



1. Frameless glass fencing, from Nu-Lite Balustrading, allows an unobstructed view of the pool while the neatly clipped hedges and use of evergreen plants ensure the pool blends seamlessly into its surrounds. For more information: www.nu-lite.com.au.

2. The landscaping around this pool, part of an award-winning project by Landscape 2000, shows just what can be achieved with clever design and careful selection of hard landscaping materials. For more information: www.landscape2000.com.au.

to salty conditions. To combat the latter problem, consider coastal plants that are salt-tolerant and hardy.

Pool fencing laws prohibit planting trees too close to a pool fence lest children climb them to gain access to the pool area. When planting trees, keep in mind that anything with invasive roots should be avoided as it may eventually damage water pipes and surrounds and put pressure on the pool frame.

Deciduous plants and those with fine foliage are not recommended because of the amount of leaf litter they create. Every autumn, and whenever a strong wind blows, your pool will be showered with leaves and your pool cleaner will be working overtime. Leaf litter can also stain some pools and surrounds if not removed quickly.

If you want to create a resort feel around your pool, and you live in a temperate climate, go for tropical plants. But whatever planting theme you decide on, just be sure to choose plants that require minimal maintenance, as access can be an issue.

And a final word: don't forget the lighting. You need lighting that makes the pool and the surrounding area safe and appealing to use at night. This can be complemented with coloured underwater lighting or uplit feature plants or artworks around the pool perimeter to add ambience. ■



SETTING THE SCENE

With the right landscaping, your new pool will blend beautifully into your backyard

Story: Amanda Elboz, MAILDM

When contemplating a pool, perhaps the most vital consideration is how to ensure it will blend seamlessly into its environment. With the size of many backyards shrinking, a pool will often be the major element in an outdoor space, so it needs to complement the style of the garden and house. The goal is to ensure all hard and soft landscaping elements work in harmony and, if your pool is located next to the house, that both internal and external living spaces are expertly integrated.

The hard landscaping components, such as decking, paving, retaining walls and the like, require special consideration as they need to be safe and sturdy as well as aesthetically appealing. Particular attention needs to be given to the choice of pavers around your pool. This involves contemplating the overall design of the garden and the architectural style of the house to ensure the paving products you choose will enhance both.

For a modern, uncluttered look, large-format square-edged pavers and coping contribute crisp, clean lines. For a freeform or natural pool, you can use rounded bullnose coping and random paving. Today, pavers can be made to any size you like, giving you maximum flexibility. Many companies can also supply skimmer box lids made from the same material as the paving and coping.

On the practical side, the pavers need to withstand the harsh conditions around the pool caused by constant splashes of chemically treated water. When choosing pavers, they need to be durable, slip-resistant and non-porous (or sealed accordingly).

As fencing around pools is mandatory, it's important that it suits the design of the landscape and house. If your space is limited or there is an amazing outlook, the best choice is a glass fence. Although frameless glass fencing is the most expensive option, it's something worth budgeting for as it will open up your backyard and allow your new, beautifully designed pool area to become a focal point of the landscape.

Shade is another important piece of the puzzle. You need somewhere cool and shady nearby, such as a poolside pavilion, hut or cabana. Any permanent structure will obviously become a dominant feature of the landscape so needs careful consideration. For coverage when you're actually in the water, you could consider installing a shade sail across part of the pool or place beside the pool a large cantilevered umbrella that can be extended out over the water should you need it.

On the soft landscaping side, careful selection and placement of plants are a must. Plants can provide privacy from neighbours and some degree of shade. They also soften and balance the hard pool structure and surrounds.

There are practical limitations on your plant selection due to splashing from chemically treated water. And if you have a saltwater pool, you'll find some plants just can't tolerate exposure