

# Careful Consideration

*This striking design showcases how local salvaging and thoughtful design can turn into eco-savings*



**ABOVE** Crushed granite was used for the flooring as well as the pillars.



**WORDS:** Kate McKee

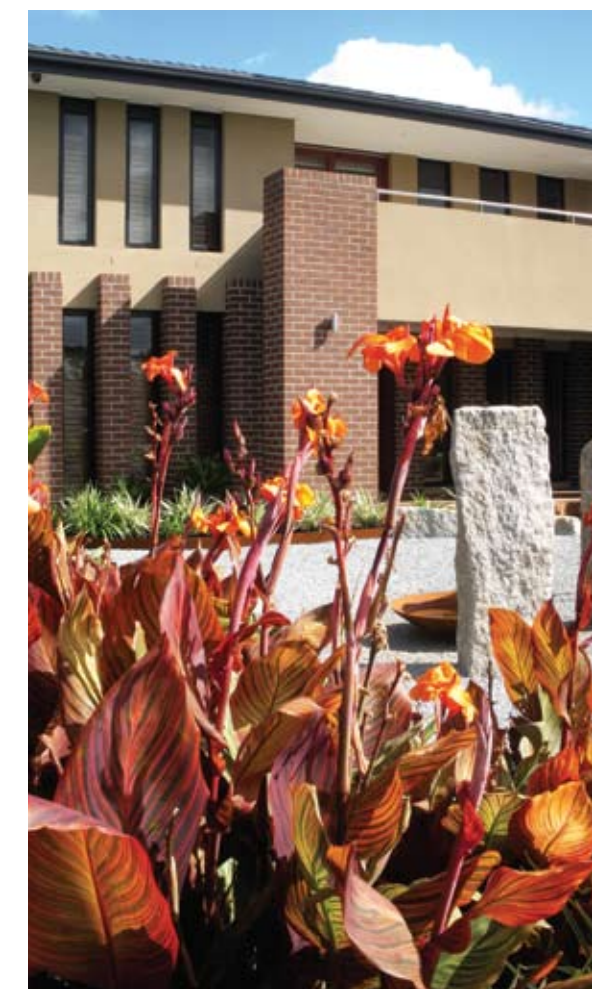
**T**his eye-catching garden was designed and constructed by Ryan Young Sustainable Landscape Design. The brief in itself was interesting as the clients sought a low-maintenance, tropical look for the front of their Melbourne abode — not a common request for the Victorian environment or one that is easily achieved. In fact, designer Ryan Young likens it to “close to crazy”. But who doesn’t like a challenge?

“Designers need to work with the location, the topography and the climate,” says Ryan, regarding the creation of a functional and sustainable garden design for his clients. “Initially I designed the garden a little differently, however my client wanted a tropical look for their garden, which was situated in an area that has heavy frosts, heavy clay soil and a lot of wind all year.”





*“The large rocks used for the granite pillars are “waste rocks” from a local quarry”*



**OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM** The corten steel garden edging will last for 20-plus years, four to five times longer than most.  
**BELOW** The garden is only watered with rainwater as all the plants have the same water requirements.



Plant selection was inevitably a hard one, but as you can see from the colourful and thriving surrounds, Ryan definitely made the right choices. “Knowing your plants is crucial as a designer, not just to use what is trendy or what is shown on TV,” explains Ryan, who selected plants such as *Dianella* spp., leucadendron, bird of paradise, canna, and cycad due to the harsh conditions.

Many simple solutions were used in an effort to keep the garden water wise and eco-friendly in its design and maintenance. Ryan used soil from the site rather than importing it and the plants are mainly native from a local nursery. The large rocks used for the granite pillars are “waste rocks” from a local quarry. The term “waste rock” refers to the odd sizes and shapes of rock that can’t be used for a normal application. These interestingly shaped rocks are usually turned into road base, but make for a wonderful garden design element. The garden mulch has also been salvaged and reused and is made of recycled pallets.

The procurement of local products and recycling of materials allows for a reduction in emissions due



to a lack of. “When selecting products to use in a landscape, the embodied energy needs to be taken into consideration,” says Ryan. “It makes no sense using imported timber and stone when we have quarries and forests in Australia. The conditions our workers work in compared to those in Asian countries should also be considered – we are very fortunate.”

The garden is watered with rainwater via inline drippers, which have no water loss when operating due to sub-surface application. Once all of the plants are established, they will require no additional water other than rainfall, so water usage is kept to a complete and natural minimum.

The use of resources was kept to a minimum at all times; even the LED lighting features that light up the garden at night needed to be changed every 10 years. The water feature chosen can also be used as a fire pit for those chilly Melbourne nights.

The lush plantings and granite pillars make this garden a visual success, but its eco-conscious design and water-wise maintenance make it a sustainable accomplishment as well. ■