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Small wonders

There are rich rewards to be enjoyed in a small outdoor space. No matter how compact your suburban plot, courtyard or balcony, it has the capacity to help lift your spirits, immerse you in greenery and counterbalance the built environment. "Look for ways to inject life, texture and drama into the area," says Melbourne landscape designer Carolyn Blackman from Vivid Design. For Sydney landscape designer Adam Robinson, who specialises in creating mini green spaces, it's about making greenery "the life force of the space". The following 10 projects show you how...

PRODUCED BY Elizabeth Wilson

This balcony in inner-city Sydney has been transformed into a twinkling jewel by landscape designer Adam Robinson. It's now a space for sitting, dining and retreating, complete with a curtain for shade protection. Plants include (from left) *Casuarina* 'Cousin It', golden barrel cactus, *Philodendron* 'Rojo Congo' and potato vine. For more on this balcony, turn to page 135.



Grand beauty

The owners of this 1920s home in Sydney's east were looking to amp up the excitement at the front entrance. They wanted something bold but in keeping with the grand scale and elegance of the architecture; the brilliant fuchsia colour on the wall did the trick. Next they turned to interior designer Kate Bell and landscape designer Adam Robinson to dress the space. Kate selected a Lincoln Brooks day bed with cushions in Fig Leaf fabric from Peter Dunham Textiles, a striking foil for the wall colour. Adam opted for oversized pots planted with *Rhapis excelsa* at either end of the day bed, a nod to the strong symmetrical notes found throughout the property.

Kate Bell Design; www.katebelldesign.com. Adam Robinson Design; www.adamrobinsondesign.com.

DESIGN NOTE

Bold colour is a great way to bring energy into a space. "It works because of the juxtaposition of the classic architecture with a modern plant palette and joyful colour," says Adam.

Plants in pots include (from left) *Philodendron 'Rojo Congo'*, *Rhipsalis heteroclada* and *Rhapis excelsa* underplanted with *Epipremnum aurea*.

DESIGN NOTE

"The mirrors give the illusion of depth as well as reflecting abundant green around the space," says Adam. "They also feel like windows looking out beyond the city walls."

Crowd pleaser

A leafy, enticing sanctuary in the heart of the city... That was the brief when the owner of this Sydney apartment enlisted landscape designer Adam Robinson to help turn her balcony into an inviting zone suitable for dining and entertaining. Adam designed built-in bench seating on both sides of the 7.5x4.5m space, perfect for accommodating a crowd. The balcony is north-facing but doesn't receive direct sunlight, so Adam installed two large mirrors on one wall to boost the light levels. The lack of direct sunlight dictated the use of hardy palms and succulents. White curtains provide privacy and shade when required. This project was named Best in Category at the AILDM National Landscape Design Awards 2016.

Adam Robinson Design; (02) 8542 0317 or www.adamrobinsondesign.com.

KEY PLANTS

Giant white bird of paradise
(*Strelitzia nicolai*)

Devil's ivy
(*Epipremnum aureum*)

Walking iris
(*Neomarica gracilis*)

Aechmea fasciata

Rubber plant
(*Ficus elastica*
'Burgundy')