

Courtyard Garden

Backyards for Wildlife Garden Design Fact Sheet

What is a Courtyard Style Garden?

Generally speaking, a courtyard garden is a garden surrounded by at least three walls of a building, or even nestled inside one. They are common in cities and towns where houses are built close together. They are usually very small, sometimes even limited to a few square metres.

A courtyard garden can be a challenge for people who are use to larger blocks, particularly because the access to water is often limited in small courtyards. Therefore it is a wise choice to create a native courtyard garden with local drought-tolerant plants.

Many Adelaide native plants work well in courtyard gardens. With a few design strategies you can create your own native courtyard garden easily.



Create Your Courtyard Garden Step by Step

When you design a courtyard garden, discipline is essential because every centimetre counts. Here are some key points for a courtyard garden design that you might want to consider:

1. Courtyards usually appear like a 'box', which can be associated with the fences or walls. Design a courtyard garden by using **regular-shaped garden beds** such as squares and rectangles that can save space to an extent. However, if you want to reduce the 'box-like' effect, **irregular shaped walls and paving** could be a good idea.
2. **Focus on fewer objects** if your gardening space is small. Keep the structure and layout simple by **avoiding the use of too many different types of building materials**. If too many textures are used, the space will seem smaller and more confusing.

3. **Select your paving material carefully.** You will probably want to use more paving in a courtyard garden to make the space look bigger. The type of paving material used will have a major visual effect on the overall appearance of the garden. Materials can be chosen to match other surfaces like tiles and walls of your house, or even match the pavers within the house, so that the courtyard can extend your indoor space.

4. **Consider a native lawn according to the size of your garden.** Lawn in the yard is an ideal place for outdoor family activities. Larger courtyards are recommended to have an area of native lawn, but smaller ones are generally unsuitable for lawns and should focus on making good use of paving (see the two different sample courtyard garden templates on the next page).

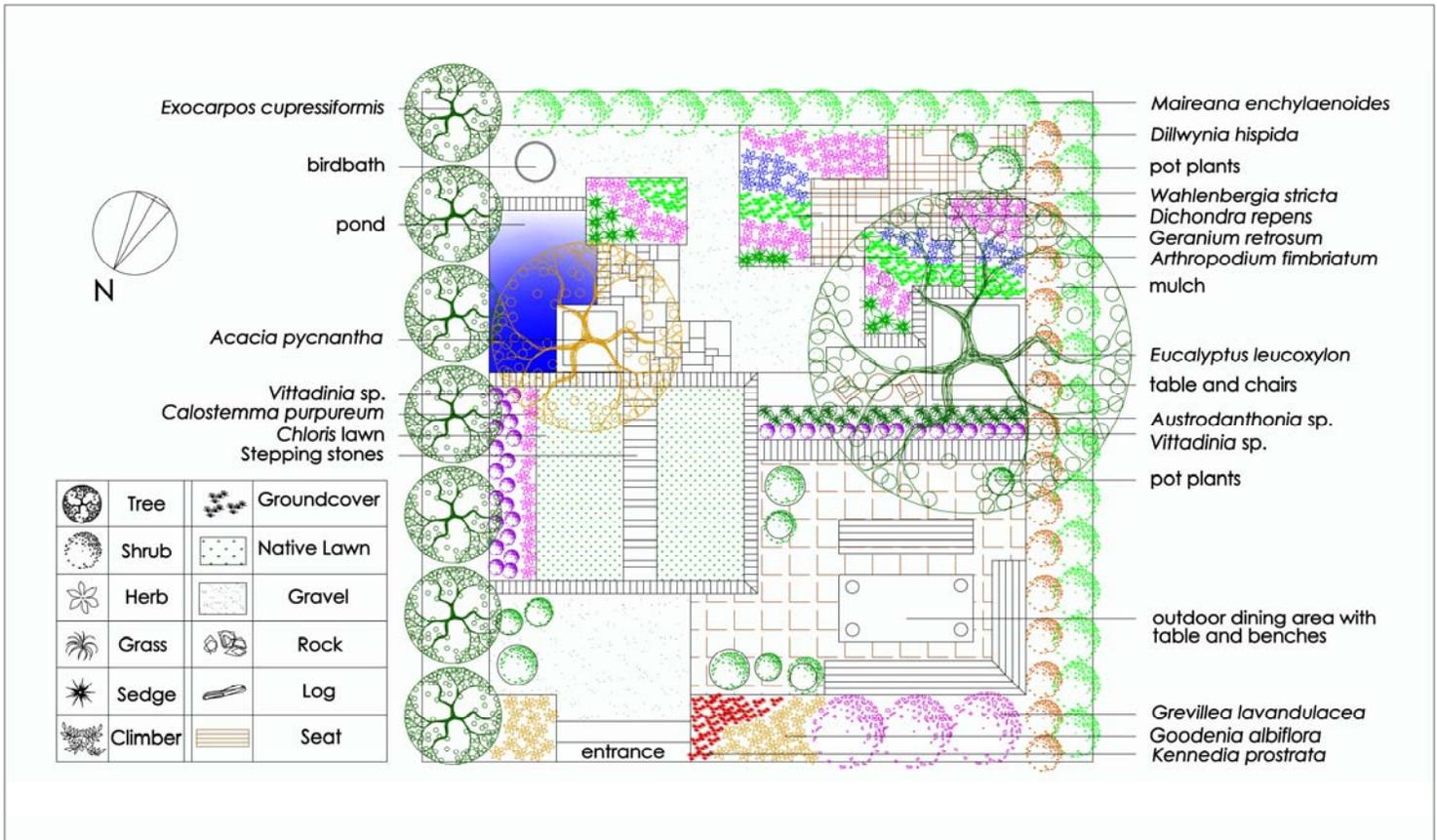
5. **Use some containers like pots or hanging baskets in your courtyard garden.** Containers are a good idea as they can be moved where you want, which can let you create changeable views within your garden. For example, flowering plants can be moved to a prominent position so you can enjoy them.



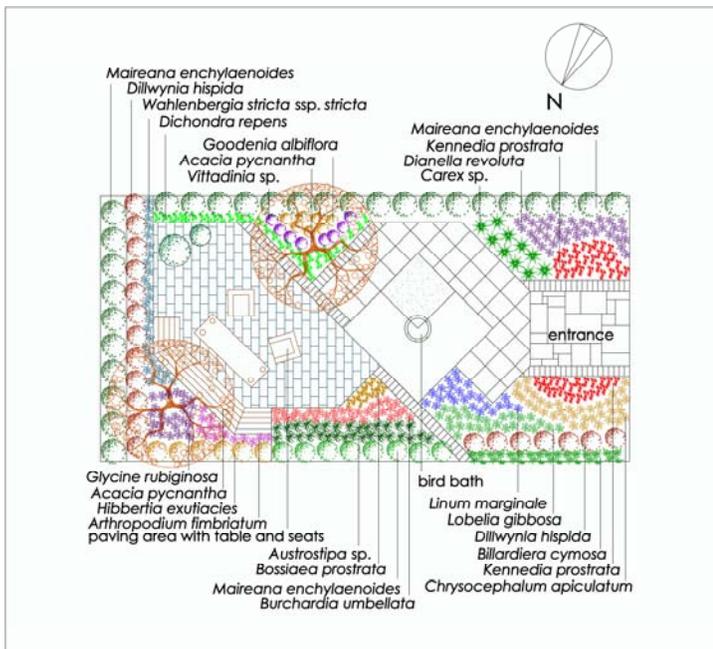
6. **Take advantage of climbers.** Climbing plants usually require very little ground space, so they are good for small courtyards. Climbers can either help cover a surface that you want to hide, or help to merge other materials into the garden.

7. **Do not over plant your courtyard garden.** Too many varied plants can create a feeling of clutter. A simple planting scheme of a few species works better in a confined area.

Example of a Courtyard Garden using Grey Box and Blue Gum Woodland Species 10m x 10m



Example of a Courtyard Garden using Grey Box and Blue Gum Woodland Species 10m x 5m

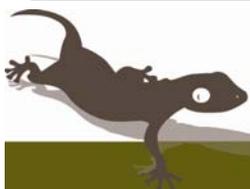


These are two examples of courtyard gardens for locations which were once originally Grey Box and Blue Gum Woodlands. The plant species selected for this design are based on a plant list of this vegetation association. **If you are not sure about the association of your area, please visit the BFW website to find your list.**

There are over 80 species lists for different vegetation associations in urban northern and southern Adelaide. There is also a Native Grower's List and both are available on the BFW website www.backyards4wildlife.com.au

Click on the interactive map or Nature Maps for your list. If you have a trouble finding your list, please contact the **Urban Biodiversity Unit** with your suburb.

You can also substitute plant species of each plant type with those on your species list if the plant you want is unavailable. Then you can create your own local native garden which benefits your local environment. If you would like to know more information about your local native plants, such as height and flowering time etc, please visit our **plant selector** through the website.



Backyards for Wildlife is managed by the SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, with support from the Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board and the Australian Government.

For further Information Contact

Urban Biodiversity Unit, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
Wittinga House, 328 Shepherds Hill Road, Blackwood SA 5051

Telephone: (08) 8278 0600 Facsimile: (08) 8278 0619

Email Address: info@urbanforest.on.net

Web Site: www.backyards4wildlife.com.au



Government
of South Australia



Australian Government