



# GARDEN DESIGN DIRT

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

**T**ransforming your garden into a striking, design-led space doesn't require a complete overhaul – just a willingness to play with scale, colour, texture and layout. With a few bold decisions and thoughtful design choices, you can elevate even the simplest outdoor space into something exceptional.

## SUPERSIZE FOR IMPACT

One of the most effective – and often most surprising – ways to add a design edge to your garden is to play with scale. While traditional garden 'rules' encourage modest proportions, going supesize creates instant drama. Think oversized pots anchoring a terrace, or a single large tree used as a sculptural statement. Supersized elements create a sense of luxury and confidence, drawing the eye and giving your garden a clear identity. A pair of giant planters flanking a doorway or a generous specimen tree in a modest garden can become a real talking point, allowing your outdoor space to feel curated rather than crowded.

## GO DARK FOR DEPTH

If there's one colour trick every stylish garden should use, it's painting the fence a dark, saturated shade. Deep black, charcoal grey or navy immediately adds sophistication. These moody tones recede visually, creating the illusion of more space while making every plant pop in front of them. Against a dark backdrop, green foliage appears richer, flowers more vibrant, and the overall space feels more polished and intentional. It's a small change with a big payoff – and definitely a move away from the ordinary brown panels we're all used to.

## PLAN FIRST, PLANT LATER

A beautifully designed garden starts with a solid plan. Without one, even the best plants and prettiest pots won't sit comfortably together. A well-thought-out layout incorporates strong lines, generous planting beds and a clear flow through the space. Don't underestimate the importance of practical details like the depth of borders; shallow beds restrict your plant palette and prevent the garden from maturing well. For homeowners unsure where to begin, ED Gardens offers a two-hour consultation – either on-site or online – to help explore layout options and reveal the true potential of your plot.

## REPEAT FOR RHYTHM

Repetition is one of the most powerful design tools available. Whether it's a series of identical pots, a repeated plant variety or



When in doubt, supesize it – oversized planters and lush greenery turn even the smallest patio into a designer statement



The view from inside sets the tone – aligning the interior with the garden beyond creates a seamless intentional and calm flow



Layering textures adds depth and character – rough with smooth, shiny with matte, warm with cool

## Adding a design edge

the consistent use of one material, repetition adds rhythm and cohesion. Used well, it highlights features and creates balance, turning a collection of parts into a unified whole. It's a technique that instantly elevates the design, reinforcing your choices and helping the garden feel harmonious.

### EXERCISE RESTRAINT

With so many beautiful plants available, it's tempting to buy one of everything. But restraint is key. Limiting the number of material finishes, plant varieties and colours gives the garden clarity. Too much visual noise creates chaos; a disciplined palette creates calm.

### FRAME THE VIEW

Think of every window and doorway as a picture frame. What you see from inside the home is just as important as how the garden feels when you're standing in it. Position focal

points – such as statement pots, sculptures or structural plants – so they draw the eye outward and enhance the connection between interior and exterior.

### TEXTURE, TEXTURE, TEXTURE

Texture is one of the first things we notice in a space. Mixing rough with smooth, matte with shiny, soft with hard creates contrast and adds depth. Combining textures keeps a garden dynamic without overwhelming it, giving your space a layered, tactile richness. With thoughtful choices and a willingness to be bold, your garden can become a stylish extension of your home - full of impact, cohesion and character. ●

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