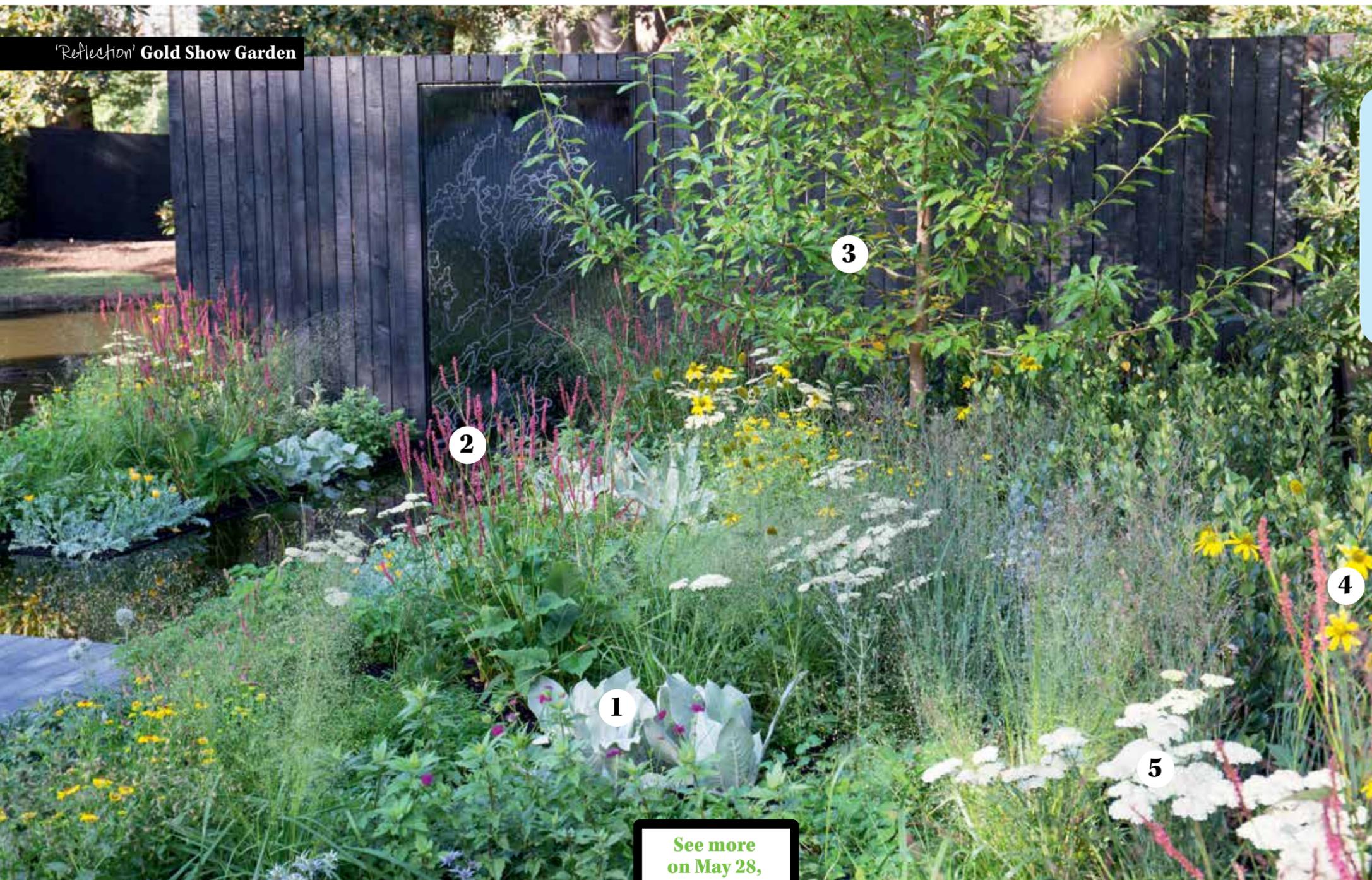


'Reflection' Gold Show Garden



call of the wild

A sophisticated palette with wispy grasses, including *Panicum* 'Heavy Metal' and *P. virgatum*, creates a carefully orchestrated wild and casual planting style for this design. Silver and white, with accents of pink and yellow, contrasts with the boathouse, which is clad with Oregon timber that has been burned to create a charcoal-like surface. Designer Ian Barker said his aim was to show how a naturalistic planting style, popular in Europe and North America, can be adapted for Australian gardens.

- 1. *Verbascum* 'Polar Summer'
- 2. *Polygonum* 'Summer Dance'
- 3. *Nyssa sylvatica* 'Forum'
- 4. *Rudbeckia laciniata*
- 5. *Achillea* 'Mondpagode'



'Chateau de Carlton'

PRETTY PATTERNS

These designs, made with jewel-coloured succulents, show off the versatility of these popular, drought-tolerant plants, which come in myriad intricate textures. Studio Gi, who designed this garden, used a repeated pattern to strengthen its symphony.



'Kidsense': Achievable Gardens (2nd)

child's play

A woven, nest-like pod cubby and graduating spiral tunnel are highlights of designer Fiona Webber's colourful and playful children's garden, which abounds with sensory elements. Bright yellow and orange cushions match the edible flowers on nasturtium plants. A silver 'river' of common everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum* 'Yorke Peninsula') flanks a tiny, fragrant chamomile lawn.

- 1. Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*)
- 2. Weeping lillypilly (*Waterhousea floribunda*)
- 3. Edible canna (*Canna indica* var. *edulis*)

See more on May 28, at 6.30pm on ABC TV

a show of inspiration

words DERYN THORPE photography VIRGINIA CUMMINS

Display gardens at garden shows often yield great design and planting ideas to try out at home. Here are a few of the themes and plant combinations that stood out this year at the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show

One of my gardening high points each year is discovering new plants, design trends and planting styles at the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS). There is a real sense of excitement at the show, as it attracts some of Australia's best designers who create thrilling show gardens displaying their design and building skills, and gardening ideas. This year, the displays featured simple shelters and pared-back hardscaping, which allowed the intricate plantings to steal the show. Most gardens had restrained colour schemes, but celebrated plant diversity. Foliage had a 'natural' look, rather than being tightly clipped, and 'hot' plants included grasses, succulents, dwarf conifers, compact natives and plants with silver or purple foliage.

"The garden was designed to show real planting combinations with normal and popular species"

classic style

This garden, by Vivid Design for The Greenery Garden Centre in Heidelberg, uses different levels for interest, and the hardscape has a central sitting area created from classic red brick and Australian bluestone. Its gorgeous plant selection includes well-loved classics such as *Gardenia 'Aimee Yoshiba'*, windflowers (*Anemone japonica*), *Arthropodium cirratum 'Matapouri Bay'* and clipped *Rhaphiolepis indica*. However, it was the abundance of delicate white flowers on *Hydrangea paniculata 'Sundae Fraise'* that had visitors 'ooohing and ahing'. The green and white juvenile flower racemes will develop pink autumn tones. Designer Carolyn Blackman says the garden was designed to display real planting combinations alongside normal and popular plant species. "We wanted the garden to show that the plants should, and can, provide structure and form in the garden, as well as decoration."

- 1. Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*)
- 2. *Iris japonica variegata*
- 3. *Rhaphiolepis 'Snow Maiden'*
- 4. *Euphorbia 'Silver Swan'*
- 5. *Arthropodium cirratum 'Matapouri Bay'*
- 6. Bay tree (*Laurus nobilis 'Miles Choice'*)
- 7. *Magnolia grandiflora 'Teddy Bear'*
- 8. *Heuchera 'Fire Alarm'*



'The Greenery Garden Centre Show Garden' Best in Show



'The Golden Afternoon' Achievable Gardens (3rd)

MUTED TONES

Green-grey and burgundy foliage is enlivened with splashes of fresh white coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea 'Alba'*). This colour scheme was one of the most popular colour palettes at the show. In this garden, designed by Jaz Rhodes, it is enhanced by a variety of textures, including a carpet of *Ajuga 'Caitlin's Giant'*, kidney weed (*Dicondra repens*) and the green-grey foliage of woolly bush.

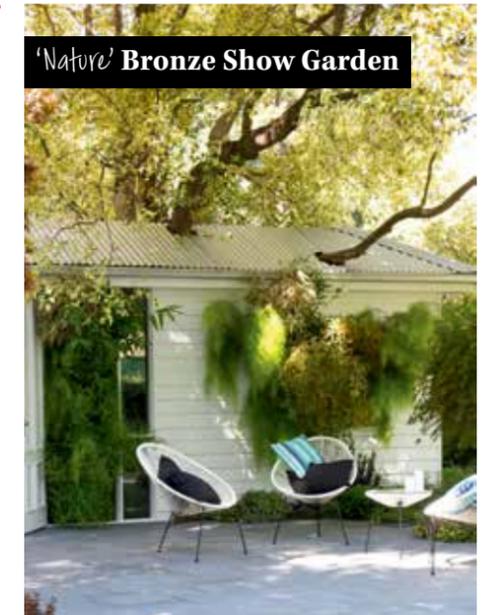


'A Garden Called Frank' Gold Show Garden

green & clean

Fescue lawn left lush and long, and textural plantings of dwarf conifers provide softness to a green and white design with a Nordic ambience. The pergola is lined with ash timber and the oversized concrete landings provide balance. Designer Peta Donaldson selected all the plants specifically for their foliage. Featured foliage plants included *Pinus thunbergii 'Yatsubusa'* and *P. strobus 'Merrimack'*.

- 1. Green diosma (*Coleonema compactum*)
- 2. *Juniperus conferta*
- 3. Red maple (*Acer Autumn Blaze*)



'Nature' Bronze Show Garden

eccentric sheds

Why have a garden shed when you can have a real treehouse! This whimsical greenhouse (*above*) is stuffed so full of shade-loving indoor plants that they appear to be escaping through the window! Who says a garden has to be serious? This Dali-esque building (*below*) is turning the world on its side. It comes complete with an overgrown bicycle – perfect as an unusual garden sculpture.



'The Relic'

'Breakfast in Bed' Momentum Energy Sustainability Award



TOUCH OF WHIMSY
This cottage-style courtyard designed by Claudine Reynolds takes recycling and outdoor dining to a new level, using an old chest of drawers as a vegetable bed and an apple tree espaliered on a white bedstead. Cafe-style white furniture stands out against the grey walls and feathery clumps of lawn chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*). Vegies include Black Toscana kale, Detroit beetroot, dwarf purple beans, rainbow chard.



'Refuge' Achievable Gardens (1st)

"Mostly native plants team with a combination circular metal water feature and firepit"

great outdoors

Designer Lincoln Flynn shows how to create an upmarket bush campsite in your own backyard, teaming mostly native plants with a combination circular metal water feature and firepit. A metal cut-out fence screen has pots of cascading *Dichondra argentea* 'Silver Falls', and a curved gabion wall seating area with a table provides the perfect place to relax.

1. *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* 'Vintage Red'
2. *Banksia spinulosa* 'Birthday Candles'



'Right of Way' Silver Show Garden

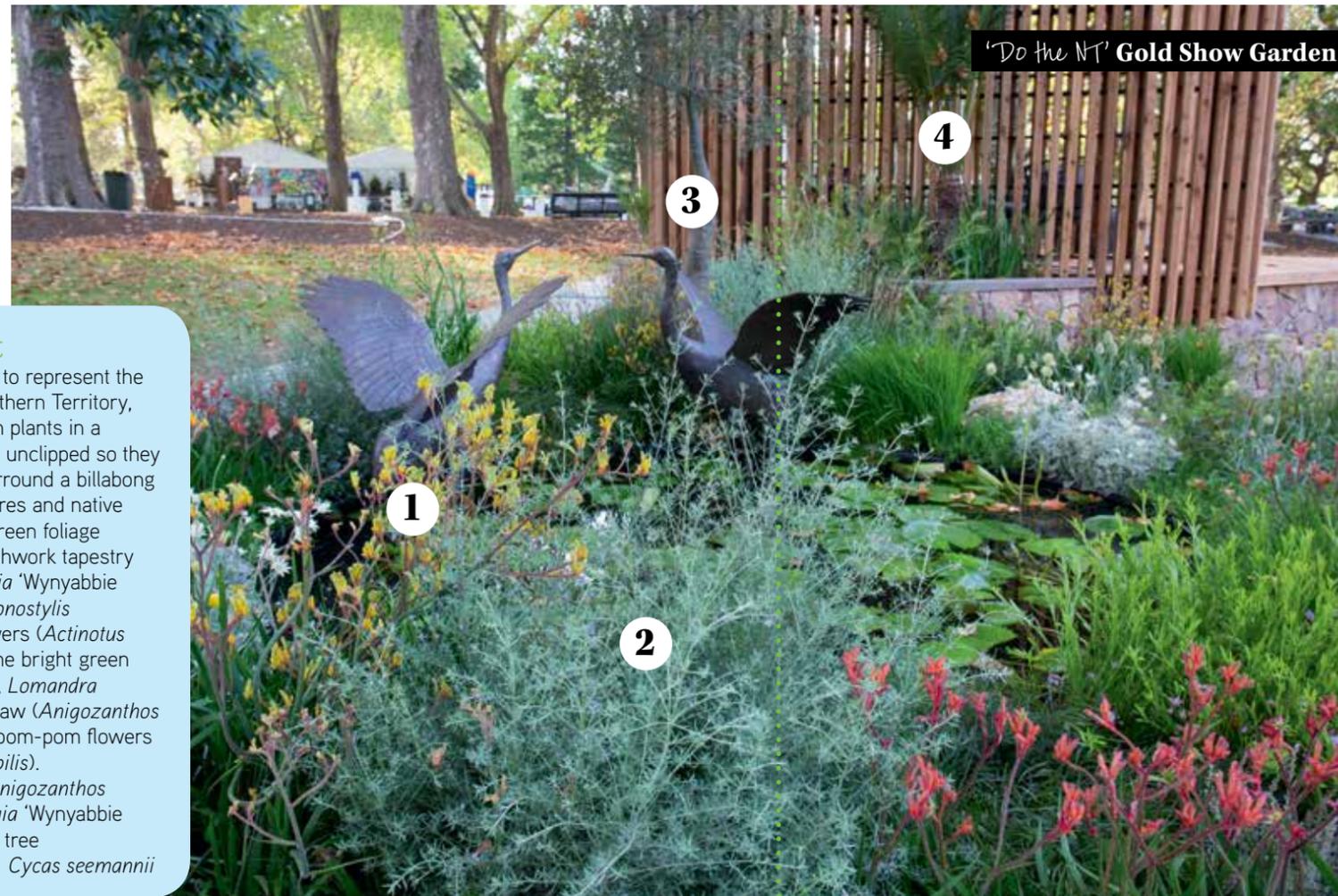
clever contrasts

This display shows how a laneway can be transformed into a place of beauty using a selection of tough grasses and pretty cottage-garden perennials. The designer, Daniel Tyrell, has created a traditional bluestone cobbled path to contrast with a modern fence, spray-painted with colourful graffiti by Conrad Bizjak. In the natural-looking garden, a froth of grass seeds on *Miscanthus oligostachyus* 'Eileen Quinn' and *Panicum virgatum* 'Rubrum' dance through edibles such as parsley, bronze fennel and caraway. Drought-tolerant beauties *Agastache aurantiaca* 'Sweet Lili' and *A. rugosa* 'Heronswood Mist' team with plants commonly found on degraded laneways, including common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) and verbena.

natural habitat

Created by Candeo Design to represent the diversity of flora in the Northern Territory, this garden uses Australian plants in a naturalistic way. Plants left unclipped so they look wispy and delicate surround a billabong with bronze broilga sculptures and native waterlilies. The grey and green foliage combination creates a patchwork tapestry effect, combining *Westringia* 'Wynyabbie Gem', grey cotton head (*Conostylis candidans*) and flannel flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*) to complement the bright green of *Crowea saligna* 'Starlet', *Lomandra* 'Lime Tuff', red kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos* 'Rampage') and the white pom-pom flowers of mulla mulla (*Ptilotus nobilis*).

1. Yellow kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos* 'Bush Matilda')
2. *Westringia* 'Wynyabbie Gem'
3. Queensland bottle tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*)
4. *Cycas seemannii*



'Do the NT' Gold Show Garden

POT OF GOLD

Designer Yvonne Green created a stream of echeveria succulents spilling from a terracotta pot, offset by the coppery-pink flower heads of *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' - one of the 'it' plants at the show. A stand of *Dianella tasmanica* 'Blaze' adds a touch of strappy foliage.



'Revelling in Levels'