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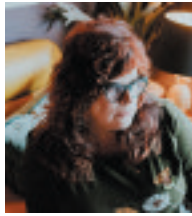
How it all started in Southend for Nathalie Emmanuel

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HOW TO... MAKE GARDENS POP

Earth Designs was formed by Leigh-on-Sea-based **Katrina Kieffer-Wells** in 2003, and here in her monthly column she shares her tips on how to create a designer garden in five steps...



Since the rise in garden makeover programmes, people are becoming more interested in their gardens – and how to create successful garden design themselves without having to pay over the odds. Garden design is a relatively new phenomena for domestic use. Previously

‘Plants will pop out against the dark hues, and it will make your space seem bigger’



the domain of large country estates, it was only at the turn of the 20th century that families started to look at how they organised their outdoor space. In the last 20 years, garden design has become really popular, however, not everybody can afford a garden designer.

Here we give you some essential tips to create an instant successful garden design...

Paint the fences

There is no doubt about it dark colours booze glamour. Drench your boundary is in black or dark grey to give your garden a super stylish backdrop. Plants will pop out against the dark hues, and it will make your space seem bigger.

Super-size planter

Invest in a large, fabulous planter. And then plant it with a gorgeous specimen tree. Pop it in a prominent position and it will pull a lot of focus to that area. It will play with scale and create a real *Alice in Wonderland* feel. If you can put it near to the seating area, it will create a canopy and help divide the garden into sections. Try fibreglass planters, or a corten steel.

Simplify your planting

We are all guilty of popping to the garden centre and falling in love with something

that looks amazing at the time. Very often we plant it in the garden in the wrong place with the wrong conditions. Try and simplify your planting by including three or four plants that you like and use them regularly throughout the garden. Consider a colour scheme to unite the space.

Lose the stuff

Get rid of the hose pipe. Hide the wheelbarrow away.

Focus on foliage

The top designer trick is to forget about flowers and focus on leaf shape and colour. Look at what the plant will look like when it isn't in flower. Include grasses or movement, and hydrangeas for their big glossy leaves.

Accessorise well

If you can, buy brilliantly designed furniture. Put it in a prominent position and it will act as a piece of sculpture as well as a seating area. Storm lanterns work brilliantly if you can't afford lighting.

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