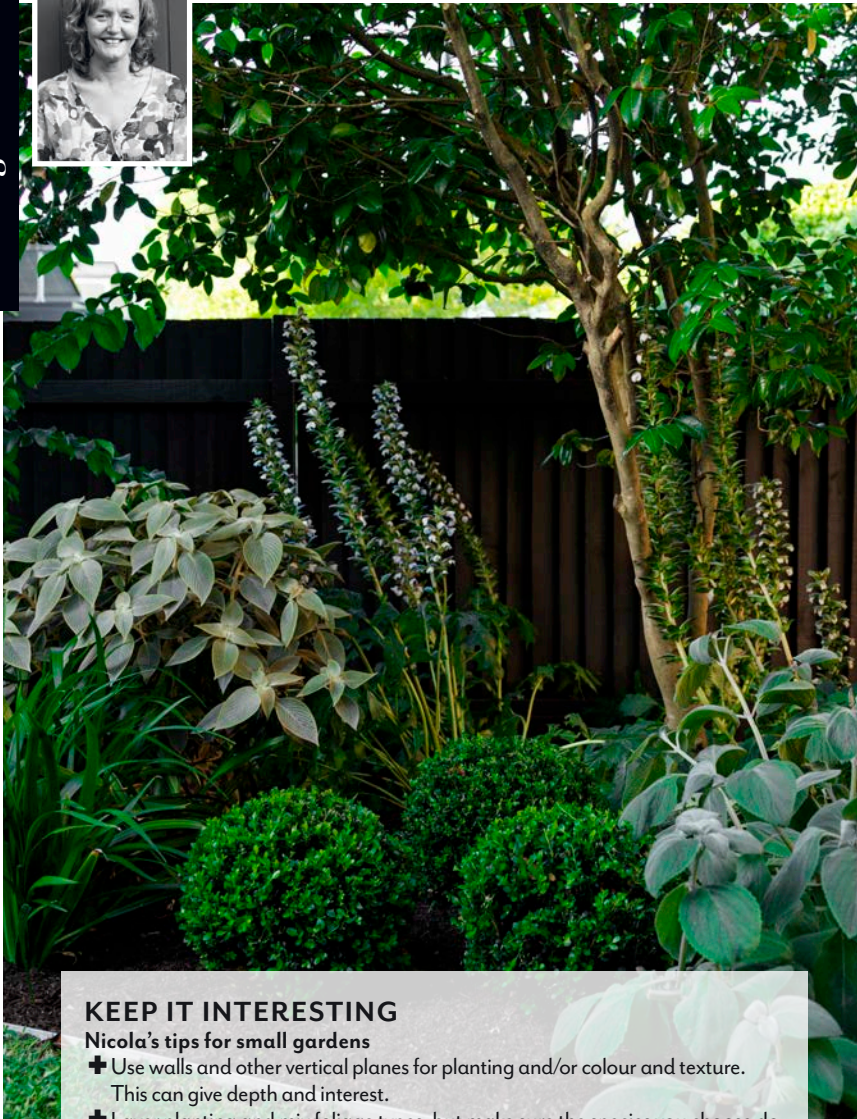


EMERALD *jewel*

A perfect balance of soft romantic plantings and sleek sophistication have transformed this garden into a never-want-to-leave-it space.

Photography by Nick Bowyer

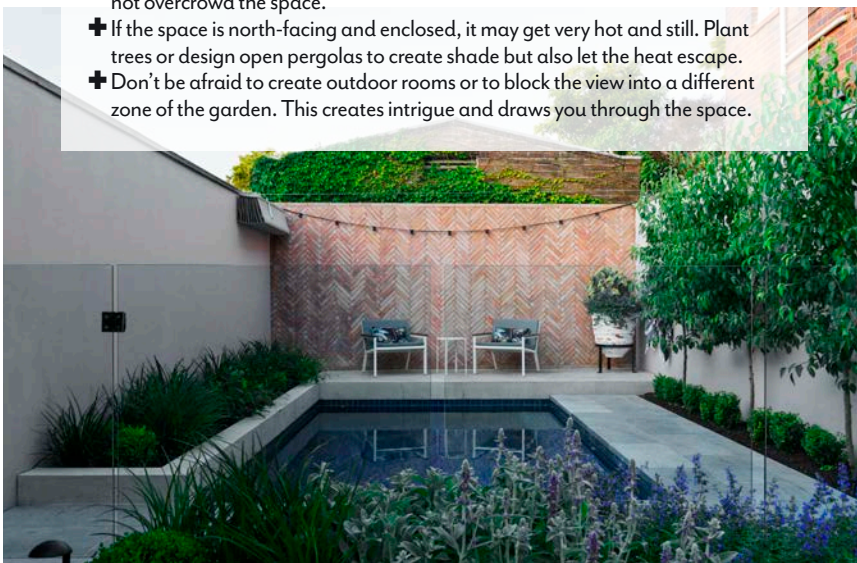
From the luscious planting to the bluestone stepping stones and wall of herringbone terracotta tiles, this gem of a garden is filled with visual and tactile delights.



KEEP IT INTERESTING

Nicola's tips for small gardens

- ✦ Use walls and other vertical planes for planting and/or colour and texture. This can give depth and interest.
- ✦ Layer planting and mix foliage types, but make sure the species you choose do not overcrowd the space.
- ✦ If the space is north-facing and enclosed, it may get very hot and still. Plant trees or design open pergolas to create shade but also let the heat escape.
- ✦ Don't be afraid to create outdoor rooms or to block the view into a different zone of the garden. This creates intrigue and draws you through the space.



A gorgeous feature wall of elongated terracotta tiles in a herringbone pattern is just one of the unexpected, eye-pleasing elements in this beautiful, textured garden. It's a detail that wouldn't look out of place in a chic interior space - and that is exactly the point of this garden design.

Having renovated their home four years earlier, the owners of this Sydney property were excited to revamp their rear garden and outdoor entertaining areas, which together form an L-shape. With their kitchen and dining areas opening directly onto the garden, their priority was to create an inviting and beautiful space. "They wanted to bring these outdoor areas up to the level of their home, with a relaxed but structured feel to match the interiors," says landscape designer and director of Pepo Botanic Design, Nicola Cameron (pictured). The clients, parents of two young daughters, also wanted to install a pool.

Extending off the existing deck is a 3x10m rectangular lawn, which Nicola softened with deep, curvacious garden beds containing layers of flowering and textural plants. In keeping with the owner's wishes, the plant mix has a cottage feel

The 2.5x4.5m pool is neatly tucked into the smaller length of the L, within existing masonry boundary walls. The hardscaping around the pool - Belgium blue limestone pavers and polished concrete poured in situ - has all the polish and sophistication of interior joinery. A row of snow pear (*Pyrus nivalis*) forms a green wall down one side of the pool, with a bed of liriopie on the other.

The boundary walls provided ready-made privacy screens for the pool and gave Nicola the inspiration for the feature wall of reclaimed terracotta tiles. "The terracotta tiles were chosen to complement the neighbour's brick wall which is covered in Boston ivy," says Nicola. "The two materials happily sit together."

At the cooler, northern end of the pool, on the raised concrete platform, Nicola has created a seating area. "Comfortable seating at the end of the pool draws you into the space."

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TOP Silvery *Strobilanthes gossypinus*, flowering *Acanthus mollis*, balls of Japanese box, *Plectranthus argentatus* and a mature camellia all feature in the textured garden beds encircling the lawn. ABOVE Pretty mauve-flowering lamb's ear (*Stachys lanata* 'Moonlight Velvet') and *Nepeta gracilis* echo the hues of the blue limestone in the pool area. Three espaliered snow pears (*Pyrus nivalis*) provide a tall green screen along the pool.