

Design

BYRON SHIRE HAS AN OUTSTANDING PALETTE OF INDIGENOUS PLANTS TO CHOOSE FROM. A GARDEN THAT UTILISES LOCAL SPECIES WILL LOOK MORE IN PLACE WITH ITS SURROUNDS AND LINK UP WITH EXISTING HABITAT TO 'INVITE' THE NATIVE WILDLIFE TO YOUR PLACE.

SUCCESSFUL GARDEN DESIGN BEGINS WITH A SITE PLAN - A SCALE DRAWING THAT INCLUDES ANY SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE SITE SUCH AS EXISTING TREES, SHEDS AND PATHS ETC.

SITE ANALYSIS

Site Analysis is a pivotal stage that lists an inventory of existing and desirable features of the garden that guide the design. Typical features include:

- Direction of cooling summer breezes and warm winter sun (typically north east) – best to leave free of obstructions and keep plantings low.
- Direction of cold winter winds (typically south west) – best for larger trees and wind block plantings to shelter the property
- Desirable views to retain and areas in the garden or rooms of the house where you wish to create privacy
- Undesirable views to obscure
- Pedestrian and vehicle access

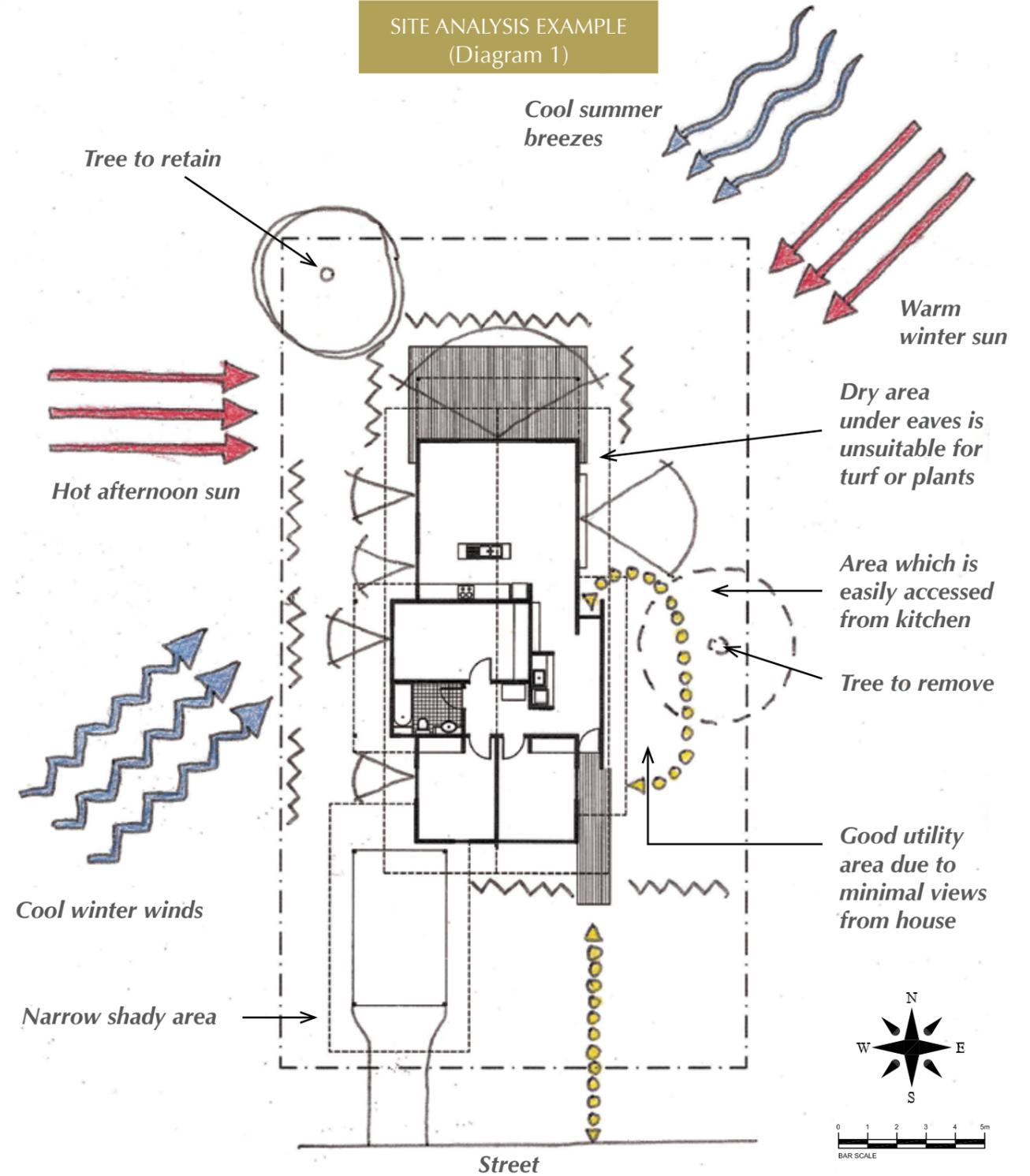
- Trees & plants to be retained
- Problem areas to address such as soil quality & drainage
- Fences, overhead power lines & underground cables
- Water outlets.

Sadly... we've all done it... excited by a surge of plant impulse buys, we give little thought to an overall layout. The result: a garden that doesn't function with the surrounding environment. Creating an initial design for a new garden or even renovating an existing garden will give you an overview of what to aim for, even if funds only allow realising the design gradually over time.



Pruned Lilly Pilly hedge with Giant Spear Lily. Photo: Veda Dante

SITE ANALYSIS EXAMPLE (Diagram 1)



- PRIVACY REQUIRED
- FOCAL POINT
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Illustration: Mandy Lisson



Davidson's Plum. Photo: Susan Allen

BASIC PLANTING GUIDE

Before you plant

- Check your soil type – does it match the description & type of garden & plants in your zone? Does the soil need any conditioning (mulch, fertilizer, organic matter) before planting?
- Choose plants – pay attention to microclimate, (e.g. full sun/shade, etc).
- Prepare the site – preliminary weeding, dig all the holes and have fertilizer, mulch and water on hand.

Correct planting technique

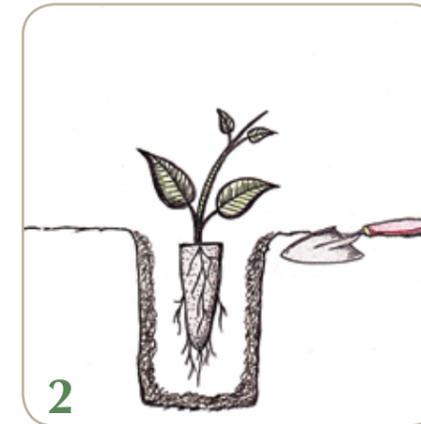
Check with the nursery where you purchase the plants about specific planting tips for your selected species, e.g. siting of the planting, watering & fertilizer requirements, mulching etc. Reputable online gardening websites can also be a great source of information.

GETTING HELP

Help can be obtained from local council, landscape designers, experienced bush regenerators, websites and nurseries. There are also a lot of great books and gardening magazines out there to help design your garden – why not put a scrapbook together of all the elements you wish to include? Most importantly, spend time in your garden, get to know the microclimates and plan your garden around its strengths and limitations.



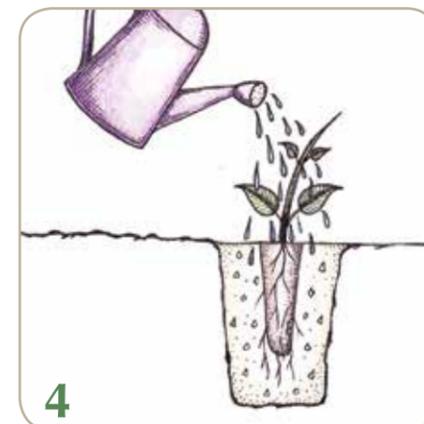
1. Dig a hole slightly deeper and at least twice as wide as the pot size. Loosen the soil around the sides of the planting hole. Water the plant & fill the hole with water and allow both to drain away. If the water doesn't drain from the hole you may need additional help with the addition of gypsum or build up a free draining mound of soil to plant into.



2. Gently remove the plant from the pot or tube and place in the planting hole - the top of the root ball should be level with the surrounding soil. If the roots are pot-bound gently loosen the root ball and then place in hole.



3. Backfill soil, making sure that the surface root ball is well covered and include a little slow release native plant fertilizer and water crystals/gel. Press the backfill down with your hands and shape the soil surface slightly to hold water. Do not place organic matter or too much fertilizer at the base of the hole as this may encourage root rot or fertilizer 'burn'.



4. Water the plant thoroughly after planting and then once a week for the first few months, (depending on season). Thereafter, water generously when the soil feels dry.



5. Mulch around the plant - 10cm thick with at least a 50cm radius - this will help to retain moisture and discourage weed growth. Avoid placing mulch against the stem of the plant as this may encourage collar rot.