



**Colour:** Hebe speciosa 'La Seduisante' can be clipped to shape or left to fill out to allow for maximum flower display.



**Flourishing:** As it reaches adulthood the multi-coloured leaves of Astelia 'Westland' will become increasingly impressive.

## Garden novices are growing along nicely

### FROM PAGE 2

marvellous," Tony says. "She sat down and listened to what our needs and wants were in terms of easy care, hardiness, ability to take the salt. Basically, if we can't kill it it's got to be good.

"Alison stomped around the section and had a good look a couple of times, then came back with a plan. The planting plan that she gave us was fantastic. It gave us precise locations where to put plants because, again, we didn't know how big plants would grow or wouldn't grow," he says.

As well as the planting plan, Alison ensured the Lloyds knew what each plant would eventually look like.

"She gave us pictures of plants saying 'this would look really good there, it's shady, it grows well, it's got this tree to go with it, like the bromeliads out the front'. We knew what we were getting without knowing a lot about plants. She was excellent to deal with. She knew what we were trying to achieve with the structure of the house.

"We wanted a simple elegance, understated but quality, and she followed that through," Trish says.

"We're novices when it comes to gardening. I love getting out there and weeding and raking and looking after it and watering each night. I really enjoy it

now I've got it. I've taken good care of it and I'm looking forward, too. We've got a fantastic design for down the side of the house where it's a bank. We've got a little path and grass and steps and lovely plants," she says.

Alison has also drawn up planting plans for the lower area of the section, which is currently a wide sweep of lawn easily able to accommodate a gentle family cricket match and provide plenty of romping space for their still-growing black Labrador. However, at present Trish and Tony are not sure how much lawn they're prepared to turn over to garden.

Medium-sized trees that will give privacy for themselves and their neighbours are on the agenda, but nothing that will come between them and their fantastic "borrowed landscape" across the Pauatahanui inlet to the surrounding hills.

Another definite for this area is a vegetable garden which, while it won't amount to self-sufficiency, will add a welcome taste of "home-grown" to family meals.

As well as listing ideal plants for each site, the planting plan also included the quantities needed to give good coverage of the spaces, their requirements, plant suppliers and seasonal planting programmes for each plant type.

Keeping with the clean lines of the house, the garden plan is simple but rich in plant form and colour, yet without a

flower to be seen.

For instance, the long broad path to the front door has just four potted plants marking its simple lines: brown/silver leaved Astelia 'Westland' at the door; Aeonium 'Schwarzkopf' at the opposite end.

Planted in white pots, their leaves unblemished and their deep colour made near-black by the intense sun reflecting from the predominantly white background, it's easy to see why these easy-grow succulents have become a favourite for so many styles of garden.

A shady corner to one side of the entrance courtyard is home to a delightful combination of mounds of Scleranthus biflorus, underpinning the curvaceous glossy leaves of Myosotidium hortensia (Chatham Islands Forget-me-nots) and contrasting with two big large craggy rocks.

But this lovely spot nearly lost its charm when Tony and Trish were planting it.

Having carefully laid protective cover on the paving to prevent it being damaged should the rocks crash on to it, the rocks went tumbling from the wheelbarrow. The couple watched in horror as the larger of the rocks landed safely on the garden but maintained its momentum till it came to rest through both panes of the doubled-glazed floor-level window.

A narrow bed at the opposite side of the courtyard is given over to Neoregelia

'Crimson Heart', already a stunning blaze of red in a striking contrast of colour and leaf shape with a single, sharp green *Griselinia lucida*.

Beds either side of the gate feature a central *Aloe arborescens*, the strongly architectural form of which already stands stark against the white wall and above an underplanting of native *Fuchsia procumbens*.

A row of rounded hebes and *pseudopanax* separates these matching beds with a great spread of deep burgundy in *Cordyline 'Purpurea'*, *Phormium 'Dark Delight'* and a grassy border of *Uncinia rubra*.

Next up is a similar plant selection in green this time, with *Phormium 'Jester'*, and *Cordyline 'Green Goddess'* bordered by *Marlborough Rock Daisy (Pachystegia insignis)*.

And while it's not on the plan, Trish is determined that the warm courtyard will eventually be covered by a grapevine struck from cuttings of the vines grown by her great-grandfather Josef Franich, who brought them, also as cuttings, from his native Yugoslavia.

"It's part of the children's heritage, but also the grapes taste so much nicer than anything you find in the supermarket," Trish says.

Alison Bayly and Oasis Garden Design can be contacted by phone at 0274 379 215.



**Contented:** The sharp green of the new growth of *Giselinia lucida* indicates a happy plant in the right spot.



**Happy:** Right at home in this gentle site, *Myosotidium hortensia's* glossy curves leaves are unmarked by weather, pests or disease and the plants should multiply well once they reach flowering stage.