&A with Adrian Swain



What design ideas can you apply to a large backyard to ensure the best use of space?

It's important to have an overall master plan when landscaping a large space. It'll allow you to plan the entire project and to integrate structural elements such as paths, walls and ramps linking areas together and avoiding a patchwork approach. A good master plan will allow you to select complementary materials and colours for walls paving and steps creating harmonious living environments.

On a practical level, look at your garden design based on watering and maintenance needs. What are the things you have to reach most often? Place herbs and plants that require heavier watering such as veggie beds, close to the house.

Landscape designer

and horticulturalist *Adrian Swain*, of *Ecodesign*, is passionate about landscape design and the design of living environments that benefit not only the people who live within them but also the community generally. "As a designer I am passionate about delivering results, guiding my clients through the design process and focussing on this journey, this is where inspiration is found."

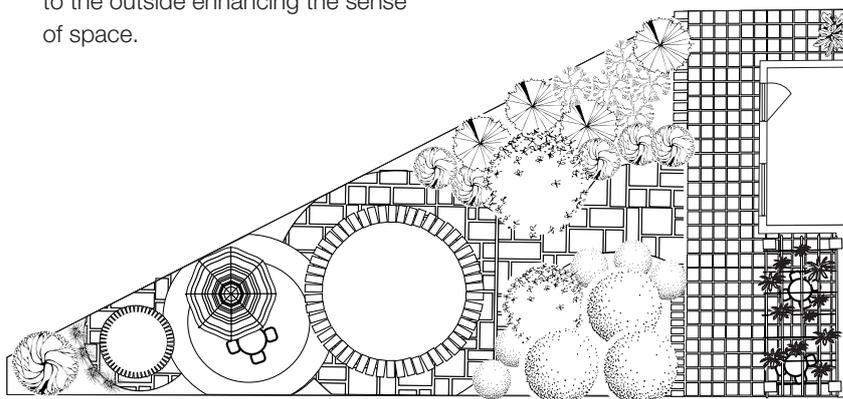


With space at a premium in many inner urban blocks what can be done to turn a small outdoor area into an appealing extension of the home?

Maintaining privacy with screens while still letting in as much sun as possible are key elements to a successful design for small outdoor spaces. Extending internal flooring materials to the outside by using external equivalents, allows for a seamless transition and unencumbered flow from the inside to the outside enhancing the sense of space.

For example, the use of large format tiles inside and similar format pavers or tiles externally with corresponding grout lines.

With space at a premium function is king! By adding features such as built-in seating, storage, pizza ovens and barbecues. Remember to place herbs near the barbecue so you can pick rosemary or coriander while you're cooking. Use screens to hide bins, rainwater tanks and compost bins away. ➡



Paver: Abode®
Colour: Latte

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Paver: Aspenstone® in Cappuccino
Retaining wall: Keystone® in Charcoal

Q | *In the future, how might we be using our domestic outdoor spaces?*

The garden of the future can be described in one word: productive. I believe that in future, there will be less land for growing food commercially, having made way for more and more housing. This will mean food prices will increase and anyone with a garden will choose to make that space productive to grow herbs, vegetables, fruit trees or to keep chooks.

In the gardens and homes of the future, the principles of ESD are here to stay, with building materials able to be reused or recycled, such as bricks, steel and aluminium.

Our current lifestyle preferences for the close relationship between outdoor rooms and outdoor kitchens, won't be changing any time soon.

With our growing focus on sustainability, the time has come for a return to exposed brick walls rather than high maintenance rendered finishes. I believe that revisiting standard building and landscaping materials such as bricks, stone and metals, used with imagination and creativity, will mean that artisans and craftsmen who will create these bespoke elements of the home and garden, will come in to their own.

Q | *Are you seeing other emerging trends?*

Aside from the use of sustainable landscape materials and productive gardens, another trend that is influencing the design of today's outdoor areas is the introduction of technology in to the outdoor space, such as big screen TVs, lighting, fans, automated louvres and shade structures.

Not only have Australians brought their love of landscaping to the outdoor room but also their love of cooking. It's like we've said 'let's cook, renovate and landscape'. New additions to the outdoor room include the pizza ovens, outdoor kitchens, ceiling fans and fire places.

It's in our Australian psyche to want to stay outdoors as much as possible and this means from breakfast until dinner. And all this new technology makes that possible.

Also, when planning your garden think of the future. Along with your house, the backyard can also add value to your property. While you can enjoy a well-planned garden now, also think about the features that can appeal to potential future buyers.

Q | *What is the best advice for turning an ordinary suburban backyard into a desirable outdoor entertaining area?*

Function drives a lot of design in today's backyards. I advise homeowners to start with a site analysis to ensure that landscaping integrates both architecture and the environment, and then plan the design features and functions around that.



Paver: Stylestone™ Quarry in Dune
Retaining wall: Heathstone Grande®