

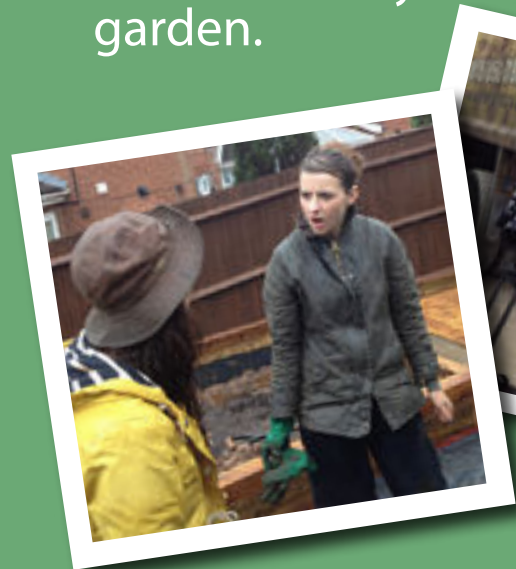
LOVE YOUR GARDEN

David Domoney's Complete Guide



ITV's Love Your Garden is the most watched TV gardening show in Britain. The team head around the country to give surprise garden makeovers to deserving people.

Read David Domoney's Complete Guide to the show, including expert gardening advice and step-by-step projects to make over your own garden.





INTRODUCTION



The garden is an incredibly important part of our lives. It gives us space to relax and unwind, and the satisfaction of seeing little plants grow and thrive by our hands.

Countless studies have shown that gardens and outdoor spaces improve our mood and wellbeing. A great garden just makes us feel better.

I love taking part in the show with my co-presenters, Alan Titchmarsh, Frances Tophill and Katie Rushworth.

It's a pleasure to work with the whole team behind the show and see how much difference a garden can make to the families we meet.

Get your own dream garden

But I believe that everyone can have the garden of their dreams. The truth is that you don't need large television budgets or a team of people to help you.

Remember, we complete those makeovers from scratch in just a few days. But it is possible to revamp your own garden on a smaller budget.

It might take a bit longer, but you can do it. After all, the inspiring gardens that we feature in every show are designed, built and maintained by people on normal budgets.



What's in this guide?

Here I reveal my top tips and ideas from the show to help you love your garden. Whether you want a total revamp or just to tweak it, there's something here for everyone to do.

I will look at getting the design basics right and choosing plants and features, plus ideas for maintenance and sustainability to save time and money. Plus I've added in some of my favourite projects for you to try at home.

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Fall in love with your garden again



CHAPTER 1

DESIGNING A SMALL GARDEN



No plot is too small for the Love Your Garden team to tackle. We worked with tiny box gardens, long, narrow plots and awkward triangle shapes.

But these smaller gardens are fast becoming the norm. Modern residential estates leave little room for green space as they prioritise houses. Meanwhile, we are building garages, conservatories and extensions, meaning the garden space gets eaten up.

But don't despair! You can do loads with a small area. Just use design and horticultural tricks to make the most of every square inch.

Make it bigger

Okay, you can't actually make the garden bigger. But you can make it look bigger by breaking up the space.

Make sure you can't see all the edges at once. Use plants and features to intercept the eye as you look at the garden, so you don't notice its size. It sounds simplistic, but it works.

Long narrow garden

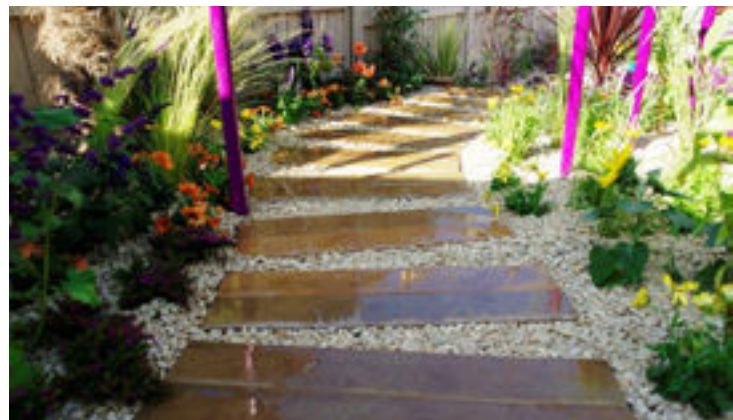
Divide it into rooms to break up the depth. Let things lean in from the sides like long grasses and floppy flower spires. Take paths and features right up to the edge to create the illusion of more width.

Small square garden

Curves and sinuous design create an open, flowing shape. If you add in squares and rectangles, everything will feel cramped and boxy.

Design around a series of curves and circles to make the garden feel larger and more open.

Create a meandering path. Narrow, winding walkways force us to slow down and enjoy the journey. It should lead you through the garden, exploring all the different areas.



TIP: Push a wooden stake into the soil where you want the centre to be. Tie a length of string to the stake and use it to measure a circle out from the centre.



Make it taller

Don't forget to add height! If you can't extend your garden outwards, go up instead. Use trees, climbers, planters and hanging baskets to immerse yourself with plants.

Plant trees and large shrubs too. Many people worry they will dwarf a small garden, but they make natural focal points and lend the garden a sense of stature and permanency.

You can also use tall plants to disguise walls and fences, blurring the garden boundaries. Climbers and bamboo work really well because they provide coverage without getting bulky.



Fill it carefully

Next you should consider what to put in the garden.

Small plots need fewer hard landscaping materials – two or three is enough.

The same goes for features. It can be tempting to add loads of little features, but it's far more effective to use a few larger ones for more impact. Strong focal points ground the design.

Keep the colour scheme simple too. Everything in a small garden is amplified, so any tones that don't work together will be really noticeable.

Stick to two or three colours instead. Then you can create variation by using different shades of the same colour.



TIP: Choose your colours carefully



Get inspired with a colour wheel! Create contrast with colours on opposite sides of the wheel, or harmony with colours next to each other.

Annual flowers

Get more flower bang for your buck with annuals. These take up less space than perennials because they have smaller root systems, so they make great filler plants.

Plus they are cheap and many freely self-seed, so you only have to buy them once.



It might sound limited, but cohesion is vital in a small garden. It's not that less is more, but less is more effective. You need to do more with less, so focus your attentions and use things that have a big impact.



CHAPTER 2

EASY

HARD LANDSCAPING



When you're revamping a garden, getting the hard landscaping right is crucial. It's much harder to change it later on! In essence, we are talking paths, walls, fences, patio and decking.

Paths

Plan where your garden path will go, and mark it out with string or hosepipe before you commit to the shape.

Gravel and paving slabs are very popular for paths, but it doesn't have to be stone. More natural pathways like bark chippings and buried log rolls are great for a wilder, woodier feel. And cottage gardens suit simple grass walkways.

To make curves or circles with paving, use smaller stones. Speed up laying with carpet stones, which are attached so you can lay several at once.

I loved the mosaic-style path in the Devon garden. Recreate it at home with angular slabs to make a large-scale mosaic.

Lay out the design first to check it looks right. As you move out from the centre of the path, increase the spacing between slabs to make planting pockets.

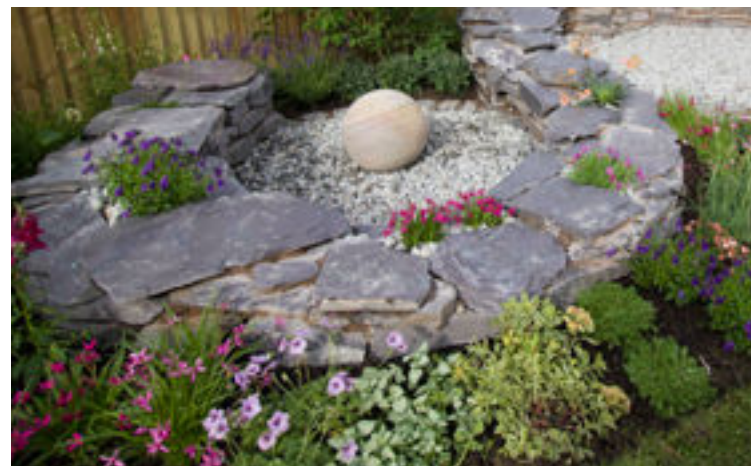


Wall

If you're not comfortable constructing a wall, get a builder to do it.

Make it feel like part of the garden by leaving gaps in the top for plants.

Anything from traditional rocky plants like alpines and succulents to lavenders and even bedding plants works.



TIP: Create unity

Replicate the hard landscaping within the planting scheme. Cover beds and fill pots with gravel or pieces of slate – it keeps weeds down and moisture in, and adds a designer finish.



Patio

TIP: Earmark the sunniest spot for the seating area. Many people automatically put it right by the house, but it should be perfectly positioned to catch the most sunlight.

The choice of patio is dependent on your garden size and style, but here's a few pointers to help you once you've chosen your slabs.

Slope it. If you lay a perfectly level patio, rainwater will pool. Build in a slight slope to get it to run off in the direction you want. Towards a flower bed is ideal.



TIP: Make the patio area, and the garden, look bigger by laying the patio on the point, with a corner rather than a side facing the house.

You can get an installer to do the job if you're not very handy, or check out a laying guide for practical advice.

Decking

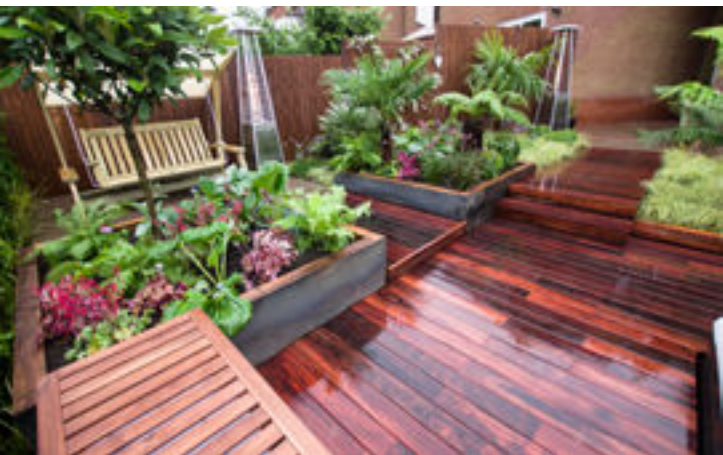
Before you replace old decking, check to see if you could simply refurbish it and save yourself some serious money!

Replace any damaged boards and hire or borrow a jet wash to remove any algae. Then sand it down to expose the wood pores, before giving it a couple of coats of wood stain.

I like traditional oil-based ones, but there are great water-based stains available too. Remember to coat the entire decking in one go to ensure it dries evenly.

If you are installing a new decking, the same rule applies for a slope – make sure the water has somewhere to go.

And widen a narrow area by laying it so the boards run horizontally.



Fence

In most cases, fences simply need a clean and a couple of coats of stain or paint. Remember to cover the tops of panels and posts, because they are most exposed to rainfall.

Revamp old fencing by adding trellis to the tops of panels, or grow climbers and bamboo in front of it.





CHAPTER 3

PLANTING

BEDS AND BORDERS



Here's a little secret – you don't have to be an expert to design a garden.

The plants you use will be influenced by a range of factors:

- *The light levels*
- *The garden style*
- *The soil type*

The light levels

No gardener, no matter how committed, can make a sun-loving plant thrive in the shade.

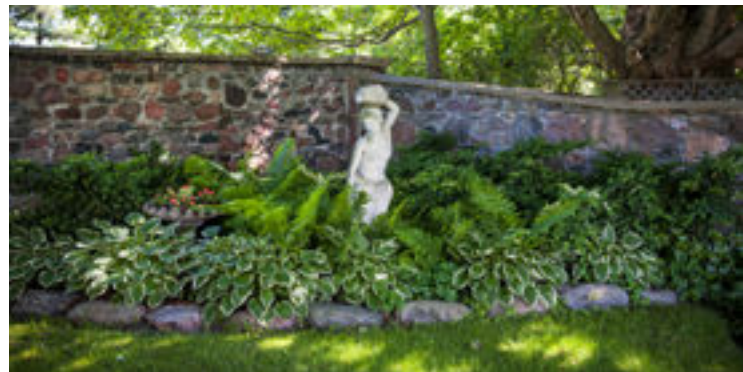
Always check the label before you buy, and work out the light levels of each bed before you try and plant them.

Remember, the backs of beds and borders are shaded by the plants in front, so plants that like full or partial shade grow best there.

A plant in the wrong place will have stunted, wiry growth and it will not flower well.

The garden style

Often, the plants are dictated by the garden theme. If you want a contemporary garden, there's no point buying cottage plants. Here's some top plants used in my favourite themes from this series.



Formal garden

- Box
- Hosta
- Star Jasmine
- Hydrangea
- Coneflower



Cottage garden

- Helenium
- Rose
- Delphinium
- Foxglove
- Coralbells



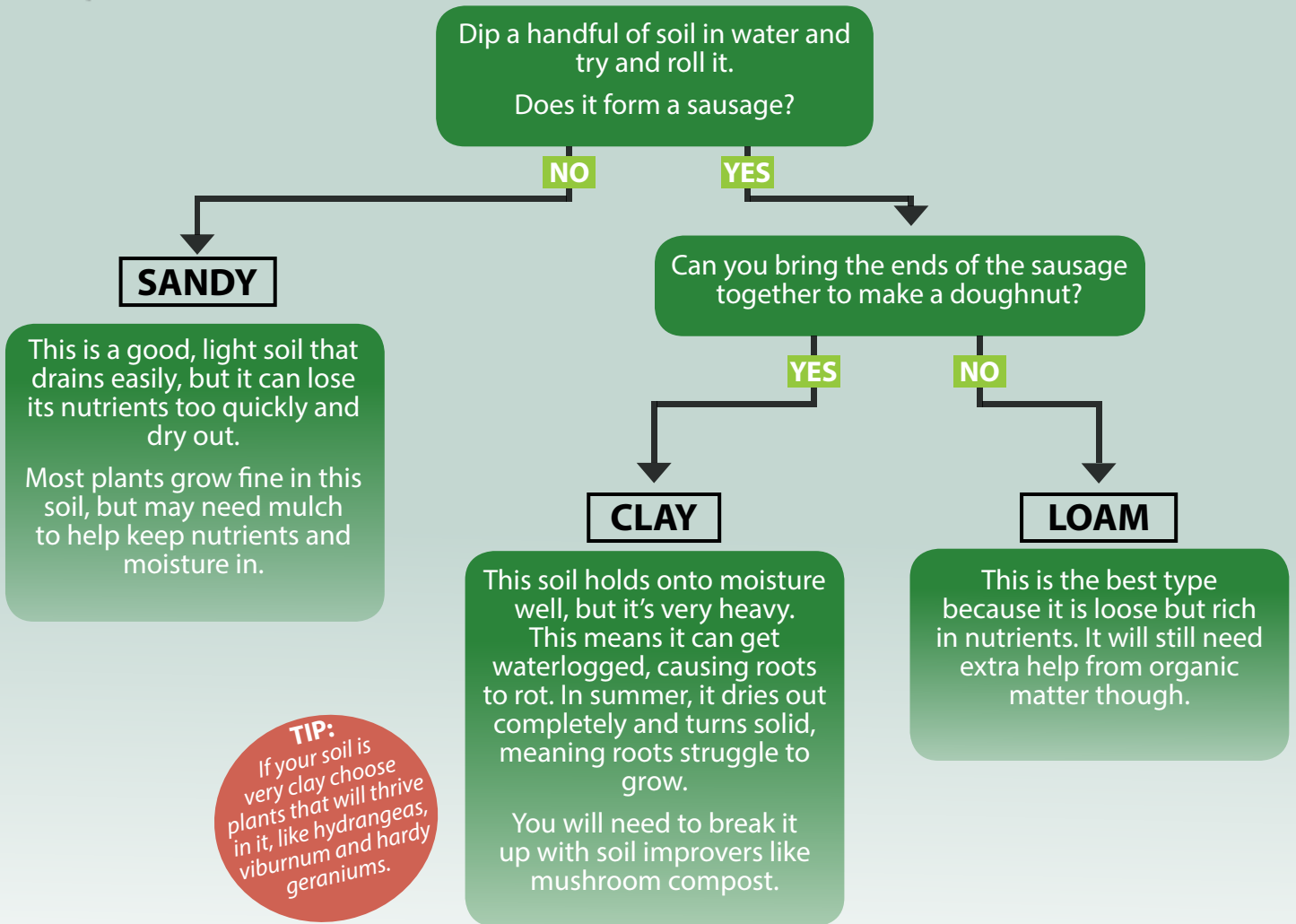
Coastal garden

- Echium
- Sea Kale
- Erigeron
- Sea Holly
- Thrift



The soil type

If you don't know your soil type, do the test. Bear in mind that there can be huge variations in soil types – some are slightly sandy or very clay.



Designing a garden bed

- It can be tempting, if you have space for twenty plants, to use twenty different ones. But that will look disjointed. Better to use five or six types and repeat them to create unity.
- Repeat plants around the garden too. Take ideas from one bed and use them in another to create cohesion and harmony.
- The next step is to work out size. The tallest plants should go at the back, with smaller varieties in front.

- Use low-growing plants for ground cover at the very front of the bed.
- Now take into account the season. You don't want everything flowering and fading at the same time. Mix early and late blooming plants together, and add in some evergreen structure like box, conifers and trees.
- Choose plants that work extra hard, like shrubs that give blossom in spring, leaves in summer and berries in winter.

The end result should be a mixture of flower, foliage, form and evergreen.



CHAPTER 4

ADDING FEATURES WITH STYLE



Features are all you need to put your personal stamp on the garden. Here are a few we used during the show.

For height

Create privacy with a pergola. They are ideal for sheltering a seating area. Train climbers like jasmine to grow over them to create a scented haven. Or buy one with a canopy roof to provide shade.

If you don't have space for a pergola, try arches. They are great for dividing up long gardens or linking different areas. Plus they look beautiful with a climber growing through.

TIP: Wooden wigwams are great for adding height to the middle of a bed.



For seating

There is such a huge range of dining sets available that I can't even begin to list them here. But here are alternative or even extra seating options.

Sun loungers are ideal if your garden is south-facing, or if you just want to spend your weekends relaxing.

Positioning is all important here, and make sure there is room to turn them and follow the sun around the sky!

The best gardens have more than one seating area. Chairs and benches in secluded spots are perfect for enjoying a glass of wine in the evening.

Novel ideas can work too. I loved the boat seating area in the Devon garden, with the side cut out. Be a little inventive and get something really different.

After all, you want to be able to sit out in your lovely new garden!





TIP:
If you are pushed for space, try a self-contained water feature that doesn't need any plumbing.

For personality

Items like statues, sculptures and ornaments fall into this category. After all, it's your garden – you can put whatever you want in there! If you want a zombie sculpture that climbs out of the soil, you get one.

Most people opt for statues, which make great focal points in deep beds and long plots.

Be careful not to use too many – a smaller number of strong focal points is better.

TIP: Get the kids involved with personalised planters. They love anything with their name on it!



For water

All gardeners love water features – they are so tranquil. If you have the space, aim for a natural swimming pool! The plants around the edge will keep the water clean.

Ponds are a more realistic option for most people. Surround it with carnivorous plants for a twist on the typical planting scheme.

For a formal look, try a traditional rill. It's a long narrow line of water, usually with a waterfall at the end.

If you prefer a modern look, there are loads of styles to choose from. Metal ones are great because they reflect the garden around them. Complement them with smooth pebbles and impactful planting.

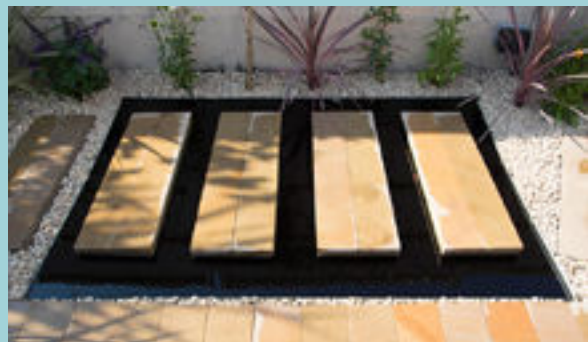


Mini Project: Dye the water feature

Make a still, shallow water feature look deeper and darker with aquatic dye.

It gives the water a mysterious, inky look and reflects the sky and surrounding plants.

It does not harm plants or animals and can be used to hide internal building work. Top up as per the manufacturer's instructions.





PROJECT

BUILD A SHED GREEN ROOF



Maximise your planting space with a green roof. Before you start, make sure your shed will bear the weight of the structure, plus plants plus water. It can get very heavy.

What to do

- ✿ If your roof is flat, build in a slight slope to stop water pooling.
- ✿ If it has a serious slope, use thin wooden planks to create a grid that will hold the plants in place.
- ✿ The planting space should be about 12cm deep.
- ✿ Waterproof it with pond liner so the wood doesn't rot.
- ✿ Then add some eggbox-type plastic material for drainage to help excess water escape.
- ✿ Cover with a layer of horticultural fleece to protect plant roots.
- ✿ Add a few inches of compost, and you're ready to plant it up!

The plants

It's important to choose low-growing plants because they are exposed to a lot of wind up there.

Alpines are small, hardy plants that are used to hot and dry conditions.

Aim for carpeting varieties that will grow into the space and cover the whole roof.

Phlox, Lewisia, Sedum, Saxifrage, Campanula and Veronica are all good choices.

Fully soak the root ball before planting and feel free to tear some off if it's too deep for your space – it won't do them any harm.

Water it all in and keep an eye on the moisture levels while it gets established.



This not only improves the view from your bedroom window, it helps wildlife too!





CHAPTER 5

SPACE

FOR THE KIDS



So often the gardens we create are for families, but it can feel like the kids take over the whole space. The best solution is to designate a part of the garden for them, keeping back a bit for you.

However, make it too separate and the garden will feel disjointed. So here are a few ways to merge the children's play area with the rest of the space.

Hide and disguise

The easiest way to make their play area feel like part of the garden is to use plants. Surround the play equipment with shrubs and climbers on trellis panels, using them to part-hide it.

This also creates a space that the kids can call their own.

Planting will create areas for them to explore. Older children will love a special jungle area, filled with plants and trees and spaces to build a top-secret den!

For older kids that you don't need to keep an eye on, put the play area at the bottom of the garden.

Keep large structures to one side so your view down the garden remains fairly intact. If you have the space, install storage like a second shed.



Make it a feature

If hiding it is not an option, embrace the play area and make it a feature.

Try play equipment made from wood so you can match the colour to other garden timber.

Top plants for a jungle feel

- Bamboo
- Ferns
- Phormium
- Fatsia japonica
- Miscanthus



Fantastic grass

The lawn is often the best play area, so look after it. Rake and feed in spring and autumn, and seed any bare patches in spring.

Mow at a fairly high setting to avoid scalping the lawn, and rake up any dead leaves that harbour pests and diseases.

If the grass gets waterlogged, aerate by pushing a garden fork fairly deep into the soil to drain water and get oxygen to the roots.

A good lawn will survive endless trampling, water fights and goalie dives.

PROJECT

PLANT A CHILD-PROOF FLOWER BED



Any gardener with kids knows just how easily they can kill plants. Save yourself the agony by planting tough varieties that will withstand a trampling or a direct hit from a football.



Choisya ternata

A tough shrub that takes a hard pruning. If a branch gets snapped off, just cut it out – the plant will survive.

Grasses

Most kinds of grasses are hardy and flexible. Aim for varieties that stay small so it doesn't take over. Miscanthus is a popular choice.

Rosemary and Lavender

Lovely Mediterranean scented plants that are tough as old boots.

Box

A good solid plant. It's great used to line borders and protect more delicate plants from wayward footballs. Japanese holly is another good variety.

Hardy geranium

Probably the hardest summer bedding plant. It will grow more or less anywhere, and copes with hard pruning if a stem or two gets broken off.





CHAPTER 6

EDIBLE

GARDENING



Growing your own fruit and veg is increasing in popularity, partly due to rising food costs, as well as concern about chemical use and food miles.

But you don't need a full-scale allotment to enjoy your own garden produce. You can grow fruit and veg even in tiny spaces. Here's how to get the best garden harvest.

Use containers

Don't take up valuable flower bed space by creating a veg plot – you can grow loads of varieties in containers.

Try herbs, beans, lettuce, carrots, beetroot, radishes, tomatoes, chillies and peppers.

You can even grow potatoes in a deep container like a metal barrel or plastic dustbin!

Plus, most fruit trees and shrubs grow happily in larger containers, and many have dwarf varieties that won't get too big.

Figs, plums, pears, peaches, apples, cherries, apricots and strawberries all love being in pots.

Blueberries actually prefer being in pots because they need very acidic soil. Fill the pot with special ericaceous compost and replace the top layer every spring for a great crop of fruit.

If you live in a warm part of the country, try olive trees or citrus varieties like oranges and lemons.

For taller trees like fig, pear and apple, underplant with flowering bedding plants to stop the container base looking bare.

Eat the flowers

There are loads of edible flowers you can grow to eat.

Carefully pick off the flower heads of pansies and violets and scatter over salads. Or float them on drinks to add a floral note.

You can also eat rose, sunflower and calendula petals. Cut off the green edge which tastes bitter.

Crystallise edible flowers by coating them in eggwhite and sugar, and leaving to dry out.



TIP:
Pop edible flowers and petals into ice cube trays and top up with water to make decorative floral ice cubes!



PROJECT:

CREATE A POTAGER GARDEN



What is a potager garden?

The problem with veg plots is that they look bare and boring for most of the year.

If you do want to grow crops in your garden, borrow the French potager style by mixing edible and ornamental plants in the same bed.

You want a garden, not an allotment, so consider the design and how the colours will work together.



What to do

Plant veg varieties as usual, but leave extra space around them.

Add in ornamental flowers and herbs. You can use anything.

Flowers for cutting are a popular choice, so even the ornamental plants are functional too. Poppies, sweet peas, cornflowers, aquilegias and calendulas are all great for cutting.

Line walls and fences with espaliered fruit trees for height and stunning spring blossom.



TIP:
If you're pushed for space, make this in a large container for a herb box instead!

How to make a herb wheel

These were traditionally made by laying a cartwheel on the soil and planting between the spokes.

You can still use a wheel, or create a circular shape with paving. It can be as big or as small as you like.

Plant a selection of your favourite herbs. Popular choices include mint, chives, thyme, basil, rosemary, tarragon and marjoram.

Remember that mint is quite invasive, so plant it in its plastic pot to control the roots!

Water in well and pick the herbs constantly to encourage the plants to produce more.





CHAPTER 7

THE SENSORY GARDEN FEELING



It's easy to get so hung up on how the garden looks, you forget to consider how it feels! Sensory gardens are those that please all the senses, and they can have a huge impact on your mood and wellbeing.



Scent and taste

Scented plants are a must. Surround seating areas with fragrant climbers like jasmine, clematis and honeysuckle. Line paths and patios with mint, thyme, lavender and rosemary, so they release their scent when you brush past them.

Smell encourages memories, so choose plants that remind you of holidays and childhood homes.

TIP:
Make your garden appeal to the taste buds too with the advice on edible gardening in Chapter 6 on page 13

Texture and movement



Texture is important in a sensory garden. Some plants are crying out to be stroked, like the fluffy Lamb's Ears and soft Mexican Feather Grass.

But you also need to consider visual texture. There are two types: fine and coarse.

Fine texture means lots of small leaves close together, while coarse textured-plants have large leaves spaced further apart. The juxtaposition of the two types creates a visually pleasing effect.

Grasses are failsafe texture plants and so underused in garden design. They form the backdrop for other plants and they bend in the wind, creating movement and a fluid, weightless feeling.

Mood

Create a calm mood with blue tones – the most calming colour. There are loads of blue plants available.

Try iris, pansies, borage, foxgloves and delphiniums alongside bluish grasses like festuca glauca and Leymus arenarius.



TIP:
Add sound with a water feature. Anything from a trickle to a full-scale fountain will sound soothing. Check out Chapter 4 on page 9 for ideas.

Wildlife garden

Now you can focus on other elements. Attracting wildlife is a high priority for many gardeners. Birds, bees and butterflies make the garden feel alive with activity.

Try growing plants that they love. Shrubs that bear berries such as pyracantha and cotoneaster are always popular with birds.

Add nest boxes and a bird table filled with fresh water, and they will never want to leave!

Pollinators

You can also attract pollinators with pollen and nectar-rich plants. I love wildflower meadow seed mixes, which offer a great variety of stunning flowers and mimic the natural habitats that these insects are losing.

Lavender, dianthus, salvia, foxgloves, buddleja, scabious and dahlias are all beautiful plants for any garden, and very popular with pollinators too.



Insect Hotels

Many garden insects, like ladybirds, lacewings and solitary bees, hibernate over winter. But their natural habitats are fast disappearing. [Here is an article on how](#) to build them an insect hotel for your garden, using just recycled materials.



PROJECT

MAKE A DIY BUTTERFLY FEEDER



Attract stunning butterflies by making them a sweet treat!



- ✿ In a pan, mix four parts water to one part sugar.
- ✿ Boil for a few minutes until the sugar has fully dissolved.
- ✿ Let it cool.
- ✿ Fill the bottom of a shallow Tupperware container with paper towels.
- ✿ Pour the sugar mixture over the top until they are saturated.
- ✿ Then pop a couple of brightly coloured scouring pads on top (yellow is popular). These attract the butterflies and give them somewhere dry to land.
- ✿ Put the feeder out in the garden, just a little higher than your flowers.



CHAPTER 8 TROPICAL BRITAIN



We created a couple of tropical style gardens this series. Their popularity is down to their exotic and relaxing feeling. It's like being on holiday in your own back garden!

What sets tropical gardens apart is their distinctive mood: lush and soothing. The plants are impactful and contemporary, but the overall feel is timeless. Plus, tropical gardens are really low-maintenance.

Tropical plants in Britain?

Yes! Many are hardier than you might think! Rain doesn't do them any harm – some originate from rainforests.

And they can survive low temperatures well in sheltered spots.

Drought is their enemy, so you must keep them well-watered.

Is that all?

Bear in mind that some are not fully hardy and will need protecting from winter frosts with straw.

Plant tropical varieties in spring so they can get their roots established in the run up to winter, and water them really well for the first year.

Create a mix

The trick to getting tropical plants to work in your garden is to mix them with British plants.

Create a framework of exotic varieties and fill in with garden stalwarts like carex, sedge, hosta, astringia, miscanthus and Japanese anemone.



TIP:
Gravel over beds to keep weeds down and retain water.





Fun with foliage

To get a tropical garden at home, foliage is key. As a general rule, use ferns and trees for a forest feel, grasses for movement and big, bold flowers for a pop of colour.

Trees are great for adding height and a canopy of foliage. This adds to the garden mood by making it feel enclosed, like an escape from the rest of the world.

Add climbers, tall grasses and plants in high containers.

Don't worry about the shade from all these tall plants – many forest-style varieties grow best in the dappled shade through tree leaves.

Create carpets of plants using varieties with moving foliage like grasses. It seems like a sea of green floating above the ground.

Punctuate it with tall plants like lily and agapanthus. And keep the garden path narrow, allowing plants to tumble over it like a true jungle trail.



MY TOP 5 TROPICAL STYLE PLANTS



Trachycarpus fortunei

A very hardy palm tree that thrives in a sheltered spot. Jelly Palm and *Chamaerops humilis* are other good varieties.

Dicksonia antarctica

A sturdy tree fern, but not completely hardy. Protect the crown from frost with straw held in place with wire over winter.

Ghost lady fern

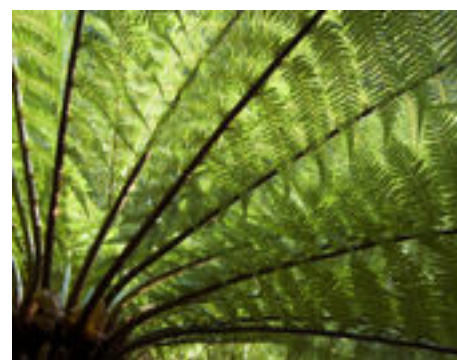
An unusual pale green fern with long pointed foliage. Combine with *Dryopteris* or *Polystichum* in a shady spot.

Cordyline 'Torbay Dazzler'

A great spiky plant with long pointed leaves in a yellow-green. For something darker, try the 'Torbay Red' variety.

Carex comans 'Amazon Mist'

The ideal general purpose grass with a good carpeting habit. Try *Phormium 'Platt's Black'* for a darker shade to add depth to borders.





CHAPTER 9

SUSTAINABLE MAINTENANCE



Sustainability is more important now than ever before. We are all reusing and recycling whatever we can to help the environment. So it makes sense to continue this in the garden too.

Water

Reduce your water consumption with a water butt to collect rainwater from house and shed roofs.

If your hosepipe gets a hole in it, don't throw it out! Punch more holes in it and lay it across beds to create a cheap irrigation system.

Use bottles to keep plants watered while you're away. Fill litre plastic or glass bottles with water, tip upside down and push the neck into the soil to deliver water direct to the roots. Or buy a water spike for controlled release.



Compost

Install a compost bin and recycle as much garden and kitchen waste as possible.

Remember to aim for a good mix of green material (eggshells, kitchen scraps and grass and plant cuttings) and brown material (hay, twigs, dry leaves and coffee grounds).

Fork it over regularly to mix it together.



Pots

Create individual plant pots by recycling containers you would normally throw away. Clean out tins, yoghurt pots and milk bottles and fill with small plants and herbs.

Use toilet roll inner tubes as pots for seedlings. Or create newspaper pots by wrapping a few sheets around a bottle or other cylinder. Tuck in the bottom.

You can also upcycle household objects as quirky plant containers. Cups, boots, bowls, sinks, wellies, ornaments and even furniture like chests of drawers can hold plants.

Be creative!

Plants

Get more plants for free! Collect seeds in autumn and store in dry, airtight containers over winter, ready for sowing in the spring. Take cuttings from plants and shrubs, and divide perennial plants every few years in the autumn.





PROJECT

RECYCLE WOODEN PALLETS



Recycling wooden pallets is really popular at the moment, and it makes sense. They are strong structures and you can do so much with them.

Make a vertical planter

I liked Frances' idea of creating a living wall picture frame. Use a section of a pallet and cover the bottom and back with lining fabric. Nail a piece of plywood to the back for extra support.

Fill with compost and plants, working methodically layer by layer, so the plants poke out between the slats.

Try a few trailing varieties like ivy and creeping Jenny at the bottom, and choose shade-loving plants because they will shade each other out as they grow.

Then seal up the top and water well.



TIP:
Paint garden wood with preserving fence stain to prolong its life.



Make a pallet table

This is a nifty way to make your own garden furniture and recycle any old wood.

Use one pallet as the base and attach a caster wheel to each corner.

On a second pallet, fill in the gaps with spare planks of wood on the top, leaving the top middle section empty. You can break up a third pallet to get the extra wood.

Attach the two pallets with metal brackets to create a table.

Staple a semi-permeable membrane liner into the middle section.

Fill with compost and low-growing plants. Soak the rootballs before planting to give them the best possible start.

TIP: leave the sides that aren't being planted open so you can store wine bottles in there!



CHAPTER 10

THE FRONT GARDEN



So many of our nation's front gardens are being concreted over to make car parks. But you can't overestimate the effect of being greeted by a nice garden when you get home. Front gardens give the people living on our streets a sense of pride and community. And they encourage respect for the area from passers-by.

*I started **Cultivation Street**, a national campaign to bring back front gardens, so the issue is very close to my heart. But as a gardener, I also know that there are some really simple ways to make your front garden a nicer place to be.*



Use container planting

Many front gardens are small spaces, so containers allow you to maximise your flower count! Create seasonal containers by using what's in flower each season, so you'll always be greeted by blooms when you get home.

TIP: When planting containers, put in more plants than you think you need. And start with the largest one in the centre, adding smaller ones around the edges.



Cover the house in flowers. Use wall mangers and hanging baskets, and grow climbers through trellis panels.

Get luscious hanging baskets by adding moisture crystals to the compost to help retain water. Then sprinkle with pelleted feed every few weeks. Take care not to let it touch the leaves or stems though, as it can burn the foliage.

All containers need regular watering – every day in warm, dry weather.

My number one tip is to give containers a top dressing of gravel. This suppresses weeds and locks in moisture by reducing evaporation from the soil. Plus it gives pots a professional finish.





Grow something adventurous

One of my favourite front garden tricks is to use a tree as a central focal point. Keep it small so it doesn't block out light – acer, willow, hazel and amelanchier are all good choices.

I also love front gardens filled with fruit trees and shrubs. Plant up strawberry pots and get a great front garden AND free jam!

See Chapter 6 on page 13 for more ideas on container crops.

TIP:
Attract wildlife with their favourite plants and a bird table.

Cover eyesores

There are some everyday things that we can't get rid of, so make them part of the design. Paint your door a fun colour and add a great knocker – I love woodpeckers.

Hide unsightly wheelie bins by building a little shelter from fence panels and cover it with climbers. Or disguise them with self-adhesive vinyl panels.

PROJECT

CREATE SEASONAL CONTAINERS



Create stunning containers all year round with a simple formula.

Middle plant - Strong Centrepiece

Start with a large, showy plant to create a focal point.

Outside plants - Seasonal Fillers

Surround it with seasonal plants. Aim to match colours or forms.

Spring Deutzia 'Mont Rose'

Summer Fuchsia

Autumn Euonymous

Winter Witch hazel
'Arnold Promise'

Ivy Osteospermums

Pansies Gerberas

Violas Geraniums

Daffodils Impatiens

Marigolds Pelargoniums

LOVE YOUR GARDEN

*David Domoney's
Complete Guide*



THE END

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you have enjoyed it and found it useful!*

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