

3 project bonsai basics

Bonsai are forever – or at least they should be. Diminutive forms of trees and shrubs, they can last just as long as their larger cousins planted in the garden, and bring you just as much delight over many years. Successful growing of bonsai comes down to a few simple rules of plant maintenance – follow our guidelines and your mini trees will be things of beauty forever. For the pattern sheet, see over page.



1. The Chinese Garden of Friendship, in Darling Harbour, Sydney, features many wonderful bonsai specimens and is an excellent place to visit for oriental inspiration.

2. Penjing is the Chinese art of creating a landscape in a pot. Here *Buxus* 'Kingsville Dwarf' was used. It's an elegant, tiny-leaved boxwood which is ideal for bonsai.



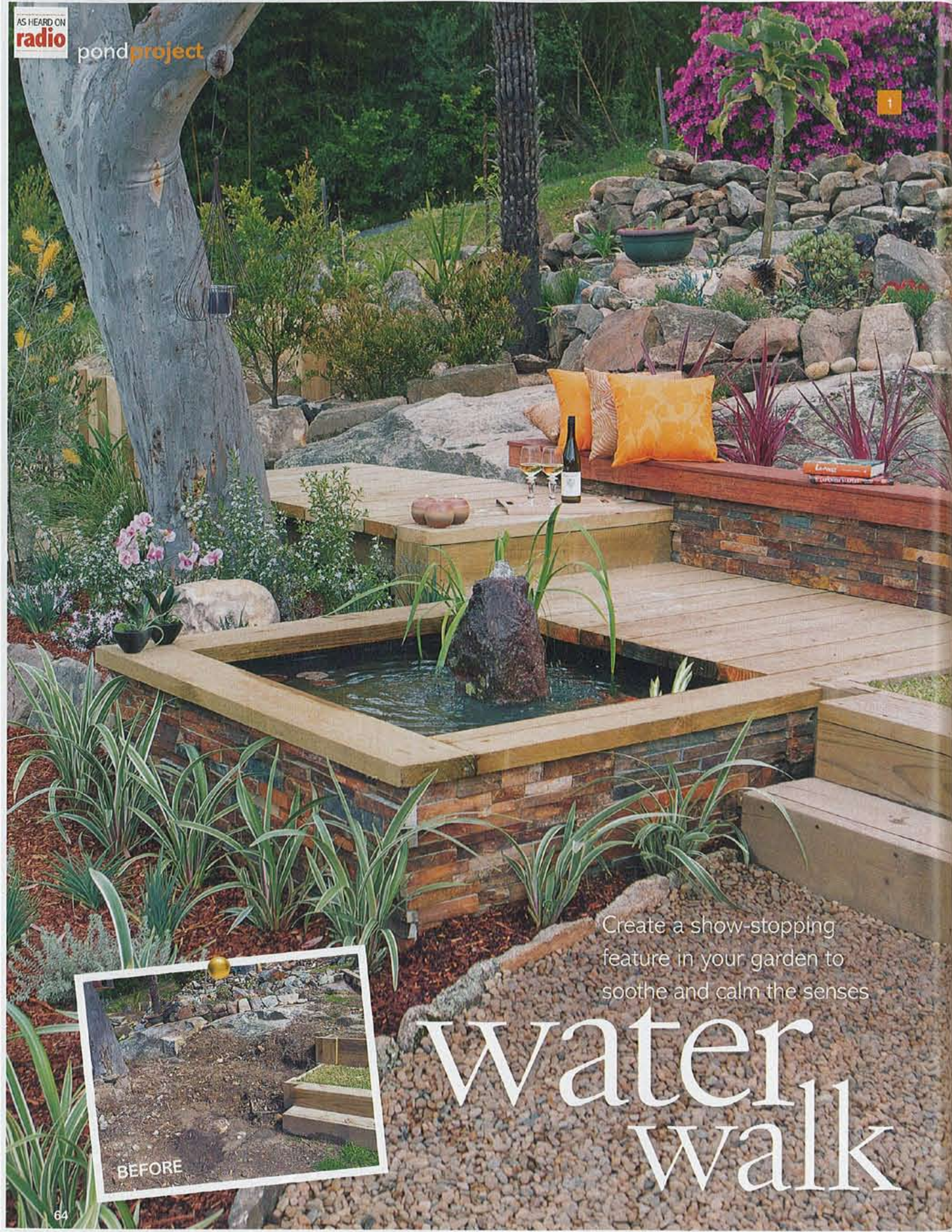
4 project the entertainer

This project will really get your party started. The low bench/table converts from an entertainment centre to a decorative planter when guests have gone. If you make the it from western red cedar, it will cost about \$500 in timber, but you can also use other durable or treated timbers that are considerably cheaper, though heavier. For the pattern sheet, see over page.

1. The stainless steel trays slot in and out, so you can use them as planters or snack holders. Being western red cedar, the bench is quite happy to live outside.

2. Your guests may never leave when there's somewhere to take the weight off their feet, plus watermelon and plenty of beverages on ice.

For shopping details, see [Stockists page](#)



Create a show-stopping feature in your garden to soothe and calm the senses

water walk



Add a touch of magic to your backyard with this cool pond and boardwalk. Think of the ever-changing reflections on the water, cooling ambience and breathtaking water plants, such as waterlilies and aquatic iris. No other garden element can introduce quite as many dimensions and delight so many of the senses.

Integrating a water feature into your landscape can be challenging, especially on uneven sites. But this delightful project works well on sloping terrain and makes brilliant use of space that would otherwise likely go unused. In fact, you can construct this feature on just about any block – simply modify it to suit your situation. So turn the page to find out how to add a little slice of paradise to your garden. ▶

1. Timber, stone and water meld perfectly to create a relaxed and tranquil garden.

2. A mix of hardy native shrubs and ornamental grasses add colour and structure to the richly textured scheme.



Anigozanthos
'Rampaging Roy Slaven'

Dianella
'Wyeena'

Dianella
'Cassa Blue'

Cordyline
'Electric Pink'

Brachy
'Brea'

Plants for the look

You've created a retreat for relaxation, so keep the garden maintenance to a minimum with hardy shrubs and grassy plants.

Pond and boardwalk

This project is ideal for sloping sites and for connecting garden spaces on difficult terrain. It comprises a sleeper box frame, which supports a pond and its boardwalk. The boardwalk also forms the pond's capping and its surround, and stacked stone cladding is a great way to decorate the pond's frame.

GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES

- 1400 x 1400 x 450mm fibreglass pre-fabricated pond
- 200 x 50 x 2400mm H4 CCA sleepers (12)
- 200 x 75 x 2400mm H4 CCA sleeper
- 200 x 50 x 2400mm H4 EcoWood ACQ sleepers (6)
- 20kg quick-set concrete (1-2 bags per post)
- 100mm and 150mm galvanised bugle batten screws
- 75mm stainless steel bugle batten screws
- 35mm galvanised decking screws
- Landscape construction adhesive
- 2400 x 1200 x 7.5mm blueboard sheet
- 90 x 19mm x 3m DNA certified merbau decking (4)
- Hozelock EasyClear 6000 pond pump
- 20mm river pebbles
- Paving sand
- 600 x 150 x 25-35mm stacked stone cladding

Note: Change quantities and sizes to suit your garden.

HERE'S HOW

To construct the pond frame:

STEP 1 Decide on the height you want for your boardwalk (here, flush with a landing of the garden steps). The decking used for the walkway is 50mm thick and the preformed pond is 450mm deep, so clear and roughly level area where the pond will sit so it finishes 560mm below boardwalk level. This allows for a 30mm sand base and a 30mm gap between lip of pond and underside of boardwalk decking. The frame for the pond is 400mm high all around, and made of 2 rails which are 200 x 50mm CCA sleepers used on edge on each side.

STEP 2 Locate upper full length rail that forms rear wall of pond and doubles as a joist for boardwalk. Prop so it's horizontal and 50mm down from top of stair landing. Screw to timber of stairs at 1 end, if possible. At far end, or both ends if you're not butting against an existing structure, measure length of posts needed. If you need a post at the pond end, install posts behind rail so

they don't interfere with the box frame. The posts need to go 500mm into the ground and finish flush with top of rail. Cut posts to length from 50mm CCA sleepers. Dig a 500mm-deep hole for each post, then place post in hole and screw to rail with 100mm screws.

STEP 3 From stair end, mark 50mm then the overall pond width on rail. The pond opening needs to be large enough to enable pond to slip in, and to allow its lip to rest on internal posts. Mark centre of pond width on rear rail. Dig a 500mm deep hole under this position, and again cut a post, but this time it should finish 30mm short of rail top to allow for the pond lip which it supports. Make sure top surface is level before fixing to rear rail with 100mm screws. Pour 1 or 2 bags of concrete around each post.

STEP 4 Cut upper side rail from a CCA sleeper to suit side of pond. Dig a 500mm-deep hole for a post at middle and another at end, then prop side in place and check for level. Measure and

cut posts so they are 30mm short of top of side, and temporarily clamp in place. Check corner is square, then screw rear rail to side rail with two 150mm screws, and screw posts to sides with 100mm screws.

STEP 5 Make sure tops of side posts are level with central back post. Repeat this procedure for fitting far side upper rail, complete with 2 posts, then front of pond with a central post only. Do not concrete posts in place yet.

STEP 6 With all top rails and posts in place and level, measure diagonals of box frame. For frame to be square, diagonals must be equal. Adjust, then concrete posts in place. Let set, then screw lower course of rails in place with 100mm screws to complete frame.

STEP 7 Spread a 30mm layer of paving sand inside frame and screed to level. Measure from top of posts to top of sand. The height must be the same as external height of your pond from underside of its lip to its base.

STEP 8 Gently lower the pond into frame, so it is supported on the posts and by the sand.

To construct the boardwalk and surround:

STEP 9 Cut 3 posts that will stand 400mm higher than height of boardwalk joists and be set 500mm into the ground. They are spaced 1200mm apart and run parallel to the pond's rear rail. The distance between them determines the width of your boardwalk, here 900mm. These posts will support a joist and the rear wall.

STEP 10 Rip the 200 x 75mm CCA sleeper down the centre to make two 100 x 75mm pieces to use as joists. Clamp 1 piece against the face of a post with 75mm edge upmost as a joist. Clamp at far end as well, then use a level to check it's the same height as pond's rear rail. Once level, use 150mm screws to attach joist to posts. ▶



Clever shortcuts

Stacked stone cladding is made from real stone and is very easy to install. If you use a preformed fibreglass pond it will give you a handy head start over using fabric liners.



The overhang of the boardwalk creates a jetty-like feel and also gives fish a shady spot in which to hide.