

SPRING 2006

# realgardens

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE™

**CHRIS COLLINS  
ON CLIMBERS  
GARDENS WITH  
KERB APPEAL  
COLOURFUL  
CONTAINER  
RECIPES**



**MAKING  
SCENTS  
GARDEN  
FRAGRANCE  
MADE FUN**

  
**Plant for Life**  
Inspired Living

# design



## **PRIVACY**

Wooden trellis planted with leafy climbers creates privacy but lets the sun filter through

## **DECORATE**

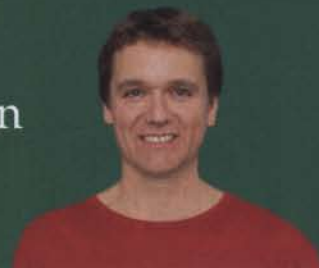
Key pieces, such as a jazzy cushion and a giant urn, add visual impact and interest

## **PLANT MIX**

Introduce both evergreens and flowering shrubs for year-round leaf cover

Don't be afraid to accessorise your garden as you would a room'

GARDEN DESIGNER **ANDY STURGEON**



# Create a me space

Creating a haven, a 'me space', in a corner of the garden is a life-enhancing design project. Plant a mix of leafy evergreens and flowering shrubs for privacy, add one or two features to please the eye and soothe the senses, and install a comfy bench so you can put your feet up



Lush green male fern

**THEY SAY A GLIMPSE** is more exciting than full frontal and that's something that certainly works in this garden. Just a hint of a bench and a suggestion of a shapely Cretan urn are what make this secluded corner so inviting. If you could see everything from the house, there would be no sense of mystery and little need to venture down the garden.

In a quiet corner you don't want busy planting, instead it's best to concentrate on one or two flowering plants – in this case a hydrangea. These are easy-care, hardy showcase plants. Choose from blowsy mophead types, or lacecaps, like the pink one here, which have clusters of tiny flowers surrounded by a cirlet of false petals, called sepals.

In a small area, large shrubs, such as pittosporum, cotoneaster and Californian

lilac (ceanothus), perform the function of trees but don't extend beyond their allotted space. Their green canopy will cast a lovely dappled shade creating a welcome retreat on a hot summer's day.

## CHOOSING MATERIALS

The wooden trellis panels on top of the low walls provide effective and instant privacy from neighbours and overlooking windows. It's also perfect for growing scented climbers, including roses and jasmine, and is a quick way to add height to a new garden. The sheltered space will also concentrate the perfume of the flowers, preventing it drifting away on the breeze.

You could pave the area, but it is much easier – and more effective – to lay gravel. Simple, quick and relatively

## WATER FEATURE

A tiny pond or fountain is a soothing element for a quiet corner

Design: L Pleasance. Portrait: I Reekmans. Photographs: J Harpur/GAP Photos, J Ingram/GPL.

# design



## GET THE LOOK

**1** Wooden trellis clothed in climbers creates something of a net-curtain effect; plenty of light will still filter through to your garden but it offers some privacy from neighbours. And, of course, it creates more space for growing plants, which is useful in a small garden.

**2** Choose pale coloured pots and urns so they stand out against the surrounding greenery.

**3** It must be a throwback to our caveman days, but when you sit with your

back against something solid, like a wall, you feel protected and secure. For this reason, tucking a bench or chair into a corner and surrounding it with plants feels very relaxing.

**4** Even the tiniest pond is a magnet for wildlife. It's a drinking hole for birds and hedgehogs and a breeding ground for frogs, toads and a whole host of insect life, including dragonflies.

**5** Gravel is a versatile surfacing material. The beauty of it is its flexibility,

as it can be spread around shrubs and makes a natural-looking setting. A traditional material, it also works well in a contemporary garden, like this one.

**6** So far we've talked about screening off the area from neighbours, but sometimes, as much as we love them, it's bliss to have a bolt hole from your nearest and dearest. A fast growing, tall-stemmed plant at the entrance to your secluded corner is what you need – a pink lavatera was used in this garden.

inexpensive, gravel is available in a wide range of colours. For my money, though, soothing pinks and greys take some beating in a garden setting. Gravel is best laid on top of a weed-suppressing membrane – and just so you know, this is water permeable, so you won't end up sitting in a puddle.

The gravel here doesn't have a strongly defined edge, instead it's been swept under the lower stems of the surrounding shrubs. Self-seeding plants, including dusty pink verbascums and purple cornflowers (see pic right), will easily root into gravel, adding to the informality.

Don't be afraid to accessorise your garden in the same way you would a room. Use scatter cushions in bright fabrics to add a splash of colour to dull



Self-seeded plants take root in the gravel.



Ferns are beautiful leafy plants for shady areas.



In shade, green algae will develop on terracotta pots. If you don't like it, remove it with a dry brush.

furniture. Instead of a vase of flowers, brighten up an outdoor table with tender pot plants, such as fuchsias or begonias.

### STRESS RELIEF

A pond brings a garden to life with the wildlife it attracts (in this corner a tiny pool is tucked away in the greenery by the bench). For instant stress relief, the owner can just sit back and watch the show.

To appreciate the many benefits of taking time out and making the most of your cherished green space, visit [www.plantforlife.info](http://www.plantforlife.info). Just a few minutes in the company of plants and trees can provide positive stress relief – and PlantforLife has some great suggestions for improving your garden, including easy ideas for features, such as soothing fountains, and how to attract wildlife. ■

**'A glimpse is more exciting than full frontal and works in the garden'**

## CREATE A ME SPACE YOUR PLANT SHOPPING LIST



**MALE FERN** (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) 1-1.5m ☼☼ Great for a shady corner or beside a pond. Needs shelter from cold winds. In spring, the leaves, called 'fronds', unfurl from curled buds. It doesn't flower. Improve the soil with well-rotted leaf mould or garden compost.



**LAVATERA** (L. 'Barnsley') 1-2m ☼☼ A fast-growing shrub that blooms from midsummer to autumn. Sadly, it isn't long-lived but at least you will have plenty of colour while less speedy shrubs get going. In windy or frosty areas, grow it against a warm wall.



**WEIGELA** (W. 'Florida Variegata') 1-2m ☼☼☼ Masses of funnel-shaped, pale pink flowers on graceful arching stems in May and June. To keep it growing vigorously, each year after flowering, prune out a few of the older branches to ground level.



**CEANOTHUS** (C. 'Concha') 1-1.3m ☼☼ Hardy evergreen shrub that does well in a border or by a sunny wall. By late spring, reddish-purple buds open into vibrant blue flowers. After flowering you can prune the ends of the stems to retain a neat shape.



**HONEY SPURGE** (*Euphorbia mellifera*) 1.2m 1-2.5m ☼☼☼ Good in rock gardens and borders, this evergreen plant has honey-scented flowers in late spring, followed by pea-like fruits. The milky sap is an irritant, so try to avoid getting it on your skin.



**HYDRANGEA** (*H. macrophylla* 'Selina') 1-2m 1.25m ☼☼☼☼ A new introduction with red-tinged leaves. Hydrangeas are useful for all kinds of garden sites and can be planted on their own or in groups. They can also be grown in pots. They dislike chalky soils.

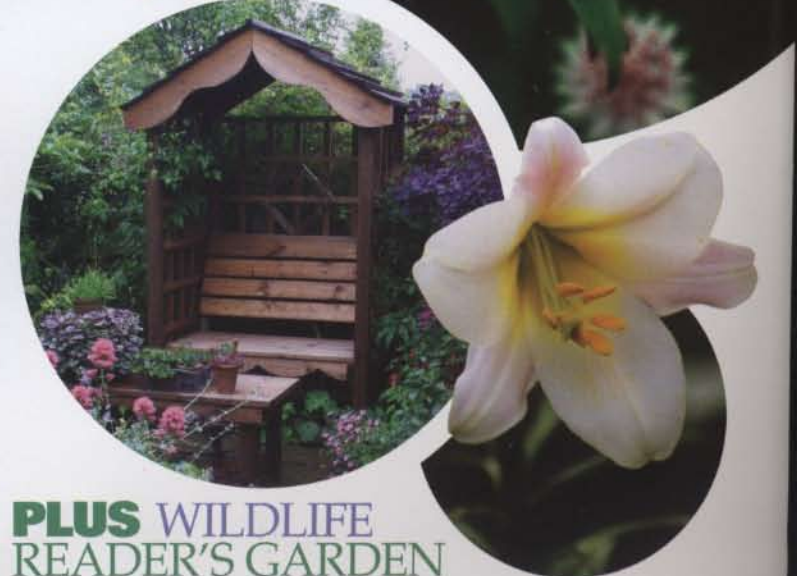
# next month



FUN GARDEN IDEAS FOR KIDS  
HEAVENLY SCENTS  
INSPIRED COLOUR SCHEMES  
SUMMER FAVOURITES



*Astrantia* 'Buckland' – a great plant for damp shade  
INSET Fragrant regal lily



PLUS WILDLIFE  
READER'S GARDEN