

THINK BIG!

This expansive garden unfolds slowly through a series of well-defined spaces, but it never loses its sense of overall grandeur. What a majestic old dame she is!



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he first thing that captures your attention on arriving at this month's garden is the truly enormous

eucalyptus tree on the sidewalk. With a base circumference of nearly two meters, it stands as a reassuring sentinel over the household. Old, established trees throughout the rest of the garden also lend a feeling of permanence, provide superb enclosure and house an astonishing array of bird life. Most of the trees are also very large and have the potential to intimidate human proportion, which is not necessarily comfortable on a continuing basis. People need to relate to an aspect in their immediate dimension to create comfort and allow enjoyment. To redress the balance somewhat, strong focal points have been used throughout the garden, many in the form of water features, which will even more powerfully draw the attention into the human plane.

A large garden's vast expanses can be very impressive however to satisfy our desire for variation and interest and invite us to use them, rooms have been created. This provides a more intimate unfolding of surprise and offers varying utility.

FIVE CIRCLES

The ground pattern in many areas of the garden consists of circular shapes that hold the attention within the space, and allows the visitor to feel at ease and not lost within a large, expansive space. The second circle of lawn, situated underneath the densest

part of the tree canopy, houses a striking, large, white sculpture of a woman's head facing the canopy, as if she is intrigued by its secrets. A small ornamental bench provides a cool seat in the shade to share this contemplation with her.

The fourth circle of lawn is home to a large, gurgling urn water feature framed by tall *Syzygiums* at the back, reaffirming its place in the garden. The curves of the urn add even more visual weight than merely its physical size. Adequate visual weight for focal points is crucial in an expansive garden, in order to ground them.

The fifth circle of lawn serves as a transition zone leading through to the formal outdoor entertainment areas. An elegant Victorian style gazebo sits raised above the swimming pool, looking out over the sunken conversation pit that adjoins the indoor pub and family room, facilitating a superb indoor-outdoor way of living and entertaining.

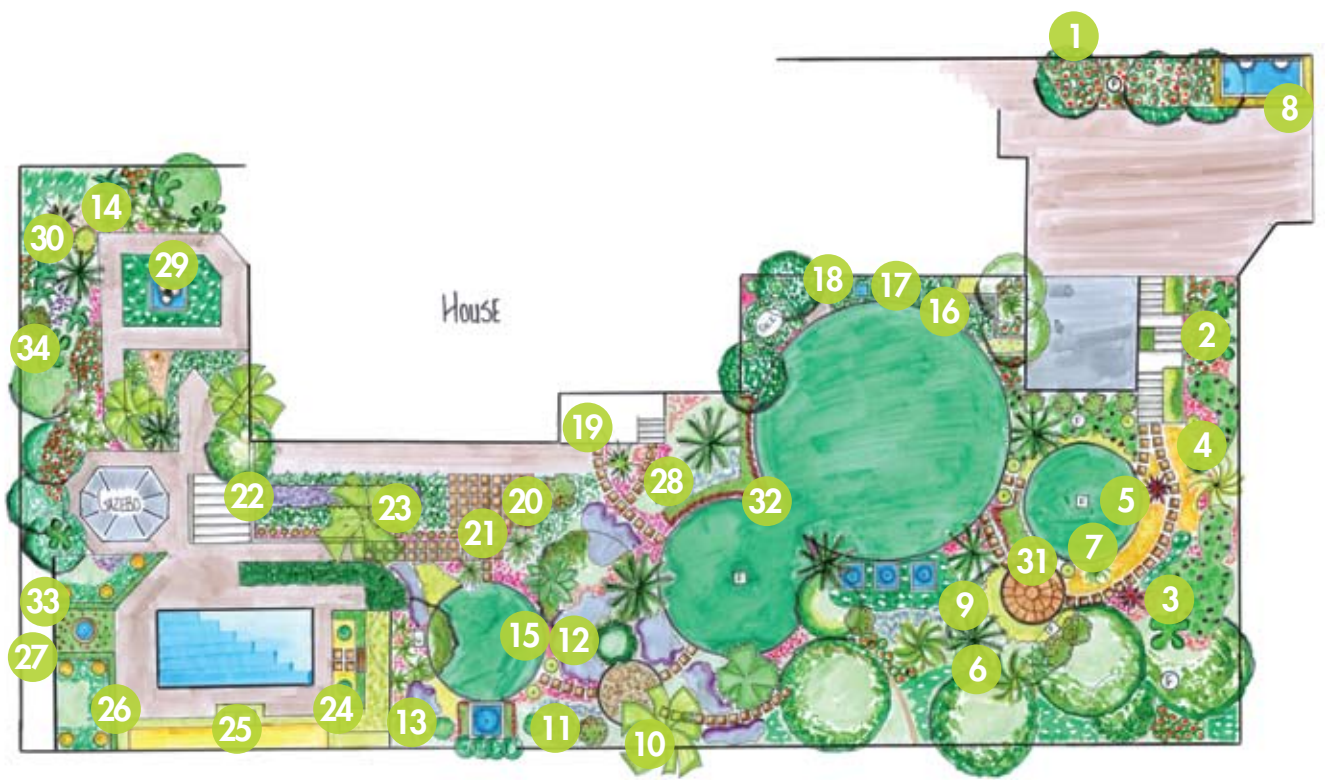
A nymph-like female sculpture by the renowned artist Anton Smit reclines lazily next to the swimming pool. The close proximity of the pool and the gazebo permits friendly banter while being engaged in different forms of relaxation. The conversation pit has been given a true conversation piece in the shape of an unusual, modern water feature. It is fantastically oversized for the actual space, but successfully offset once again by the large trees in the area.

A bland bricked seat has been enlivened by a garden mural, linking it with the rest of the garden as a green space.



*Top tip:
Undersized focal points in a large space look sad – rather err on the side of too big than too small.*

Top: A wooden bench is far more practical in a shaded area as it does not get as cold as concrete or develop moss. **Above:** The water feature is the favourite bathing spot for birds in the afternoon. **Far left:** The feminine bench at the pool links well with the gazebo, and often serves as the 'drying off' seat at the pool.



Left: Dainty and elegant with tranquil music piped through the ceiling, the gazebo is the stage for long, lazy afternoons.
Below: The rough texture of the tree stems framing the modern sculpture forms a delightful contrast.



PLANT LIST

1. *Clivia miniata*
2. *Monstera deliciosa*
3. *Agapanthus africanus*
4. *Phoenix roebelenii*
5. *Cordyline australis* 'Red Sensation'
6. *Dicksonia antarctica*
7. *Liriope muscari* 'Variegata'
8. *Acorus gramineus*
9. *Carex morrowii* 'Variegata'
10. Palm
11. *Nandina domestica*
12. *Pittosporum nigrescens*
13. Azalea
14. *Rumohra adiantiformis*
15. *Plectranthus*
16. *Anthericum saundersiae*
17. *Ophiopogon japonicus*
18. *Freylinia tropica* Std.
19. *Yucca* sp.
20. *Strelitzia reginae*
21. *Phormium tenax*
22. *Lavandula* 'Margaret Roberts'
23. *Duranta* 'Sheena's Gold' (topiary)
24. *Dietes bicolor*
25. *Duranta* 'Sheena's Gold' (hedge)
26. *Abelia* (hedge)
27. *Buxus sempervirens* (hedge)
28. *Cycas thourarsii*
29. *Zantedeschia aethiopica*
30. *Asparagus meyerii*
31. *Duranta* 'Sheena's Gold' Std.
32. *Nandina pygmaea*
33. *Hemerocallis* sp.
34. *Philodendron selloum*

USEFUL GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING IN LARGER GARDEN SPACES

Create different garden rooms to:

- Make spaces user-friendly and intimate
- Invite exploration of the garden
- Facilitate different functional areas
- Create intrigue and suspense

Size the focal points carefully to avoid them being dwarfed by their context. Focal points anchor the human experience in a larger space and need to be visually strong enough to do so.

Use colour as a design tool to its fullest – a large garden offers plenty of scope for creating different effects by simply using colour. You will not often find such a free hand with red, orange and other bright, bold colours ... have fun with it! 🌿



Above: A nymph-like female figure is dramatically contrasted by the gnarled stem structure of the tree behind it – a strange but captivating picture.
Left: An interesting garden mural links a bland corner very effectively with the rest of the garden.

