





Sub-tropical sanctuary

Water-wise and child-friendly, this lush garden is every family's dream



The owners of this stunning Queenslander, nestled in an inner northern Brisbane suburb, wanted a beautiful garden to complement their newly renovated home. It had to have easy-to-access areas where the family could spend time together, a sub-tropical look and be as low-maintenance and water-wise as possible.

Working to a design by Deicke Richards Architects, the garden was built by Mark Perriman MLP, one of the few Master of Landscaping professionals based in Brisbane, and his team of landscapers from Mark Perriman Landscapes.

Keen to achieve an overall look that was green, leafy and very lush, the owners were very specific about the plants to be included. They carefully researched their options and prepared a list of their preferred plants, which included philodendron, ferns and palms. They also asked that the existing large palms along the rear fence line by the pool remain to provide dappled shade.

The existing garden had looked sad and depleted as a result of the drought so to ensure the viability of the verdant new sub-tropical garden, provision was made for rainwater tanks with a total capacity of 20,000 litres.

To ensure rapid establishment of the plants, a variety of water retention and microbial agents were added to the high-quality garden soils installed prior to planting. This was complemented by the application of Fine Slash Pine Mulch to assist in water retention and to maximise the efficiency of the water-wise drip irrigation system.

As the land is not level, there were drainage and run-off issues to contend with. These have been resolved in the form of a dry creek bed traversed by two raised timber walkways. Located to one side of the house, the creek bed meanders between the back and front of the property and is a means of channeling run-off.

Integrating the existing pool into the new



design was also critical. Located at the rear of the backyard, it seemed to sit too high so a way of getting the levels right needed to be found. The architect's design addressed this by introducing raised paved areas close to the pool.

Throughout the emphasis is on natural materials and colours, from the dry-stack sandstone retaining wall near the dry creek bed to the charcoal-and-ivory-coloured paving.

Of course, the sub-tropical planting is the key to the garden's success. As you stroll around the garden you will spy clusters of Travellers palms, Fishtail palms, Macarthur palms and Golden Cane palms, all densely planted to address the need for privacy and to create a feeling of abundance.

Contributing splashes of colour are five different Heliconia varieties, six ginger varieties, several jasmine varieties and a scattering of Zebra Prayer plants, spider lilies and peace lilies.

What the family now has is the lush, child-friendly, sub-tropical sanctuary they so desired. Combining traditional and contemporary elements, the garden perfectly complements both the architecture of the house and its inner-city location.

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