



Future Proof your Garden with
**HOW TO TRANSFORM
YOUR SMALL GARDEN
INTO AN OASIS**

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YOUR
LANDSCAPE
JOURNEY

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Introduction



Welcome to the Future Proof your Garden with How to Transform your Small Garden into an Oasis guide. This guide is designed to help you select coastal plants in your outdoor space, whether you have a small balcony, expansive garden or a commercial space.

In the halcyon days of the 1960s the average sized suburban block was a sprawling quarter acre (approximately 1,000 square metres). The limited availability of land and the cost of land rising, it's not surprising to learn that while houses are getting larger, property blocks are getting smaller. Whereas, urban areas have long been terraces and apartments based.

This guide will provide design tips and ideas to help you maximise your space.

With our busy lives and limited outdoor areas, it's essential to find ways to incorporate nature into our daily lives, even in the smallest of spaces. Small gardens offer a multitude of benefits, both for individuals and the environment, making them an invaluable asset.

The benefits of improving your small garden space:

- An Escape from Urban Living: With space at a premium, you can still create your own small retreat from the stress of modern life.
- Environmental Benefits: Every little bit helps contribute to urban greening, reduce heat island effects, improve air quality, and provide habitat for local flora and fauna.
- Health and Well-being: Research has proven that exposure to nature has significant positive effects on our mental, emotional, and physical well-being.



Let me guide you on Your Landscape Journey, discovering the secrets to creating a Small Garden Haven!

Happy creating!

Angela Maroney

Elevate your balcony garden to a green haven

Balcony gardens offer an escape from the built world, providing an opportunity to create a special zone in which to retreat from modern day stress. Whether you live in a high-rise apartment or a cosy townhouse, designing a thriving garden on your balcony allows you to create a green oasis in a limited space. However, working with balconies comes with its own set of challenges. From the constraints of limited space to the importance of maximising verticality, here's how you can create a flourishing balcony garden that truly shines.

1. Embrace Limited Space: Think: Vertical gardens, hanging planters, and trellises can transform bare walls into lush, green tapestries, adding both beauty and functionality to your balcony. Choose tall and climbing plants that take advantage of the vertical space. Hanging baskets and cascading plants can add depth and visual interest while allowing you to grow more plants in a limited area.
2. Selecting Suitable Containers: Choosing the right containers is crucial for a successful balcony garden. Opt for lightweight and durable materials like plastic, fiberglass, or resin that are weather-resistant and easy to move.
3. Thriving in Containers: Container gardening requires careful plant selection. Choose plants that are well-suited to container living and can thrive in the microclimate of your balcony.
4. Sunlight and Shade: Assess the sunlight exposure on your balcony and choose plants accordingly. Some balconies receive direct sunlight, while others may be in partial shade.
5. Watering and Drainage: Be mindful of your plants' water needs, as balconies can be exposed to wind and sun, causing soil to dry out more quickly.
6. Vertical Privacy and Aesthetics: Privacy can be a concern in balcony gardens. Consider incorporating tall plants strategically placed to create a sense of seclusion.
7. Adding Personal Touches: Incorporate outdoor rugs, comfortable seating, and cushions to create a cosy seating area. Decorative lighting, such as string lights or lanterns, can add a warm and inviting glow in the evenings.



Transform your courtyard into a green retreat



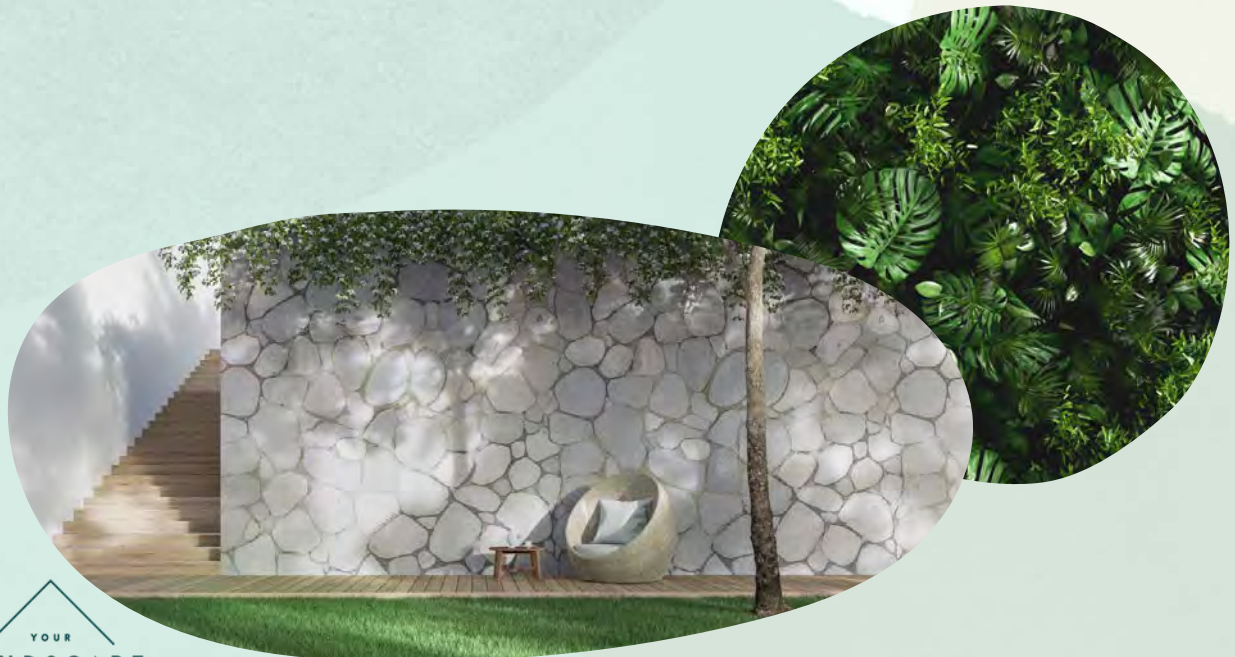
Townhouse/courtyard gardens present a unique design challenge with their restricted space and close proximity to neighbours. The following design tips for townhouse gardens can be used to help you maximise space, create privacy, and incorporate multifunctional elements to make the most of every millimetre:

- Embrace Verticality: When space is limited, grow up! Vertical gardening should become your best friend in small spaces. Make use of trellises, living walls, and/or hanging planters.
- Privacy is Essential: Given the close proximity of your neighbours, install screens, fences, or tall plants strategically to block views from neighbouring properties..
- Multi-functional Elements: Invest in furniture with built-in storage compartments, such as benches or ottomans for extra storage and modular seating for flexible arrangement
- Scale and Proportion: Aim for a balance between functionality and visual appeal by selecting items that complement the size of your garden while still meeting your needs.
- Container Gardening: Select for lightweight materials. Choose plants that thrive in containers. Group plants with similar growing requirements together for efficient care.
- Lighting for Ambiance: Create a magical ambiance in your garden with well-planned lighting.
- Utilise Mirrors and Reflective Surfaces: Trick the eye and create an illusion of more space by incorporating mirrors and reflective surfaces.
- Embrace a Cohesive Design: Aim for a cohesive design that harmonises with your architecture and personal style. Keep the design clean and uncluttered.

Revolutionise your small residential garden into a lush sanctuary

With thoughtful planning and design, you can turn even the most compact areas into captivating outdoor sanctuaries. The key considerations for designing beautiful small gardens are:

- **Create Zones and Focal Points:** Divide your small garden into distinct zones to maximise functionality and visual appeal. Consider creating areas for lounging, dining, and play.
- **Use Hardscape Elements:** Integrate hardscape elements like pathways, seating areas, and borders to add structure and functionality to your small garden.
- **Choose the Right Plants:** Select plants that are compact varieties and thrive in your local climate.
- **Embrace Vertical Gardening:** Green walls, and cascading plants, such as trailing vines can soften vertical surfaces and create a lush backdrop for your garden.
- **Optimise Natural Light:** Take note of the sunniest and shadiest areas throughout the day. Choose plants that thrive in your garden's specific lighting conditions. Consider using shade sails, pergolas, or umbrellas to provide shade in areas that receive excessive sunlight.
- **Enhance with Water Features:** Even in a small garden, a well-placed water feature can add a sense of serenity.
- **Add Vertical Screens for Privacy:** In small residential gardens, vertical screens can provide much-needed privacy while adding a touch of natural beauty



Embrace compact Trees for small gardens

When it comes to small garden spaces, choosing the right trees can make all the difference in transforming your outdoor area into a lush and inviting oasis. Selecting suitable tree species that are slow-growing, compact, and narrow is essential to ensure that your garden remains balanced and doesn't feel overwhelmed. TIP: Select trees that are specifically suited to thrive in limited areas.

Trees provide vertical interest and a sense of scale, and also provide shade and privacy.

- **Embrace Slow-Growing Varieties:** Slow-growing trees are ideal for small gardens as they maintain a more manageable size and require less frequent pruning. Look for tree species that have a reputation for their slow growth rate, such as Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*).
- **Compact and Narrow Forms:** In small garden spaces, compact and narrow tree varieties are a great choice as they take up less horizontal room while still providing vertical interest. Consider columnar trees like the Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta') or the Pear Capital (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Capital') that offer an upright growth habit and a slender silhouette.
- **Dwarf and Miniature Varieties:** Dwarf or miniature tree varieties are perfect for small garden spaces as they offer all the beauty and characteristics of their full-sized counterparts but in a more compact package. Consider dwarf versions of popular trees like the Crepe Myrtle, Cherry, or Japanese maple or dwarf fruit trees like the 'Pixie' apple or pear varieties.



Tree selection: Compact Trees for small gardens

Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)



Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*)

Dogwood (*Cornus* spp.)



Ornamental Pear (*Pyrus* 'Capital')

Mediterranean Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* 'Stricta')



Small shrubs for structure & beauty

Shrubs are the backbone of any garden, providing a framework and defining the overall layout. In small gardens, where space is limited, look for varieties that have a naturally compact growth habit or can be pruned to maintain a manageable size.

Agave attenuata 'Boutin Blue'



Pittosporum 'Golf Ball'
(*Pittosporum tenuifolium*)

Raphiolepis indica
'Oriental Pearl'



Fountain Grass
(*Pennisetum alopecuroides*)

Crassula 'Blue Bird'



Lush carpeted areas: Groundcovers

Creating a carpeted effect with groundcovers is a smart way to maximise the visual impact of your small garden. They serve as living mulch, covering the soil and preventing weed growth, reducing the need for excessive maintenance.

Temple Grass
(*Boysia tenusifolia*)



Kidneyweed
(*Dichondra repens*)



Mondo Grass
(*Ophiopogon japonicus*)



Bugleweed
(*Ajuga reptans*)



Native Violet
(*Viola hederacea*)

Grow up with Vertical gardening

In small spaces where every millimetre counts, vertical gardening has emerged as a game-changing technique. Vertical gardening is all about thinking beyond traditional ground-level plantings and embracing the vertical space available in your garden. By utilising walls, hanging baskets, trellises, and fences, you can create a thriving green display that adds beauty and functionality to your outdoor space.



Create a living art installation by arranging a variety of plants in a symmetrical or abstract pattern on a wall-mounted structure



Install a series of hanging planters at different heights to create a cascading effect, adding depth and visual interest to your vertical garden



Combine different plant textures, colours, and sizes to create a dynamic and eye-catching display on a living wall.



Utilise a trellis or grid system to support climbing plants, creating a living green backdrop that adds privacy and beauty to your outdoor space



Resources

The following are some resources that will help you to find the information you require to successfully select the best plants for your garden:



Books:

- "The Australian Native Garden: A Practical Guide" by Angus Stewart: This book focuses on designing and planting small gardens with Australian native plants, offering insights into selecting the right species, creating habitats for local wildlife, and sustainable gardening practices.
- "Urban Gardening" by Matt Mitchell: Learn Step-By-Step How To Grow In Container And Everything About Balcony And Vertical Gardening. Build Your Own Garden In Any City Apartment.
- "The Edible Balcony: Growing Fresh Produce in Small Spaces" by Indira Naidoo: This book offers advice on growing food in small urban spaces, including balconies and patios, with a focus on Australian climate and suitable plants.

Online Blogs and Websites:

- Gardening Australia: The official website of the popular TV show "Gardening Australia" offers a wealth of information on gardening in the Australian context. Their articles and guides cover various topics, including small gardens, container gardening, and urban gardening.
- [Sustainable Gardening Australia](#): This organization promotes sustainable gardening practices and provides resources tailored to Australian gardens. Their website offers articles, fact sheets, and guides on topics like small space gardening, water-wise gardening, and native plants.
- [The Micro Gardener](#): This online resource focuses on maximizing small spaces for gardening and edible landscapes. The website offers tips, tutorials, and design ideas specifically relevant to Australian conditions, including vertical gardening, container gardening, and balcony gardens.



Summary



Life is a journey of learning – keep going, keep growing. 😊

Tap into my 30+ years of experience to achieve your dream backyard oasis with Your Landscape Journey. You will gain personal access to my industry tips and tricks. Including ways to future proof your garden. Better yet, I'll also help guide you on how to keep your garden renovation project on time, on budget and looking good for years to come

Want to learn more about how to Future Proof your Garden Renovation? Why not, join the waiting list for [the 5 Day Future Proof your Garden Challenge](#) to learn how to select the best plants for your climate and micro-climate? With weather patterns becoming more extreme it makes sense to plan your garden to be strong and resilient. However, this doesn't mean you have to sacrifice beauty for practicality.

Keen to learn more? [Sign up to the Wait-list for courses and workshops](#) - coming soon

Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is general in nature and does not take into account your personal situation. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs, and where appropriate, seek professional advice from your Council, Landscape Architect or Landscape Designer or a Legal Expert.



Let me guide you on Your Landscape Journey,

Do you have lots of questions or just feel like saying hello? Why not contact me directly for a chat about [One-to-One Consultation!](#)



Glossary

Container gardening: Growing plants in pots, containers, or other small spaces rather than directly in the ground

Raised bed: A contained garden bed built above ground level, often constructed with wooden planks or bricks. Raised beds provide better soil drainage and are easier to manage in small spaces

Groundcovers: Low-growing plants that spread quickly and cover large areas, providing erosion control and weed suppression.

Vertical gardening: Growing plants vertically using trellises, stakes, or walls to maximise space. This method is especially useful in small gardens where horizontal space is limited



Edible landscaping: Integrating edible plants, such as vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees, into the overall garden design. This approach combines both aesthetics and functionality

Trellis: A structure, usually made of wood or metal, that provides support for climbing plants like vines, peas, or cucumbers. Trellises help maximize vertical space and create an attractive focal point in a small garden

Climbing Plants: Vines or climbers that can be trained to grow on trellises, walls, or pergolas, adding vertical interest and a lush, green backdrop. Examples include clematis, ivy, or climbing roses

Microgreens: Young vegetable greens, such as lettuce, spinach, or kale, harvested when they are just a few centimetres tall. Microgreens are packed with nutrients and can be grown indoors or in small outdoor spaces.

Espalier: A technique of training trees or shrubs to grow flat against a wall or fence, usually in a pattern or shape. Espalier is an excellent method for growing fruit trees in limited spaces, such as against a sunny wall.

