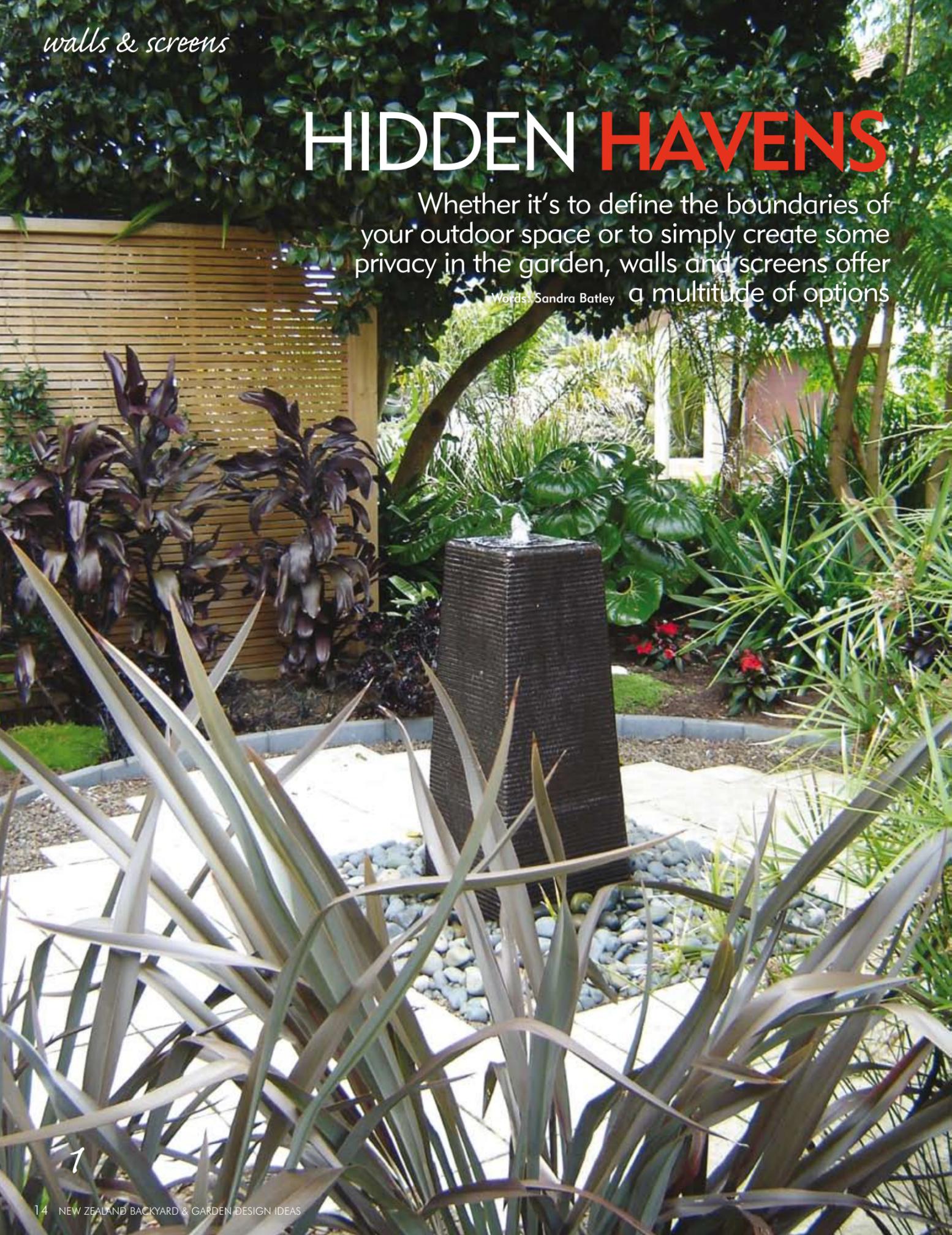


HIDDEN HAVENS

Whether it's to define the boundaries of your outdoor space or to simply create some privacy in the garden, walls and screens offer a multitude of options

Words: Sandra Batley



divided into smaller, intimate spaces. If space permits, create a series of outdoor rooms in your backyard by strategically placing walls so that each designated area becomes its own separate space. Incorporating walls like this in the garden allows you to enjoy several different settings all in the one area, such as an intimate space to dine, relax or entertain in, a protected spot for growing herbs and vegetables, as well as a sunny area for a colourful flower garden.

Even if you don't have a large backyard, creating outdoor rooms with walls and screens can still be achieved as the principle remains the same regardless of the size of the space.

Screening

In addition to enclosure, walls and screens can be used as a visual barrier to screen unattractive views or elements in the garden such as the utility area or an unsightly fence. Rather than construct an overpowering wall, consider a free-standing panel of trellis as a screening option. It can be made in a variety of patterns with the timber painted or left to weather naturally. Climbing plants or shrubs →



If your garden lacks privacy or if you simply want to define the boundaries of your outdoor space and create a more intimate setting, a wall or screen may just be the solution you're looking for.

Serving both functional and decorative purposes, walls and screens can be used in myriad ways in the garden. Being practical and aesthetically pleasing means walls and screens can be used to create an atmosphere, act as a focal point, hide an unsightly view or segregate parts of the garden.

Enclosure

Although serving several purposes, the main use for vertical structures such as walls and screens is enclosure. Whether it's to define the boundaries and enclose an entire space or to divide a garden into a series of smaller spaces, such as outdoor rooms, walls and screens are ideal options.

Walls are great for creating barriers and segregating one area from another, while screens can be used to add ambience or hide the garden from neighbours' view. Screens can also keep noise in (or out), depending on what the space will be used for.

A garden that can be seen all at once is not as interesting as a garden that has been

1. Oriental trellis is a popular way to divide and create separate outdoor rooms while also providing sufficient screening.

2. "Gun slot"-style windows within a wall provide views in and out of this courtyard space and create the perfect backdrop for lush tropical plants.

3. A series of dark-stained timber-slat screens placed off-set with this garden provide both privacy and screening.



walls & screens

can also be planted in front to help soften and blend with surrounding vegetation, making it both an attractive and practical device in the garden.

Screens can also be placed like signposts in the garden to help people navigate their way around the garden. Used in this way, screens allow you to catch a glimpse of what is beyond or purposely redirect you away from an unsightly area of the garden.

Privacy

Screens and walls not only play an important part in defining spaces, they also provide the perfect solution for screening out unwanted views. As property sizes get smaller and urban living increases, lack of privacy in your garden is becoming commonplace. To overcome this, a wall or screen can be strategically placed. Varying degrees of privacy can be achieved, depending on your needs, by using timber slat or trellis-style screens, bamboo, masonry block or brushwood panels. For a more definite statement, solid barriers can be used.

Materials

The sheer size and structure of walls and screens make them definite garden features. And the material used to create them will have an impact on the overall look and feel of the garden. When it comes to materials, the choice is often confusing given the vast array of options available, such as timber, aluminium, corrugated iron, concrete block, brick, stone, bamboo and brushwood.

One important rule is to use materials that are reflected elsewhere in the garden. This will not only create a visual link but will also give the space cohesion and make the walls/screens form part of the overall garden design. You should choose materials that harmonise rather than conflict with the style and architecture of your home.

Timber is an ideal material, as it is both durable and versatile. It is able to withstand exposure to the elements and can be installed by the average handy person. Its life span is less than that of concrete, brick or stone, but it weathers beautifully and fits in with a number of different garden styles.

Natural stone is another stunning choice. It has a sense of permanence and beauty and suits any garden style, from formal to modern. When using natural stone, try to use locally sourced rock for a more authentic result.

Bamboo is another good material to use. It's perfect for cladding an unsightly fence or creating a privacy screen in the garden. Being versatile also means bamboo can be used to create different looks, such as cool and crisp, tropical or contemporary.

Decorative features

In addition to being functional, screens and walls can also be used decoratively in the garden. Whether it's to support flowering and scented climbers or to provide an interesting focal point or backdrop within the garden, walls and screens can be used as design features in outdoor spaces.

4. A sculpture of tea-tree panels and red manuka, encased in a treated dressed timber frame, is a good choice for a coastal or native-style garden.

5. Bamboo and metal sheeting is an eye-catching contemporary combination, juxtaposing natural and manmade materials.

6. Bamusero's Bethells-style structure provides screening without completely obscuring views and creates a very casual feel.

A good example of this is attaching timber trellis panels to the side of an old wall or shed and then adding plants, pots and other decorative pieces to create a charming, rustic effect.

Another interesting way to use walls and screens decoratively in the garden is to make them bright in colour. Consider a bold red or majestic purple wall for added effect.

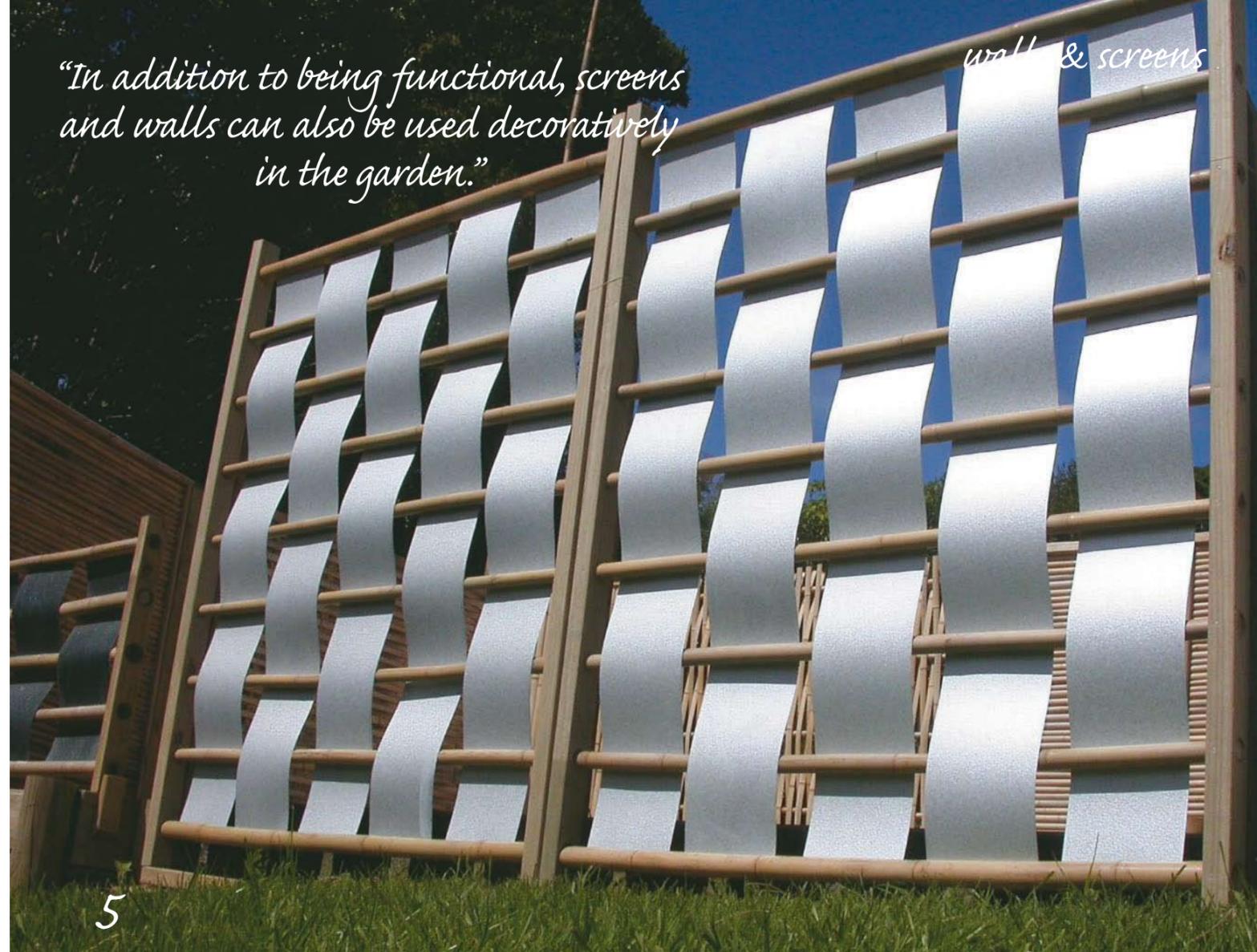
To get the most out of walls and screens in the garden, it's a good idea to make them multi-functional. Walls and screens that are both practical and decorative will provide you with a lot more options. For instance, a wall that screens out neighbouring views but also acts as a feature wall in itself will provide privacy in the garden as well as add a new dimension to the space.

Protection from the elements

Practically, screens can be used in the garden as windbreaks. Placed strategically within



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the garden, they provide protection from the prevailing winds — an important factor to think about when creating an outdoor living space.

Very often, however, erecting a solid wall or fence can create wind turbulence. The wind simply hits the solid fence with full force, surges over and causes worse turbulence on the lee side. A good alternative is to use a slatted timber screen, as this will allow the air currents to pass through, in turn reducing the force.

Alternatively, you can create a windbreak using plants. They provide all the benefits of a built screen with the additional advantage of flowers, foliage and scent. There's a number of shrubs and trees both native and exotic that can be used.

Walls and screens serve many functions in the garden. Whether it's for practical purposes, such as defining a space, creating privacy or screening unsightly views, or for decorative purposes such as adding a splash of colour, creating a new dimension in the garden, or simply acting as a focal point or feature element, vertical structures offer many ways to enhance your outdoor living space. ■