



The raised vegetable beds are interplanted with flowering ground covers. Pictures: Gerald Moscarda

# Ecological design ahead of the curve

A run-down garden has been made over into a sustainable and low-maintenance oasis. DERYN THORPE reports.

Andrew Beck from Sustainable Garden Design was commissioned by the owners of a 12-year-old Canning Vale home to create a waterwise contemporary garden that would make them want to spend more time outside.

Their existing garden was tired and the alfresco area uninviting, so they worked with Mr Beck to create a new low-maintenance space that would entice them to make the most of Perth's good weather.

They wanted the makeover to include a covered area for a spa, an improved alfresco area, raised garden beds, the opportunity to grow food and a design that provided privacy.

Mr Beck remodelled both the front and back gardens in a

scheme that was unified by the use of curves, rusted corten steel, gabion walls and natural stone. The result is a garden with a natural yet contemporary vibe.

Dotted through the garden are rusted steel bowls planted with collections of colourful succulents. Sub-surface drip irrigation, linked to a bore, provides reticulation.

"I like to introduce a creative flair to the mundane and in every job we bring in artist input," Mr Beck said.

"I am really passionate about creating gardens and work to make them inspiring and sustainable as well as beautiful." Gabion walls are made from rectangular wire baskets filled with stones, in

## Get the look

Andrew Beck's tips for a contemporary, waterwise garden

- Improve sandy coastal soils with bentonite clay, organic soil conditioner and plant bacteria. Top with mulch.
- Plant a simple herb garden, preferably close to the kitchen so it is easy to harvest.
- Use citrus — beautiful, bountiful, evergreen, compact trees which are a manageable size.
- Include curves and circles in the garden design.
- Create sitting spaces.



this case South West river stones, which are used as fences, a letter box and garden features.

A gabion fence at the side of the house is decorated by rusted steel cut-outs depicting a tree and etched corten panels are used as fence screens near the spa. The alfresco area has a new polished concrete floor.

It is the little details that make this garden extraordinary, such as the exposed aggregate paths which were hand seeded with tiny pebbles so they complement the river stones, which are also used as feature mulch.

In the back garden three corten steel hoops, surrounded

by blue stone pavers, interplanted with flowering ground covers, are used as raised vegetable beds.

A raised limestone garden bed surrounds the exterior fences and has seating installed to provide spots to relax with a drink.

"Here I have planted citrus as a screen as they are evergreen and productive and in two years will block out the fence," Mr Beck said.

"Garden design is about giving clients what they need in a creative and sustainable way. We build the garden so it will last and then plant it out to create a tapestry of different

colour and textures. It is the most satisfying work that I have ever done."

Sustainable Garden Design,  
0405 303 824,  
[sustainablegardendesignperth.com](http://sustainablegardendesignperth.com).

## Planting guide

Some of the plants selected for the garden

- Citrus / Eureka lemon, Tahitian lime, Washington navel, Navelina and Attwood orange
- Succulents / Kalanchoe Bella, Bronze Sculpture and Quicksilver, Aeonium arboreum var. atropurpureum, Aloe Topaz, Sedum Jelly Beans, Senecio Blue Chalk Sticks
- Edibles / Runner beans, beetroot, cherry tomatoes,

- spinach, cauliflower
- Herbs / Oregano, thyme, marjoram, rosemary Blue Lagoon, basil, marigold, coriander
- Exotics / Sacred bamboo (Nandina nana, Flirt and Gulf Stream), Bacopa Snow Blizzard, Trailing lotus (Lotus berthelotii), Seaside daisy (Erigeron karvinskianus)
- Australian plants / Blue flag (Patersonia occidentalis), Banksia lindleyana and blechnifolia, Conostylis candicans and aculeate, Morning flag (Orthrosanthus multiflorus), Lomandra Frosty top and Little Con)