

Trevor visits Sharlyn Sarac's garden

Channel Nines newest face has proven in a short time to be a talented newsreader. We thought we'd visit her home to try to help out with the garden and learn a little more about the person behind the weekend news. Sharlyn lives in Perth's northern suburbs and the home is built high on a rise that would normally challenge the best gardener. The limestone retaining wall is beautifully built and adds wonderful perspective to the garden and house. Sharlyn, who lives with her mum was quick to point out she's not a green thumb at all but thoroughly enjoys the wonderful environment her mum has developed around the home.

The front garden had many features for me including a terrific standard wisteria which was in masses of flower which was pretty amazing considering it was out of season.

The back garden was a revelation as it was a great mix of functionality where there are two outdoor rooms one with a huge spa and another set up for outdoor entertaining. The garden itself was planted with some beautiful *Dracaena*'s or dragon trees. Her mum has planted two powton trees which are also known as the princess tree producing magnificent spring flowers. My concern was the speed and size these trees grow to and it's position in the garden. This is the fastest growing tree in the world capable of growing 3 metres in height a year. It's a hardwood tree originating from China and after talking to Sharlyn's camera shy mum I realised she knew exactly what she was doing and was happy to let these beautiful trees spread and shade a large paved area.

One problem or possible problem was a *Lantana* spreading through the garden bed which Sharlyn feared was a weed with the potential to take over the garden bed. The *Lantana* is a problem in the tropics as it can overtake natural flora quickly smothering out all competitors. This variety, the mauve flowering 'montevicensis' is actually one of the best groundcovers you can have so I quickly reassured her that it was a good plant to have.

Before leaving Sharlyn asked me to have a look at the front garden and particularly lawn and after one of the hottest summers in years it was

looking a little frazzled. I promised a quick fix and pulled out the unique 3 in 1 garden tonic Professor Macs 3 in 1. Made up of Eucalyptus oils, Tea Tree oils, liquid composts and a wetting agent its perfect for lawns and gardens alike. The oils are a natural insecticide effectively controlling African black beetle and lawn army worm two of the worst lawn pests around. Adding a wetting agent when fertilising ensures the nutrients seep evenly to the roots assisting the plant to recover from heat stress quickly as the new autumn seasons growth sets in.

Sharlyn Sarac can be seen on Channel Nine reading week day news at the moment with Dixie Marshall.