

Since it's a roof garden, the plant palette needed to be visually interesting and low-maintenance, as well as tolerant of full sun and shallow soil. Native rosemary (*Westringia* 'Grey Box'), a species with silvery foliage and a naturally clumping habit, brings texture to the space and is paired with strappy-leaved *Lomandra* 'Lime Tuff' and 'Blue Ridge' for contrast. Kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos* 'Big Red' and 'Yellow Gem'), creeping thyme (*Thymus* 'Pink Chintz') and yellow buttons (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*) provide pops of seasonal colour.

While the rooftop garden engages with the wider landscape, helping settle the new home into its surroundings, the back garden is more insular. Yes, there's continuity in the overall aesthetic, but leisure is the design focus here: a lawn to play on, an entertaining zone and, of course, the pool.

An existing stand of wild date palm (*Phoenix reclinata*) provided some privacy in the pool area, but Ben and his team filled in the gaps with weeping lilly pilly (*Waterhousea floribunda* 'Sweeper'). Surrounding the pool are a series of raised beds, some featuring imperial bromeliads (*Alcantarea imperialis* 'Rubra') under-planted with no-mow grass (*Zoysia tenuifolia*) - like ruby crowns showcased on cushions of emerald velvet. Hardy native pigface (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*) and Mediterranean spurge (*Euphorbia wulfenii*) are abundantly planted nearby for additional texture and colour poolside.

Of course, there were challenges along the way - such as bad weather, drainage issues, sharing the site simultaneously with multiple trades, protecting all finishes and managing difficult access. "Materials had to be either craned in or heaved up in buckets from the street," says Ben. "Thankfully long-reach truck cranes meant the bulk of the soils were delivered in. This allowed landscape works to be sequenced around the final stages of building works."

The result? A garden with two equally lovely personalities - one a public persona; the other, more private. It really is possible to have it all. ▶

Formed Gardens, Brookvale, NSW; (02) 8036 8580 or www.formedgardens.com.au. Melissa Wilson Landscape Architects, Surry Hills, NSW; melissawilson.com.au.

TOP A custom-made copper outdoor shower is tucked into a corner off the pool area, enclosed by walls of hand-cut sandstone. The bed beyond is planted with weeping lilly pilly (*Waterhousea floribunda* 'Sweeper'), imperial bromeliad (*Alcantarea imperialis* 'Rubra') and no-mow grass (*Zoysia tenuifolia*). The pavers are a light-grey limestone. **RIGHT** The pool area is encircled by planters at varying heights, some in off-form concrete and some in brick. This one features an imperial bromeliad, under-planted with a cascade of native pigface (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*) and a side of Mediterranean spurge (*Euphorbia wulfenii*).



FEATURE PLANTS

TREES

Weeping lilly pilli
(*Waterhousea floribunda*
'Sweeper')

SHRUBS

Native rosemary
(*Westringia* 'Grey Box')

Tree germander
(*Teucrium fruticans*)

Grevillea 'Moonlight'

Mediterranean spurge
(*Euphorbia wulfenii*)

GROUNDCOVERS

Yellow buttons
(*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)

Creeping thyme
(*Thymus* 'Pink Chintz')

Pigface (*Carpobrotus*)

No-mow grass (*Zoysia tenuifolia*)

An existing stand of wild date palm (*Phoenix reclinata*) protected the backyard from prying eyes. The new landscaping brings colour and extra lushness to the pool area itself. **H&G**

While the rooftop garden engages with the wider landscape, the back garden is more insular.

BEST OF BOTH

A showy front garden that makes the most of spectacular views, a tranquil back garden to retreat to... The owners of this Sydney home have it all.

STORY *Andrea Tomaz* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Ollie Brunt*



Red and yellow kangaroo paw, lomandras, native rosemary (*Westringia* 'Grey Box') and pretty yellow buttons (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*) are some of the hardy species used for the stunning roof garden at this home in Sydney's east. An existing *Murraya paniculata* hedge (far left) was pruned to direct the eye to the harbour in the distance; *Grevillea* 'Moonlight' fills a planter on the garden's opposite boundary.

Gardens





Sitting pretty in Sydney's east, this home has a captivating double identity. With hints of a lookout tower at the front, it offers sweeping coastal views, yet it's a genuinely private property, with a family-friendly yard out the back.

Completed in 2019, the garden, designed by Melissa Wilson Landscape Architects and installed by Formed Gardens, was part of a new-build project by MASQ Architects. "The home was built for a professional couple with school-age children," says Ben Longbottom of Formed Gardens. "For the landscaping, they wanted something bold, full of interesting planting and forms. It needed to complement the architecture and provide a retreat for the family to enjoy."

Journeying through the garden is a delight that starts at the street entrance, where native pigface (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*) and trailing rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Prostratus') cascade over the edges of planters above, creating a moment to pause before stepping inside.

At the top of the stairs, horizontal steppers invite visitors into the 'infinity' garden, which stretches across the roof of the garage. "It's both arrival courtyard and viewing platform," says Ben. "Plants cover the entire structure to create a dynamic aspect for the home, which has district and harbour views." ▶

Carpobrotus 'Aussie Rambler' trails off the roof planter, forming curtains of wine-coloured foliage over the window.

Neatly clipped mounds of silvery tree germander (*Teucrium fruticans*) contrast with the lime green leaves of *Lomandra* 'Lime Tuff'. **OPPOSITE** Pigface (left) and trailing rosemary create a dramatic 'hanging garden' feel at the entrance.

