

# FOCAL POINTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

*A Melbourne garden is brought to life  
with multiple complementary elements*



The two screens are Corten steel, selected for its rusted colour, which provides a great contrast for foliage.



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The team at AQL Landscape Design had their work cut out for them with this design brief. The clients wanted their Melbourne garden to really flourish, with a focal water feature plus a social setting for gatherings, plus they wanted to highlight some areas and soften others.

Thankfully, with the help of the Australian Quality Landscaping construction team, AQL met the brief with what they call a “country-themed garden with a contemporary twist”.

Firstly, the idea was to create a country-style garden with a strong emphasis on vibrant flower colour, for visual interest throughout the seasons as well as food production. The team decided to focus on yellow, orange, white and red flowers in one area and blue, pink and yellow in another.

As the design brief asked for focal points throughout, AQL Landscape Design got creative to meet these objectives, explaining that they also always aim to design a space so that it appears larger than it is.

The homeowners initially requested a gathering space (or “chill-out” zone) for the teenagers. The resulting rear sitting deck is now the perfect space for socialising. The timber decking was built around an existing ornamental pear tree, which provides great



To provide the soothing sounds of water throughout the garden that the clients asked for, the team incorporated an urn water feature in the space.



*“To visually soften the boundary fences, different plants were used”*



The exposed red brick from the neighbour's garage wall was cleaned up and is now a backdrop for the new outdoor entertaining and seating area.



shade to the sitting area. And the addition of a Corten steel screen contrasts nicely with the existing red-brick wall.

As the wall belongs to the neighbour (it's their garage), after some deliberation the team decided not to paint or render it but rather to just clean it and leave the gorgeous old brick exposed. This highlights the rustic appeal of the wall and creates a unique, old-world backdrop to the new outdoor sitting area.

Screening can be used to detract attention from different spaces and highlight other areas of the garden. The clients requested some spaces to be screened in, such as the rear driveway, the garage and the existing water tank. However, for the focal areas in the garden, two Corten steel screens were added to provide a "rusty" appearance. Not only does this rusty colour offer a great backdrop for plant foliage and flowers, it blends into its surroundings as if it was there all along. The screen works particularly nicely in the social space, providing

a gentle boundary and a strong contrast to the hard-element materials, such as the brick and timber deck.

To visually soften the boundary fences, different plants were used. Stainless-steel cabling was attached to the existing north-side fence for the climbing clematis to grow on, and Australian native plants were added along this boundary line to attract local bird life.

For Wayne De Klijn, landscape architect, horticulturist and principal of AQL Landscape Design, sustainability is the underlying foundation to a successful garden or landscape. And this space was no different. For the new walling and paving, the team recycled and re-laid the Castlemaine stone that already existed in the garden. The new deck was made from plantation-grown spotted gum and, having been built around the existing ornamental pear tree, created a new appreciation for the old centrepiece. The existing water tank was also repurposed to water the garden and top up the

newly added water feature. Granite gravel was selected for the permeable path through the garden in order to allow water to penetrate into the garden beds.

"The team really enjoyed working on this space," Wayne says, adding some tips for those working with a small garden. "Use large-format pavers, small-leaf foliage plants, great viewing lines and corridors or meandering paths to make your space seem larger."

This fantastic garden beautifully showcases Wayne's 38 years of industry experience in all aspects of landscape design, consultancy, project management and landscape construction. Wayne is also an ambassador for the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA), having been the recipient of many AILA awards himself. He avidly promotes landscape architecture as a career and has employed and mentored nearly a dozen landscape architect students, as well as employing many qualified landscape architects through AQL Landscape Design. [aql.net.au](http://aql.net.au)

