

the (sydney) magazine



Justin Hemmes
Is the bar tsar up to his biggest challenge yet?

Shhhh... How the noise of city life is driving us crazy

Image makeover: Top advertising agencies on selling Sydney

Weird science: A tour of our most unusual small museums

Plus Matthew Johns rugs up to kick off the footy season



dryspell

Michael Cooke explores an eco-friendly garden that gives maximum impact using minimal moisture.

Photography Michael Wee

Landscape gardener Janis Neimanis and his wife, Andrea, demolished their Allambie Heights house two years ago, replacing it with a modern, light-filled dwelling that makes the best of the site's bush and ocean views. The couple share the house with their two children, eight-year-old Nadine and six-year-old Claudia.

As part of the redevelopment, the traditional front lawn has been replaced with pale brown crushed granite that functions as both mulch and a walking surface. Delicate hairpin banksias and grass trees combine with lush cycads and pandanus to create a dramatically beautiful garden that requires little to no water and yet doesn't look too dry or spiky.

A low red retaining wall delineates a level change and adds a splash of colour to a muted palette, which is primarily inspired by the nearby bush reserve. This new-generation garden is extremely easy to maintain – from time to time an old leaf might be removed or a path raked, but little else is required.

michael's tip

Make a statement this winter with a pair of Puddlebeach rain boots. The range includes Wellington boots and kloggies. Women's Army Dot ankle boots (pictured) from \$90. Children's and men's sizes available. Order at www.puddlebeach.com.au.



Stockists

Australian Native Landscapes
317 Mona Vale Road, Terrey Hills.
Phone: 9450 1444.
Belrose Nursery Bundaleer Street,
Belrose. Phone: 9450 1484.
Harvest Seeds and Native Plants
287 Mona Vale Road, Terrey Hills.
Phone: 9450 2699.
Murobond 81 Dickson Avenue,
Artarmon. Phone: 1800 199 299.
Palmland 327 Mona Vale Road,
Terrey Hills. Phone: 9450 1555.
Redefine Landscape Design
29 Canea Crescent, Allambie
Heights. Phone: 0408 123263.
Transplant Wildwood 183 Peats
Ridge Road, Peats Ridge.
Phone: 4375 1200.

create the garden

- 1 The leathery leaves of the **cardboard palm** (*Zamia furfuracea*) are tawny gold and khaki and look amazing against a backdrop of stone or steel. Growing about 1500mm high, the cardboard palm is easily grown in pots and tolerates extreme heat as well as salty conditions. Available from Palmland in a 400mm pot for \$275.
- 2 **Sago palm** (*Cycas revoluta*) is slow growing, exceptionally hardy and tolerates full sun or part shade. It grows well in the garden and is excellent in large containers. Expect to pay about \$295 for a 400mm pot from Palmland.
- 3 The red **retaining wall** follows the line of the roof pitch and divides the two garden levels. It is painted in Murowash Arizona, \$33 for 1 litre from Murobond.
- 4 Replace the lawn with a surface of **brown crushed granite**. Mix with off-white cement to stabilise the material and compact it for path or driveway. Use without cement as a mulch around plants. Brown deco granite, \$62 a tonne from Australian Native Landscapes.
- 5 **Second-hand stone** was cut and fitted on site as cladding for a cement block wall. Expect to pay around \$975 a square metre, supplied and installed, from Redefine Landscape Design.
- 6 Nectar-loving birds are attracted to the small, tubular flowers of the **coral plant** (*Russelia equisetiformis*). The foliage can also be grown cascading over a wall. It flowers for most of the year and grows to about 1m high. \$16.95 from Belrose Nursery in a 200mm pot.
- 7 Mature-sized trees can make a spectacular difference. The **screw pine** (*Pandanus tectorius*) grows along the coasts of Queensland and northern NSW and adapts well to gardens, growing to 5m. A mature specimen costs from \$2500 to \$15,000 from Transplant.
- 8 Slender **bamboo grass** (*Stipa verticulata*) has filigree flower heads that wave in the breeze. Plant a group of at least five for the best effect and cut back to ground level each winter. From Harvest Seeds and Native Plants in a forestry tube for \$2.75.