

These lucky canines have plenty of room to romp and play.



# PUPPY PARADISE

*A lush haven for both man and his best friend*

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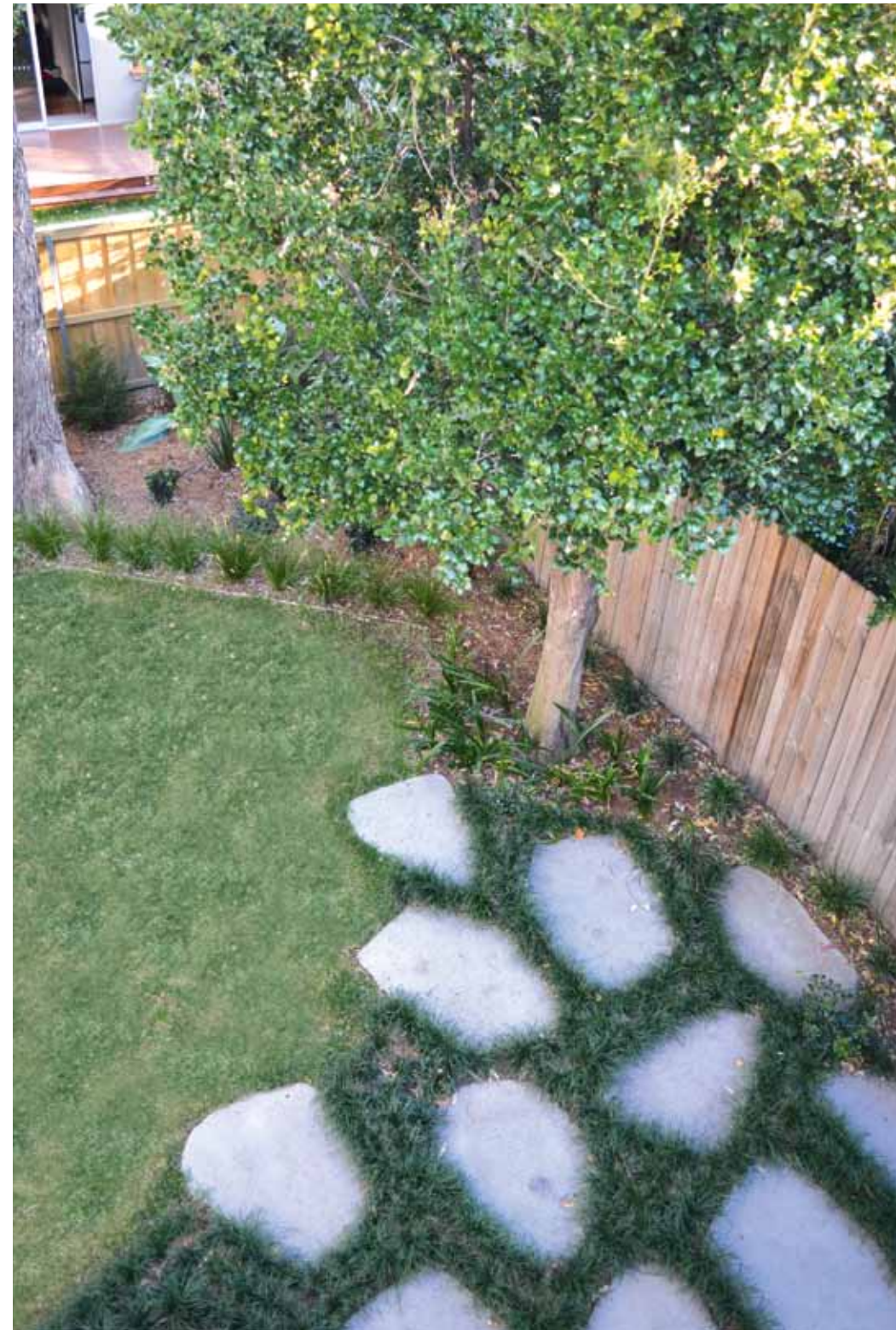
If you thought this garden was just another stylish run-of-the-mill suburban backyard, you'd be barking up the wrong tree. This delightful compact Lilyfield garden pays testament to how man (and his dog) can truly share outdoor living in suburbia.

The garden was designed by Steve Warner of Outhouse Design and constructed by Steve Warner and Greg Soster from Outside Space.

In creating the garden, the homeowners wanted to achieve an informal and low-

maintenance space that was ultimately functional and durable (for the dogs), with a sprinkle of quirkiness and a dash of the unexpected. The resulting garden is a delightful green space that is light-filled, warm and welcoming.

There is plenty of room on the lawn to run and romp, and ample shady places to soak up the sun and have a lazy afternoon snooze — and that is just for the owner. The two in-residence canines, Mana and Tora, have given the garden the paws up, too. With lots of grassy open spaces, it is a little slice of doggie paradise that these canines will definitely enjoy for years to come.



## DESIGNER GARDENS

**LEFT** Leafy trees provide shade for the dogs in the warm summer months.

**ABOVE** The new curves in the garden work well with the straight lines of the existing hard landscaping surface.

Steve says, "It's the simplicity of the garden I like. It has a strong boldness about it, while still being soft and engaging in its shape and planting selected," he says.

Before the renovation, the garden was a lacklustre space that followed the contours of the fence line. The designers have thought outside the box, adding fluid curves and interesting angles and dimensions with oversized pavers and deep garden beds. The existing square concrete pavers were kept and integrated into the design.

The biggest challenge in creating this garden was the modest budget the designers had at their disposal. The final design clearly illustrates what can be achieved with a minimal spend. "We cleaned up and reused the existing pavers and created the connection to the garden by blending them with new bluestone steppers," says Steve. "Dividing the larger clumps of existing *Strelitzia* into multiples enabled us to create additional planting focal points."

"This garden demonstrates that even on a tight budget, investing in good design and key quality products can make all the difference. It is a great space with plenty of character and a sense of fun," he adds.

The linked garden edging with rolled metal edge clearly defines the leafy lawn from the garden beds. The luxurious leafy green mondo is interspersed among the bluestone pavers and adds a wonderful touch of whimsy. The fluid motion of the mondo sweeping over the pavers brings a charming feel to the space.

The large organic bluestone pavers, the smallest 800mm by 600mm, were sourced from Eco Outdoor. They make a bold visual statement when viewed from the balcony above.



*“The luxurious leafy green mondo is interspersed among the bluestone pavers and adds a wonderful touch of whimsy”*

There are plenty of places to lay and places to run, this garden is no doubt the envy of the other canines in the neighbourhood.





The positioning of the randomly sized bluestone pavers around the curved grassy space, looks like the pads of a dog's paw.

The key eco-friendly elements are the soft landscaping elements. The plants used are all drought-tolerant, so require minimal watering. The natives are low-maintenance, and select groundcovers and screening plants have been chosen that spread quickly, working well with the existing site and soil conditions.

To provide privacy, the owner opted for a living leafy screen. Native lilly pilly Hot Flush (*Acmena smithii*) has dark green leaves, and a glossy mauve new growth. The trees have petite clusters of white flowers that turn into pretty berries in the cooler months of the year. Steve says it can be trimmed easily to the required height.

The wide garden beds add depth, drawing the eye to select focal points, and within the beds is a variety of mixed layered planting. All of the plants selected were chosen for their colour, interesting texture, and contrast. Fragrance hasn't been forgotten here either, with star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) which grows quite quickly and has delightful white scented flowers that will waft over the garden

and indoors. Miss Muffett (*Pittosporum tobira*) has tightly compacted foliage and a strong defined shape. The beautiful mass cream and white flowers that bloom in spring have a pretty subtle fragrance.

Perhaps most importantly the plants chosen for the garden had to be robust, with two large dogs in residence. Feature plants include bird of paradise (*Strelitzia*) with its glossy emerald leaves and striking showy exotic flowers. Another attractive focal plant is the orange clivia (*Clivia miniata*), which has vivid clusters of flowers in late winter through spring. Snow maiden (*Raphiolepis indica*) has contrasting shape and scent, and *Liriope* 'Evergreen Giant' is drought-tolerant. The *Lomandra* 'Tanika' is another pooch-hardy native plant — it has soft, flowing evergreen foliage that is pliable.

The mondo (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) is mass-planted and visually connects the gardens to the grassy lawns. Steve says it is a cost-effective plant; more importantly, it's very supple and hardy, a must when you have two happy hounds that enjoy laying on it.

**BELOW** It's doggie heaven for these playful pups.

