

How does your garden grow...?

It's the period of renewal, spring is a much-welcomed season after a long winter. From the beautiful spring bulbs blooming, tree blossom and milder days, it's a time where our gardens take centre stage. But, if your outside space is in need of a 'lift' for 2025, there's plenty of green inspiration to be found

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GO GREENER IN 2025!

When the RHS released their gardening predictions for 2025, it estimated not only will gardening be fun, it will also see us looking to front gardens and urban areas reimagined for a greener future.

Guy Barter, chief horticulturist at the RHS, says: 'Gardens never stand still and 2025 is likely to see not only new, exciting planting choices but new ways of designing, growing and maintaining spaces.'

'The EV revolution could usher in significant changes to what front gardens look like while city centres could be punctuated by many more growing spaces that serve the dual purpose of providing refuge for people and wildlife but also all-important flood proofing capabilities.'

One of the key areas included in the forecast was that front gardens will be on the front line. With ever increasing numbers of electric cars on the road, homeowners will be looking for landscaping options which provide easy access to charging points.

Permeable paving and gravel gardens flanked with low-maintenance plants are low cost, and prevent pooling or run-off of rainwater, making them an ideal option in dense urban areas.

So, if your driveway is looking past its best and you want an eco-friendly option, what are the best materials?

Grass pavers: Allowing grass to be incorporated into a pavement, it provides the best of both worlds. There is the appearance of grass but the load bearing capability of a well-constructed pavement or driveway and the added environmental benefit of promoting natural drainage and enhancing biodiversity.

Permeable paving: Being versatile, it can be used in several areas of an outside space. Providing a durable surface for driveways, it can handle the weight of vehicles while also managing rainwater effectively.

Rubber driveways: Made from recycled tyres, this is a sustainable choice as they help to decrease landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

Gravel driveways: The simplest, yet classic option, gravel is one of the most eco-friendly materials and allows water to permeate. It's cost-effective too!



PHOTO: ADGESTOCK



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Cube 1994

Having celebrated 30 years of business in 2024 and as previous Gold Medal Winners at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, this family-run business is not only designing and building inspiring gardens and outdoor spaces, they are keen to ensure they bring eco-friendly practices to benefit the next generation.

WOODLAND AND TRADITIONAL COTTAGE GARDENS

Sean Butler, managing director and lead designer for Cube 1994, says: 'The relaxed, organic style of woodland and cottage gardens appears to be making a comeback.'

'With an abundance of colours, textures, and scents, these gardens reflect the beauty of traditional English countryside gardening while also embracing sustainability and ecological responsibility. Key features include pollinator-friendly planting, mixed borders and rustic accents.'

Epping (below): 'The owners of this woodland garden selected perennials, wildflowers, and low-maintenance plants to ensure the garden stays vibrant year-round. These naturalistic plants not only look beautiful in this setting but support local pollinators. Layers of plants in different heights and textures encourage a sense of wild abundance.'

Stock (bottom): 'The owners of this period property chose a cottage-planting style for their front garden, with a mix of flowering plants, grasses, and herbs, to create a relaxed, cottage garden feel.'



This Epping project shows the organic style of woodland and cottage gardens is making a comeback



Cottage planting has been used in the front garden of this period property in Stock, which was also designed and built by Cube 1994



PHOTO: CUBE 1994

In Danbury 25,000 litre capacity tanks were placed underground to collect rainwater on an extensive project by Cube 1994

SUSTAINABLE GARDENS

'Sustainability continues to be a key theme for both garden designers and their clients in 2025,' says Sean.

'As climate change concerns grow, more people are adopting eco-friendly practices that not only benefit the environment but also enhance the overall health of their gardens.'

'Example sustainable practices include rainwater harvesting, wildlife-friendly gardens and also composting.'

Danbury (above): 'As dry summers become the norm along with increasing water bill costs, installing water butts or a rainwater harvesting system is becoming a must-have for many of our clients.'

'These large 25,000 litre capacity tanks were placed underground to collect rainwater.'

'This system alleviated the land drainage issues in the garden and provided a valuable source of water for the new fully automated irrigation system and toilet flushing in the house.'

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RAISED GARDENS AND VERTICAL PLANTING

‘Gardening in small outdoor spaces is on the rise,’ says Sean. ‘Garden designers are increasingly turning to raised garden beds and vertical planting systems to make the most of the available space. This trend is perfect for those with smaller gardens, balconies or window boxes.’

Colchester: ‘Modular raised beds offer flexible options for growing everything from vegetables to flowers and herbs. They help keep your garden organized, reduce back strain, and improve drainage. This blank canvas, small urban garden was transformed into a multi-level interesting space. The raised beds are clad in a Corten DesignClad by London Stone to contrast with the off-white porcelain paving.’

PHOTO: CUBE 1994

This small urban garden in Colchester was transformed into a multi-level interesting space by Cube 1994

FIND OUT MORE

With the focus on sustainability and encouraging nature into our gardens, here are some events and helpful resources to help you make the most of your outdoor space, whatever the size, in 2025.

Essex Wildlife Trust: garden ponds advice

The trust is committed to protecting wildlife and inspiring everyone of every age to have a lifelong love of nature. Building a garden pond is one of the most important things we can do to increase garden biodiversity year-round.

The online event will include the importance of what makes a good garden pond, how should we set about creating a good garden pond, and what kinds of creatures might move in to call it home.

When: Tuesday, March 11. 7pm-8pm.
Find out more: essexwt.org.uk

RHS Garden Hyde Hall: courses for all

With various events, courses and workshops taking place throughout the year (often a sell-out!) you'll have to get in quick.

The *Garden Design for Beginners* is a particular favourite and can

help if you're not sure on how to get the best from your garden, whatever the size.

But, if you want to know what has been nibbling your plants or would like to know the right plant for the right place, these informative courses provide help and advice from the experts.

When: The course *Plant Health and the Garden Ecosystem: What's damaging my plant?* takes place on Tuesday, April 8 and the *Plants for Difficult Places* course is on Wednesday, May 21.

Find out more: rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall

Perrywood Garden Centre: How To advice and workshops

Celebrating 70 years in 2025, the award-winning Tiptree centre is an inspiration for even the non-green-fingered. Perrywood's How To section can help with all those garden dilemmas with advice and tips from the knowledgeable team.

And, if you want to chat with the gardening experts to gather ideas and advice, then the Garden Advice Service workshops are informative and will be making a welcome return this spring. ●

Find out more: perrywood.co.uk