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**Quick
MAKEOVER**

“My rooftop garden is full of style”

Mary Putt’s rooftop space is low maintenance and full of **LUSH COLOUR**

After moving from a house into a flat in 2016, Mary Putt, from Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, decided she needed some professional help to convert her roof terrace into a proper garden, not just a tiled space. After some online research, she opted to go with local garden designer Katrina Kieffer-Wells of Earth Designs.

Mary didn’t really have many ideas of what to do with this new and very different type of outside space, but was inspired by a tea room in her local high street that she regularly visits. “I wanted to feel how I do when I’m there, enveloped by lush plants and greenery,” she says. “Katrina seemed to understand just what I wanted and when I saw the initial drawings, I was really pleased.”

Katrina, who knew the tea room herself, incorporated this request into the design. “Mary wanted a lot of colour and although the space was primarily for her use, she still wanted to be able to entertain friends out there and it needed to be manageable,” says Katrina. “I wanted Mary to feel like she was sitting right in the plants, so I planned in a comfy oak seat, footstool and matching curved planters.”

CREATING IMPACT
The rooftop garden did present a few challenges for Mary and Katrina. “The start date for the work was delayed as I had to consult building services. Weight was a major consideration, the original red quarry tiles had to be removed and the roof had to be resealed, as directly below my terrace is another property,” recalls Mary. Access to the garden was also a problem, and Katrina’s team had to transport all



AFTER

the materials to the garden in the lift and then through Mary’s flat. Once the work started, it took about a month to complete, finishing in the autumn of 2016. Sandstone paving slabs, which are lighter in weight than other types, were laid and the edges dressed with Scottish pebbles.

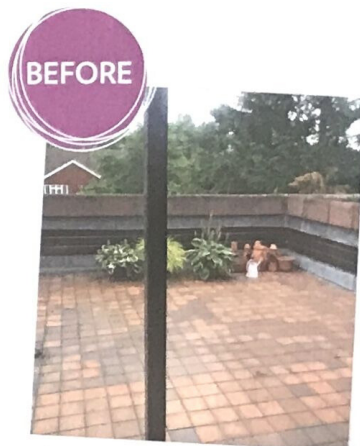


1
TALL ARCHITECTURAL GRASSES create height in a border and look fantastic when the breeze moves through them. See p32 for more wow ways with grasses.

3
TRAILING PLANTS such as fuchsias break up and soften the smooth lines of the raised bed.

2
FIBREGLASS is a tough material that can cope with exposure to the elements. It is also lightweight, so a good choice for rooftop gardens.

4
CURVES & CIRCLES are repeated throughout the garden, helping to make the space seem larger than it is.



BEFORE

The tiled rooftop terrace was featureless and in need of a makeover.

MY GARDEN PLAN

- LOCATION**
A modern top floor flat with a large outdoor roof space in Essex.
- THE LOOK**
Private little paradise full of easy planting with a stylish patio entertaining area.
- SITE & SOIL**
Size 4.5 x 6m, with a side bit that measures 1 x 5m
Faces South
Soil Garden Centre compost

MY BUDGET

- Sandstone paving & labour **£1,794.24**
- Fibreglass raised planters & installation **£6,385**
- Plants, soil, aggregate & free-standing planters **£2,486**
- Watering system **£362.50**
- TOTAL: £11,027.74**

HOW LONG IT TOOK

- Paving **3 days**
- Building the planters **17 days**
- Planting **1 day**
- TOTAL: 3 WEEKS**

FEATURE: GAP PHOTOS; PHOTOS: GAP PHOTOS; IAN THWAITES; MARY PUTT; KATRINA KIEFFER-WELLS OF EARTHDESIGNS.CO.UK



Mary wanted the terrace to have a lush feel while remaining low-maintenance.

Lightweight fibreglass planters were used and filled with a light soil, mixed with hydration crystals, designed especially for roof and terrace gardens. Multilevel planters were installed in one corner to create impact and make good use of the smaller space, allowing a multitude of plants to be grown. The curvy, oak planters were then built, encompassing an oak seat emphasising the feeling of being 'hugged' by plants. The use of curves was a deliberate design aspect, as Mary wanted to avoid harsh, straight lines, preferring round shapes and curved lines, and Katrina drew inspiration from art deco style. "Those evocative, strong, modern deco shapes are a great basis for design and are timeless," she says.

EASY-CARE GREENERY

Planting was used to create a layered effect, incorporating colourful foliage and modern grasses for texture and movement. "Plant choice was slightly governed by the size of the beds and the layering look we wanted to create," says Katrina.

In the relatively exposed, south-facing terrace, plants needed to be able to cope with windy conditions, as well as highlight levels, and the team installed a watering system to irrigate the raised beds. Mary admits that the plants have taken something of a battering this past summer during the exceptionally warm weather, but the design of the garden allows Mary to easily replace any plants if necessary.

A small silver birch tree adds height and privacy to the space, while a variety of other containers are dotted around the terrace, giving interest and allowing Mary to experiment with different plants.

SECLUDED OASIS

Thanks to the lighting that was installed within the design, including nine low-voltage LED



FUCHSIAS will fill flower beds with their bell-like blooms year after year.

INSPIRED BY 1920s art deco club chairs, this bench allows Mary to put her feet up among her plants.

HEUCHERAS provide low-maintenance, contrasting colour. Placing planted containers among beds adds interest and allows you to play with height.

spotlights for the planters and raised beds, Mary's garden can be used in the evening after dark. She is able to look out on it through her large living room glass doors in winter, and she especially enjoys sitting out in it, with a

drink, when the weather allows. "It's extremely private. When I'm out there I am surrounded by trees and plants and no one can look in on me. It's just what I wanted and a space I can enjoy all year round."

"I wanted to feel enveloped by lush plants"

READER GARDEN

CLEVER PLANTING

Yellow-green phormium leaves look stunning in an on-trend copper planter



HOW TO CREATE A CIRCULAR PATIO



PLAN & VISUALISE

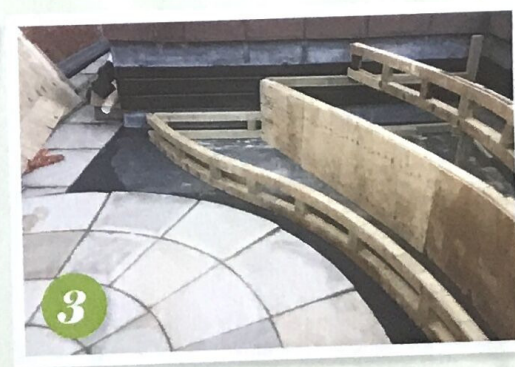
Using a paving planner (try marshalls.co.uk) gives you the ability to create a scale plan of

your patio so you can see exactly what it will look like and work out what supplies you'll need to buy,



DRY LAY THE SLABS

Once you have your plan and supplies, dry laying your slabs, before you put down any mortar, ensures they end up in the right spot.



WORK FROM INSIDE TO OUT

Lay the patio starting at the centre and working outwards, checking with a spirit level as you go that you have a drainage slope away from the building.