

Design WORKSHOP

EVER WONDERED HOW THE EXPERTS
CREATE A GORGEOUS GARDEN?
WE SHOW YOU HOW

New paths and planting have beautifully enhanced the architectural character of this Auckland villa. The garden's mature cabbage trees were incorporated into the makeover, which also improved access to both the front and the back garden of this Herne Bay home.

THE BRIEF

The clients wanted to improve the street appeal of their home and create easier access to its front entrance and rear garden. The front garden had to be in keeping with the traditional character of the street.



Kirsten Sach

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

Kirsten Sach of Kirsten Sach Landscape Design creates gardens for a range of different locations, from inner-city courtyards to offshore islands. In 2007 she won a gold award at the Ellerslie Flower Show for her eco-friendly entry "Raingarden", designed to collect and purify stormwater through water diversion and planting.



ON THE SIDE

Bluestone was used for the pavers down the side of the house, maintaining continuity with the bluestone steps leading to the front verandah of the house. Polished black marble pebbles were used in between the pavers and as a mulch around the base of the planting. "Buxus hedging helps edge the path and a row of pleached olives screens the neighbour's windows," says Kirsten.



POHUTUKAWA PRINCESS

A small hybrid pohutukawa ('Maori Princess') was planted in the front lawn as a focal point and to tie in with the existing native cabbage trees. The pohutukawa, which is uplit at night, gives the garden a sense of place in its Auckland surroundings, says Kirsten.

CLASSIC KIWIANA

"The existing mature cabbage trees at the front and back of the property give the garden a Kiwiana feel that I love," says Kirsten. Native pohutukawa and corokia continue this theme, while the clipped hedging adds a crisp touch.

Scented Michelia figo hedge

STEP IT UP

There wasn't enough room to have stairs that led directly to the front door, so a new path was designed with access from the side of the deck. "The steps are made from bluestone and have a floating effect as they step up the slope. They are underlit at night to emphasize this," says Kirsten.

FORMAL FLAVOUR

Squaring off and levelling the previously sloping garden created a formal effect at the front of the house, in keeping with its traditional architecture. This was reinforced by the use of layers of hedging, which are a mix of different species to create contrasting foliage

colours and textures. "The hedging helped to soften and screen the plastered block retaining walls," explains Kirsten. "I wanted to avoid the standard picket fence, so the hedges also act as a barrier and boundary."

SEEING DOUBLE

The plant palette is a simple mix of grey and fresh green. Low, clipped box hedges, with a slightly taller hedge of the native shrub Corokia 'Geentys Ghost' behind and mondo grass below, form a soft frame for the garden areas. There is also a row of fragrant port wine magnolia (Michelia figo).



FOCAL HERO

"The rear garden had a lot of existing features including a kowhai, protected puka and the Buddha statue. This lent itself to continuing with an Eastern theme with the Buddha as a focal point," says Kirsten. "I was mostly responsible for the planting design for the backyard, which included tying in some beautiful mature cabbage trees and a mature grapefruit tree. These features give the garden character, so it was important to keep them." The pond is framed with clipped box hedging so that it nestles into the surrounding planting.



ON THE BENCH

This stone seat was sourced by the clients and used as a prominent feature at the far end of the lawn, to help create the Eastern-resort feel they wanted in the garden. It's positioned in front of a protected native karaka tree that's surrounded by a mass planting of the orange flowering perennial clivia.



GREEN WALK

To the right-hand side of the rear lawn is a stone path that meanders through lush planting. Species here are a mix of subtropical and native, and include nikau palms, hen and chicken ferns (*Asplenium bulbiferum*) irises and mondo grass. These are planted around the bluestone stepping stones, which are set into black marble pebbles, as in the side garden. The clients like to entertain, so the garden is lit at night.

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Corokia, from \$14.99, is a dense and hardy hedging option with grey tones.



Port wine magnolia (*Michelia Figo*), from \$12.99, has scented flowers.



Clivia, from \$12.99, is low maintenance and perfect for a pop of vibrant colour.

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