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GROW A FRIENDLY SPACE

Katrina Kieffer-Wells from Earth Designs reveals the inspiration behind this contemporary garden and shares tips for creating a space for the whole family

Our clients wanted a contemporary outside space that reflected their recently renovated interior. It needed to deliver the illusion of space and provide separate areas to cater for all members of the family, including teenage children. It's a south facing garden so a shady area was essential, along with private space for a hot tub and patio for entertaining.

Finding inspiration everywhere

You can find inspiration for your garden in anything that captures your imagination. Art, architecture and fashion are always rich sources and I often use elements from exhibitions and places I've visited as starting points for my designs. Collecting a portfolio of colours, shapes, textures and design details that you like will provide a wealth of ideas.

Sometimes an element of beauty can inspire a practical solution. In this garden, the idea behind a wall of pleached parasol trees between the patio and hot tub originated in the colonnades of the Santa Croce from my recent trip to Florence. Here they add height and provide much-needed shade and privacy.

An X-ray of a dress at a Balenciaga exhibition got me thinking about creating layers of transparency in the planting to



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suggest hidden depths. And the bold shapes in Paul Huxley's paintings inspired the boxy layout and block planters that divide the garden into different recreational areas.

The end result

A garden of many parts, with open spaces and hidden treasures. Layers of tall foliage, low borders and mid-height planters give the illusion of space and create separate hangouts for different activities. Perfect for families who want to be outside together or doing their own thing.

Get the look

Push the visual boundaries of your garden by rotating layout along the longest lines to create depth and flow. Accentuate the feeling of space with repetition and block planting.

Privacy is essential in urban garden. Strategic use of planting, planters, structures or screens can create open spaces for socialising and secluded seating for quiet moments. Nothing's more exciting in a garden than the promise of a secret hideaway. Use layers, levels and structures to create glimpses through foliage and down pathways.



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