

DESIGN

WILD AT HEART

Carefully structured around a family's needs but with plenty of room for romance, this hardy garden shines in all seasons.

TEXT ELIZABETH WILSON | PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL

THE BRIEF

As the parents of four teenagers, Amanda and Leon Shapero had family top of mind when it came to designing their garden in Melbourne's south-east. "We needed a hardy garden and we wanted an outdoor room where the kids, as they became young adults, could have gatherings with friends at home," says Amanda. An unabashed flower lover, she also wanted a garden that changed with the seasons while Leon wanted a strip of lawn. In response, landscape designer Myles Broad created a structured front garden with a strong green-and-white palette (pictured right). For the rear garden, he created an entertainer's area with a large outdoor room that opens directly onto the pool and is surrounded by lawn and bordered by hedges. Five years on, the two gardens continue to fulfil the family's needs. "We've had 16th, 18th and various other birthday parties in the garden. It is in constant use," says Amanda.



MYLES BROAD
PRINCIPAL DESIGNER,
ECKERSLEY GARDEN
ARCHITECTURE

"The house is romantic in style and the front garden had to reflect that. It's an all-season garden with flowers

throughout summer and foliage that changes from red/orange in autumn, to bare in winter and silvery/green in spring. It's a garden where structure and form are important and the flowers are a bonus."

SHORT & SWEET

The star jasmine (*Trachelospermum asiaticum*) groundcover bears white flowers in spring.

FORM & FOLIAGE

A strong sense of form and structure is at the heart of this garden. "The planting is regimented, but the plants have a softness and wildness to them," says Myles.

NEW & OLD

The liquidambar tree was part of the original garden. To its left, on each side of the path, Myles planted two snowball trees (*Viburnum opulus*), which bear white flowers in spring. The purple-leaved tree to the right is *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'.

UP THE GARDEN PATH

The exposed aggregate path is seeded with pebbles. "It's low-key and textural. It looks like a country path and complements the garden's romantic look," says Myles.

GREEN & WHITE

Mass-planted oak-leaved hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), provides a strong green-and-white statement in summer. The leaves turn golden in autumn then deep purple in winter.



< POOLING RESOURCES

Using dark tiles to line the pool means it "becomes a reflective water feature in winter – it takes on the moods of the different seasons," says Myles. Layers of foliage have transformed the rear garden into a lush entertaining space. At the far left is a row of *Michelia doltsopa*, a tall and narrow screening plant. Running the length of the pool is a hedge of Tuscany privet (*Ligustrum vulgare* 'Buxifolium'), a "better performer in Australia than English box," says Myles. Planted along the fence is a line of ginkgo biloba, a tree favoured by Myles for its fan-shaped leaves that change colour with the seasons. The thick clump of long strappy grass at right is the drought-tolerant *Liriope gigantea*.

GOT IT COVERED

The outdoor room is the hub of the Shapero home. The timber pergola features a pitched glass roof that enhances the indoor-outdoor connection and "makes it more like a conservatory," says Myles. The Hedgehog light, from Mance Design, is made from hawthorn twigs and casts a dramatic shadow.

LAYERS OF GREEN

These Dedon Barcelona chairs are the best place to take in the curvy lines and rolling layers of green in the back garden. Along the far fence is a row of *Michelia doltsopa*. A wavy hedge of Tuscany privet is in the foreground. Climbing over the pergola is the soft-leaved *Rosa* 'Crepuscule'.

TOTALLY FLOORED

The pergola floor is made from Tasmanian sandstone in Almond, laid in a crazy-paving pattern.



Styling by Sarah Appleford. Illustration by Allison Langton. For Where to Buy, see page 290.

- 1 Liquidambar
- 2 Oak-leaved hydrangea
- 3 Giant white mondo
- 4 White crepe myrtle
- 5 *Liriope muscari*
- 6 Plantings include ginkgo biloba, *Ligustrum vulgare* 'Buxifolium' and *Lilium philippinense*.
- 7 Lawn
- 8 Pool
- 9 Outdoor room
- 10 Pond
- 11 House



GREEN LEAVES

A Large urns and pots are dotted throughout the garden. The ground cover is *Bergenia cordifolia* and the trees are white-flowering crepe myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Natchez') chosen for their spring flowers and sculptural trunks. B The Tuscany privet is clipped into a "fun" wavy hedge. The Sir Walter Buffalo lawn is kept deliberately long, lush and unmowed. C A round hedge of Tuscany privet encircles a cycad. D The elongated flower cluster of the oak-leaved hydrangea.

MYLES' TIPS

- * Create year-round appeal in the garden using foliage plants with varying leaf forms and textures to form a dark green colour base.
- * The white flower palette is simple, classic. The key is to choose a range of plants with flowers in different shapes and sizes. The beauty is that there is no danger of plants visually clashing with one other.
- * Plants to consider for a green-and-white theme: sweet viburnum can be clipped into a hedge. *Gardenia* 'Grandiflora Star' or white daphne suit a semi-shaded position, and white flowering crabapple (*Malus* 'Sugar Tyme') is a lovely small deciduous tree. **H&G**

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