

gardening

# down to EARTH

From India to New York, Kiwi landscape architect Craig Pocock designs with the health of the planet in mind

WORDS: LYNDA HALLINAN PHOTOGRAPHS: TOM ZOOK



Craig Pocock applies his environmental philosophy to gardens from Kashid, India (pictured here), to upstate New York (pictured above).

It's a good thing Christchurch-based landscape architect Craig Pocock wasn't cut out for polishing boots. As a teenager, he enrolled to study landscape architecture at Lincoln University only after being turned down by the army. "They wouldn't take me," he recalls. "They told me I asked too many questions and had a bad attitude."

That willingness to challenge the status quo – coupled with a few twists of fate – has played a significant role in cementing his reputation as one of New Zealand's leading advocates for sustainable design.

Craig grew up "running loose on a farm" in Canterbury, with an intuitive love for the environment, but it wasn't until after he graduated and landed a job as a landscape architect for the Whakatane District Council that he began to develop his environmental philosophy.

"The Resource Management Act had just come in and there was a lot of tension between the council and local iwi." The experience provided him with a unique insight into the long-term effects of landscape development on local communities.

After three years in Whakatane, Craig left for London. One night he struck up a conversation with a woman in a bar "who just happened to work for an agency that happened to be looking for a landscape architect to work in the Middle East". ▷



gardening

Tropical taro plants surround a courtyard pool. Craig installed a wetland filter system to keep this frangipani-fringed swimming pool in India clean without chemicals.



Craig got the job and spent two years working on lavish, "environmentally frivolous" hotel gardens in the West Bank and Jordan. "In our development near the Dead Sea, we planted 300,000 tropical plants that sucked up 80 cubic metres of water a day in an area where it hadn't rained for six years and the villages didn't have running water. Everything we did was fighting the environment but there was no convincing the client so I quit."

Craig left the Middle East with a clear sense of design destiny – and an American wife. "I played rugby with one of the princes and my wife worked for one of the princesses. We met at an embassy party after a match." The couple moved to

Philadelphia, where Craig's wife studied law while he designed high-end but eco-friendly landscapes for clients in upstate New York, Washington and India.

After returning to New Zealand to raise a family, Craig now also lectures at Lincoln University and has worked with the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects to develop sustainability guidelines for design awards.

Aesthetics and sustainability needn't be mutually exclusive, he says. In one of his Indian courtyard gardens, the elegant swimming pool is kept clean not with chemicals but by recirculating the water through beds of gravel and a 100sqm wetland. Stormwater and grey water are also recycled through rain gardens and Craig specifies permeable materials, native plants and cut slabs of stone rather than cement wherever possible.

"As designers we need to understand our materials. For every tonne of concrete we specify on our plans we're responsible for at least four tonnes of carbon dioxide ending up in our atmosphere."

Contact Craig Pocock, (03) 358 3040 or see [www.designenvironment.co.nz](http://www.designenvironment.co.nz)



Don't let allergies get in the way of your day. Help prevent them with Flixonase Hayfever & Allergy. Just one spray daily can let you enjoy life without the worry of symptoms such as a runny nose, watery eyes or that groggy, stuffed up feeling.



Allergy Freedom

Pharmacy medicine. Flixonase contains 50mcg of Fluticasone Propionate per spray. Always read the label and use strictly as directed. Do not exceed the stated dose or treatment duration (6 months). Seek medical advice prior to use if you have an infection in the nose. If symptoms persist or you have side effects see your healthcare professional. For children and adults 12 years of age and over. Dosage: 2 sprays into each nostril once a day. Do not use if you have hypersensitivity to Fluticasone Propionate or any of the ingredients listed on the leaflet. Do not use if pregnant or breast feeding unless under medical supervision. GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, Auckland, New Zealand. Flixonase® is a registered trade mark of the GlaxoSmithKline group of companies. TAPS PP4452.

