

# WHAT'S TRENDING IN OUR INDUSTRY?



With spring almost upon us, **Sean Butler** shares his insights and predicts what essential landscaping ideas to bear in mind for the year ahead

## Plants

There is a resurgence in the use of tropical and sub-tropical types of plants in landscaping. The use of Olives, *Phormiums*, *Trachycarpus*, *Phoenix* and the more common *Fatsias* were all the rage 20-25 years ago. It could definitely



be argued that due to climate change, we are seeing a gradual lean towards heavier use of lush greenery and tropical-type foliage plants in the designed landscape being repeated, and used much like they were 20 years ago.

Our clients (young people in particular) travel more now than they ever used to a few years ago, and come back inspired from places like Asia and Africa. They want us garden designers to recreate the feel of this tropical landscape to evoke those memories. But is this the only reason? Or is it that the younger clients are more climate aware, or is it that they simply don't want busy, perennial flowering gardens? I like being challenged by this repeat concept as it was something that I never really thought would come back again.

## Colour

It's safe to say that in recent years, grey has been overused – it's everywhere! Anthracite grey is the go-to colour for everything, but surely it's time to brighten up our environments?

Luckily, the pink and red blend of Living Coral is the colour for 2019. The colour represents playful expression and our innate need for optimism. After last year and the continuation this year of the Brexit fiasco, we can use all the innate optimism we can get!

In reaction to the onslaught of digital technology and social media increasingly embedding into daily life, we are seeking authentic and immersive experiences that enable connection and intimacy. People want to be sociable and spirited.

Representing the fusion of modern life, Living Coral is a nurturing colour that appears in our natural surroundings and at the same time, displays a lively presence within social media. There are some designer plants with beautiful coral flowers available, including tulips, roses and *Euphorbias*.

For a cutting garden, *Rununculus*, *Campanella*, poppies and peonies. Vibrant colours, however, are normally chosen in the form of objects rather than plants as accent pieces. A more muted flower colour with pastels is still the trend when designing gardens and choosing plants.



## Materials

Porcelain has got to be one of the most popularised materials to take over from the natural stone market. Will porcelain stone paving outstrip the natural stone demand? It's all about the client's perception on price point. Porcelain has been a renowned product for interiors for decades. The price doesn't seem to vary and therefore consumers are savvy on price. It's whether or not we can upsell the value that porcelain brings. With a palette from wood effect to polished concrete, it seems that this product has a solution to all designers' appetites.

## ABOUT SEAN BUTLER

Sean Butler is a landscape designer and director of Cube 1994. With a background in civil engineering, Sean has an in-depth understanding of the design, construction and maintenance of the physical and naturally built landscape.  
[www.cube1994.com](http://www.cube1994.com)