

17 DIARY DATES • DAY TRIPS to yesteryear

# ESSEX LIFE

THE COUNTY'S FAVOURITE MONTHLY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE SINCE 1952

essexlifemag.co.uk SEPTEMBER 2025

exclusive

## Martina Cole 'Stroke left me unable to read'

### Why move to SAFFRON WALDEN?

54  
pages of  
**HOMES &  
GARDENS**

WILDLIFE  
WONDERS TO  
DISCOVER  
Bats, deers &  
fungi forays



# FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!

2025's best Essex eateries revealed

PLUS YOU CAN WIN

- An eight-course tasting menu at The Windmill Chatham Green
- Sunday roast at Wivenhoe House • £150 dinner at The Three Horseshoes

£4.50



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# GARDEN DESIGN DIRT

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



A pergola frames the dining area while balancing the height of nearby buildings and trees



A small urban garden with busy brickwork transformed by a bespoke wall-mounted vertical garden

## GOING VERTICAL?

When we design gardens, we often see them from a bird's-eye view – flat, focused on fences, patios, and lawns. But a great garden needs vertical interest. It's the elevation changes, tall features and planting layers that create a sense of mass and void. These vertical elements are what your eye naturally picks up when you look out from your house – not just your patio tiles.

Adding height in clever ways gives structure, drama, and balance, especially when countering a dominant wall or tall neighbouring building. A vertical feature placed diagonally across from a tall object can restore harmony in the space.

### VERTICAL PLANTING

Vertical planting is a fantastic way to maximize greenery without using up valuable floor space. It boosts your garden's green footprint and can help soften hard, urban surfaces like brick or concrete walls. It's also a great alternative for those who want to skip

the lawn but still enjoy lush surroundings. There are plenty of vertical garden kits on the market, but they do require some care – particularly with watering.

When choosing one, consider the wall's orientation, plant choice and your commitment to maintenance.

### ARCHWAYS

A timeless garden feature, archways add beauty, mystery, and structure. They act as portals to different areas of the garden and provide a framework for climbers like roses, clematis, or jasmine to thrive. Whether custom-built or store-bought, archways are brilliant for adding height and visual flow. They also cast beautiful shadows and can be used for strategic screening – to divert attention or frame a particular view.

### SCREEN IT UP

Screens aren't just for privacy – they're also excellent for vertical styling. Whether made of timber, masonry, perspex, or laser-cut metal,

they can be solid or semi-transparent, letting in dappled light while adding shape and rhythm to your space. Use screens repeatedly throughout your garden to create visual flow and structure. They offer concealment, a backdrop for plants and winter interest when greenery fades.

### HEIGHT FROM STRUCTURES

Adding a pergola or structure can transform your garden. Not only can it provide shade and privacy, but it also offers a chance to introduce vertical greenery, defining zones like dining or lounging areas. These structures let you send the green upward with climbing plants or hanging features, making your space feel more immersive and lush without taking up too much ground space. ●

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

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