

28 September 2004

Suburban Garden

In Darwin it's always hot. So gardens need to be cool, relaxing places to be.

Suburban gardens are the greatest **challenge** of all, because not only do they need to look good, but they have to be very **functional**.

They need to be a cricket pitch one day, a basketball court the next, a place where you have barbeques and parties, a place where you can sit and relax after work, and then of course you'll want to grow some food, so you'll need a veggie garden, a herb garden, and p'raps a lime tree.

In this garden in the northern suburbs meets all that criteria, and it's an interesting and dynamic place for kids.

How have they done it? By breaking the area up into small areas or spaces, each with its own purpose, so that in this garden, you have lots of gardens.

The lovely little **veggie garden** is full of herbs and tucker plants.

The compost area is small but produces more than enough compost for the veggies and the small nursery.

And there's this lovely little **worm farm** quietly **converting** kitchen scraps into **vermi-compost** for the veggies, and **vermi-tea** to keep those orchids flowering like mad.

In our tropical environment we need lots of shade to keep the house cool and stop the kids from getting sunburnt.

All the different areas in this garden are connected by paths.

The **pool** is **nestled in** amongst rocks and plants and looks very natural.

When you have eight months of the year without rain, you get a bit desperate for the sight of water, so every tropical garden needs a **pond**, a place where you can sit and contemplate the world, and an oasis for all the lizards, frogs and birds that live in your garden.

This is very childproof garden, a place where they can really get in and enjoy it.

There's a music stand made from old bits and pieces.

Cubby houses are hot places in the wet season, but this platform works wonderfully. It can be anything from pirate ship, a stage, or just a hang where all the kids come after school.

With all the shade in this garden the accent is on foliage and texture rather than flowers. The flowers that are here are like jewels - something to be celebrated amongst the foliage.

The owners reckon the answer is careful planning. Not the sort you do on paper at the start, but the ongoing plans that happen as your life changes, the ones you make up as you're weeding or sitting in your favourite chair.

story notes

suburban

The **suburbs** are the areas around a city where people live.

Suburban means in the suburbs.

challenge

A **challenge** is a difficult job, or something that needs a lot of skill and effort to do.

functional

Functional here means useful.

A kitchen should be **functional** and not just good to look at.

veggie garden

A **veggie garden** is a place where vegetables are grown.

Veggies is a common shortening of vegetables.

The Australian habit of shortening words and adding an 'ee' sound is the subject of today's spotlight.

worm farm

A **worm farm** is place where worms are kept.

converting

changing

vermi-compost

Vermi- is a prefix meaning worm.

So **vermi-compost** is worm-compost or the waste from the worms after they've eaten the kitchen scraps.

vermi-tea

The fertile liquid produced by the worm farm.

pool

The pool is used for swimming.

nestled in

lying closely

pond

A **pond** is a small pool.

In gardens, a pond is usually used for keeping fish or frogs, not for swimming.
