

# Home Harvest

*This welcoming modern garden is low-maintenance, family-friendly and full of character*





**WORDS:** Kate McKee

**I**nitially this beautiful outdoor area in Enmore, Sydney was a blend of old bricks and concrete. The only feature was a classic bright green tin storage shed, which took up half the garden and housed a collection of spiders.

The brief was simple. The owners wanted an intimate garden for friends and family as well as a place where the kids could ride bikes and play in the sandpit. They also wanted somewhere they could grow herbs and vegetables.

“When you live in the inner city and land is at a premium you must maximise your external space. This garden was hot in the summer and damp in the winter. The owners didn’t go outside and the children needed a safe place to enjoy,” says Steve Warner, Principal Landscape Designer for Outhouse Landscape Design.

One of the first things that Steve had to manage was the backyard’s lack of space and how he could incorporate practical aspects like storage and day-to-day utilities such as bins, as well as giving the space the attributes that the clients desired. His clever design involved beautiful screens and angled paving. “The space was so small that it was critical that the screening solution was a feature,” he says. “Creating it from rusted corten steel meant that the finish had a relationship with the rest of the materials used and had a visual link with the proposed boundary wall finish.”

The corten screening actually hides the bin area behind and the elaborate pattern looks stunning at night, while still allowing the area to be ventilated. “With smart design, what could be seen as a problem can actually turn into a great feature within the space,” comments Steve.

The fence surrounding the yard was originally green Colorbond, so the intention was to soften the boundary lines while still creating interest. A separate timber frame was constructed in front of the existing fence, which was then lined with external blue board. “To break up the fence line we painted sections with Porter’s Rust Paint,” says Steve. “This broke up the boundary and the

*“With any small space the paving selection and layout is critical in helping to make a space feel bigger”*

**TOP** The in-ground garden beds double as seating while also supporting the family’s crop production.

**BOTTOM** Uplights installed in the garden highlight the space, with eye lights on the low walls to create safety around the paved area.

natural tone of the rust complemented the grain in the sandstone paving.”

With any small space the paving selection and layout is critical in helping to make a space feel bigger. By using 600mm long x 400mm deep sandstone pavers and laying them on an angle it allows the garden’s width to be stretched visually. The earthy tones of the sandstone keep the space feeling light, while the banding in the paving adds interest to the garden.

**TOP** The only feature in the garden before was an old, rundown garden shed.

**BOTTOM** What child doesn’t covet a sand pit to play in? This outdoor area caters to both the children and the adults.



“The angle that the paving was laid allows for in-ground garden beds down the side path. This breaks up the space and accommodates spiral planters for sweet peas and tomatoes,” explains Steve. The curved seating and walls also add interest to the garden, and allow for deep garden beds for production and a contrasting blend of planting.

Some of the key plants that were used were Anigozanthos, Echium candicans, Stachys byzantine, Helichrysum ‘Limelight’, espaliered citrus, Passiflora and Rosmarinus officinalis, as well as assorted herbs.

“What I love about this garden is that we worked with the client to select the key backbone plants, but our job was to create the structure so that the client could be hands-on,” says Steve. “Even in the short time that the garden has been installed, the planting is ever-changing.”

The owners’ children love to plant the seeds and pick the fruit and vegetables, making this edible home garden a source of family fun as well as a sustainable addition to the space.

After the makeover the backyard is now both practical and low-maintenance, important for the owners who have careers and a strong family focus. Its style and character reflect the owners’ lifestyles perfectly and they are delighted with the results. As one of them commented to Steve recently, “Just harvested a bowlful of cherry tomatoes and armful of spinach. Kangaroo paw is reaching for the clouds. Our garden is ‘crazy cool’ and we love it!”

“The owners love the new garden as it acts as an extension of the home,” says Steve. “It offers a place to unwind, for the children to have fun and, best of all, for the family to come together in a relaxed space.” ■