



TV SHOW FRIDAY 7.30PM

FEBRUARY 2026

GARDENING

AUSTRALIA

50
WAYS TO
improve
your garden
THIS MONTH

creating a
MODERN AUSSIE GARDEN

tips on **DESIGN, PLANTS + MATERIALS**

connect with
native plants

BUILD A
frog-friendly
backyard!

10 *top-performing*
CLIMBERS

choose the right
GROUNDCOVERS
for your space



• WATER-SAVING TIPS • WHICH PLANTS ARE TOXIC TO PETS?

• LOVE YOUR LILLY PILLIES • STEPHANIE ALEXANDER'S GARDEN PATH

next-gen gardens

The Australian garden has entered a new era, shaped by a growing appreciation for native plants and a clearer sense of what we want from our outdoor spaces. Today's gardens are looser and more relaxed, using natural materials and unstructured planting to create flowing spaces that feel alive. They're low-maintenance and family-friendly – places you can simply step into and enjoy. This shift embraces biodiversity, climate-suited plants and an easy, distinctly Australian way of living. Here, two leading designers share their insights into the contemporary Australian garden and how to bring it to life.



KATE SEDDON
LANDSCAPE DESIGNER
Melbourne, Victoria

Do you believe Australian garden design is changing? It feels like there's a groundswell towards a more natural and conscious approach – one that integrates diversity, climate-appropriate planting and habitat. While not every garden design embraces biodiversity principles, we're increasingly seeing bits and pieces woven in: planting to attract insects and wildlife, water features for birdlife or the use of local and natural materials to give a garden a sense of place.

How would you define the contemporary Australian garden? There isn't a single 'Australian look', but

contemporary gardens increasingly show a deeper engagement with native and indigenous plants. Designers and homeowners are choosing species and cultivars that celebrate our flora without defaulting to a bush-garden aesthetic. International design principles are being reinterpreted through an Australian lens, using palettes unique to our climate.

What are the key elements of this aesthetic? Natural stone used for paving and boulders, and built elements that act as subtle retaining structures or spatial dividers while also serving as occasional seating or platforms for other features.



Left Natural stone pavers. Above White correa.

Which plants would you include in a modern Aussie garden?

- **Aggregflorum brachyandrum 'Silver'** (syn. *Leptospermum brachyandrum*) offers sinuous, beautifully coloured branches and a graceful draping form, making it an elegant crepe myrtle alternative.
- **Eucalyptus lunata 'Moon Lagoon'** brings silvery, light-catching foliage and strong structure.
- **Clay wattle** (*Acacia glaucoptera*) provides sculptural stems and rich tonality, especially when backlit.
- **White correa** (*C. alba*) and chef's cap correa (*C. bauerlenii*) add form and texture while remaining easy to manage.
- **Tuckeroo** (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*) has gently undulating foliage and is a distinctly Australian alternative to European staples for warm temperate gardens.



STEVE DEDRICK
GARDEN DESIGNER
& ENVIRONMENTAL
PRACTITIONER
Adelaide, South Australia

This page, clockwise from top right Mallees like the coastal mallee box are multi-trunked and tend to be shorter than other gum trees; chocolate lily gets its name from its alluring chocolate-scented flowers; the head-turning gold dust wattle in flower. Below *Aggregflorum brachyandrum* 'Silver' has a soft, weeping habit.



Do you believe Australian garden design is changing? I believe practices are always evolving. There's a growing awareness of what home gardens can offer to community, local biodiversity and, importantly, the future. People are thinking more consciously about the role their garden plays beyond their fence line.

How would you define the contemporary Australian garden?

It's a garden that's rooted in the present but looking towards the future – resilient spaces that support local biodiversity and community. Stewardship is at the forefront. Tending a garden brings so many positive benefits, with mental health being one of the most profound.

What are the key elements of this aesthetic? Simplicity. Raw, locally milled timber is always high on the list, along with being resourceful and working with existing materials or features wherever possible. Minimal impact if you can manage it.

Which plants would you include in a modern Aussie garden?

- **Coastal mallee box** (*Eucalyptus porosa*) With tall gums being removed or lopped



COMPILED BY AB BISHOP. PHOTOS: ROB BLACKBURN (KATE'S PORTRAIT), JARROD PRIESTLEY (STEVE'S PORTRAIT), MALLEE DESIGN, VIRGINIA CUMMINS, SYDNEY OATS, CC BY 2.0, ISTOCK, TRIGG PLANTS

in suburbia, I see mallee gums as the answer to 're-canopying' our suburbs.

- **Native pine** (*Callitris gracilis*) This is a magical, under-appreciated tree. The cockies love them, too.
- **Lemon-scented grass** (*Cymbopogon ambiguus*) Crush the leaves for a gorgeous scent or brew for a bush tea. It supports an incredible amount of wildlife.
- **Chocolate lily** (*Arthropodium strictum*) This whimsical tuberous plant produces mauve flowers with a heavenly scent in spring and summer. Find a patch in the bush and you'll smell heaven!
- **Gold dust wattle** (*Acacia acinacea*) Pair this wispy, open shrub with native grasses for a dynamite combination. Honeyeaters adore it. GA