



Text: Rina Smit Image: Eco Landscapes

Gardening

Ask most people what they want from their gardens and it will be versatile outdoor space - an extension of their homes well designed and well equipped to allow activities to flow seamlessly from inside to outside. For most people a garden is a space associated with the better things in life, where the emphasis is on relaxation and recreation. Flowers are proud assertion that a ray of beauty out values all the utilities of the world. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)



Designing for Harmony

Text: Renée Wright Images: Eco Landscapes

*E*very successful garden will, upon closer examination, yield a hidden framework, a carefully considered design which facilitates harmony, balance and beauty with just enough excitement to suit the temperament of the individuals or the ethos of the corporation who use it.

The more successful the garden, the less obvious this forethought will be. It is only really when something is not quite right that one becomes aware of the lack of adherence to sound design principles.

I believe that a garden should assist us all in finding inner balance, be restorative and healing in its effect, and yet provide lively interest, a bold statement and even perhaps a little intrigue. This delicate balancing act also has to remain entirely functional and suited to the lifestyle or practical needs of the owners.

This is the wonderful and unique challenge of a garden designer to find the solution that is custom fit for each individual site with its own particular restrictions and challenges, the taste of the client and their own unique wish list for the usage they wish to enjoy.

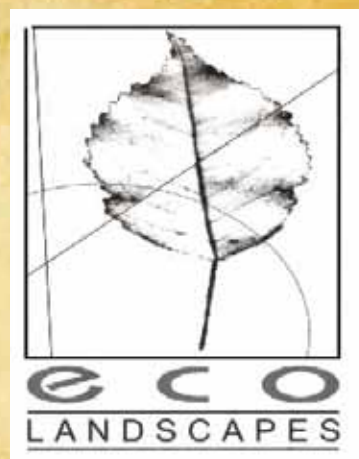
Here are some key aspects to approaching the design of garden, and particularly for the smaller garden spaces that is becoming increasingly common.



The cardinal rule: The smaller the garden, the more important a good design becomes. A larger garden can mask a multitude of errors.... in a small garden the difference between a good and bad design is immediately obvious.

KEY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Keep it simple and stick to the specific garden style or theme if you choose to have one. For a particular theme to succeed, it needs to be carried through in every design detail choice. A fusion of different garden styles can be beautiful and exciting; however design decisions need to be made deliberately and carefully.
- Be clear on what you want to do in the garden and what you want the garden elements to do for you.
- A strong ground pattern or garden shape is essential and will compensate for a multitude of planting errors. Design in a restricted or very visible space is more demanding and a great deal more defining, as almost everything is experienced at close quarters or is in view from multiple angles.
- Choosing appropriate plants is crucial in ensuring a garden design works well. Adult dimensions and growth conditions need to be taken into account religiously.
- Resist the temptation to over plant. An overcrowded garden obliterates any sense of tranquility and beauty otherwise possible.
- Be mindful of ergonomics – one need to be able to move through the garden comfortably, and be able to execute maintenance with ease.
- There is always space for a water element, even in the smallest space. The sight and sound of moving water is simply unparalleled in its ability to confer peace and tranquility – don't be without it!
- Do not overlook the finer subtleties of foliage colour, texture and shape variation of plant material – this provides a rich tapestry of interest in the garden. Flowers are a bonus on top of all this!
- Make the garden your own – add those little touches that are meaningful to you, but avoid over embellishment! Corporate colours or emblem can easily be echoed in its green spaces.
- Create a design and stick to it – this is the only way to avoid a patchwork quilt of sudden inspirations and impulse purchases!!



PRINCIPAL DESIGNER: RENÉE WRIGHT

SOUTH AFRICA:

ITALY:

MOBILE: (0027) 83 271 0880
(0039) 340 253 1822

TELEPHONE: (0027)12 361 9644 (0039) 0187 460 087

renee@ecolandscapes.co.za

lesedi@gmail.com

www.ecolandscapes.co.za

www.lesedi.com

ecolandscapes.co.za







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