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GARDEN GROW-HOW!

Gardens don't have to be exclusive or child friendly. **Katrina Kieffer-Wells MSGD** of Earth Design explains how to make them work for all the family, big and small

Believe it or not spring is here, which means it's time to make plans for your garden. If you're thinking of making changes, carefully consider your family make-up and their needs. If this year has taught us anything, it's that your outside space is an extension of your home. An essential extra room for all the family to enjoy.

For the younger members, it's a space to learn and let off steam, run, play, climb, experiment and experience nature. For adults, a place of refuge and relaxation. So how do you make your garden work for everyone?

Divide and conquer

Creating spaces in your garden for different activities is a great way to make the garden friendly for all family members. Separate noisy play areas from quiet, relaxing corners and unsightly trampolines from sophisticated seating areas. Use hedgerows, archways, screens and borders to define spaces. Then mould each environment to compliment the activity. Space allowing, you could even have more than one lawn for loud games and relaxing. Open areas for socialising and solitary swing chairs for quiet contemplation.

Show and tell

There's no doubt about it, children create clutter. But there are some clever ways to keep it at bay. Create the sophisticated look you want by making the grown-up eating and entertaining space the focus. Position play areas at the rear of the garden. Screen them



'Tall flowering plants encourage wildlife and look stunning'

from view with fencing or semi-transparent borders and tall flowering plants. The children will have plenty of room to play and you can enjoy the garden without looking out over a lawn strewn with play equipment.

Learn and grow

If your children like science and nature the garden is a great place to learn. Ponds and fruit trees create opportunities to explore and observe the life cycles of plants, birds and insects. A herb garden doesn't take up as much room as a vegetable patch, but provides plenty of interesting tastes and smells to explore. While tall flowering plants encourage wildlife and look stunning.

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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