

# Elegant simplicity

This month's garden is a true extension of the home owner's tasteful interior

T

he tranquil order of a formal garden has delighted gardeners literally for ages.

This garden's style is a perfect continuation of the indoor style, reflecting

elegant simplicity fused with comfortable family living. The elevated position of the main patio displays the formal ground pattern beautifully. The timeless shape of the lawn accommodates a classic water feature in the centre. Water cascades gently over the edge of a shallow wide bowl into the pond below, occasionally showering the playful fairy figure on the edge of the pond. The ground pattern is kept in pristine shape by the cobbled edging, while making garden maintenance a breeze. Restrained planting stands in support of beautiful lines, and does not seek to make an independent statement.

## Garden rooms

The garden has been visually divided into three sections, or 'rooms', to invite exploration and layer interest. The central main section links to the house by virtue of a cheerful yellow *Duranta* hedge, which lines up with the dimensions of the patio. The four corners of the area have been accented by four wrought iron obelisks into which *Duranta* 'Sheena's gold' has been planted to create beautiful topiarised yellow pyramids. The garden is enclosed from the neighbours and made intimate by a tall *Syzygium* hedge cut into a box shape. This drapes over a decorative bench within an

arch – like a small summer house – and creates an intimate nook from where the garden may be enjoyed from a different angle.

The second room is a playful herb garden in a small segment of the garden to the side. Cobble edging traces out the pattern of the sun with its rays. As the cobbles are very securely fitted, they also provide access to the garden. The figure of an old man reclining on a miniature bench reflects the owner's sense of humour and colourful seedlings complement dill, rosemary, thyme and a selection of other herbs.

The third room comprises a thin strip of the garden accessed through a 'double' archway from the lawn and also from the opposite side of the raised patio. The double archway creates the illusion of depth and makes this garden vista feel wider than it actually is. Pencil conifers and *Ficus* lollipops delineate the garden from its very naturalistic backdrop, which is an uncultivated green zone beyond the perimeter wall. A fragrant hedge of orange jasmine (*Murraya exotica*) edges the bed, and the minty fragrance of pennyroyal between the stepping blocks underfoot provides a sensory experience as you walk on the paver path.

## Colour as a design tool

The colour palette in the garden has been carefully manipulated, with blue, grey, yellow and shades of green forming the backbone of the garden.

Red serves as dramatic accents. Blues



A tall *Syzygium* hedge provides privacy



WORDS: Renée Wright; PHOTOGRAPHS: Elza Roux

and greys are intended to link the garden with the accent colour on the exterior of the house and are repeated in the garden in these ways:

- A grey garden bench
- Dove grey trellises
- An unplastered pond
- *Agapanthus* 'Blue Velvet' and potato bush lollipop
- A hand-painted 'mosaic' edge around the bowl of the water feature
- Grey skyrocket conifers

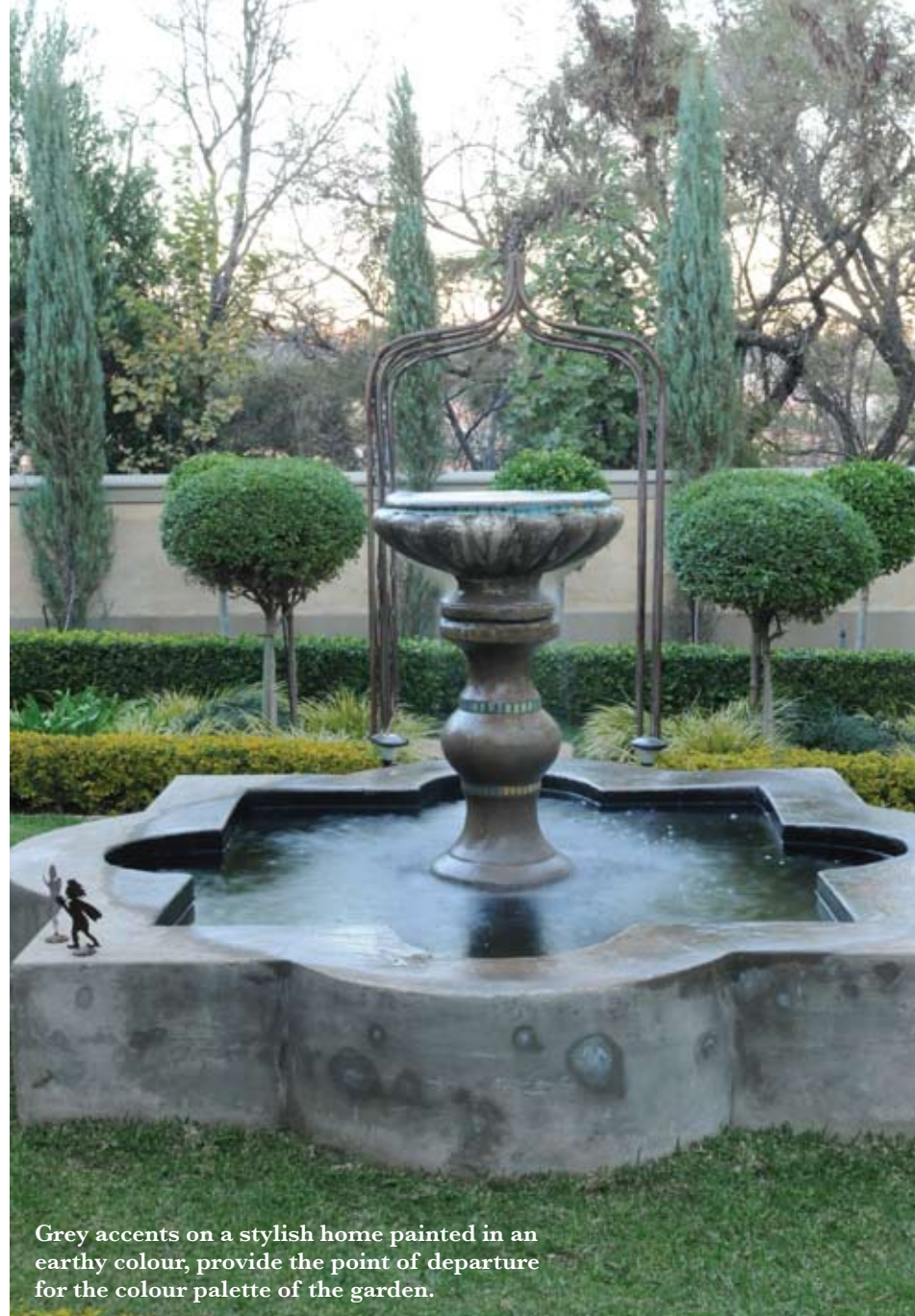
Yellow is used in hedges and topiary to strengthen lines and accents all year round without being too dominant. It also adds a cheerful element to the garden and the combination with tranquil blues and greys is extremely pleasing. In the third room, where it is not desirable to accent the length of the area, a dark green hedge was utilized instead of yellow.

Red can be used as the accent colour to mark entrances as the rest of the palette is restrained. It also links with items on the patio and the interior of the house, facilitating a seamless indoor/outdoor transition. Red is very dramatic and must be used very deliberately and with due restraint.

## Hedge maintenance

It is not necessary to be intimidated by the prospect of keeping hedges neatly trimmed!

A wrought iron frame section can be made up to the height and width of the mature size of the hedge and this can be placed over it to facilitate precise trimming. It is a good idea to initially trim back the 'long arms' as it will encourage the plant to 'bush out' at the bottom which makes for a nice dense hedge. As a general rule, rather cut less but more often. Vigorous growth is stimulated in this way, and one avoids the risk of cutting back too much.



Grey accents on a stylish home painted in an earthy colour, provide the point of departure for the colour palette of the garden.



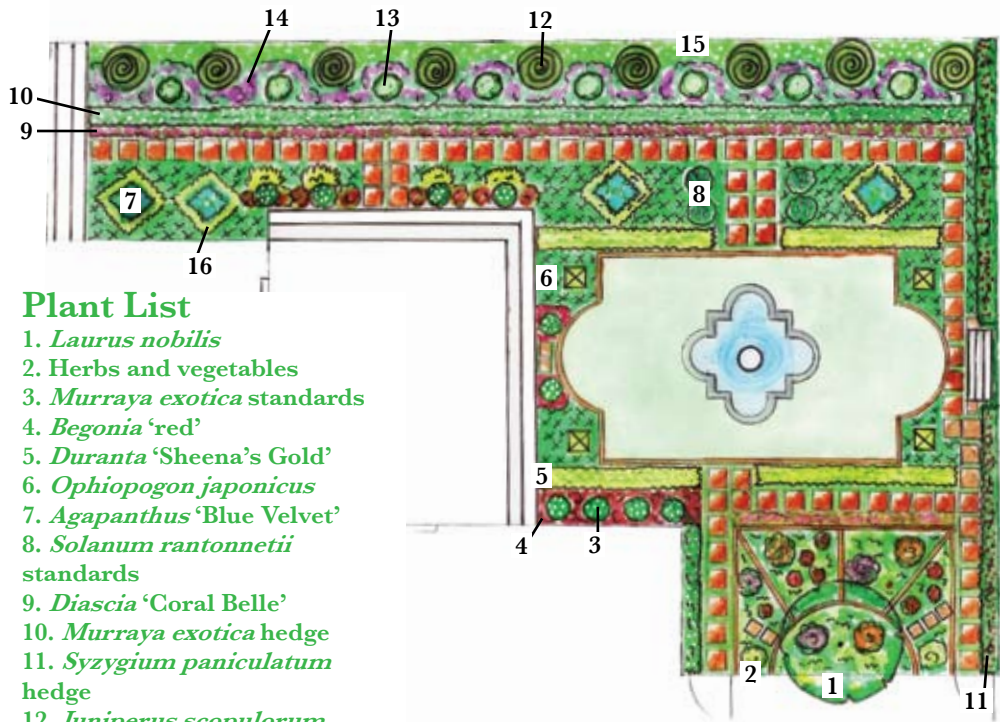
## Linkage with the house

Linking indoor and outdoor living spaces creates a unified and tranquil living experience. This can be achieved by:

- Continuing the architectural lines of the house into those of the garden.
- Repeating colours found within the house in the garden.
- Using ornamentation which complements the style of the house, creating a strong unity.
- Repeating accent colours on the exterior of the house facilitates rhythm.
- Repeating the same colour hard landscaping materials inside and out, i.e. the colour of the paving on the patio or inside the house blends with the colour of the pavers in the garden. 🌿

### Top Tip

Colour is not a casual affair – do not choose colour in the garden arbitrarily – it is an independent design tool with which specific effects can be facilitated and a definitive atmosphere can be created.



### Plant List

1. *Laurus nobilis*
2. Herbs and vegetables
3. *Murraya exotica* standards
4. *Begonia* 'red'
5. *Duranta* 'Sheena's Gold'
6. *Ophiopogon japonicus*
7. *Agapanthus* 'Blue Velvet'
8. *Solanum rantonnetii* standards
9. *Diascia* 'Coral Belle'
10. *Murraya exotica* hedge
11. *Syzygium paniculatum* hedge
12. *Juniperus scopulorum* 'Skyrocket'
13. *Ficus benjamina* standards
14. *Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender'
15. *Trachelospermum jasminoides*
16. *Acorus gramineus* 'Golden Edge'

"The day has been long boxed in by glass and concrete deafening with sound, the mind lost among a thousand minds. Step into the scent of the evening, the hush of leaves, the touch of blossom. The garden gives you back your life." – Pam Brown

## DIARY OF EVENTS AT WITKOPPEN WILDFLOWER INDIGENOUS NURSERY

**FYNBOS FESTIVAL: 6-7 SEPTEMBER.** On Saturday 6th at 11am, Nico Thuyensma will host a talk on growing Proteas and Ericas successfully on the Highveld. Free, but booking essential.

**CONTAINER GARDENING: 13-21 SEPTEMBER.**

**BOTANICAL & NATURAL ART EXHIBITION: 27-28 SEPTEMBER.**

**BIRD WEEKEND: 4-5 OCTOBER.** Illustrated talks in the Nursery on Saturday 4 October and a guided outing to Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens on Sunday 5 October. Cost R140pp which includes entrance to the Botanical Gardens. Booking essential.

**A TALK ON SPIDERS AND A "SPIDER HUNT" WITH ASTRI & JOHN LEROY: SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER.**

**LOW MAINTENANCE GARDENING: 18-26 OCTOBER.**

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We are in Frederick Road, off Cedar Avenue, Witkoppen, 2kms past Fourways Mall on the way to Broadacres. Tel: 011 705 2703 or 011 465 7793. Cell: 084 782 2240. Monday to Saturday: 8am to 5pm. Sunday 8am to 4pm.

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