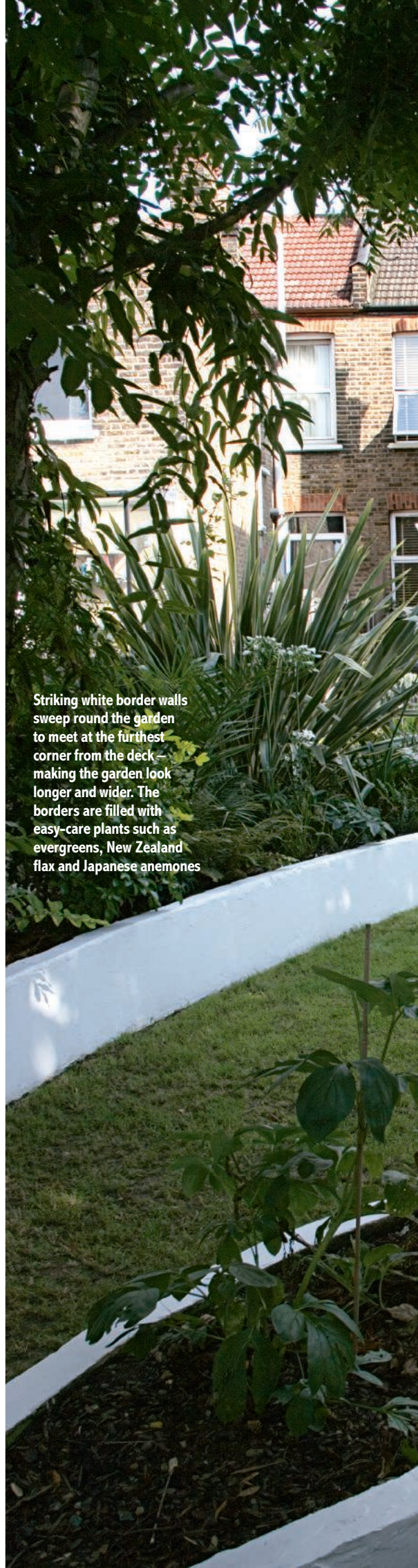


‘It’s designed to be all play and no work’

Paul Sullivan and John Lear’s eye-catching garden ticks all the boxes. It has space to relax in, space to entertain and, best of all, it needs virtually no looking after



‘The garden was unusable when we moved in,’ says Paul. ‘Now we’re out there so much more – we have a patio heater, so we can sit out on cooler nights’



Striking white border walls sweep round the garden to meet at the furthest corner from the deck – making the garden look longer and wider. The borders are filled with easy-care plants such as evergreens, New Zealand flax and Japanese anemones

Before



When Paul Sullivan and John Lear moved into their East London home, the garden was incredibly neglected. 'The neighbours told us it hadn't been tended for about 11 years,' says Paul. 'Small trees had taken seed and were growing in the middle of the lawn, there was a dilapidated shed in the corner, and the whole plot was very overgrown.'

Paul and John wanted a low-maintenance garden they could entertain in, so an outdoor dining space was a must. They also needed a lawn for Paul's four-year-old daughter, Alex, to play on, and loved the idea of a pond.

'We had no idea where to start,' says Paul. 'So we called in garden design company Earth Designs to come up with something interesting, with planting that would be ►



The kitchen floor is at the same level as the patio decking – when the doors are open, it feels like one room



‘Next year, we’re replacing the grass with artificial turf so we won’t even have to mow it’

easy to care for.’ The resulting ‘fish-eye lawn’ – so named because of the shape of the turfed area – is a clever mix of raised beds and a decked area with a sunken pond. The lawn is set at an angle so the garden appears wider and longer, and the walls of the raised beds are whitewashed to create an impact.

Paul and John are delighted with the finished design, but they’ve decided to go even lower maintenance. ‘Next year, we’re replacing the grass with artificial turf. Then we won’t even have to mow it!’ 🏡

▼ **FILL SHADY BORDERS WITH GRACEFUL JAPANESE ANEMONES** Japanese anemones are easy to grow and great for difficult areas – they like shade, thrive in most soil types and will spread over time to fill gaps in borders. They come in white, pinks and purples



▲ Paul and John chose grasses and ferns for the area around the pond – they give the decked patio area a relaxed, natural feel and need next to no looking after

GARDEN PLAN
Size 16m x 5m
Orientation East-facing
Main features
1 Patio deck **2** Dining table **3** Pond and waterfall **4** ‘Fish-eye’ lawn **5** Large tree **6** Raised border

**Ideal
ideas**

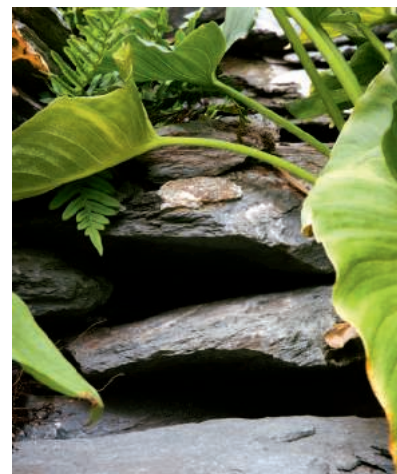
Use these clever tricks from Paul and John’s garden to make more of your outside space



■ **ADD A FEATURE TO DECKING** Before fitting your decking, think about how you can add interest. Like Paul and John, you could cut away a section and insert a pond.



■ **CONTRAST WITH COLOUR** The spiky leaves of the black mondo grass look spectacular when planted with contrasting plants. Paul and John have teamed theirs with a beautiful, vibrant lime-green Irish moss.



■ **MAKE A WATERFALL** Simple rocks and boulders have been carefully arranged in Paul and John’s pond to create a waterfall, which is fed by a powered pump.