

NEW SECTIONS!

MORE PAGES OF AMAZING TRANSFORMATIONS

# australian home beautiful

58  
pages of  
HOMES  
WITH  
TIMELESS  
STYLE

*new section:*  
**RESTORE! REVIVE! REVAMP!**  
Renovations and mini makeovers

## **CLEAN LIVING**

A buyer's guide to  
washing machines

## *modern glamour*

CREATE STYLE WITH STRONG HUES AND VINTAGE CHARM

**EASY ENTERTAINING**  
SWEET TREATS  
& BAKING HEAVEN

**THE CLEVER HOME: THE NEW TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE**



Cottage garden:  
**COUNTRY CHARM**

This beautiful property in the NSW Southern Highlands has become an enchanted garden and a haven for local birds

WORDS & STYLING IMOGENE ABADY PHOTOGRAPHY CRAIG WALL



*Create an inviting entrance*  
Soften a path by allowing low-growing plants to spill over the edges. Here, violet-blue 'Jolly Bee' geraniums border yorkstone pavers, while 'Seduction' standard roses and lavender bushes fling out a scented welcome.



After living in apartments in Chicago and Melbourne for 12 years, owners Val and Dick were enthusiastic about finally having an outdoor space to enjoy when they bought a plot of land in the NSW Southern Highlands five years ago. Having created the house of their dreams, the retired couple wanted a beautiful garden to go with it. Minimal maintenance was a priority; while both were happy to potter and prune, they didn't want the upkeep of a lawn. Kent Martin at Tranquil Earth helped the couple realise their dream, landscaping the bare plot to Val's design.

Faced with the temperate challenges of the area, Val and Dick drew inspiration from holidays in Europe, focusing on frost-tolerant plants. Flowerbeds overflow with storybook favourites such as English roses, hollyhocks and vividly hued dahlias; a stand of silver birches, planted as a setting for a favourite sculpture, is flanked by a hedge of conifers; while delicate waxflowers encircle a stone birdbath. "We spent a lot of time planting out the garden initially but, to a great extent, it now takes care of itself," says Val.

This country garden, brimming with traditional plants, colour and scent, is also a natural extension of the house. "We wanted it to be a place where we can sit out and watch the crimson rosellas, king parrots and crested doves come down to feed," says Val. "The garden has turned out to be a perfect setting for our house, and enjoying it has become an effortless pleasure."

**"We spent a lot OF TIME PLANTING OUT THE GARDEN INITIALLY, BUT IT NOW TAKES CARE OF ITSELF"**



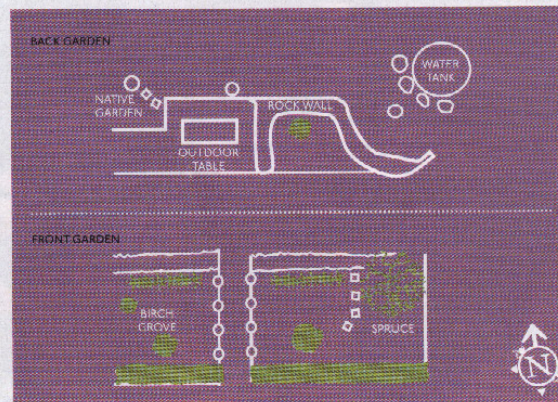
*Add an element of surprise* A stone pelican nestles among the long purple spires of 'Walker's Low' catmint in the shade of the silver birch grove.




*Work with existing trees* Incorporating existing plants into your garden plan gives it instant maturity. The front garden and drive were designed around a 40-year-old North American blue spruce, which offers height, visual interest and screening from the street.



*Make a feature of your favourites* This beautifully perfumed English rose, 'Jude the Obscure', has been given a privileged position among the massed plantings by being placed within an obelisk frame. >







*Create a serene garden grove* Val had always wanted a grove of birch trees in the back garden and had originally thought a sweep of 30 would be ideal. After seeing mature birches elsewhere, however, she decided nine would be enough! Hellebores shroud the base of each tree; these perennial flowerers are frost-hardy and perfect for cooler temperatures.

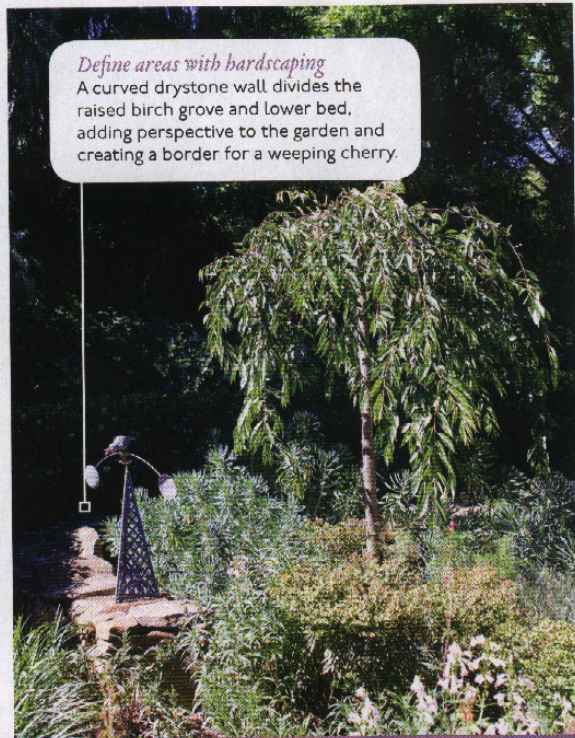
*Accentuate a focal point* The Balinese stone buddha had been with the family at their past two homes so Val and Dick were keen for it to have pride of place in the garden. Placing it on a raised bed among the birches gives it real impact.

*Disguise practical additions* A water tank is important, but they're not always great to look at. This 9000-litre version has been concealed behind a hedge of 'Spartan' conifers, which also acts as a backdrop to the stone buddha. Ground cover, including blue rock bindweed, dwarf dahlias and salvia 'Blue Spires', screens the drystone wall around the raised birch grove.





*Welcome visitors* A stone birdbath nestles among hedges of mint bush and waxflower. This corner of native plants within the larger garden has been designed to encourage visits by the many birds of the area, such as this crimson rosella.



*Define areas with hardscaping* A curved drystone wall divides the raised birch grove and lower bed, adding perspective to the garden and creating a border for a weeping cherry.

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Hollyhock



Nasturtiums



Dahlia



### Key materials

**Trees** Silver birch, \$183/75-litre pot, conifer ‘Spartan’, \$215/75-litre pot, weeping cherry, \$248/75-litre pot, Winter Hill Tree Farm, (02) 4878 9193, winterhill.com.au.

**Urn** try stone urn on pedestal, \$1618/1230cm x 750cm, Yardware, (02) 8353 3888, yardware.com.au.

**Buddha** try stone buddha sculpture, from \$650/70cm, Rock ‘n Stone, (03) 9571 6266, rocknstone.com.au.

**Roses** ‘Jude The Obscure’ English rose, \$25/200mm pot, Green E Plants Rose Nursery, (02) 9653 1745, greeneroses.com.au.

**Contact:** Kent Martin at Tranquil Earth Landscapes, (02) 4889 5556, tranquilearth.com.au. 