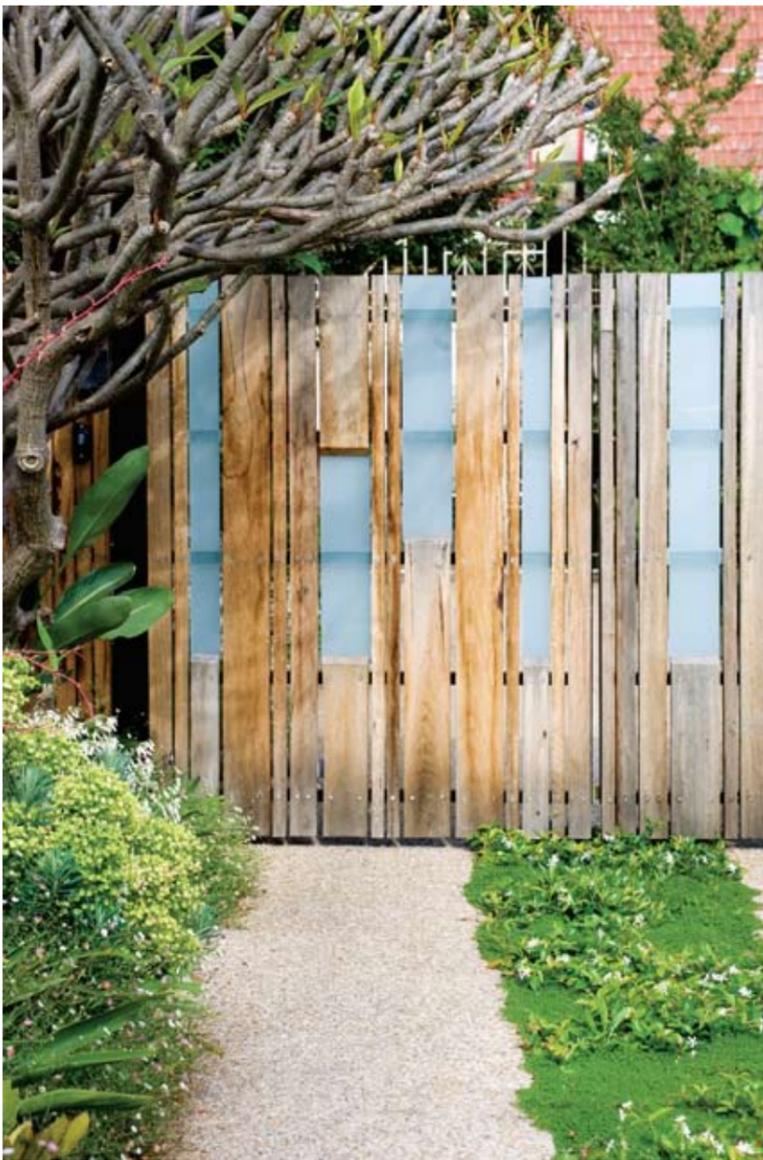


# Pool v Garden

text: Melissa Rymer photography: Romo Samuel

Swimming pools are not top of the list when it comes to environmentally friendly gardens; however, with careful research and planting it is possible to overcome the negatives.



**top left** The hard paving on the driveway has been offset by the strip of mossy greenery that runs down the centre. **right** Pavers around the pool are surrounded by Spanish Shawl, a hardy groundcover with pink flowers. **bottom left** A variety of foliage hugs the edge of the pool. The fence, made from recycled timber, was designed by Marcus O'Reilly. **right** Native grasses soften the geometry of the hard landscaping.



Crazy paving and succulents sit stylishly alongside the retro furnishings.

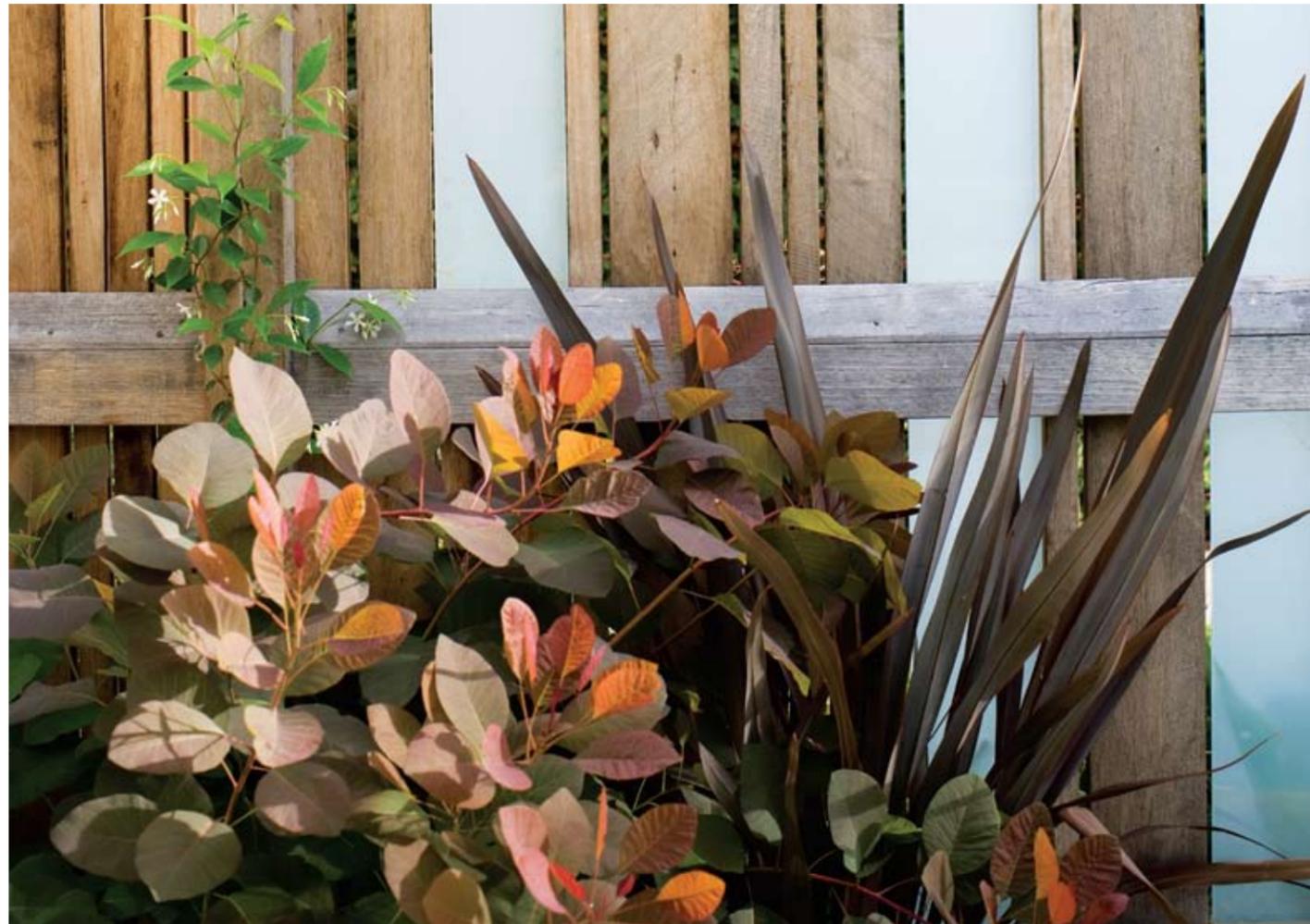
Landscape designer Kate Seddon has designed this delightful garden in Elwood, Melburnians' favourite beachside suburb (arguably). The owners have an artistic sensibility which permeates the house and extends into the garden. Collectors of retro pieces and antiques, their house exudes warmth and charm. Clearly, they love their garden and it truly is another room in the home. It too is sprinkled with sculptures and found objects.

One of the most noticeable aspects of this garden is the striking blue feature wall behind the pool, which has custom-made steel pot holders made by blacksmith Nick Attfield. A proliferation of colour radiates from the bright geraniums hanging from terracotta pots. This intense burst of colour evokes the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo and fellow countryman architect Luis Barragan.

The brief was to create a pool and garden that did not look overly designed. Given the back garden is taken up by a studio and garage the front garden was the obvious location. The owners were adamant that the presence of a pool would not rule out the creation of a flourishing garden.

One of the issues with swimming pools is that the highly treated water is very damaging to the plants that surround it. This is why most pools tend to have planting some distance from the pool's edge. Both the clients and Kate were keen to explore some environmentally friendly options that allowed planting right up to pool's edge. In fact they are such keen gardeners, they will often do some weeding and re-arranging around the edges while standing in the pool. →

A diverse selection of plants gives the garden a rich palette of colour and textures.  
**opposite page** The vivid colours of the geraniums are offset against the "Yves Klein" blue feature wall.



After much research they installed a Magna Pool, a filtration system that removes microscopic organic material in the water that bacteria feeds on. According to the company, it then converts magnesium minerals into magnesium hydroxide (also known as Milk of Magnesia) that is so gentle it is used for skin irritations, and without any bacteria to feed on the pool stays clean. The system also generates a non-synthetic chlorine and acts as a natural sanitation system designed to protect the water quality. Equally important, the system reduces water use by up to 65 per cent and is also designed to reduce energy costs.

Even though the garden was put in only about 12 months ago, the plants are thriving. This is, in part, because of the great selection of hardy plants, but also because the owners are such devoted gardeners, they will promptly move a plant or shrub if it isn't thriving. Kate has used crazy-paving extensively around the pool with ground level beds filled with low shrubs, ground cover and grasses. The paving ties in well with the retro-style open

verandah. Throughout this garden there is a wonderful variety of textures, colours and forms providing a lot of visual interest. The three-metre-tall red Mexican Lily (*Beschornia* sp.) is a particularly striking feature, as is the spectacular *Brugmansia* (trumpet flower) that blooms in summer, with cascading rows of white flowers.

While swimming pools are a thorny topic when it comes to sustainability, this innovative and environmentally responsible system creates new possibilities for those who are in a dilemma about installing a pool. The design of this garden strikes a happy balance, incorporating the pool within a lively and prolific garden, giving the owners the best of all worlds. 🌿

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