

DESIGN

# NATIVE SUN

A hard, brick-paved outdoor area is transformed into a native-themed oasis that's completely at home in its coastal Victorian setting.

TEXT JESSICA SANFORD | PHOTOGRAPHY MARK ROPER

THE CHALLENGE

Wrapping around a contemporary house in a bayside Melbourne suburb, this garden was previously dominated by hard lines, hard structures and red-brick paving. The homeowners wanted to soften the garden's appearance and to forge a connection between their plantings and the indigenous flora of nearby coastal bushland. With this in mind, Scott Leung, Principal Designer at Eckersley Garden Architecture, chose fine-textured plants to counter the strict geometry of the property. These native species are drought- and salt-tolerant, and also attract local birdlife to the garden. To continue the native theme, hard landscaping was rendered in Australian stone, pebbles and timber, with each material specifically chosen for its earthy tones. A modern twist was achieved by keeping the structure and plantings neat and ordered. Timber screens create straight visual lines and frame selected focal points.



**SCOTT LEUNG**  
PRINCIPAL DESIGNER,  
ECKERSLEY GARDEN  
DESIGN

"The soft texture of the garden and the hard edges of the house complement each other beautifully. Colours

have been repeated, so that even though many textures and materials are used, they all blend in together, giving the garden a smooth flow-through."

SCREEN STAR

A silvertop ash screen, painted in Murobond Paints Pure Acrylic in Kohl, runs along the long path to the front door, offering filtered glimpses of the garden at strategic points.

NATIVE FOLIAGE

By the pool, red-cap gum (*Eucalyptus erythrocorys*), scarlet kunzea (*Kunzea baxteri*) and fine leaf mat rush (*Lomandra longifolia* 'Tanika') make a textural counterpoint to a lawn of Palmetto buffalo grass.

FAR-SIGHTED

Pool fencing in clear glass fosters an uninterrupted visual flow. Each outdoor area flows into the next, expanding the sense of space and extending lines of sight. Loungers, table and chairs from xxx.





**< NATURE RETREAT**

In a casual seating area at the side of the house, large granite rocks protrude through the timber decking to form a circle. The 'emerging' rocks and plantings create an impression that the deck has been constructed around existing native elements, evoking a natural and relaxed environment. In this area, plantings have been simplified to coastal banksia trees with underplantings of fine leaf mat rush. Choosing just one or two species, and planting them en masse, makes the space look well edited, clean and contemporary. Chairs from xxxxxxxxxxxx.

**OUT OF THE WOODS**

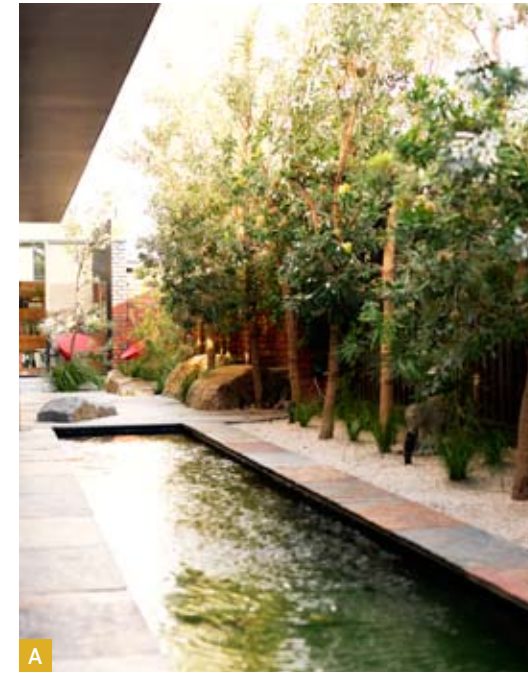
"Coastal banksias (*Banksia integrifolia*) planted throughout the deck area near the pond create a banksia woodlands look," says Scott, "which replicates the coastal woodlands of the nearby Mornington Peninsula."

**PAVE THE WAY**

Pavers surrounding the pond are split stone tiles in Myrtle from Eco Outdoor, chosen for their attractive colour variations and a naturally split top surface that gives the material non-slip qualities.

**GROUND CONTROL**

Fine leaf mat rush planted at ground level softens the hard surface and straight lines of the timber deck. Granite rocks from Hillview Quarries.



A



B

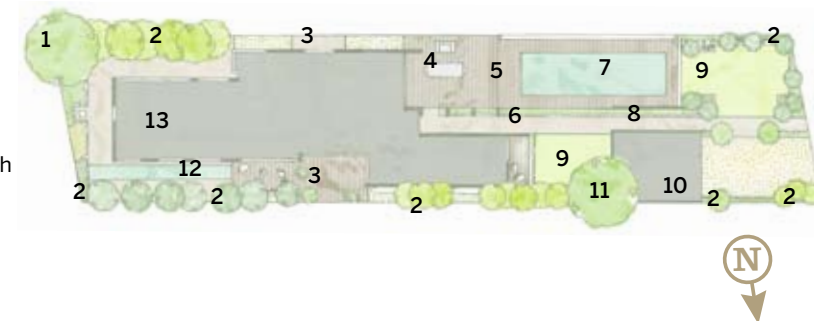


C



D

- 1 *Eucalyptus ficofolia*
- 2 *Banksia integrifolia*
- 3 *Dichondra repens*
- 4 Barbecue and dining
- 5 Ironbark decking
- 6 *Lomandra longifolia* 'Tanika')
- 7 Pool
- 8 Winstow bluestone path
- 9 Lawn
- 10 Garage
- 11 *Melaleuca*
- 12 Pond
- 13 House



**THE FINE DETAILS**

**A** A shallow rectangular pond runs along one side of the house, providing a serene water view from each bedroom.  
**B** The neutral tones of an untreated ironbark deck blend in well with bricks and stone.  
**C and D** The owners wanted to define the entry point to the house. This was achieved with a path of Winstow bluestone from Yarrabee & Castlemaine Stone Solutions, laid directly from the gate to the front door. Alongside it, multiple clumps of fine leaf mat rush create a wave-like impression; when wind ripples the leaves, it's reminiscent of the nearby ocean.

**CONTEMPORARY NATIVE GARDEN TIPS**

- \***Timber** Any untreated timber will weather to a silver-grey tone over time, so make sure the colour palette will accommodate this change.
- \***Rocks** Large rocks sourced from quarries can be used for borders, decorative pieces or seating.
- \***Materials** Select plants native to the area and landscaping materials that mesh with the aesthetics of the property.

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