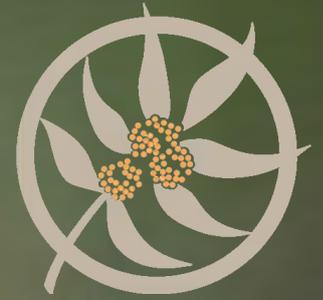


AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Bringing a garden and landscape to life requires a blend of skills, creativity, design and innovation knowledge and most of all, passion and energy.

In this edition, our members write about the gardens they have shaped over time, learning and sharing as they go, to create unique landscapes for the benefit of their clients and visitors.

We hope you enjoy reading their perspectives.

Kind regards,

David

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PATRICK REGNAULT FAIH RH

Patrick is a Fellow of the Institute, a former National Coucillor and Regional Convenor. Our aim is to create beautiful gardens that bring people and place together. We listen to what our clients want and use our expertise to create the best possible environment: places that are beautiful to be in and respectful of our surroundings.



MARK PAUL MAIH RH

Mark Paul is the founder of The Greenwall Company and the creator of the first greenwall in Australia over 30 years ago, a wall that is still thriving today.



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Podcaster, content marketer, horticulturist of 10 years. Creator of the Australian horticultural industry podcast, Plants Grow Here. Believes that gardening is better with ecology.



INDIGENOUS PLANTS IN THE GARDEN

by Nadia Cole MAIH and Lucy Gow

Designing and gardening with indigenous plants has numerous benefits for gardeners, the environment and developing connection with landscape, history and culture.

Indigenous plants are those that are native to a particular area. This means that every place will have a different suite of indigenous species. They may be unique (endemic) to an area, or they could be a local variation of a widespread species.

Either way, indigenous flora is adapted to live and reproduce in the local conditions of their patch and have evolved alongside the many other organisms that exist there.

REDUCED EFFORT, INCREASED SUCCESS

It makes a lot of sense to work with what you have got. By choosing plants that thrive in the local soil and have evolved to withstand local conditions — whether they be hot dry summers, salty coastal winds, or frosty winter nights — you are setting yourself up for garden success.

Soil that is in reasonable condition will need little if any improvement, and once established, indigenous plants can survive on rainfall and

only need watering during prolonged dry periods or during heatwaves. This means a reduced investment of both time and money and a better chance of withstanding our changing climate.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Indigenous garden plants contribute to biodiversity and may be ‘insurance populations’ for those species that are becoming rare due to habitat loss, weed invasion and other threatening processes.

Cultivation has become an important conservation tool for species such as Murnong (*Microseris* spp.) which was an important food source for Aboriginal peoples but has become scarce in the wild since European settlement.

Indigenous plants are a valuable source of food and habitat for wildlife, other plants (e.g. epiphytes) and microorganisms, many of which they have co-existed with for millennia.

Some have specialised symbiotic relationships with other organisms, such as the threatened Eltham Copper Butterfly which relies on a shrub and an ant to reproduce. Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) is used as a nesting location for its eggs and food source for its caterpillars, while the ants guard the caterpillars from predators.

The inclusion of more indigenous plants in our gardens is also a helpful way to reduce the spread of environmental weeds.

Weeds have a devastating impact on native plants and animals and can threaten food production, water catchments and soils. Many weeds in Australia have 'escaped' from cultivation, and an estimated 10 new weed species naturalise each year. These include both exotic and native Australian species.

Another benefit of using indigenous plants is that there is far less energy use associated with their production and cultivation than exotic species and native cultivars. The need for transport and packaging is reduced as plants tend to be acquired locally, and there is less need for irrigation and soil improvement.

Another bonus is the avoidance of pesticides and fertilisers which generate large amounts of greenhouse emissions in their production and pollute soils and waterways.

CONNECTION

Indigenous plants offer opportunities to connect with nature, history and place. When growing plants, we cultivate understanding and appreciation for them, such as noticing the seasonal flowering of a Chocolate Lily or the shelter provided to frogs and reptiles by a tussocky grass.

You can even learn which species were used by First Nations people for food, medicine, weapons and other utilities. When used in schools, public spaces and even private gardens, indigenous plantings can be an educational tool to share knowledge about Indigenous culture and ecology.

DESIGNING WITH INDIGENOUS PLANTS

There seems to be a prevailing myth that you can only use indigenous plants in natural-style bush gardens, but indigenous plants can also be stunning in a modern or formal garden. This can be achieved using repetition, borders and symmetry and by pruning shrubs into hedges or balls.



► **ELTHAM COPPER BUTTERFLY.** Image/ <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-species/eltham-copper-butterfly>

As with any design, selecting the right indigenous plant depends on the site conditions. Indigenous or not, a sun-loving plant won't do well in a shady spot. When choosing exotic or non-indigenous native plants be careful not to include those that might become weeds in the area.

SOURCING PLANTS

Local councils often have information about indigenous species online or in booklet form (and some run or support indigenous nurseries). Community groups (such as Friends groups) can also be an excellent resource.

Check availability with the local indigenous and native nurseries early in the design as production is seasonal and in smaller quantities than commercial nurseries.

We encourage all gardeners, horticulturalists and landscape designers to learn about and incorporate indigenous plants into their gardens. It is a small act that can help your local environment and foster knowledge and stewardship of our unique and beautiful flora.

You may even find some new favourite plants! ■



A SECRET GARDEN IN WOOLLAHRA, NSW

by Andrea Govaert MAIH Images/ Andrea Govaert

As professional gardeners we build a relationship with gardens and equally important, their owners. Professionally designed or not, private gardens are mostly the product of a client's imagination. They tell us a story about the owners as much as they speak for themselves.

A garden in Woollahra, New South Wales, is a perfect example of such garden. Its creators are Dr Harold Roper and his beloved wife Barbara, who sadly passed away recently.

Their enduring passion is the garden, which they jointly built during a lifetime of gardening.

Dr Roper was born and raised in South Africa, where he graduated as a geologist, and later settled in Sydney where he became a professor of Engineering at Sydney University.

His horticultural interest, in particular in relation to fruit bearing trees, is clearly visible in the design and make-up of the garden.

The property commences along a long narrow private driveway, filled with citrus, *Ficus carica*, *Punica granatum*, clipped *Laurus nobilis* and Japanese box hedges that are a quiet promise to what is yet to come.

The driveway ends at the front garden of the house, flanked by an enormous Norfolk Island pine, where the 'real garden' starts, which is surrounding the entire house.



► DR ROPER SURROUNDED BY HIS MANDARIN AND MANGO TREES. Image/ Andrea Govaert.



► THE DRIVEWAY SEEN FROM THE HOUSE. Image/ Andrea Govaert.

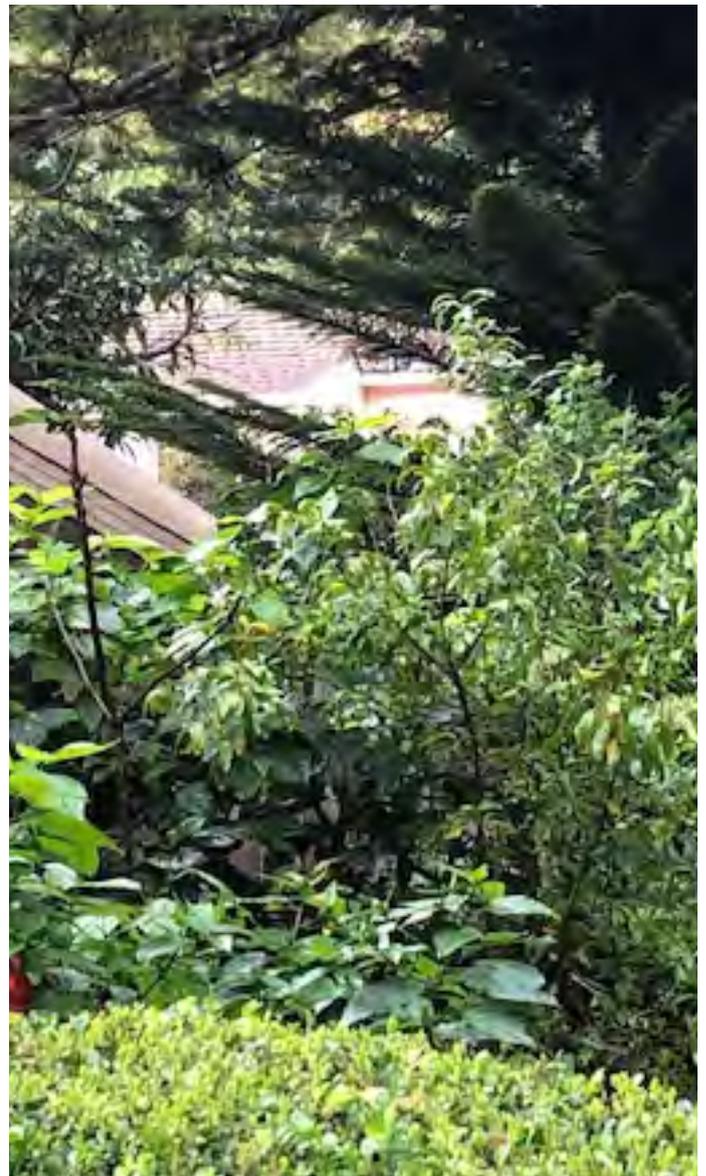
During the build, the soil was improved with substantial amounts of compost, later generated by the garden itself when it matured. Water is supplied via a bore situated at the entrance of the driveway.

Both the hard scaping and planting schemes are designed with an eye for the invariably sandy patches and shady areas, which are taken for what they are and used to their advantage: sandy patches are filled with drought tolerant herbs (rosemary, thyme, oregano), succulents and orchids.

Shady, relatively moist areas are filled with camellias (mostly *japonica* varieties), azaleas and (native) ferns. The grass in the back garden was taken out.

Instead the area was terraced by Dr Roper himself using bricks, leaving deliberate gaps that are filled with bromeliad varieties as well as a beautiful collection of delicate orchids supported by their aerial root systems.

A path meanders through the back garden and creates the illusion of a walk through a micro sub tropical forest, framed by huge palm trees, both indigenous (*Wodyetia bifurcata*) and foreign (*Neodynsis decaryi*, *Ravenia rivularis*, *Dypsis lutescens* and *Trachiparcus fortunei*), and under planted with South African natives *Strelitzia regina* and *Agapanthus africanus* as well as various salvias, geraniums, ferns. (*Cyathea australis*) orchids and grasses.



► END OF THE DRIVEWAY. Image/ Andrea Govaert.

As a self confessed passionate edible garden grower, Dr Roper also planted an extensive collection of fruit trees: mangoes, avocados (*Persea americana* both Hass and Shepard varieties), citrus, bananas, coffee (*Coffea arabica* and *C. canephora*), Loquat (*Eriohotrya japonica*) as well as pecan (*Carya illinoensis* variety unknown) and species of macadamia trees (*Macademia tetraphilla*), which produce an abundance of fruit and nuts when in season.

The result is an enchanting, secluded and personal place unlike any other garden. It is hard to believe that this garden is situated in the middle of a buzzing Sydney suburb.

During our many gardening sessions, Dr Roper was kind enough to share his vast horticultural and geological knowledge, acquired during his many travels through his native South Africa.

He told me about one geological mission along the Skeleton Coast in Namibia, or ‘the land that God created in anger’ due to the dryness of the climate. So dry that, according to Dr Roper, soldiers used to put their biscuit rations on the train rails to crush them before consumption.

In the Namib Desert, one of the driest places on the planet, all but very few plant species are able to withstand its conditions, most notably the *Welwitschia mirabilis*, named after Friedrich Welwitsch who first observed the plant in 1859.

Dr Roper recounted his excitement and relief when he stumbled on this plant in an otherwise completely barren landscape. Its leaf structure and CAM photo synthesising allows this plant to survive only on the moisture that is created at night when temperatures drop. The *Welwitschia mirabilis* features proudly on the coat of arms of Namibia.



► THE TERRACED GARDEN Image/ Andrea Govaert.



► MANGO, SALVIAS, CAPE GOOSEBERRY Image/ Andrea Govaert.



► WELWITSCHIA MIRABILIS (FEMALE) IN NAMIBIA Image/ Wikimedia Commons

During another gardening session, Dr Roper told me the story of the monkeys he encountered on one of his trips.

He was surprised by their completely erratic behaviour and realised only a little later that they were simply drunk from eating Loquat fruits, (a tree species that he also grows), that had fallen of the trees, and which, due to their relatively high sugar content, jointly with the presence of a natural yeast (similar to grapes), had fermented into alcohol without any human intervention.

These are just a few examples of Dr Roper's many delightful and often humorous (horticultural) anecdotes.

It made me realise, once again, there is always something to learn from knowledgeable gardeners. It is therefore indeed a privilege to work in these gardens, and to listen to the stories they tell. ■



► LOQUAT FRUIT AND LEAVES Image/ Aftabbanoori via Wikimedia Commons



► A MODEST ORNAMENT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN Image/ Andrea Govaert.



GARDENS OF OUR TIMES

by Patrick Regnault FAIH RH

Gardens are a reflection of their times. We are more aware of this in historic gardens but perhaps we need to be more mindful of it in modern gardens as well.

Today's gardens show the concerns of their times, consciously or not. Loss of biodiversity, fear of being cut off from the natural world, climate change worries whilst at the same time bringing technology into the garden and its further reliance on energy consumption, as well as increase in hard surfaces for entertainment.

There is a dichotomy between environmental concerns and individual desires, regardless of the cost.

In a world that seems unstable, the garden has become a place of retreat perhaps more so than before. The keen interest in vegetable growing which has increased during the pandemic is an example of increasing concern about food security and perhaps a wider lack of trust in

humans and human society in general. It can be rationalised by wanting higher quality food and eating fresher vegetables but it does not stack up economically.

In this case, our role as professionals is to guide our clients in choosing the best performing method of cultivation, teach them the basics or at least offer them the opportunity to learn.

Throwing in vegetable gardens which we know will become redundant after a year or a season may not be the best way to a long term engagement in growing plants.

This goes the same way for fruit trees, as professionals we need to understand the long term bio-security implications of those trends.

Environmental concerns are clearly visible in the conversation of biodiversity in gardens. It has always been important to do to avoid the spread of pests and diseases.

What used to be simply good horticultural practice of mixing floral families, genera and species for diversity and interest have been replaced by a buzz word - "Biodiversity"- which seems to have left common sense behind.

Mini-forests, focusing on genera as opposed to plant families, are trends that can only bring medium to long term problems to underground infrastructure and real biodiversity.

Our role, once again, is to give clear and sound information to our clientele, to educate them in the benefits of shrubbery as opposed to trees in more confined urban areas and to create little havens for smaller creatures.

The focus on sustainable practices has been embraced by the vast majority of society. The word is in common usage but we can wonder if it is really being applied.

Green waste recycling has become routine and composting is coming back. Water tanks are found in many houses but that system itself could be improved at little cost and greater benefit for the environment.

At present, most tank overflows are plumbed directly to the storm water system. As designers we can use that overflow in our design to great effect and little cost. Rain gardens, temporary creek beds and planted sumps can be incorporated in the garden design to allow water to infiltrate the soil and replenish the aquifers, prior to sending the excess to the storm water system.

Gardens are not the wilderness, yet they can teach us about the natural world; The rhythm of seasons, the effect of weather and climate on food production, the creatures that depend on plants for food or reproduction.

Plants teach the cycle of life and death, renewal and decay, the transformation and never ending cycle. Plants teach the cycle of life and death, renewal and decay, the transformation and never ending cycle.

Gardens in the past were used to teach philosophy to students, to get them to ask deeper questions about our place in the universe.



► **THE RED-BROWED FINCH, A COMMON FORAGER IN BACKYARD GARDENS.** Image/ JJ Harrison (<https://www.jjharrison.com.au/>), CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



► **RAIN GARDEN** Image/ USEPA Environmental-Protection-Agency, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Gardens are worth much more than their aesthetic value. They were once part and parcel of higher educational facilities as a space for discussion and reflection.

Gardens in hospitals are known to reduce stress and admission time as for school green spaces improve memory retention and learning.

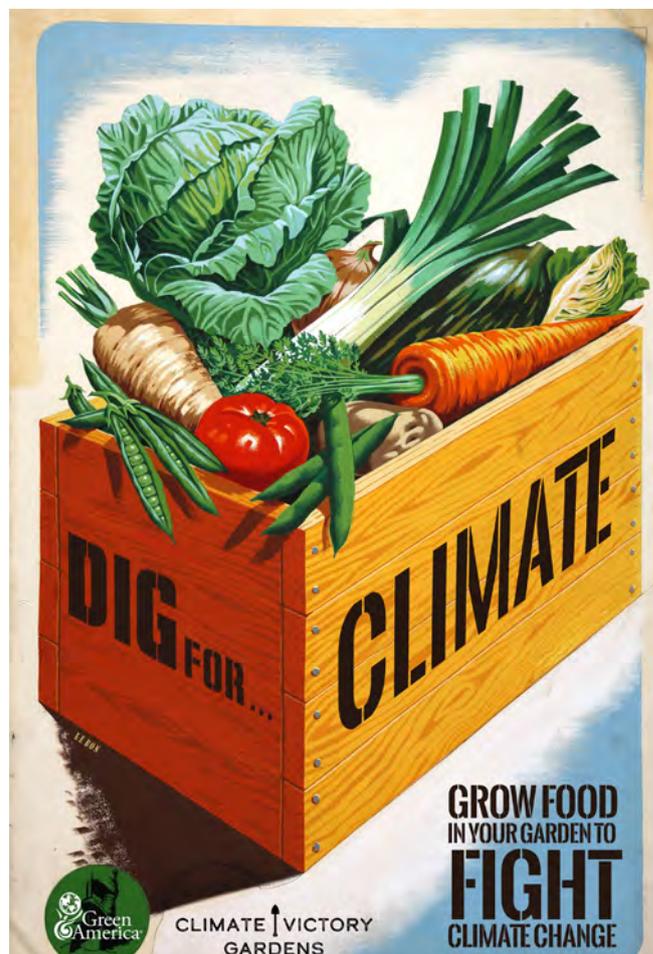
Our role is to promote the use of green space to benefit society as a whole. We cannot ask people to be in touch with nature if we reduce it to shrubs around a paved area.

In summary, horticulture is an essential service that perhaps we need to promote to the general public but foremost to the policy makers, whether they be public or private.

Through times and places, gardens have been part of the discussion on the direction society was taking. It seems that for a while this aspect of horticulture has been set aside or even rejected in favour of the superficial, the facile and the temporary.

Luckily this is not the case everywhere, the Modern Community Movement inspired by the Victory Gardens of post WWII and the public allotment movements of the late 1800s.

Learning from the knowledge passed down from previous generations. Using and adapting those methods to our modern cities and suburbs requires only curiosity and the free sharing of information. ■



► CLIMATE VICTORY GARDENS POSTER Image/ <https://greenamerica.org/>



► BENDIGO HOSPITAL GARDEN Image/ OCULUS



RECLAIMING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT - WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

by Mark Paul MAIH RH Images/ Mark Paul The Greenwall Company

Imagine a city in which buildings are clothed in soft swathes of green. A place where walls breathe and harsh lines disappear into sculpted beauty. Where sound is absorbed, air is cleaned, and biodiversity rules, as it has for thousands of years before man moved in.

My personal journey of discovery began in early childhood. At the age of two I was collecting worms and spiders. The whole natural world enthralled me. I saw and heard birds and reptiles, animals and plants. I was fascinated by their interactions, alarm calls, ecological niches and hiding places.

It is my strong belief that there is something about the human psyche that has driven humans to create gardens and collect plants.

Our ancestors were plant gatherers and collectors. Our grandparents swapped and borrowed plants, cuttings and seeds from friends and neighbours, when times were tough and nurseries did not exist; or were simply too expensive.

When my Grandmother Redfern emigrated from Ireland in the early 1900s, she brought with her an acorn that she then grew in her garden in Windsor, at that time a rural area in New South

Wales some hours away from Sydney. The acorn developed into a beautiful oak tree. All the trees and plants on her quarter-acre block were grown from cuttings, or seed, that were freely given (or 'borrowed') from someone's garden.



“I instigated a bush regeneration program in our backyard. I was still in primary school ...”

That tradition of sharing plants continued with my immediate family who moved from rural Windsor to Newport Beach when I was two years old. From my grandmother’s garden we took seven species of bromeliads, along with many other cuttings and plants.

My mother, Nan Paul, brought plants and cuttings from her mother’s garden to Newport Beach and then began the work on her own garden. This garden was a battle-axe one-acre block on the slope of a rainforest gully. Here I delighted in chasing the koalas that were abundant in the area. This delight was short lived.

Unfortunately, the septic tanks that we and our neighbours brought with us slowly killed or stunted the dry sclerophyll forests that had remained in the area despite earlier logging, which meant that there was declining food for the koalas. With the explosion of fences, dogs and other domestic pets the koalas disappeared.

However, in our garden, other native plants grew abundantly; these were the plants that preferred moist conditions. Turpentine trees, swathed in *Cissus antarctica* provided shade and ferns covered the ground, the Greenhood orchids thrived.

This plant community provided habitat for the insects, birds and small mammals. Clearing the bush and planting formal gardens of exotic plants and lawns was what everyone did. In the beginning my parents did the same.

I remember that the family decided to grow a lawn around the house. In summer, the lawn grew and grew and grew; requiring two days of mowing each fortnight.

This was a very large lawn. It took my father and me two days to cut the grass.

Wanting to spend more time in the sea and on the beach than in mowing the lawns, I instigated a bush regeneration program in our backyard. I was still at primary school. I enlisted the help of my mother and we set about propagating the plants to make this a reality.

We used Tetra packs and tins as pots for the propagation. These we filled with sand. From the surrounding bush we collected old Banksia cones and old Hakea cones; then put the cones in the oven for about twenty minutes so we could release the seeds, and then scattered them into the sand filled pots.

We poured some water into ice cream containers. We then sat the pots in the ice-cream containers. These provided a reservoir. A plastic bag over the top, secured with rubber bands provided a seal for the ‘greenhouse’. We propagated the whole garden this way.

By the time I left high school, there was no lawn to be mown. The built environment crept closer, and once again the habitat of flora and fauna changed. When the septic tanks (that had helped kill the koalas) were phased out and a mains connected sewerage system went in different trees took over.





► MARK PAUL'S GARDEN. Images/ Mark Paul The Greenwall Company.

The trees that had previously lived thrived in the wet and 'off the septic' now died. The dry, sclerophytic trees that had struggled to survive got going again. At the same time the mangroves on the foreshores were either filled for landfill or dredged for deep-water boat and marina access for 'waterfront' housing.

So, I learnt very early on that how we live and how we use our land changes the environment. It is not always for the best. Later on, I learnt that we need to be smart and innovative in the way we grow plants and how we use our land. I also learnt that being innovative we also need to look to the past, to traditional practices. We also need to look at nature.

Today I run The Greenwall Company where we aspire to green cities. I have designed and implemented many gardens, both residential and commercial. There are a large number of factors that affect the process. They include; budget considerations, aspect, sight lines, clients likes and plant interest, maintenance, longevity and sustainability.

Also, my own private gardens have given me much pleasure. They are more about process and experimentation and housing plants that

are of interest to me, than fashionable design criteria.

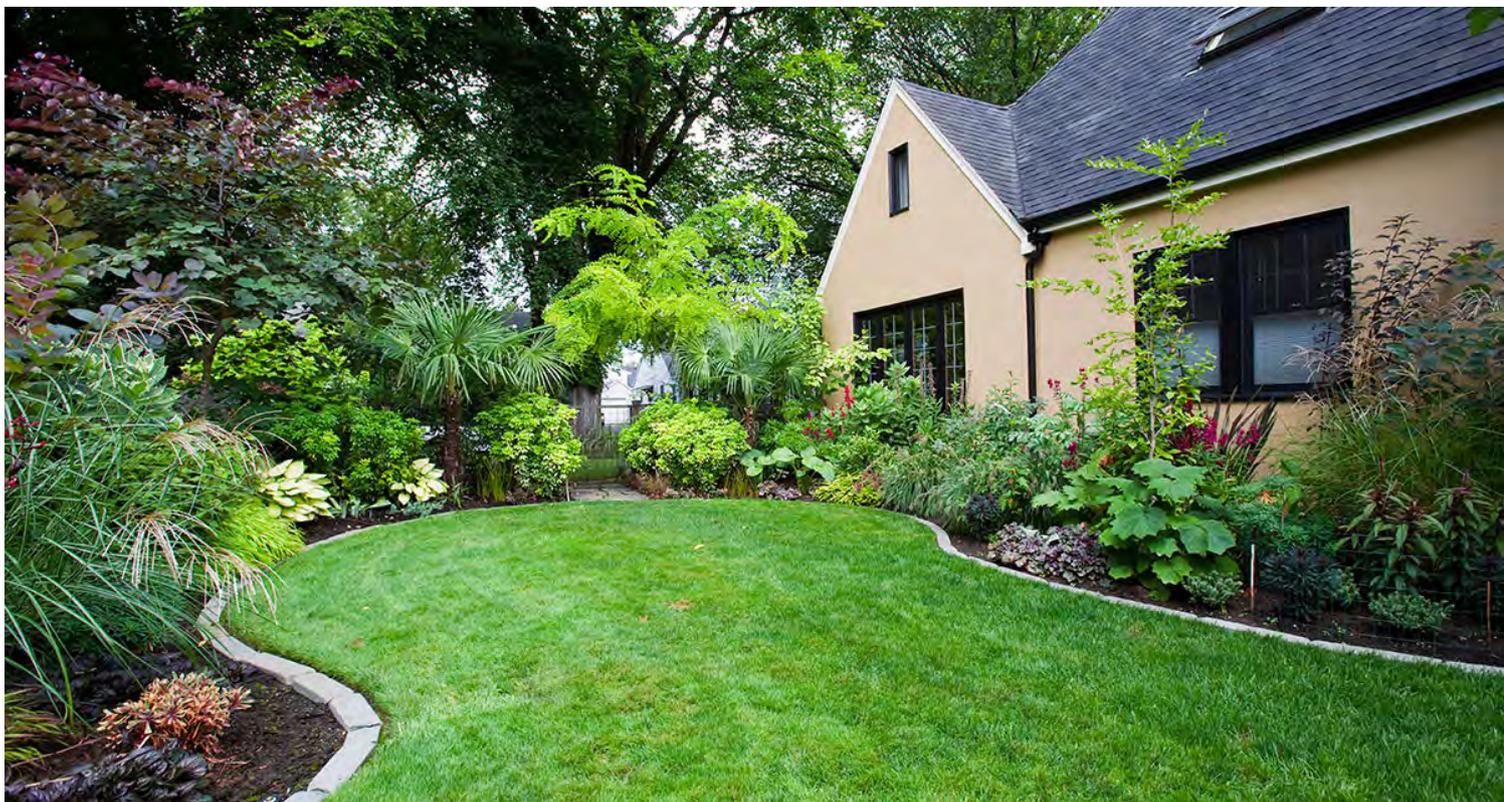
My current garden is built into a sandstone escarpment in a Sydney suburb. I have used the natural flow of water to create a series of little wetlands; nurturing native plants, species collected from around the world, and many of them endangered flora.

Nothing is wasted.

Rainwater runs the whole system; fish and chickens and kitchen waste feed the whole garden. We have no green bin, all garden waste is used to mulch the garden, this breaks down naturally and nutrients are added to the soil.

There is a herb and vegetable garden to educate the kids and begin the process once more of life education; just as grandmother's garden was a beginning for me.

A home for so many plants, including those that I have propagated myself, those that others have given me and, yes, even some plants from the gardens of my Grandmother and Mother. The tradition continues! ■



SOIL DILIGENCE

by Jonathan Garner FAIH RH

I trust my first article (see Dec 2021 Edition) sparked your interest in the overarching topic of achieving design intent and that you're happy for me to help you attain the quest on your current, future and past projects.

Let's start with landing the contract and applying due diligence towards the soil during this preliminary phase. Finally, regulatory bodies & industry have embraced the importance of working with the local site soil.

Once we amend the local soil appropriately and address any insults the previous trades may have done to it, the local soil profile is generally better suited for a healthy ecology than a media created from blended imported materials.

Naturally, there are exceptions to my generalised comments such as reclaimed land, roof gardens, podiums and planters. These, we'll leave for future discussions. But while we're on the related topic, I will mention one shining example of a garden built on imported soils.

Although Barangaroo on the shores of Sydney Harbour is growing completely on imported media, the profile was designed, engineered and tailored to meet the exact needs of the selected species.

We'll drill down into engineering soil in future discussions.

For now, I invite you to take the opportunity in visiting to appreciate the results that are achieved when the client and designer listens to and acts on the professional advice specified by the soil scientist, the horticulturist and created by landscape professionals.

Have a look sometime. It's a terrific example of best practice and while you're there, pop into the Palisade Hotel next door for a deluxe Bloody Mary and the panoramic view of Sydney. (I declare no financial gain from my suggestion)

"Yes Jonathan, that all sounds wonderful and quite achievable when the cheque book is wide open, but how can I implement French champagne practices when the budget might only allow for cask wine?"

The solution to this is to educate the stakeholders that you will be applying best possible practices within the financial constraints they have provided.



Education, constant communication, diligence and pragmatism are what's called for in situations where the expectations exceed the level of investment the client is prepared to make.

The quote we're submitting is our opportunity to explain and educate the uninformed about the necessity of giving their plantings the best start in life.

"Hire me and it **will** happen"
"Hire them and it might happen"

Putting structural elements such as surface and subsoil drainage aside, the most important thing we can do for the long term performance and outcomes of our botanical workmanship is to get the soil right.

Yes, plant selection is also vital, but if the media beneath them isn't right from the start, we're looking at extra costs to budget, insults to the aesthetic and probable plant losses down the track.

When I'm estimating projects designed and specified by other parties, if there is no line item for soil testing and consulting, I add the item and

highlight the value of spending a minor fraction of the project towards getting it right in the first place.

This gets back to the value of educating the client and designer that you are the contractor they should be engaging.

By emphasising to the stakeholders the importance of getting the science right, you have demonstrated that we genuinely care about the clients dream and they can rest well with the comfort of knowing they're about to or have already, engaged a landscape professional that is committed to their project that goes beyond the financial relationship you are embarking on.

If you're not sure or confident about an element in your scope, obtain reputable advice on the issue. Telling the client that you're seeking advice because you're not quite sure usually boosts their confidence to know that you're not guessing at anything.

Demonstrating duty of care by seeking assistance is a hallmark of professional integrity not weakness.

Let's be frank. Most structures are relatively easy to build. Start on a solid foundation & the rest is pretty much Lego.

Most licensed contractors build the same as most other contractors. The vast number of structural contractors in the market demonstrates that this is the easier part of creating the landscape asset. The skill at combining quality structures and beautiful healthy gardens is where the quality contractor rises to the top.

Regardless of whether we're working with site soil or an imported blend, please engage a soil scientist, it is they who will help to advise on achieving a suitably well drained sub and healthy topsoil.

Emphasising to the client that you embrace contemporary sciences, environmental responsibility, due diligence and duty of care will often see the tender decision extending beyond the bottom line consideration.

So, now I've got you onboard with engaging a reputable soil scientist and we've been awarded the project, now it's time to form the ever so important collaborative relationship with the builder.

We need to get in early, develop a professional relationship with them, minimise disruptions to their schedule whilst ensuring that they come to understand and respect the integral role that we play in the overall design intent.

Collaboration will lead to education and a level of respect from the principal contractor. Having respect from other trades makes life much easier for our craft

Just because the project has numerous trades crawling all over the place doesn't mean we can't get started on waking up the soil ecology.

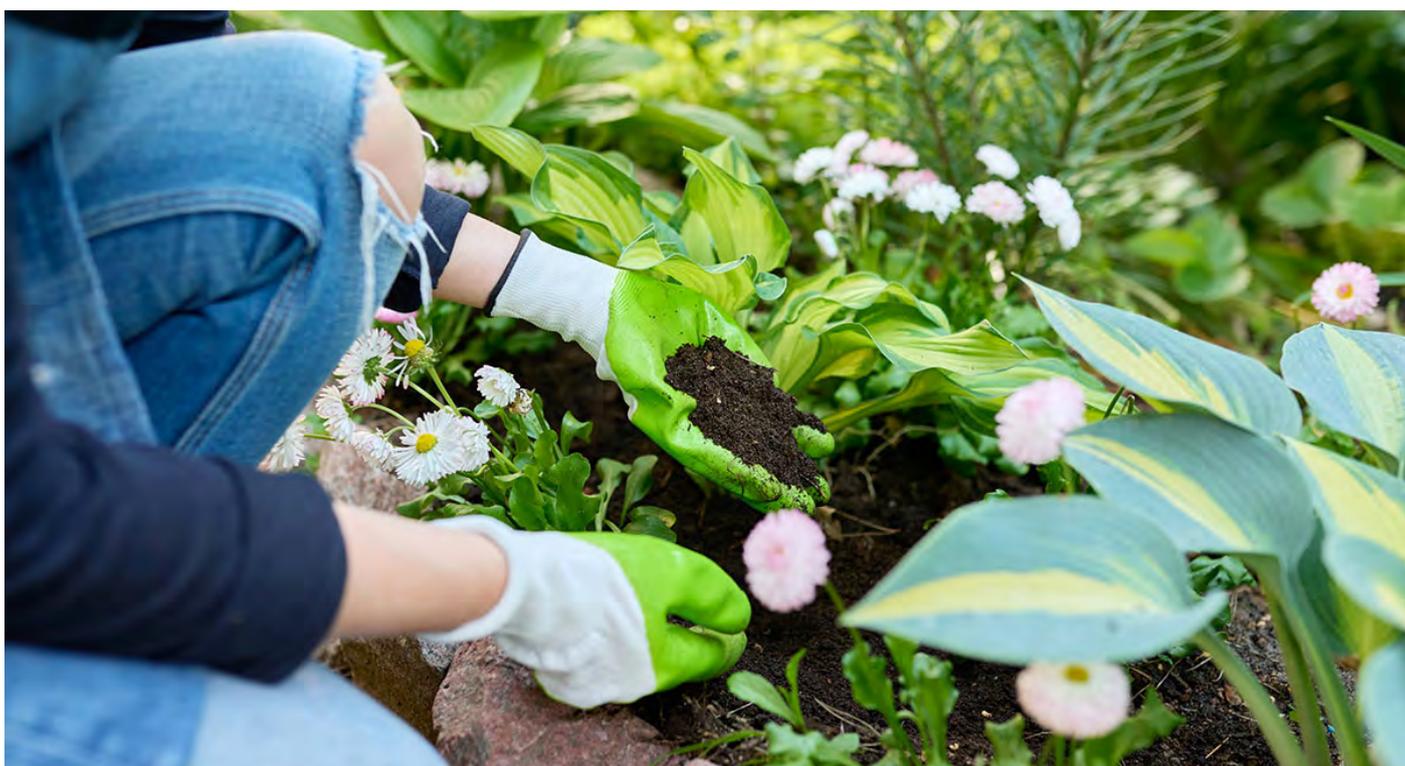
Let's get in early with our soil scientist. How about we call him Murray. We'll pot hole throughout the planting areas so we can inspect the profile, take samples and hopefully identify the parent material.

Murray will show us the various layers within the soil profile and help us identify potential drainage or gaseous exchange issues relating to possible layering, compaction and / or other legacies that may need addressing.

Having the client or designer there will further demonstrate our diligence and present the perfect opportunity to show the cheque signers any unseen issues that are legitimate variations.

Murray will also provide the added influence of an expert opinion in the field.

Nobody likes the discomfort caused by variations. Identifying and fixing them during the early stages while the budget is still buoyant is much easier than justifying them further down the track.



So we've sampled and inspected our profiles. Now is a good time to rake off the myriad of pollutants & set up some affordable protective measures. There's no point preparing until we've got the test results and Murray's advised us on amendments.

My protection methods start by raking the surface reasonably level, covering with geo fabric and pinning in place. The heavier the material the better, as this serves to absorb the future pollutants that are likely to be spilled, scraped off or dumped on by other trades onsite.

By covering the area, it protects the soil and demonstrates to the thoughtless or uninformed trades that we are working on this area and hopefully they might show some consideration.

Depending on the budget it's often too expensive or unnecessary to protect all of the planting areas. I generally focus on the front beds and areas that are close to the building works or prone to foot traffic.

Finally, I place sheets of ply or particle board on the soil. Usually sufficient for the trades to walk on or stockpile their heavier materials.

Check out hardware's for damaged flooring boards. Damaged yellow and green tongue often sells for \$10 a sheet. This makes an affordable protective measure against compaction and improves the building site aesthetic.

Actions like this rarely go unnoticed.

When we next talk, let's discuss the soil amendment processes and materials available to us. ■





15 TIPS TO MAKE CLIENTS DO THINGS YOUR WAY

by Daniel Fuller

Whether you're trying to increase a client's budget, or trying to convince them that your idea is better than their idea, it can be hard to explain to our clients that things have to be done a certain way. You're the qualified professional, so here are 15 tips to help you get clients following your lead.

1 INCREASE YOUR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Before you try to convince your client to do anything, they need to trust that you have their best interests at heart. People can feel when you're genuinely trying to get the best outcome for them.

2 INCREASE YOUR AUTHORITY

The way you speak and hold yourself, your business branding, and the vehicle you turn up in are all factors that influence the authority that customers subconsciously assign to you. Why should your clients do what you say if they don't respect you?

3 DRESS ACCORDINGLY

This follows on from the previous tip; turning up in torn clothes with a busted pair of boots won't help win you much respect. Wear a clean work uniform displaying your company logo, and wear it proudly. Just like a professional would.

4 DON'T LET YOUR VOICE BETRAY YOUR LACK OF CONFIDENCE

Unless you're asking a question, avoid ending your sentences with an upward inflection in your voice tone. Limit the number of times you say "umm" and "ahh". Project confidence when you speak.

5 BE POSITIVE

The situation is in your capable hands, and everything is under control. You can put the client at ease simply by chilling out and having a good time.

6 KEEP YOUR COOL

We all know how clients can be sometimes, but that doesn't mean that you get to arc up at them, even if they've been incredibly rude to you. It isn't personal; it's just business, so treat the situation accordingly.

7 TAKE IT NICE AND SLOW

Don't try to rush to get to the point, because you may confuse the client. Pretend you're explaining it to a 5-year-old and make sure they've understood what you've said. Otherwise the two of you aren't even having the same conversation.

8 TRIM THE FAT

If something isn't relevant to the point you're trying to make, don't mention it. You don't have to teach them tree pruning, you just have to communicate to them that the tree needs pruning, and you're the best person to do it.

9 LISTEN TO THEM

It's incredibly important for some clients that they get their point across to you, and until you listen to them they won't be able to hear what you're saying. You can repeat their point back to them succinctly to show them you understand where they're coming from before you move the conversation on.

10 ASK INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS

They help you obtain information and influence the client. "There's a lot of work to be done, but I know I can get an awesome result for you if I can spend the time and resources I need. Are you completely against raising the budget by \$100?"

11 YOU GET BONUS POINTS FOR ASKING A "NO ORIENTED QUESTION"

, as in the previous example. Former FBI negotiator and author of *Never Split The Difference*, Chris Voss argues that people feel more comfortable answering "no" to a question than "yes". Partly because "no" feels like less of a commitment, and partly because we like to correct others when they're wrong.



12 ANTICIPATE THEIR NEEDS

Clients appreciate when we understand where they're coming from and what they want from the situation.

13 BE GENEROUS

When we are generous, people love to reciprocate that back to us. You may want to bring a free plant that will look great in a regular client's garden, or you can even be generous by giving your warmth and kindness.

14 KNOW YOUR WORTH

You set your prices. You set the terms. And you're the one that says yes or no to beginning any project. You can be generous, but have boundaries.

15 SET UP AGREEMENTS

Having your clients sign legal documents agreeing to your terms helps you avoid losing control to nightmare clients.

As the professional, you're the person with the skills and knowledge to create the best plan of attack. By practicing these 15 tips, you can help clients get out of the driver's seat and follow your lead. ■



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Acacia 'Limelight'[®] Grafted Standard

LUSH DECORATIVE FOLIAGE

Origin: Mt Gambier, Australia

Species: *Acacia cognata* 'Limelight'

Protection Status: PBR protected



Full sun



Part shade



Height Approx. 1.5m



Spread to 1m

Features:

- Unique standard form with natural dome shape habit
- Decorative fresh lime green foliage
- Year round ornamental value
- Dry tolerant
- Easy to grow the minimal maintenance
- New age Australian native

Suggested Uses:

- Create a distinctive formal touch to the garden
- Either side of entranceways and driveways
- Large containers or garden beds
- Adaptable for use in native, exotic or oriental style gardens

Water Requirements:

Low. Once established, quite dry tolerant requiring only occasional deep watering during extended periods of heat.

Care:

Plant in most soil types that are well draining. For optimum results feed in spring with a fertiliser formulated for natives. Support the plant with a stake until established.



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- Please provide 1-2 quality images. Photographs must be large enough to be used in a range of publications with a file size of between 1 and 5 MB (megabytes).

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