



WORDS // KATE EVANS PHOTOGRAPHY // JASON BUSCH

If you stumbled upon this garden, you'd be easily forgiven for believing you'd just found a natural wonderland.

Centred around a large body of water, this Willoughby, Sydney, green space is a unique creation that blurs the lines between bushland and garden, while offering the perfect place to unwind and de-stress.

Initially recruited to discuss potential plant options, Landart Landscapes soon realised the untapped potential of the space. "This was a very exciting project as the clients were adventurous and trusted Landart's ability to provide a beautifully crafted landscape," says Landart designer, Matthew Leacy. "Once I explored the acreage site, I soon realised its potential and that a lot more work would need to be done to improve the function as well as the aesthetics."

The large pool and dam is the centrepiece of the design, with the rest of the garden designed around it. Not only great for a dip when the temperature soars, the dam was also designed to catch rainwater from the property itself as well as surrounding residences. To ensure fluidity in design, a boardwalk was installed to connect the different elements in the garden. "Because the pool is so big, we designed a cantilevered boardwalk that spans about 8 metres into the water, which

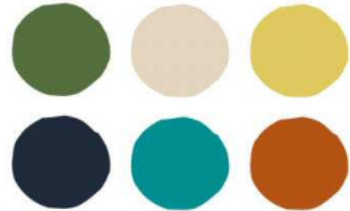
links the surrounding deck platforms to the pool," says Matthew. But installing the boardwalk was no easy feat. As the base of the pool could not be penetrated, the cantilevered structure was made of steel, craned into position, tied into the existing bedrock and then clad with timber. Australian hardwood spotted gum steps were also installed, which lead to the deck and the poolside platforms.

In terms of plant selection, certain species were chosen for their fast-growing abilities. "Choosing small plants that would grow quickly to combat weeds and cover the soil was essential to keeping costs down," says Matthew. "We also had to consider how to tie the new garden into the existing exotic garden and native bush surrounds." Succulents and ornamental grasses add a rustic feel to the space, while a 300-litre jacaranda tree was craned in to provide shade and brilliant pops of purple when it flowers. There's also a place to sit back and devour a good book, with a bench seat nestled into a sandstone ballast wall that's decorated with navy outdoor cushions that are able to withstand the elements.

Thanks to an innovative lighting scheme, the garden is able to be enjoyed after the sun sets, transforming into a magical space when night falls. 🌟
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ABOVE There's ample seating to enjoy the sun

OPPOSITE A sandstone seating nook boosts the Australiana feel of the native landscape



Colour Palette

Natural is the word that best describes the palette here. Sandstone, wood and the different tones of green from the bush and the water are complemented by the mustard and black furnishings

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PROJECT // BY THE WATER

