

# ESSEX LIFE

THE COUNTY'S FAVOURITE MONTHLY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE SINCE 1952

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## George Clarke 'I knew St Osyth Priory could be saved'

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# GARDEN DESIGN DIRT

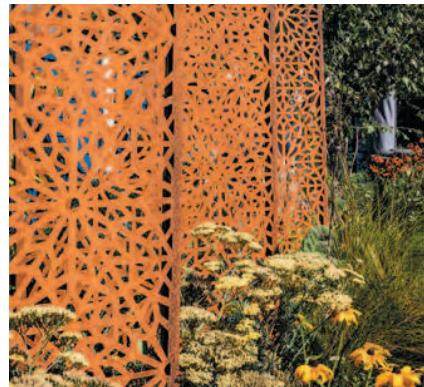
Leigh-on-Sea-based **Katrina Kieffer-Wells** of Earth Designs shares her garden expertise



A tall potted plant creates a private corner in a garden overlooked by a neighbouring balcony



Evergreen pleached trees provide a living screen against overlooking upstairs windows



A series of screens effectively block out views from neighbouring properties

## Keep it private?

**A** lack of privacy in the garden is a common issue, especially in urban environments. We all enjoy spending time outdoors, and a garden should be the ideal place to unwind in peace and quiet. However if you feel overlooked it can be difficult to relax. Fortunately, there are several creative and practical ideas you can try to make your garden more private.

### PERGOLAS ROCK

One of the best features you can add to your garden to enhance privacy is a pergola. Be mindful of placement, though—they can restrict natural light from entering your home. If you have practical skills you could construct one to your exact specifications, however there are offers a wide range of pergola options, from classic timber kits to sleek metal frames, some even featuring built-in sides. Depending on your privacy

needs, you can choose how much coverage the 'roof' provides.

### HEDGE ON A STICK

Okay, that's not the technical term—but 'pleached trees' are a clever and stylish way to raise your garden's boundary without breaking any height rules. Typically, these trees have a clear stem of about 1.8 metres, with a square or fan-shaped frame of foliage above, adding another 1.8 metres. They come in various varieties, including evergreens that offer year-round privacy. You don't have to line your entire boundary – just target problem spots.

### SCREEN IT UP

Screens are a versatile and effective way to add privacy. Position them close to the house to block sightlines or use them around patios to create a cosy, enclosed feel. Within your garden boundary, you can go extra tall –

but avoid making them so tall that they feel overpowering. Choose from timber, metal, perspex, or trellis designs. Bonus: they make beautiful backdrops for feature plants.

### PLANTING IN POTS

Placing plants in pots can instantly add height and strategic coverage. While not ideal for screening entire areas, a few well-placed, tall pots can help tackle specific privacy challenges. Choose pots as large as you can manage and opt for plants with spreading habits that thrive in containers. Think architectural evergreens like palms, or standard trees with a 'lollipop' shape – they can make a surprising difference. ●

**Earth Designs, proud members of the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Association of Professional Landscapers.**

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