

# SMALL & SAVVY

*A petite garden proves that fresh produce can be grown anywhere*

**WORDS:** RACHEL FALZON

If you have a small inner-city garden or courtyard, you may be thinking that a flourishing vegetable garden is out of reach. However, as this garden shows, space need not be a hindrance and an attractive and productive garden can go hand in hand — even by incorporating a water feature, a barbecue, seating area and ornamental plants.

When the owners of this garden approached Steve Warner of Outhouse Design, they had a clear design brief. They wanted a

functional space that would suit the family — which includes young children — with a productive vegetable garden as well as an attractive outdoor entertaining area. The site was the challenge, as it was a petite size of only 10m x 3m, so space maximisation was a key issue.

“Because of the restrictions that the small size introduced, it was important to utilise the vertical space. Steel spirals that are 1.8m in size serve as trellises for peas and runner beans and provide a decorative element,

while a dwarf apple tree is espaliered against the north-facing wall, which also serves to screen the washing line,” explains Steve. “We made sure the vegetable bed enjoyed a full-sun position, which worked in our favour as we could then have the seating in the more protected area of the garden.”

The owners had the decision of what edible plants were to be included in the garden. They chose vegies and herbs that they often cook with, including spinach, lettuce, chilli and rosemary among other

The plants that grow between the pavers make this space come alive



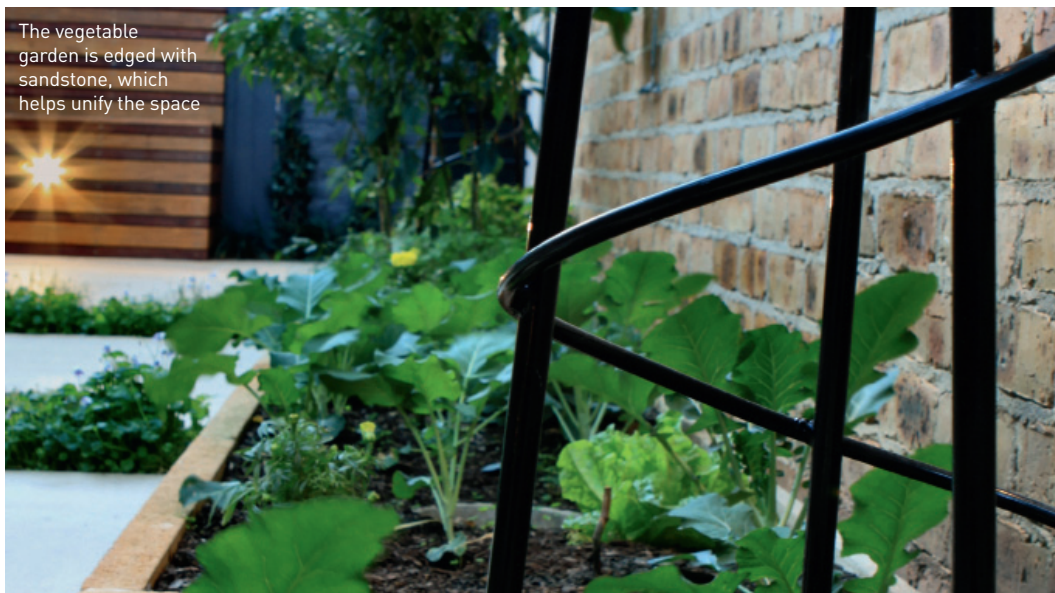
Creating cohesion, the cabinet beneath the barbecue matches this outdoor bench perfectly



This urn water feature creates a delightfully rustic feeling to the space



Cleverly placed lighting highlights the important elements of the courtyard



The vegetable garden is edged with sandstone, which helps unify the space

edibles that are rotated as the seasons change. "We used companion planting such as marigolds, which work as a great natural pest deterrent and provide a colourful, cheery addition that the children love," says Steve.

Cleverly, the Outhouse Design team introduced edible plants, such as thyme, to do double-duty and provide a decorative element within the garden beds as well as between the pavers.

This allowed them to break up the hard paving area, and support additional softscape areas for water penetration. "We wanted a combination of vegetables and herbs that the family would cook with regularly as well as those that provide interest and are educational for the children," says Steve.

The vegetable bed's location close to the kitchen allows the children to easily see the growing process happening before their eyes – from seed to plate, as the family grows, harvests and cooks their produce. The proximity to the cooking area of the home also means the produce is likely to be used and will encourage experimentation with herbs and vegies when creating culinary masterpieces in the kitchen.

The colour scheme, layout and ornamental features create a classic design, but the garden as a whole has a strong functional element. The key design features are: the vegetable garden; the water feature, which cools the space; the barbecue and seating area, which includes built-in storage as an ingenious space-saving element; and lighting that ensures the garden can be used at night during the warmer months.

"Sustainability was a key concept driving the design," says Steve. "Where possible, existing materials were incorporated into the new design or recycled. The worm farm uses organic matter that would otherwise be going to landfill and provides a natural fertiliser for the garden. The layout also utilises solar passive design principles."

This garden proves that with a clever design, even the smallest space can be used to produce fresh, healthy fruit and vegies that the whole family can enjoy.

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