

# ESSEX LIFE

THE COUNTY'S FAVOURITE MONTHLY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE SINCE 1952

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## Season's eatings

Tasty tidings in Chelmsford & Leigh

## WINTER WANDERING in Prittlewell Square, Thorpe-le-Soken & Beaumont



STRICTLY  
comes to  
St Osyth

MEET THE  
DAMES  
at the panto

## *Your* Christmas *starts here!*

- \* 13 Xmas markets
- \* 50 festive experiences
- \* 12 Yuletide towns to discover

£4.50





# GARDEN DESIGN DIRT

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



PHOTOS: ANNA O'NEILL

## Garden buildings

**T**raditionally, the garden shed has always been placed at the bottom of the garden – but is that really the best spot?

If you have a north-facing garden, the last thing you want is to block the only patch of sun with a shed or garden office. Don't be afraid to bring a garden building closer to the house. This can free up the sunniest, most valuable part of the garden for seating, planting, or simply enjoying the view.

### WORKING FROM HOME?

Since the pandemic, garden offices have skyrocketed in popularity. But it's important to be realistic. Picture working in that space on a cold, grey January afternoon – what does it look and feel like?

A basic shed just won't cut it. A proper garden office starts around £10,000-£15,000, and should be insulated, powered and comfortable. As a bonus idea: why not kit it out with a small sofa and cocktail cabinet for social use too? That way, you've got a functional space by day and a relaxing retreat by night – perfect for making the most of your garden all year round.

### SHED – A MUST HAVE

Love them or hate them, most gardens need a shed. But be clever with your storage:

- What are you storing?
- If it's bikes, consider a dedicated bike store in the front garden for easier access.
- Do you need a lawnmower?
- If not, skip the big bulky storage.
- Could you store items under bench seating or in a smaller outdoor unit?

### IF YOU DO NEED A SHED, BLEND IT IN

Paint it the same colour as the fences – dark shades like black, grey, or navy help it recede visually. Add a climber, or plant a bed in front of it to soften the look. Avoid putting a big path leading directly to it – it makes it feel like a destination, when really, it's just a functional part of the garden.

### SUMMERHOUSES CAN BE USED IN WINTER TOO

As a space to relax or read, a summerhouse could be perfect. Just bear in mind the front is usually glazed, so it's not ideal for storing clutter – it needs to look good from the house.

### TREAT YOUR OUTDOOR ROOM LIKE AN INDOOR ROOM

Add comfy furniture, bookshelves, ambient lighting, and even a plug-in radiator.

With a few thoughtful touches, it can become a cosy hideaway – even during the darker months.

### JOY FROM A GREENHOUSE

No matter how small your garden, if you're into growing your own, a greenhouse will bring so much joy.

From compact wall-mounted models to full Victorian-inspired glasshouses, there's a version for every space.

They're brilliant for:

- Potting up plants
- Growing vegetables
- Overwintering tender plants

Even a small greenhouse can become a productive, purposeful part of the garden. ●

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

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