

PROJECT *planning*

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

From fabulous fencing to feature walls and built-in furniture, get the basics right and your garden will shine, whatever the weather

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Photography (left) Liz Edlison/The Garden Collection; (centre) Marianne Majerus/Charlotte Rowe Garden Design; (right) Marianne Majerus/Stuart Craine

Spring is the best time to plan a garden revamp, and the latest outdoor spaces combine clever planting with modern materials and techniques to bring all-season style to even the tiniest city plot.

If you are completely redesigning your space, approach it as you would a room that needs redecorating. Look first at the existing surfaces (decking, paving, gravel and grass) and the perimeters (fencing, trellises and hedging). Both make up the foundation of your garden's design, to which you can add plants, furniture and accessories. Even if you're

not green-fingered, don't be tempted to go for a completely plant-free space. 'A fully paved or decked garden doesn't necessarily look bigger,' says garden designer Charlotte Rowe. 'Introducing planting will help break up the space and add interest.'

Plants also work wonders along garden boundaries, providing valuable privacy for overlooked plots. 'Hiding boundaries softens them and makes it hard to work out where the garden ends, so it feels bigger,' says Joe Swift at Modular Garden. With these basics in place, you can pick the furniture that will turn your garden into a beautiful outdoor room. >



Photography (6) Mark Speller Production/Mying Marc Heldens (7) Richard Powers (8) Marianne Majerus/Stuart Craine

8 PAINT A BOLD FEATURE WALL

'Using vibrant colour as a backdrop can really brighten up a garden, particularly if the space is shady or has a gloomy corner,' says garden designer Stuart Craine. Choose a shade that will provide a good foil for planting: this bright cerise works well with the pink and purple flowers.

Get the look Stuart Craine designed this garden, from £25,000. Dulux's Tailor Made Colour Weathershield paint in Fuchsia Falls 2, £29.99 for 5l, is similar. >