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The days are getting shorter. There is a new crispness to the air, and the bright blooms and endless evenings of summer have faded away. But even though winter waits in the wings, life in the garden doesn't have to be dull. As this modern backyard in Leigh-on-Sea proves, you don't need a large canvas to make a big statement.

Summer loving all year round

Like many a family garden, until recently this was a neglected patch of grass with a trampoline. Now it's a modern, welcoming space that radiates warmth and optimism.

From the back door or window, it's a view guaranteed to banish the autumn and winter blues, even on the greyest of days. So what inspired this stunning transformation from drab to fab? Believe it or not, the cold concrete monsters of modernism and Brutalist architecture.

CREATING THE IDEAL SPACE

Architectural and artistic movements have influenced the creation of this modern backyard in Leigh-on-Sea which was designed by Katrina Kieffer-Wells



Brutalist roots

“I love the confidence of Le Corbusier and modernist furniture and overlapping geometric shapes of iconic buildings like the National Theatre and Barbican,” says Katrina Kieffer-Wells MSGD, the garden designer behind it.

And you can see their influence in the bold lines and repeating patterns, giant planters, a pergola and raised beds stack like Lego blocks, adding height and structure and providing privacy and shade. While bare wood, gravel paths and soft sandstone tiles are reminiscent of Brutalism’s textured, unfinished surfaces.

Modern love and hot colour

But there are other influences here, too. Instead of stark concrete, the colour and contrast of modernism come into play. And Katrina’s love of Rothko and Bridget Riley shines through.

Dark painted fences become backdrops

for vivid splashes and lines of colour.

Brutalism’s cold greys make way for a sizzling palette. A riot of spicy planting fills the borders. Blazing Sunset geums, Hot Papaya echinacea and Fire Chief alum root sit alongside bouncy ferns and delicate Japanese maples, bringing colour and texture whatever the season.

Flaming scarlet planters define spaces to eat, rest and play. And the garden’s layout pays homage to the sun, following its path overhead. It faces the east but makes the most of every ray of sun. Patios and seating are in the warmest spots, perfect for sneaky siestas. And a stylish fire pit prolongs that summer festival feeling into autumn and beyond.

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Small space, big personality

From an unremarkable backyard to modern, sophisticated hangout, this garden has undergone a stunning transformation.

Having captured the summer mood, Earth Designs has made sure that the sun never sets within these walls.

Earth Designs is an award-winning garden design and landscaping company. They are members of the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Association of Professional Landscapers.

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