



Use of Lomandras in Design

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With a range of sizes and forms, foliage colours and textures, interesting flowers and general reliability, *Lomandra* species deserve to be more widely grown.

Lomandras are promoted for massed plantings or linear edging. Massed plantings at very close spacing are common along major roads and freeways. Often impressive due to their scale, these plantings would be static and boring without the moving perspective created from our cars. Varying planting densities or mixings species or forms to create swales of different heights, colours or textures might create greater interest and variety in these plantings.

Nurseries often market lomandras and other tussock or clumping species with labels denoting "accent on foliage". This is a fundamental misrepresentation of their function in landscape design. What should be noted is the contrasting form of these plants. Without trunks, stems and branches the linear leaves appear to radiate from a fixed point and our eye is naturally drawn to that point. Thus individual plants can be used to create accents in a garden. Placed at intervals along a path they can add interest to our journey by progressively switching our attention from one area to the next.

Incorporated into large-scale plantings of trees and large shrubs, informal massed plantings of lomandras (at sufficient spacing to allow for the natural form of individual plants to develop) can be very attractive. These linked under-plantings unite an area and create a much more open and relaxed effect by providing visual access to more of the design. Similarly, drifts of smaller species in the garden can introduce a feeling of greater depth by encouraging the eye to move deeper into a garden bed, or 'movement' by directing the eye towards a new area or vista.

Indigenous species should be included in revegetation projects to maintain local character and provide important habitat for butterflies. In informal (naturalistic) gardens lomandras seem to naturally compliment rock outcropping and are attractive adjacent to boulders around ponds or pools. In formal gardens many species are suitable for border plantings. In a modern style (that might be labeled architectural or sculptural!) fine leaved species combined with grass trees (with trunks of varying heights) can produce a simple but stunning effect. Such an arrangement is readily applicable to a discrete area such as a courtyard garden or to large containers or planter boxes in private or public spaces.

With such a range of potential applications it can only be hoped that a wider range of *Lomandra* species will be more commonly and imaginatively used in Australian landscape design in the future.