



AUSTRALIAN
LANDSCAPE
DESIGNERS

belle



KATE SEDDON

KATE SEDDON LANDSCAPE DESIGN

FOR KATE SEDDON, a year's tree change in the hinterland of Byron Bay led to a tree change of another sort. After returning to Melbourne in 2007, she established Kate Seddon Landscape Design, thus nurturing a brand-new career. She had previously worked in advertising client management, but having two children made her revisit her options. "I wanted to combine the skills from client liaison with something more fulfilling and family-friendly," she says. Drawing on a love of gardens and design, she completed a graduate diploma in horticulture at the University of Melbourne's Burnley College in 2005.

In producing gardens specific to the site and the client, she sidesteps the idea of an in-house style. "But, if I were to define our work, it is plant based and not dominated by hard landscaping," she says. "Scale and form, opening and closing of views, plants for textural contrast, layering, swathes of planting, structure softened by greenery, all make the journey through the garden more appealing. A garden that has everything on show in one view is a lost opportunity. There should be intrigue, a sense of adventure beyond what you can see, an invitation to move through."

Favouring natural materials, Kate uses hand-cut stone and wood, which lead to "that feeling of a garden being just right". That said, sometimes concrete and exposed aggregate, when well used, can blend in beautifully with the foliage elements.

She will contrast long-flowering, low-maintenance shrubs such as salvia, *Achillea* and euphorbia cultivars with feature or sculptural plants. And she often specifies those that serve multiple purposes, such as a shrub with striking foliage that also flowers, like *Pittosporum* 'Miss Muffet', or a deciduous tree, which makes a sculptural statement in winter, such as *Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku' (coral bark maple) or *Lagerstroemia indica* (crepe myrtle). A longtime favourite tree is the Irish strawberry (*Arbutus unedo*) which, while evergreen, produces flowers and, as the name suggests, red berries. She's always experimenting too, recently trialling *Cussonia paniculata* (mountain cabbage tree), *Stachyurus praecox*, *Leptospermum brachyandrum* 'Silver' tea tree and *Euphorbia lambii* (tree euphorbia).

As in her previous career, relationship building is a key part of the design process. "We have just completed a large project in bayside Melbourne five years in development. It's so satisfying to get to the end with a happy family and strong relationships with architect, builder and landscape contractor."