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Editor's letter



Andréa x

WE'RE ON THE THRESHOLD OF SUMMER, heading into the garden to make the most of sunny days, but also bringing a lighter, brighter touch to our interiors to echo the warmth and colour of the season. Which means that this issue has an inside-outside feel, with both cheerful gingham and check decorating ideas for indoors (page 76) and expert tips on how to style an outdoor room (page 82). We've the lowdown on choosing kitchen flooring (page 91), plus sensational table-setting ideas for dining alfresco (page 96). We're out and about shopping for vintage home buys (page 110), and tempting our palates with tasty recipes from the Med (page 114). Plus, of course, we're taking a tour of four gorgeous homes and discovering how the owners live their best country life (from page 21).

My garden is in need of love and attention, so I've been poring over the beautiful Nordic-inspired plot near Bristol that we're featuring this month (page 130). Maybe I need a similar box hedge and swing in my outside space? I'll definitely be growing some edible flowers (page 137) to add to salads. How lovely to have summertime to look forward to...

Contributors

PHOTOGRAPHS EMMA REGO, ROBERT SANDERSON



MICHELLE MASON is a designer, stylist and the author of *Love Vintage*, which we've featured an extract from this month (page 110). 'This summer, I'm looking forward to a holiday in France and Spain and visiting some brocantes on the drive down. I'm also launching a new range of vintage-inspired fabrics and wallpapers,' she says.



MAGGIE COLVIN wrote our Family Values house (page 22). 'In summer, I love the sunshine on my back and kayaking in salty water under a blue sky that turns orange and yellow in the setting sun.'

ROBERT SANDERSON

photographed our Family Values house (page 22). 'I'm a lover of wildlife and I look forward to butterflies appearing and the song of a lark ascending in summer.'



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE...

47



Design & decorate

- 76 Square dance** Joyful gingham, from chunky checks to small-scale prints, brings traditional cheer to interiors
- 82 Outdoor rooms** Style experts share their ideas for creating a relaxed spot for gathering in the garden
- 88 Create a boutique hotel bedroom** Bring in a touch of luxury with insights from creative directors Ottalie Stride and Camilla Clarke
- 91 Get the lowdown** Country kitchen floors that are durable, practical and full of character
- 96 At your table** Creating an idyllic setting for long lunches out of doors
- 100 Furniture refresh** Spruce up your garden tables and chairs in time for the summer months

News & stories

- 11 Rhubarb rhubarb!** Our pick of the latest interiors buys, slow-living ideas, sustainable products, events and more
- 12 Cinny Aumonier** The interior designer creates classic wallpapers and fabrics in fresh contemporary colourways
- 17 Paula Sutton** Our columnist shares her plans for the relaxing and indulgent guest suite at her country home

Dream homes

- 22 Family values** An inherited period farmhouse has been transformed from a jumble of rooms into a graceful home
- 32 Crisp and classic** Confident colours and vibrant pattern combine to revive traditional style
- 34 Tudor charm** Quirky original features form the backdrop for a fresh new look in this 16th-century Essex home
- 44 Beams and dreams** Refurbish a period interior with rich colour and cheerful prints
- 47 Modern rustic** A dated bungalow in Yorkshire receives a contemporary-country upgrade with a relaxed vibe
- 57 Barn raising** Texture and warming neutrals are defined by black detailing for a laid-back scheme
- 60 Worth the wait** A neglected Lincolnshire cottage gets a new lease of life, and is now filled with family treasures
- 70 Vintage white** Pre-loved pieces blend with a tonal palette and pretty country-modern designs





114



Garden & grow

- 127 Oh so sweet** Choosing sweet peas, those delightful fragrant climbers for your country-style plot
- 130 Nordic inspiration** This historic garden in the West Country has intriguing Finnish-style elements
- 137 Incredible edibles** Rosie Fyles of Chiswick House and Gardens on growing flowers good enough to eat
- 140 Kitchen garden** Plant your own crop for your larder with these vegetable patch favourites

Subscriptions

- 72 Subscribe** and receive an Emma Bridgewater mug set, worth £34



COVER PHOTOGRAPH
ROBERT SANDERSON



Property & place

- 102 Greenhouse growing** How to set up your own glass house and start off a host of horticultural endeavours

Country lifestyle

- 106 Career shift** Alison Jenkins swapped the London art world for a Somerset organic smallholding where she offers workshops on all aspects of ecological gardening
- 110 For the love of vintage** Dealer Michelle Mason reveals how to curate a collection of pre-loved pieces
- 114 Taste of summer** Dive into the holiday mood with delicious recipes for appetisers, a fish main course and mouthwatering dessert, fresh from the Mediterranean
- 120 A sip of sweetness** Making cordials and syrups from edible flowers to use in your summer recipes and drinks
- 146 A day in the country** Isabella Tree explores the rewilding project at her home on the Knepp estate in Sussex

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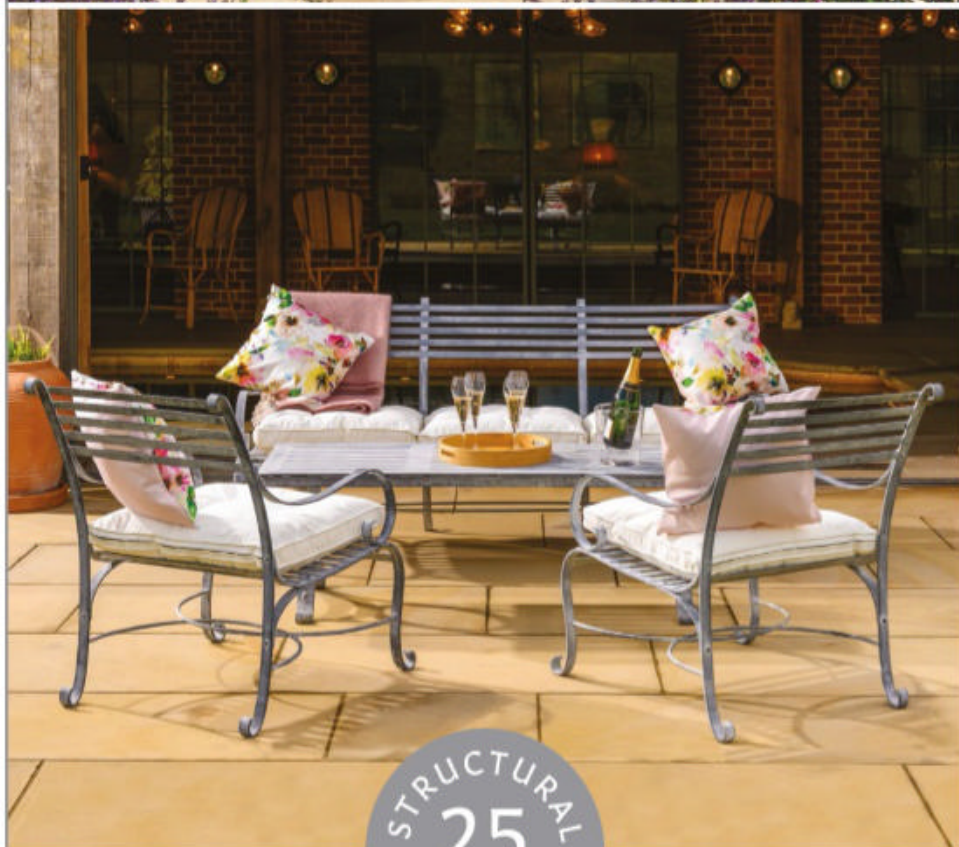
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COMING NEXT MONTH...



Homes

- Relaxed and welcoming homes
- Inspiring interior colours
- How to build an outdoor kitchen



Gardens

- The breathtaking beauty of white gardens
- Creating shade outdoors
- Easy-to-grow cosmos



Design

- Alfresco styling ideas
- Add a cinema room
- Revitalise your kitchen

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News & stories



Rhubarb rhubarb!

Inspired by rhubarb stalks and terracotta pots, Neptune's new shade Rhubarb enhances sun-filled rooms, then evolves to a deeper rose as daylight fades. Alongside new cabinetry, accessories and lighting, Neptune has introduced a colour consultancy, from £200, to help you find your signature scheme. Rhubarb matt emulsion, £48 for 2.5ltr, Neptune, neptune.com

FEATURE TARA KING

DESIGNER OF THE MONTH

Cinny Aumonier

Creating her own collection of wallpaper and fabrics has been a life-long ambition for this talented interior designer

Beginning her career as an intern at the home of design brands, Chelsea Harbour, Cinny then trained at an architectural interiors practice, before launching her own interior design business. Busy family life quickly took over, and she decided to pursue a new creative outlet, fulfilling her dream to create her own hand-printed wallpaper and fabric designs. And, in 2022, she was back at Chelsea Harbour to launch her first collection.

Have you always been creative?

I always loved Art and Textiles at school. I found drawing peaceful, a way to escape – I lost many hours!

How did the collection come about?

I was running my own interior design business, but the demands of a young family meant I had to re-evaluate. I studied wallpaper and pattern design before setting myself a challenge of designing something that I was happy with and could be produced in the UK. It took me five years, but here I am.

What inspires you?

For my most recent collection, I found inspiration in the V&A archives in the British Library. In my day-to-day life, I'm inspired by art and nature, as well as the interiors of Dorothy Draper and David Hicks. Their combination of colours, textures and patterns was way ahead of their time.

Talk us through the design process.

I tried many printing techniques, but screenprinting captured all my senses. The prints come to life and achieve a depth of colour like no other. Producing



'I love print and textures to touch; I need to feel design,' says Cinny

in the UK has always been important to me. I found a team of really trusted suppliers – all UK based – and they've been integral in supporting the launch of my collection.

What makes your designs stand out?

I love 18th-century Indian chintz (my mother was born in India). Stylised florals and pretty prints are offset by bold stripes and geometric patterns. These ground my designs, giving them a strong, contemporary feel.

What do you love about what you do?

I love print and textures to touch; I need to feel design. It gives me a sense of self and a much-needed creative hub. I feel like the journey has only just begun and there is never-ending scope to expand and create.

Sum up your creative style in three words...

Timeless, classic and contemporary.

cinny.co.uk



Scandi style

Love Scandi interiors? Then take a trip to Aelfred, London's biggest showroom of vintage Scandinavian furniture and accessories. Owner Nina Hertig (co-founder of interior design practice and gallery, Sigmar) wants to make good-quality secondhand pieces available to everyone, with prices from around £15 and furniture costing no more than £2,500. 'Rather than having everything online, we want to celebrate discovering treasures in real life,' she says. Open Thursdays to Sundays, aelfred.co.uk



WHAT A PUZZLE

Hands up if you got into jigsaws over lockdown? That was the genesis of female-founded brand Prints in Pieces, which makes puzzles pretty enough to frame as a print once complete. Each design is created by an emerging woman artist from around the world and every one comes with a tailored Spotify playlist, to boost awareness and enjoyment of the 'slow moments' in life. Prices start at £22 for a 500-piece puzzle, printsinpieces.com →





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ONE FOR THE DIARY...

23-27 MAY The Chelsea Flower Show opens its famous floral gates with all-new garden designs to inspire, with sustainability a key theme this year. Tickets cost from £48.85 for non-members, [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)

15 JUNE Turn your hand to calligraphy with INKspire's beginner's workshop in Cheshire, £37 per person, or opt for an at-home kit, £27.99 (both include materials), [inkspirecalligraphy.com](https://www.inkspirecalligraphy.com)

REFASHIONED FABRICS

Jules Haines, founder of online salvage platform, Haines, is on a mission to reduce the fabric waste destined for landfill each year. Her new collaboration is with clothing brand, Daydress. Along with repurposing last season's pretty floral fabrics, from £65m, Jules has curated a collection of cushions, from £85, and lampshades, £95. Daydress founder, Gabby Deeming, says: 'It's been a real joy to see our fabrics re-imagined for interiors.' hainescollection.co.uk



FLORAL FINISH

Online interiors emporium Edit58 offers an array of interesting items, but it is founder Lisa Mehydene's one-of-a-kind collabs with other designers that give us a real buzz. Handcrafted in West Sussex, this trug features the prettiest floral and lattice design, hand painted to order by Preneet Bart, founder of block-print textile brand, The Charpoy. From £140, [edit58.com](https://www.edit58.com)



MAKING THE CUT

The Cut Flower Sourcebook: Exceptional Perennials and Woody Plants for Cutting (£35, Filbert Press) from Rachel Siegfried – owner of Green & Gorgeous flower farm and floral design studio – shares techniques, tips and plant selections for creating your own seasonal displays. ➔





HISTORY REPEATING

To celebrate British fashion brand Brora's 30th anniversary, founder and creative director Victoria Stapleton has rifled through the archive, choosing one standout style from every year since 1993, to inspire a 30-piece collection that's sure to evoke fond fashion memories – and spark some new ones, too, broraonline.com

MARBLE ART

After years spent pursuing individual creative careers, lifelong friends Jemma Lewis and Angela Bush have teamed up to launch House of Amitié, a fresh and contemporary interiors brand inspired by the traditional craft of paper marbling. Their debut collection comprises two vibrant stories, Heritage and Avant Garde. Currently available on wallpaper, and costing £150 a roll, the designs will be translated onto interior fabrics later this year; follow [@houseofamitie](https://www.instagram.com/houseofamitie) for updates.



Orange shade, £550; Lemon shade, £490, both Natasha Hulse

INVEST IN SOME ZEST

This season's trend for fruity prints is made for country styling. Inject some zest into your home with these lovely fabric lampshades from Natasha Hulse's new collection, featuring appliqué oranges and lemons in sinuous shapes and bright citrus shades, natashahulse.com ➔



The joyful home

Our style columnist shares her secrets to welcoming house guests so that they feel at home

I've mentioned before that I am a 'slow decorator'. I take time to savour the evolution of my interiors, allowing them to flourish at a sedate and organic pace. With that said, even I am not immune to the lure of a newly decorated room, and I certainly get excited when faced with a blank canvas that needs to be accessorised and styled for a dedicated season or special purpose.

I currently have a guest annexe nearing completion that has been eight years in the making (I told you I was slow). We gathered enough money to complete the shell, then had to wait a few years while family commitments channelled our resources in different directions. Time has passed and now the moment has come to create the dedicated guest haven of my dreams and truth be told, rather than taking it in my usual slow stride, I am feeling rather giddy about it – particularly as it coincides with the advent of summer, meaning that a variety of family and friends will be escaping the city and joining us for sunny weekends in the Norfolk countryside. There's something rather special about welcoming people into our homes. I love to host, and I want my guests always to depart feeling that they have been indulged and thoroughly looked after.

I like to start with contemplating the little details that bring me the most pleasure when staying as a guest at a hotel for instance. A pile of matching towels, including a large bath sheet, folded and smelling of lavender at the end of the bed? Certainly, a selection of wonderful soaps and body lotions, and a few



'I want to make my guests feel relaxed and not as if they're tied exclusively to my timetable'

practical elements – pins, spare razor, cotton buds and a mini sewing kit for loose buttons, etc, in a little ceramic dish. A linen bathrobe is a nice touch. I believe my guests should feel as though they have stepped into a nirvana of a home away from home – or the type of comforting experience that we don't always have the time to give to ourselves.

I also put out some books – a selection of old classics and a few contemporary options or magazines are handy for those rainy days when the best-laid plans go astray. Flowers bring me joy, so it makes perfect sense as a host to have a beautiful vase of homegrown blooms from the garden waiting in the guest room. In fact, the scent of a room is an important factor, it can induce as much pleasure and feelings of relaxation as the look of the room.

A final special touch is to keep the departure as delightfully memorable as the arrival. I love to include a little goody bag of local keepsakes for them to take home with them as a reminder of their Norfolk summer stay. Of course, I'll know if I've succeeded when they never want to leave!



Pattern play



Colour-confident designer and founder of Firmdale hotels, Kit Kemp has teamed up with heritage pottery brand Spode to launch an eclectic collection of tableware and giftware, inspired by her love of the countryside. Featuring classic woodland scenes interspersed with eclectic birds and mythical creatures, the Tall Trees range brings a touch of whimsy to the table. Prices start at £20 for a side plate, available online at spode.co.uk



MINDFUL MAKING

Did you know that stitching can be as restful as meditation? With that in mind, Cornish designer Helen Round has launched a collection of soul-soothing craft kits, in partnership with fellow textile artist, Rebekah Johnston, designed to help you unwind. Choose from a set of four coasters or a mini quilt, each costing £36 and containing all the materials and instructions you need to sew by hand, no experience required, helenround.com

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Dream homes



Brush strokes

Patinated and painted wood pieces, like this cupboard and vintage shutters from our Tudor Charm home feature (page 34) are a country classic. For a cabinet like this, paint with a layer of chalk paint (try Annie Sloan), then a thinner layer in a different colour. Wax, then rub back the edges of doors and panels to reveal the base shade, then wax again. Perfectly imperfect...

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS PHOTOGRAPH LAURA MARIN

FAMILY VALUES

Marian and Alan Kendall inherited this 16th-century farmhouse and are now telling their own story within its restored walls



EXTERIOR Ancient trees frame the view of the old farmhouse. The garden room with French doors is a new addition





he irony behind the loving restoration of Marian and Alan Kendall's Grade II listed Norfolk farmhouse is that they never intended to embark on it in the first place. 'The farmhouse was a bit of a white elephant,' says Marian. 'We inherited it from Alan's father, but we were already happily ensconced in our cosy home on the same estate. When my father died in Australia, we decided to spend my inheritance upgrading the cottage for ourselves.' It was only when an architect arrived that Marian and Alan were challenged to think again. The architect suggested that Marian's inheritance would be far better invested in restoring

the graceful Grade II listed farmhouse which had period details and a history dating back to the 1500s.

Marian says it took time to believe him. 'It was so hard to see how the muddled layouts and random additions could be reworked to make a cohesive whole.' The house had started out as a thatched cottage in the 1580s and been added to by a long line of wealthier occupants who built a second floor, and finally a top floor for servants. Some of the extensions were decidedly unsympathetic, including a crumbling conservatory dating back to the 1930s.

The Kendalls found local architects LBR, who worked with interior designer Emma Deterding. With a team in place, the house was gradually reconfigured internally and the muddle of small rooms was replaced with a new footprint of graceful Georgian proportions, period features, fireplaces, panelling, wide doors, lift, high skirtings and a secret door between the dining room and study. To expand the kitchen, a 1960s French window was removed. The new kitchen space is now linked by folding doors to the garden room. 'It became the homely hub, a magnet which draws people together to sit, chat, drink, work and eat, while I cook,' says Marian.

'Emma's mantra was to give me first choice on fabrics and colours and then upcycle, upgrade, refresh and

restore. She never throws anything out,' says Marian. When a shipload of her mother's cherished collectables arrived in a large crate, Emma dusted them down and transformed even the most ignominious brown furniture with a new lick of paint, embellished with handpainting, fabric or gilding. Old tapestries from Alan's mother were made into cushions backed by contemporary fabrics. Australian paintings inherited from Marian's father found a rightful place to hang and Alan's inherited political cartoons by James Gillray were given a spot on the landing. 'It is really important that you keep your family history,' says Emma.

Colour schemes were based on Marian's favourite painting of turquoise and pink flamingos. 'She loves turquoise, blue, pink and yellow,' Emma observes. 'Hence, we

chose a sunny yellow to paint walls in the hall and the dark dining room. And there are combinations of pink and turquoise in other rooms.' Into this mix, Emma introduced new velvet sofas and armchairs, finished in contrasting velvet piping, plus curtains and headboards in exuberant colours. Emma's feel for colour made a big impression on Marian. 'I trusted her completely, and the house looks all the lovelier for it,' she says.

The field surrounding the house is next in line for

a revamp. 'We are discovering so many things in our first summer here; learning where we like to sit outside and how the garden might shape up. We have plans to restore the high walls of the old vegetable garden.' Marian is enthusiastically embarking on a garden design course, while Alan is patiently waiting for 'Madam to put in her plant orders'.



AT HOME WITH

OWNERS Marian Kendall, a Cordon Bleu cook, lives here with her husband Alan, an engineer.

HOUSE The house is a Grade II Listed farmhouse dating back to the 1500s, set in acres of farmland and meadows.



KITCHEN The kitchen is the hub of the home and boasts a large central island in a striking turquoise. **Kitchen** designed by Bryant Kitchens and painted in Vardo by Farrow & Ball. **Blind fabric**, Ashdown by Nina Campbell



LIVING ROOM A fireplace takes centre stage in the elegant new living room. **Sofas** trimmed in Blue velvet Varese Sea, Designers Guild. **Curtains** in Poppinjay, Ian Sanderson. **Rug, lamps, and sofas,** KD Loves

MARIAN AND ALAN'S COUNTRY LIFE

SIMPLE PLEASURES 'Walking the dogs, Mabel and Lily, and planning the garden design over a glass of wine watching a pink sunset.'

OUR FAVOURITE VIEW 'From the bathroom we enjoy the full extent of wide-open Norfolk skies and listen to birds singing in the summer.'

SHOP AT 'Kelling Designs (kellingdesigns.com) showroom in Field Dalling, which is filled with inspirational interiors and high end, vibrant home furnishings and accessories from sofas to lampshades in a range of uplifting colours and Ikat patterns.'

GO FOR A MEAL AT 'The Gunton Arms (theguntonarms.co.uk) near North Walsham is set in an 18th-century deer park and has a hearty menu.'





GARDEN ROOM Surrounded by a wall of Georgian style windows, linked to the garden on three sides by French doors, the garden room is a family favourite. **Sofas**, KD Loves; upholstered in Roma Aqua. **Lamps**, Pooky



HALLWAY The fan light in the hall and the front door are original features of the old farmhouse. Yellow walls imbue a welcoming sense of sunshine even on grey days. **Table lamp**, KD Loves

LANDING On the first landing a large iron lantern makes a strong statement, while the yellow walls provide a visual link between floors. **Lantern**, Jim Lawrence. For similar **wall paint**, try Citron, Farrow & Ball

EN-SUITE BATHROOM Voile curtains offset by blue walls filter a soft light in the en suite. The bath was strategically placed to enjoy views of the garden. **Bath**, The Cast Iron Bath Company. **Walls** in Borrowed Light, Farrow & Ball



‘The house looks all the lovelier for embracing colour and having that confidence .I wake up thinking, do I really live here?’



MASTER BEDROOM Serene and full of colour reminiscent of Australia, the master bedroom is a mix of bright textiles and elegant antique pieces. **Curtain fabric**, Alison Gee. **Rug**, Birdie Fortescue. **Lamps and headboard**, KD Loves



FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN
PHOTOGRAPHS ROBERT SANDERSON

CRISP AND CLASSIC

Emulate Marian Kendall's style with quintessential pieces and strong pattern



1 BLOCK COLOUR House Scatter cushion in Bahama cotton matt velvet, from £45, Sofa.com **2 CRAFTED BY HAND** Chester Castle headboard in Tracery hand-blocked linen in Fuchsia, from £950, Anbôise **3 MIRRORED SHELF** Aberdeen coffee table in Champagne, £295, Perch and Parrow **4 DECORATIVE FINISH** Zion lidded ceramic urns in Distressed White, £85 set of two, Oka **5 HAND-BLOCK PRINT** Chequer cushion in Pinks, £112, Molly

Mahon **6 GLASS ELEGANCE** Chelsea table lamp base, £189; Delicate Bloom shade, £180, both Mind The Gap **7 WARMING SHADE** Sunlight absolute matt emulsion, £54.50 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene **8 BAROQUE DETAILING** Marina mirror in Gold, £90, Ella James **9 HANGING BEAUTY** Five-sided plain lantern in Black Bronze, £1,015, Besselink and Jones **10 ART DECO DETAIL** Venice three-seater sofa with contrast piping, £1,965, Sweetpea and Willow

FEATURE ALICE HUMPHRYS




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TUDOR CHARM

Crooked ceilings and wonky floors, not to mention original wooden beams and iron-studded doors, are all part of the appeal of Jo and David Cox's 16th-century farmhouse

SITTING ROOM The striking crewelwork curtains were the starting point for this welcoming scheme. **Curtains** in Tangdar, Welland & Wye. **Club fender**, Acres Farm. **Tartan throw**, Susie Watson Designs





viewing the 16th-century farmhouse in a quiet country lane, Jo Cox felt as though she'd stepped into another world, despite it being only half a mile away from her home. 'I'll never forget that feeling of excitement when I pushed open the gate in the middle of the beech hedge,' Jo recalls.

'Seconds later, I caught sight of the old farmhouse and was entranced.'

Back in 2017, Jo and her family had been living in Brentwood, Essex. 'My husband, David, and I had done quite a lot of work to that house, but since moving there, I'd developed a passion for growing flowers and vegetables, and I yearned for a larger garden and an older property,' she reveals. 'We were also keen to live somewhere more rural and peaceful.'

While David was browsing property sites, he noticed the pink, timber-framed farmhouse, set in six acres, complete with mature gardens and a stable block. 'Properties like this don't come to the market very often around here and, although the amount of work needed was daunting, we could see the potential,' says Jo. 'Every room was bursting with period features and charming touches, such as the inglenook fireplaces. The contours of the ceilings mirrored those of the floors above, and the fact that nothing was straight added to the sense of being immersed in the house's history.'

Clinching the deal, the Cox family moved in during 2018 and applied for planning permission to convert the stable

block into an annexe, where they would live during the renovation of the farmhouse. While this application was going through, Jo and David met with conservationist and heritage consultant Ian Alderton, of Architectural Management, who helped them draw up plans for the house and the kitchen extension. He also recommended Bakers of Danbury – specialists in renovating historic buildings. 'This was fortuitous as, despite having a survey, there were various surprises that cropped up during the year-long project, including having to underpin many of the structural walls,' says Jo. 'The builders were excellent and, thankfully, we had provision for the unexpected finds in our contingency budget.'

Long before the building work began, in April 2021, Jo had contacted Essex-based interior designer Claire Orders to ask her to help update the property. Her goal was to introduce pattern, colour and texture that would accentuate the period features and make each space sing. 'This was a dream project, particularly as my design aesthetic leans towards traditional country-house style,' Claire says. 'Jo was a fabulous client. She listened to my suggestions and thoughtfully implemented my ideas for furniture, fabrics, paint colours and soft furnishings to make every room warm, inviting and interesting.'

Liaising with the builders, architects and joiners, Claire

used a floorplan to work out how to reconfigure each space, before designing bespoke cabinetry and creating mood boards. 'I would have been lost without Claire's input,' says Jo. 'She really understood the fresh, modern country look I had in mind and interpreted my thoughts into a raft of fabulous ideas.'

For instance, although Jo had her heart set on a deVOL kitchen, she feels that she would never have been brave enough to go for the deep Pantry Blue

shade that Claire recommended.

'Without Claire, this would have been a very different house,' Jo reveals. 'Now it's a home we all adore. We're proud to be its custodians and hope that our renovation will stand the farmhouse in good stead for many years to come.'

Contact Claire Orders Interiors at claireorders.co.uk



AT HOME WITH

OWNERS Jo and David Cox, their children Pippa, 15, Nathan, 12, and cat, Poppy

HOUSE A Grade II-listed, detached four-bedroom farmhouse, with parts dating back to 1520



KITCHEN Brass details, from the wall lights to drawer handles, bring warmth to the deep-blue cabinetry. **Kitchen** in Pantry Blue, deVOL. **Club wall lights**, Jim Lawrence. **Blinds** in Troon Stripe in Dark Navy, Ian Mankin



HALLWAY/BOOTROOM

Patterned floor tiles inject drama in this practical space. Pombaline Eugenio tiles, Claybrook Studio. Cabinet in Norfolk Flint, Fenwick & Tillbrook. Darlana pendant in Aged Iron, Andrew Martin



‘Every room was bursting with period features and charming, quirky touches. We could see its potential’

DINING ROOM The chairs were French polished to match the oak floorboards and beams. **Table, chairs and dresser,** Elisabeth James Antiques. **Chandelier,** Homary. **Walls in** Seal Pup, Fenwick & Tilbrook

JO'S COUNTRY LIFE

SIMPLE PLEASURES 'Having the space to create a flower and vegetable garden, where I can grow my own produce. The quince jelly I made this year was delicious!'

FAVOURITE VIEW 'The one right outside my kitchen window, from where I watch my garden change gradually through the seasons.'

SHOP AT 'Family-run Calcott Hall Farm Shop (calcotthall.com), where I have been going since I was a child. It now has a butcher's, fishmonger's, cheese counter and café, plus it sells lovely fruit and veg.'

GO FOR A MEAL AT 'The Bake House Coffee Shop (bakehousecoffeeshop.co.uk) in Cooksmill Green, Essex, which is great for lunch in the summer.'



EXTERIOR The couple sensitively updated the entrance to the 16th-century farmhouse with an oak porch. **Front door** in Little Donkey, Fenwick & Tilbrook

INNER HALL The plasterer's signature mouse (above the beam, top right) is a quirky addition, while sisal-effect carpet creates a cohesive feel. Picture light, Jim Lawrence. Stamford carpet, Unnatural Flooring



MAIN BEDROOM

Bespoke cupboards fitted under the sloping ceiling provide ample storage. For door panel fabric, try Marden, Fermoie.

Walls painted in Greylag Goose, Fenwick & Tilbrook





BATHROOM The freestanding bath was painted to complement the geometric floor tiles. Green Churriana tiles, Bert & May. Bath painted in Breakfast Room Green, Farrow & Ball. Wooden stool, Home Barn



BEAMS AND DREAMS

Refresh a period home, like Jo Cox, with bold colours and lively prints



1 INDUSTRIAL EDGE Salthouse wall light in Antiqued Brass, £84.80, Jim Lawrence **2 SOOTHING GREEN** Ambleside absolute matt emulsion, £54.50 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene **3 SCALLOP DETAIL** Cecily woven wool/cotton runner in Mustard/Pink, £95, Oliver Bonas **4 GICLEE PRINT** Buddleja in Navy art print, from £25, Abigail Borg **5 RUSTIC APPEAL** Levi bathroom stool in fir and oak, £95, Sweetpea and Willow **6 MADE IN SWEDEN** Sophia cushion

cover in Indigo, £123, Cathy Nordström **7 HIGH-GLOSS FINISH** Bobina Bobble hand-carved mangowood mirror in Chinese Red, £895, Oka **8 TRADITIONAL BEAUTY** 150i electric range cooker in Dusky Pink, from £12,600, Everhot **9 VINTAGE SOUL** Auberge Green patterned wall and floor tiles, £46.80sqm, Porcelain Superstore **10 CONTEMPORARY ELEGANCE** Marino armchair in Dark Wood, from £1,650, Ercol

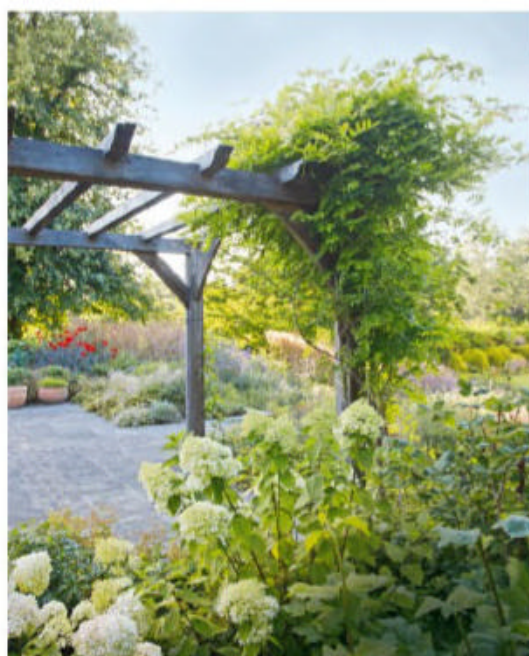
FEATURE ALICE HUMPHRYS

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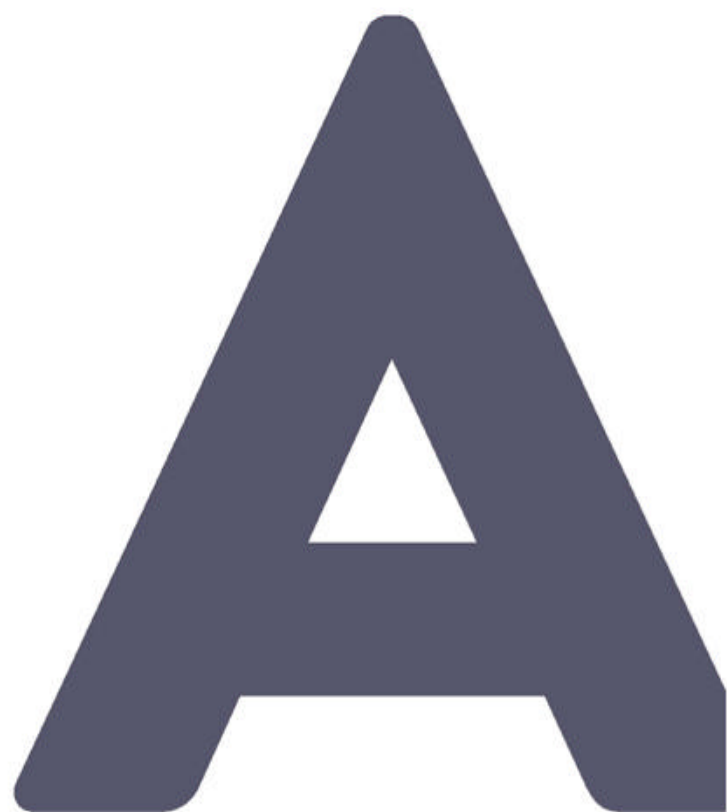
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LIVING AREA 'Replacing a 4m-long radiator underneath the window was out of our budget, so we designed a radiator cover from wooden slats to disguise it,' explains Michaela. **Chandelier,** Dowsing & Reynolds

MODERN RUSTIC

Michaela Shoebridge and her husband Lee have updated their dated 1980s bungalow to create a calm, relaxed home in the heart of Yorkshire



'As first-time buyers we were keen to find a project we could develop over time, ideally in a quiet, rural spot,' says Michaela Shoebridge. 'We'd been renting locally for two years, keeping a keen eye on properties that were coming onto the market – and this four-bedroom bungalow, in the countryside on the outskirts of Hull, was perfect. We loved that the rooms were well proportioned and logically

laid out on one level. It had a generous footprint, large back garden and bags of potential to extend and add value.'

The property had been built in the 1980s and although it needed updating, it wasn't in bad condition. The majority of the house had been decorated in magnolia, apart from a jazzy red kitchen! The layout had a cohesive feel, however, with all the rooms leading from an L-shaped hallway. One side opens into the living, dining and conservatory area, which has a central fireplace to create a divide between them, with the kitchen and utility room accessed from the dining area. On the other side of the hall are the bedrooms, study and family bathroom.

'Unfortunately, we had a big setback while we were waiting for the sale to go through – the North had a severe cold snap and the water tank froze, causing the pipes to burst and flood the entire house,' explains Michaela. 'There was a lot of water damage which had to be addressed before we could think about anything else. Our priority was to remove the old water tank and replace it with a new combi boiler which we relocated to the utility room'. The main bathroom was re-fitted, with extra space created by the removal of the water tank, allowing for a shower and small bath. They also removed an old fireplace to reveal the brickwork, installing a double-sided log burner that serves both the living room and dining area.

The kitchen and utility room have also been given a full makeover. 'We were conscious of not overspending

in this area, as we have plans to extend and move the kitchen at some point in the future,' she says. So, existing units were updated with a vinyl coating, while floor-to-ceiling cabinets were built in an unused area for extra storage and to house an integrated fridge/freezer. Lights were replaced and radiators were covered. Each room was also replastered and decorated, and characterful barn doors and ceiling beams added to the living areas.

'Aside from the flood, before we'd even got the keys, our biggest issue was working with a limited budget. This was squeezed even further with the onset of the pandemic, which really pushed up the cost of labour and materials. We were forced to reassess our plans for the house and become more creative with ideas, swapping structural changes for

more achievable aesthetic alterations,' Michaela continues. 'We also realised that we could drastically cut costs by taking on the work ourselves, obsessively researching what was required for each stage, and watching hours of DIY tutorials online. Every step of the way we have gained new skills, and despite the steep learning curve, our confidence has grown, and our plans have become bigger and more ambitious.'

The couple has created a home full of warmth and character. 'I wanted the décor to be smart but make the space feel calm and relaxing, and we've achieved this by using a soft colour palette, natural elements and modern design touches. We've really thought about how to mix rustic, natural and modern elements in an understated and uncluttered way. I think the house now has a real sense of calm and continuity, and a unique, high-end look which hasn't broken the bank. It's better than we could have ever envisaged it would be!'

Follow Michaela on Instagram
@mishkashoe



AT HOME WITH

OWNERS Slovakian born Michaela Shoebridge lives here with her partner Lee, who works in sales and marketing, along with their four cats, Frank, Christian, Bella and Eddie.

HOUSE A four-bedroom bungalow built in the 1980s in East Yorkshire.

LIVING AREA A white Ikea cabinet has been upcycled with black paint and black gaffer tape to help tie it in with the rest of the room. **Rug**, Next. **Cabinet**, Ikea. For a similar **armchair**, try Dunelm



KITCHEN With plans to extend in the future, they repurposed the existing kitchen by having the cabinets, worktops and walls professionally wrapped in vinyl. Self-adhesive **vinyl**, Cover Styl. **Pendants** and **shades**, Ferm Living

GARDEN Outside in the garden, modern furniture gives the patio area a relaxed vibe, perfect for when people come to visit. For a similar **bar table set** and outdoor **armchairs**, try Garden Trading



‘We are more than delighted with our home. It is fresh, bright and airy with a high-end finish that has been achieved on a very limited budget’





DINING ROOM Wood beams were added to the ceiling for a modern, Scandi-inspired look. It has a visual impact the minute you walk through the front door. Chairs reupholstered in boucle fabric from Fabrics Galore London

DINING ROOM The dining table was inspired by something they had seen on Pinterest. They attached an Ikea desktop to an MDF base overlaid with vertical lengths of dowelling. Try Gubi moon dining table, Royal Design



DINING ROOM Wooden beams, exposed and limewashed brick and a double-sided wood burner have helped to unify both the living and dining areas. For similar sliding barn doors, try DoorMate



MICHAELA'S COUNTRY LIFE

SIMPLE PLEASURES 'We are surrounded by the countryside and whatever window you look through there is beautiful greenery, so it felt very natural to bring the outside in.'

LESSONS LEARNT 'You can make changes without spending thousands; it's okay to upcycle and make something work until you can afford the real deal.'

NEW DIRECTIONS 'At the start of the renovation, we began an Instagram account – @mishkashoe – to document our journey. Fast forward three years and I'm now a full-time interiors content creator. It's opened up so many doors for me!'



BATHROOM A small reconfiguration created enough room for a shower and a small bath. The combination of patterned floor tiles and wall tiles in a herringbone design adds visual interest. **Bath**, Drench

BATHROOM A vanity unit with built-in storage keeps everything tucked away out of sight. Moroccan Impressions porcelain floor **tiles**, Ca' Pietra. **Vanity unit** and **basin**, both Crosswater. For a similar **stool** try, La Redoute

MASTER BEDROOM

Michaela designed and fitted a bespoke headboard along the back wall to add a touch of comfort and luxury. **Duvet cover; pillowcases**, both La Redoute



BARN RAISING

Use texture to warm up a neutral space like Michaela Shoebridge



FEATURE ALICE HUMPHRYS

1 SPECKLED STYLE Lucy terrazzo side table, £295, HKLiving at Rose & Grey **2 GEOMETRIC SURFACE** Design Pattern D wall and floor tile, £48.19sq m, London Tile Company **3 STRONG SILHOUETTE** Miata concrete table lamp base in Charcoal with rattan shade, £229, Livingetc Collection at Lights and Lamps **4 RATTAN DETAIL** Eichholtz Romee chair in Black, £1,150, Sweetpea and Willow **5 MODERN COUNTRY** Harvest two-door cupboard in Meteor with

lower oak shelf, £895, Perch and Parrow **6 SMOOTH CURVES** Kigumi round dining table, available in three finishes, £1,230, Case at Heal's **7 STONEWARE DESIGN** Halfdan vase, £52.50, Bloomingville at Cuckooland **8 AVAILABLE IN GREIGE** Bubbled plant pot in White, £29.99, H&M **9 COSY WOOL** Sheepskin cushion cover in Natural with linen back, £90, Toast **10 DIAMOND PATTERN** Amouage rug in Cream, from £199, Carpetright





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KITCHEN After unblocking the fireplace, Becky finished the alcove with beautiful Delft tiles. Faded Delft tiles, The Baked Tile Company. Ceramic pendant, The French House. Chair in Roses Blue fabric, Kate Forman



WORTH THE WAIT

Becky Eades poured her heart and soul into this former blacksmith's cottage, turning it into a bright, pretty home for her family

KITCHEN Becky designed the layout and painted the units herself. **Cabinets**, Sambourne Kitchens. Painted in Shadow White; **island** in Hardwick White, both Farrow & Ball. **Tea towel** and vintage **pots**, Decorative Country Living. For similar **stools** (left), try Weathered oak counter stools, Cox & Cox



he had resisted stepping into the dated, derelict cottage for almost a year, but when Becky Eades finally set up a viewing, she realised that the property was exactly what she wanted – and didn't want – in equal measure. 'After completing our first house renovation, the last thing my husband and I were after was another project,' Becky says.

The couple's first home had been perfect for them and daughter, Iona. But when Becky found out she was expecting their second child, Fyfe, in 2016, she knew they would soon outgrow it. Spotting the larger, dilapidated property online, Becky had concerns about the amount of work required. 'Despite continuing to house-hunt, nothing ticked all the

boxes, and I'd often find myself taking a little detour to see whether that cottage was still on the market,' she reveals.

Noticing that the price had dropped, the couple decided to take a closer look. 'The whole place was covered in Virginia creeper when we first visited,' she recalls. 'We could hardly get through the front door. But even though it was dark, riddled with damp, and in a much sorrier state than anticipated, all I could see was potential. I felt the cottage had been waiting for me and that I had to rescue it.'

With their offer accepted, the family moved in during June 2017. 'It was pretty overwhelming, especially as I was juggling two young children, my job, and the project,' says Becky. 'The cottage hadn't been touched since the 1970s. The kitchen was old-fashioned, the carpets were burgundy, there was dark panelling, a pale-brown bathroom, and all the rotten windows and doors needed replacing,' she adds.

To transform their gloomy acquisition into the bright, modern country home that Becky envisaged, the first job was to damp-proof the ground floor. 'We ended up living upstairs and using what is now the children's playroom as a temporary kitchen, complete with a camping stove,' says Becky. In September, a friend came to live with the family for several weeks to help them tackle the next stage of the

renovation. 'It was all hands on deck,' Becky explains. 'We stripped the cottage and rejigged the kitchen layout to gain better access to the utility room and back garden beyond.'

As well as updating the electrics and plumbing, the builder helped them unblock chimney breasts in the sitting room and kitchen, and pull down false ceilings to expose the original beams. From the outset, Becky had a clear vision of how the cottage, which had once been home to the village blacksmith, should look. 'I wanted it to be bright and filled with a mixture of my French and English treasures,' she says. 'I'm a very visual person and, once I've got an idea in mind, I'll work out a way of bringing that to fruition within our budget, whether that's sourcing from antiques shops and eBay to discover just the right pieces, or getting hands-on to upcycle bargain finds.'

After the new kitchen was fitted, and all rooms were habitable, the couple took a break from renovating for a couple of years, before launching into the second phase. 'The tired bathroom was an awkward shape and I could see that by placing a freestanding bath under the eaves, we could free up space to create a lovely, relaxing sanctuary,' says Becky. Other jobs included fitting a fireplace and panelling in the main bedroom, panelling the children's bedrooms, and redecorating throughout.

The result is a cottage that's jam-packed with pretty fabrics, plus vintage and antique furniture that Becky has gathered over the years. 'My mother inspired me to start collecting when I was a teenager and I haven't stopped since,' Becky reveals. 'Now, virtually everything in our home has a memory attached to it, and that's what makes it really special to us. We all feel so privileged and lucky to live here in such a beautiful village where we've been made to feel incredibly welcome.'

AT HOME WITH...

OWNERS Becky Eades, her husband and their children, Iona, eight, and Fyfe, six.

HOUSE A semi-detached, four-bedroom former blacksmith's cottage, dating back to the early 1800s.





KITCHEN 'We often hang seasonal cuttings from the branch above our dining table,' says Becky. **Vintage shelf**, Newark Antiques Fair. For similar **cushion fabric**, try Cabbages & Roses



EXTERIOR Becky designed a new porch for the pretty limestone cottage, featuring pantiles to match the roof, and repainted the front door and shutters. **Door** painted in Pigeon, Farrow & Ball



SITTING ROOM While renovating the cottage, the couple created window seats with built-in storage. **Curtain** in Meggerie in Raspberry on White linen, Cabbages & Roses. **Jute pouffe**, Dunelm

‘I’m a very visual person and, once I’ve got an idea in mind, I’ll work out a way of bringing it to fruition within our budget’



SITTING ROOM The fireplace decorated with hops is a cosy focal point. Similar **woodburner**, Jotul. **Sofas**, SofaSofa. Try Skye jute **rug**, John Lewis & Partners. **Lampshade** in Peony & Sage grainsack, by Hearts & Glitter

FYFE'S BEDROOM Panelling is the ideal backdrop for this playful nautical theme. For similar curtain fabric, try Studio G Skipper in Marine, Clarke & Clarke. **Panelling** in Light Blue, Farrow & Ball. **Rabbits**, Maileg



IONA'S BEDROOM Floral bunting adds the finishing touch to this delightful space. Try Catherine Rose Pink **quilt**; Hatley Cerise **duvet set**, all Cabbages & Roses. **Vintage chair**, Decorative Country Living



BATHROOM Rethinking the layout created space for storage under the eaves, while exposing the wooden beams restored character. Try Dulwich bath, Victoria Plum. Vintage chair, Decorative Country Living



BECKY'S COUNTRY LIFE

SIMPLE PLEASURES 'Being cocooned in country village life. We have great neighbours and feel very connected to the community.'

FAVOURITE VIEW 'When we walk out of the door and down our lane, there are incredible views. We can watch the sun set. It's very special to us.'

SHOP AT 'Decorative Country Living (decorativecountryliving.com), based in a converted chapel in a Lincolnshire village and run by Amanda Knox. She sells lovely, one-off vintage pieces for the home.'

GO FOR A MEAL AT 'Doddington Hall Cafe (doddingtonhall.com) is where I often meet my mother for lunch or afternoon tea. The food is fresh, seasonal and delicious, plus we have a mooch around Home shop.'



FEATURE JANET MCMEKIN
PHOTOGRAPHS RACHAEL SMITH

GARDEN Becky's eye for design extends to the cottage garden. 'Virtually everything in our home has a special memory attached to it,' she says. 'I felt the cottage had been waiting for me and that I had to rescue it.'

MAIN BEDROOM This tranquil space with its dove-grey palette has a particularly romantic feel. **Headboard** in Mary French Blue on Natural Linen, Cabbages & Roses. **Panelling** in Shadow White, Farrow & Ball

VINTAGE WHITE

Create a cottage look like Becky Eades' with tonal prints and pre-loved finds



1 FINISHING TOUCH Tassel bunting in White, £19.99 for 4m, Room To Grow **2 PRETTY RUFFLES** Beca ceramic pendant in White with Antique Brass fittings, £65, Laura Ashley at Dar Lighting **3 SOLID WOOD** Shaker bar stool in weathered elm, £149, Where Saints Go **4 KITCHEN STAPLE** Double oven glove in Chequerboard in Indigo, £42, Joy of Print x Tori Murphy **5 VINTAGE TOUCH** Blue Floral quilt in cotton, £69, Graham and

Green **6 HOME CLASSIC** Traykins rectangle tray in solid oak, from £49, Loaf **7 TIMELESS DESIGN** Bluebell 2.5 seat sofa in Vermeer linen in Wishful, £2,490, Sofa.com **8 BLOCK PRINT** Pippa cushion in Turquoise, £80, The French Bedroom Company **9 SUFFOLK MADE** Hand-thrown stoneware large mug in White with speckled glaze, £30, Path Homeware **10 GUSTAVIAN GREY** Frederik mirror with decorative frame, £220, Sweetpea and Willow

FEATURE ALICE HUMPHRYS

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COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS



Twill wool carpet
in Wishing Well,
£88.50sq m, Fibre



Twill wool carpet
in Whisper,
£88.50sq m, Fibre

The Contemporary Collection wool carpets

Add warmth, colour and texture underfoot with the
Country Homes & Interiors carpets and rugs range at Fibre Flooring

We're delighted to have collaborated with British flooring brand Fibre to create The Contemporary Collection of 100% wool carpets and rugs. Wonderfully warm and cocooning, yet outstandingly hardwearing, the range is inspired by the colours of nature, from soft cream and subtle grey to rich ochre and clear blue, perfect for a country-style home.

There are two weaves to choose from: nubbly,

soft Twill and stylish Chevron, both suitable for all areas of the home. The collection comes as a broadloom in 4m and 5m widths, or take your pick of rugs and runners with complementary borders. Prices start at £88.50 sq m.

FIND OUT MORE

To order free swatches, locate your nearest retailer and discover more about the range, visit fibreflooring.com/TheContemporaryCollection

In partnership
with

fibre

Design & decorate



Outside with Morris

Beauty and utility defined the designs of William Morris, so it's fitting that the new Morris & Co collection encapsulates both. The Outdoor Performance range comprises 25 fabrics in the brand's historic patterns, made in UV- and water-resistant, wipeable, anti-microbial, colour-fast finishes. That's pretty clever... Cushion in Fruit Stripe in Indigo, £115m, Morris & Co

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS

SQUARE DANCE

Cheerful country gingham is back in soft tones,
with a ruffle or two for added charm.

Go on, check it out...



Chunky checks bring a joyful touch to your interiors and can't help but raise a smile.

Choose a design rendered in gentle pastel shades so it doesn't overwhelm the space



COUNTRY TABLE

Woodhouse Check frilly tablecloth, £175; cushions and blind in Harbour Stripe cotton in Mustard, £75m, all Tori Murphy

FLOWER ROOM

Wallpaper, Picnic Sun by Långelid/von Brömssen. For a similar design, try Picnic In The Park wallpaper in Lemon Bonbon, £43 a roll, Lust Home ➔



Combine gingham with a ruffle or frill to soften its geometric design. Layer on style by playing with the scale of the check across curtains and cushions

RUSTIC KITCHEN

Curtain in Arlington Vintage Weave in Sage, £46.80m, Prestigious Textiles

BREAKFAST NOOK

Ercol Ancona **breakfast table**, £699; Ercol Heritage **chair**, £299, both Furniture Village. For a similar **cushion**, try Anyday gingham cushion in Acacia, £20, John Lewis & Partners →





For all their pep and personality, checks don't need to be the main event in your scheme. A gingham valance or cushion is all you need to add a touch of cheer



COTTAGE CORNER

Otley two-seater **sofa** in Ticking Stripe Green, £1,449; Trio Stripe **cushion** in Garnet, £30; Anyday gingham **cushion** in Blue, £20; Anyday velvet **cushion** in Garnet, £20; Antique brass **lamp**, £175; velvet **pouffe** in Pale Pink, £70; Clemence display **cabinet**, £999, all John Lewis & Partners

SUBTLE TOUCH

Valance in Vintage Check linen in Natural, £132m, Inchyra

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS

FIVE FOUNDATIONS OF

OUTDOOR ROOMS

Make the most of your garden during the summer months by creating a relaxing space to gather outside

I

LIVING WALLS

Planting is intrinsic to the garden, however it can do much more than make a space feel pretty. Surrounding your seating area with climbers will achieve a cocooning effect, while evergreen shrubs will help to delineate it and make your seating spot feel more cosy. 'If you have an area surrounded by trees, flowerbeds or shrubs, it makes your outdoor living room feel more intimate and inviting, especially in the evening with the addition of candles and lanterns,' says Sue Jones, co-founder at Oka. 'Try to pick somewhere relatively close to the house so you won't have to carry trays of drinks or platters of food across the garden.' →





Weybourne
three-seater sofa,
£1,095; corner
extension, £650;
armchair, £495, O&B



Henley glass and teak dining table with four Richmond armchairs, £2,799, Bridgman



2

GET SETTLED

Treat the purchase of outdoor furniture in the same way that you would search for a living room sofa. Try out different pieces to ensure optimum comfort, and consider whether the scale of the pieces will work on your patio or deck. 'It's easy to consider your home and garden as separate but by unifying the two

spaces you can create a sense of cohesion. Opt for designs that align with the style of your home, whether that's contemporary, colourful or classic while being durable enough to remain outdoors,' suggests Francesca Hadland, styling expert for Bridgman. The set here would look stunning in either a garden or conservatory.



3

THROWING SHADE

We all love the summer, but having a space to escape the rays can be vital to the enjoyment of an alfresco space. There are a number of ways to shield your outdoor seating area. Trees can create a natural canopy; a pergola can provide dappled shade, especially when combined with climbing plants; or you could install a sail or

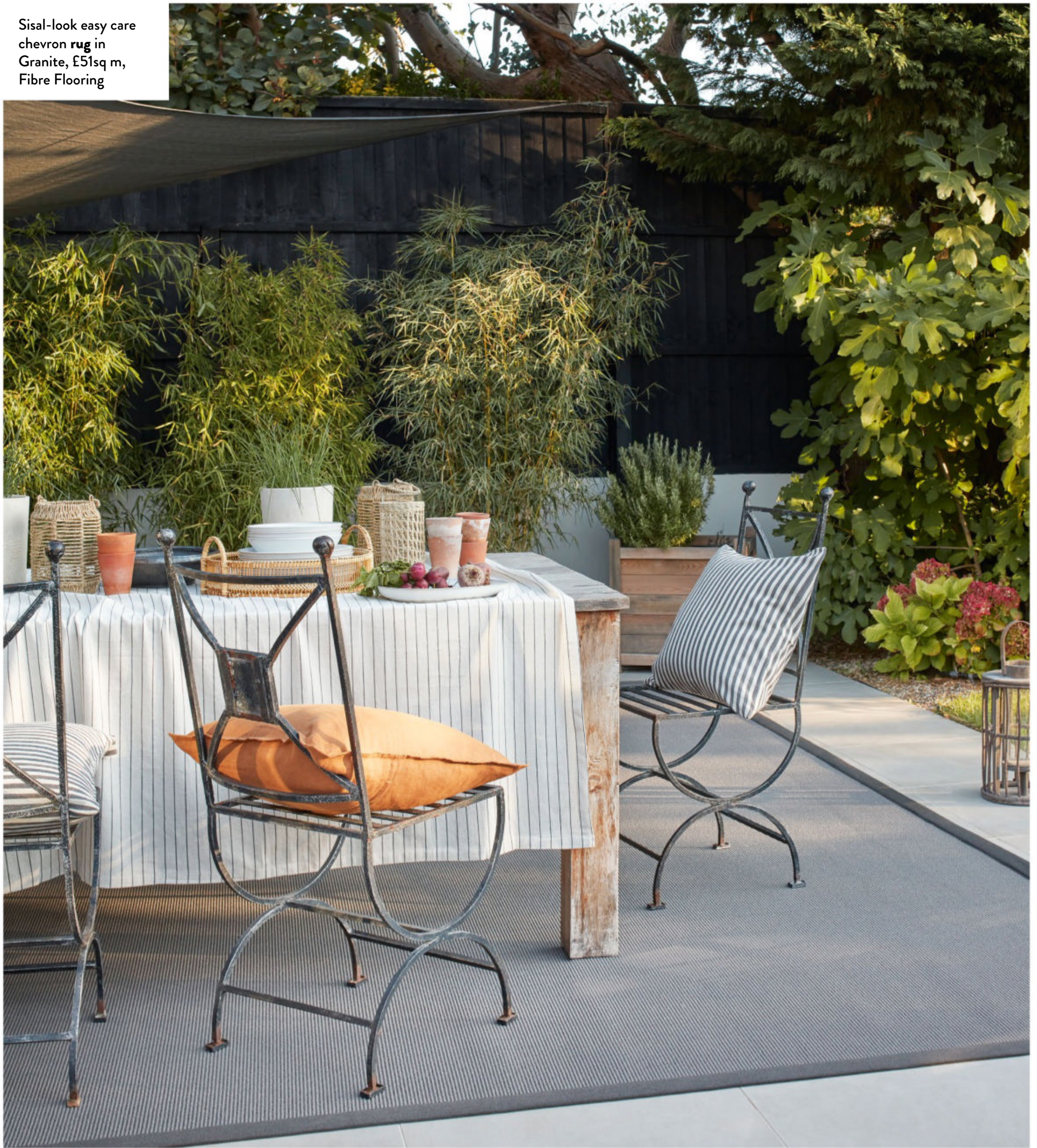
screen that can be left up all year. For a temporary shaded oasis, suspend a beautiful lace sheet over a dining table or seating area to provide respite from the heat of the day. Metal washers will protect the fabric from tearing at the corners. Add to the charm by dressing a painted wooden table with layers of linen. ➔



The lace curtain panel, £150, Pearl Lowe, is similar to this design



Sisal-look easy care
chevron rug in
Granite, £51sq m,
Fibre Flooring



4

FLOORING FLOW

Laying the same tiles in the kitchen and on the patio instantly connects the two spaces, making the outside area feel integrated into the rest of your home. Once this link is established, an outdoor rug can really elevate the space. 'Rugs work well underneath dining tables and sofas, and will add warmth and character, in the same

way they would indoors. Practicality is key and you will need to choose a wipe-clean, shower-resistant material, such as polypropylene, to ensure it continues to look beautiful,' explains Julian Downes at Fibre Flooring. 'If you are working with an oversized or small space then consider a bespoke rug to ensure the perfect fit.'

5

STARRY NIGHTS

An outdoor living space comes into its own once the sun sets. 'Festoon lights draped overhead will add instant charm and will work well to elevate your garden all year round. String lights are a fantastic value option if you're looking to make an impact without spending a fortune, and come in a variety of styles and colours. Wind

them through your fence or style them around your decking for showstopping sparkle,' says Liz Brennan, head of gardening at Dobbies. 'For a cosy look that's on-trend and sustainable, solar lanterns can be placed around your seating area to give a lovely warm glow – try grouping together a few lanterns of different sizes.'



FEATURE: HOLLY REANEY PHOTOGRAPH (3) ERIN KELLY
STYLING: NOEL KNOSTMAN

Alps modular sofa set in Tan, £1,399; Hessian lantern, £19.99, all Dobbies

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CREATE A BOUTIQUE HOTEL BEDROOM

Give your bedroom a sophisticated, curated facelift with expert insight from Ottalie Stride and Camilla Clarke, creative directors of design firm, Albion Nord

Boutique hotels are in the business of creating characterful and relaxing bedrooms that ooze personality while also ensuring a good night's sleep. But why should these design secrets be reserved for professional spaces? Ottalie Stride and Camilla Clarke, creative directors at Albion Nord, who have over 15 years of combined experience in interior design, share their tips for achieving this luxe look at home.

PRIORITISE THE BED

'Your bed defines your bedroom both in terms of space and function. While we always recommend dressing your bed in crisp, white linen, there are still plenty of opportunities to bring individuality to the room. Patterned headboards offer a great way to add vibrancy and texture, as do throws and cushions.'

CURATE A COLOUR SCHEME

'There are no rules regarding the palette for a hotel room. However, we often find that keeping the colours here light and fresh creates a sense of calm and serenity, which is welcomed when you are away and is just as important while at home. Introduce singular pops of colour on curtains, armchairs and cushions to add interest without being overpowering.'

CONSIDER THE ESSENTIALS

'Think about pieces that are commonplace in hotels that you love to stay in – almost every one will include a writing desk, accent chair and wardrobe. It is also important to ensure power points are accessible for charging phones – we

often integrate charging pads into drawers in bedside tables. Accessible light switches above the bedsides are also a must.'

ADD HOTEL TOUCHES

'It's the little things that create a holiday feel. Whether you are looking to treat yourself or give guests a warm welcome, a sleep balm and room spray on the bedside table will help to create the perfect ambience. It is nice if these also match the brand of hand soap, shampoo and conditioner in your bathroom or en suite. No hotel experience is complete without a tea tray. Vintage trays dressed with teas, coffee and a kettle, and a decanter of water on the bedside tables are nice touches too. Details like these will elevate your bedroom and make the time you spend there a little more luxurious.'

BUDGET MATTERS

'Creating a boutique hotel feel doesn't have to cost the earth – you just need to prioritise when to spend and when to save. Invest in comfort – good mattresses and bedlinen add the most excellent sense of luxury to a hotel room. Savings can be made in sourcing vintage and antique pieces, such as armchairs or wardrobes, which can be picked up inexpensively.'

PILLOW TALK

A shapely upholstered headboard and an abundant pile of pillows (all the better for sitting up for breakfast in bed) will give a bedroom a boutique hotel look



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GET THE LOWDOWN

A durable and hardwearing floor is a practical necessity in any kitchen – and a beautiful material can set your design off to perfection

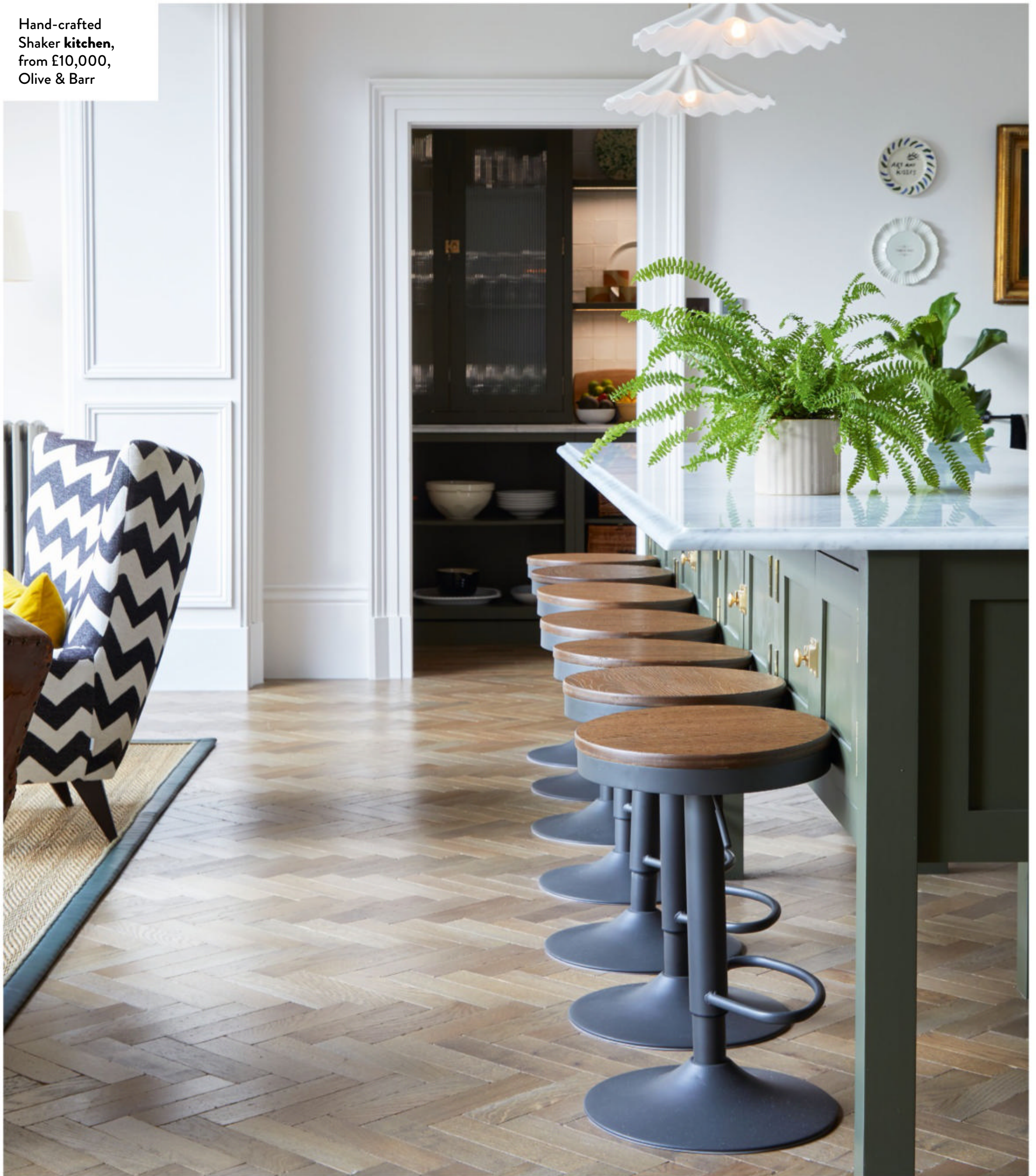
Sebastian Cox
kitchen by deVOL,
from £15,000,
deVOL

RECLAIMED BRICK

A kitchen floor must be durable and preferably easy to maintain, but your choice is not just about practicality – it can be a feature that enhances the style of your space, adding character and charm, as the original brick floor in this converted Suffolk barn suggests. ‘Farmhouse kitchens always work well with a combination of new and old or

antique elements,’ says Helen Parker, creative director of deVOL. If you are lucky enough to have an original brick floor, it may require cleaning and repair to bring it back to life: the surfaces can be porous, allowing a build up of dirt and stains, so, if in doubt, consult a specialist for advice. Or scour architectural salvage yards for reclaimed options. ➔

Hand-crafted
Shaker **kitchen**,
from £10,000,
Olive & Barr



WOOD

‘Parquet, herringbone and chevron floors are popular in kitchens as they add interest to otherwise straight lines, while streamlined planks add a sense of space in smaller areas,’ says Natalie Mudd, creative director of The Wood Flooring Co. Choose between solid and engineered wood flooring – an engineered wood floor has a top layer

of solid wood bonded to a layer of strong plywood and a stabilising counter layer. ‘This layering balances out the tensions in the wood and prevents it from bending or swelling in areas of changing moisture, such as the kitchen,’ explains Natalie. Wood floors do require maintenance and may require re-sealing, re-lacquering or re-oiling.



Havana White
Garden porcelain
tiles, £59.39sq m,
CTD Tiles

TILE

Fired at very high temperatures, porcelain tiles are robust, non-porous, highly stain and scratch resistant, 'making them an especially popular choice for kitchens,' says Amanda Telford, creative manager, CTD Tiles. Thanks to advances in digital image technology, it is now possible to buy porcelain tiles that mimic the look of

natural stone, wood, concrete, terrazzo to ultra-realistic effect, as well as in imaginative patterns that can add individuality to your design. They can also work well in indoor-outdoor kitchens, as the same design (usually in a thicker variant) can sometimes be used externally, but check suitability with your supplier before purchase. ➔



NATURAL STONE

‘As it simply becomes better with age, natural stone works well as a kitchen floor,’ says Hamish Smith, creative director of Artisans of Devizes and Ca’ Pietra. ‘If you are looking for something with timeless character, it is a great choice.’ As a natural material, each slab of limestone or marble is unique, adding to its beauty. However, stone is

typically more porous than materials such as porcelain, and it’s recommended that you re-seal it every year, so seek recommendations from your supplier. ‘Clean up any spills immediately, dab dry and we suggest vacuuming natural stone too,’ continues Hamish. ‘When washing natural stone, make sure it is with as little water as possible.’



Kitchen **cupboards**,
from £590 each,
British Standard
by Plain English

Should a kitchen floor be light, dark or patterned?

It makes sense to select your flooring at the same time as the cabinetry and worktop. Compare samples of the materials to see if you like their harmony or are you looking for more contrast?

Rich, dark timber or tiles can ground a pale kitchen, adding interest and definition to the space.

A light or neutral floor can be used to enhance the sense of space, especially if you opt for large format tiles which minimise grout lines or use a seamless material such as concrete.

Natural tones are ideal if you want to create a sense of flow between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Patterned tiles or LVT (luxury vinyl tiles) can ramp up the impact of the floor and be used to zone different areas of an open-plan kitchen-living-dining space.

TERRACOTTA

‘Using textured tiles in a kitchen, like these terracotta ones, is a great way of injecting personality into a space,’ advises Will Eaves, international design co-ordinator, British Standard by Plain English. ‘The rustic tones instantly add warmth and softness to the kitchen.’ Will suggests varying the look by laying simple square tiles in a diamond pattern

or opting for a hexagonal tile. Terracotta (cooked earth) is made from clay, moulded into shape and baked at a high temperature. Tiles are typically porous and need to be sealed, and then re-sealed every couple of years (check requirements with your supplier), so this is a choice if you are happy to embrace the beauty and patina of age.

At your table

Set the scene for summer days with friends. A few simple touches transform a meal into a memorable moment





BRIGHT AND BREEZY

Flapping tablecloths and flyaway napkins are the bane of outdoor entertaining. Keep your tabletop anchored by opting for neat placemats and knotting napkins around cutlery. Short-stemmed tumblers and nightlight holders defy knock-over breezes.

Hastings ribbed jug, £30; Moreton wine glasses, £40 set of four; Portobello china collection in White, from £8; Soft Blue fringed napkins, £28 set of four; Ribbed domed candle holder, £18; Bruton cutlery, £165 set of 24, all The White Company



GEO CACHE

Opposites attract when small-scale geometrics and dainty florals come together. Layer cloths, crockery and cutlery for a pile-on of pattern and print, and don't worry about making each place setting match. Use a varied selection of vintage plates for a unique touch.

Tapestry tablecloth, from £195; Diamond Star napkin, £45 for two, all Joy of Print x Tory Murphy. For similar cutlery, try Les Ottomans five-piece cutlery set, £65, Matches Fashion. For vintage tableware, try charity shops, eBay and Etsy

LIGHT UP

Use new or repurposed bottles as candle holders and dot them along the garden table, ready to light up the occasion as the sun goes down. For an extra decorative effect, fill the bottles with water and push in flowerheads or sprigs of rosemary so they float inside.

Glass bottle candle holders with candles, £17.99 for three; Sage fabric runner, £12.99, all Ginger Ray →



COUNTRY CHECKS

Gingham and checks are making a welcome return to country styling. How to make them look chic and not twee? Ground them with bamboo-handled cutlery and a natural raffia placemat, offset with gleaming glassware and silver details.

Ruffle gingham linen tablecloth, £189; Classic gingham linen napkin, £16; Scalloped Abaca placemat, £22; Basket weave plate, from £76 set of four; Silver Ivorine salt and rosewood pepper mill set, £335; Sophia tealight holder, £30; tumblers, £42 set of four, all Rebecca Udall



PURE AND SIMPLE

Sometimes, an effortless touch is all it takes. For a natural, easy-going place setting, tie a linen napkin into a loose knot, add a piece of seasonal fruit picked from the garden and place a handwritten name card to indicate who sits where. A crisp white linen cloth ensures the table feels dressed and ready to go.

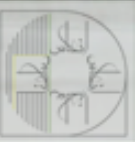
Maya dinner plate, £22.50; Artisan side plate, £18, both Nkuku. Cutlery, from a selection, Caravane. Glassware, from a selection, Canvas Home. Hand-painted linen napkin, £18, Allóra. Place card, £21 for 25, Smythson

CREAM TEA

Take a modern approach to afternoon tea with an informal yet elegant table setting that's still worthy of a special occasion. The luxe is in the details – velvet ribbons used as napkin ties, a cake stand to elevate the main event, and candlelight even in the daytime to signal a moment to remember.

Rose table runner, £29; Rose napkins, £19 for four; Bees stoneware side plate, £11.50; Bees cake stand, £59.50, all Sophie Allport

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS PHOTOGRAPH (PURE AND SIMPLE)
FUTURECONTENTHUB.COM/EMMA LEE



FURNITURE REFRESH

After a season in the shed or under cover, it's time to spruce up your garden chairs and tables for a summer of outdoor living. Here are our clean-up tips

Even if you've kept your outdoor furniture covered over the winter, chances are it will need a little TLC before it's ready to grace your garden again. Here's how to give your furniture a seasonal scrub-up ready for the summer.

WOOD

Before cleaning wooden furniture, make sure it is dry, then remove any loose dirt using a soft brush. 'Mix washing-up liquid with warm water and use a sponge or cloth to remove dirt before leaving it to dry,' says Rian Habergham, garden furniture expert at Leisure Bench.

'Many people think pressure washing is the way forward, and although it might seem satisfying as you watch your furniture change colour, we've seen lovely pieces destroyed by the powerful jets stripping away timber along with the dirt,' says Martin Young, founder of handcrafted wooden garden furniture makers, Sitting Spiritually. 'Instead, clean it all over with a wood cleaner, give it a light sand, then apply a saturating wood oil. This will keep your wooden seats and tables strong and looking their best for decades.' If you're choosing a specialist cleaner over soap and water, look for a product that's harmless to plants, such as Net-Trol exterior wood cleaner, £24.66 for 1ltr, Owatrol.

Now it's time to protect your wood. Teak oil will shield your hardwood furniture from the elements and keep it looking new. Using a rag, apply the oil, rubbing it in gently and following the grain. You can add more than one coat of oil, but make sure the first one dries completely before you apply the next.

METAL

Start by removing any debris with a soft-bristled brush or dry cloth. 'We suggest spraying metal with a heavy-duty cleaner that is safe on metals and paints,' says Paul McFadyen from Metals4U. A multisurface kitchen cleaner can be sprayed on to your furniture to tackle grime, then rinsed off to remove soap residue that could damage the metal. Once dry, sand and touch up rust spots using enamel paint, such as Hammerite metal smooth paint, £20 for 750ml, Wickes.

RATTAN

Synthetic rattan is weather resistant and easy to clean, and is often treated with a UV-protective coating. Use a brush to remove dirt, and get into the nooks and crannies with a toothbrush. Then clean the furniture with warm soapy water and a microfibre cloth. 'Be gentle, otherwise you could damage the finish. Pay attention to any metal fixtures to ensure that they don't go rusty and are treated properly,' says Rian Habergham.

Natural rattan should be rejuvenated with oil. 'If your rattan furniture is looking worse for wear, use a soft cloth to rub some olive oil into the weave. This will reduce cracking and add shine, making it look as good as new,' says Ryan Schwarze, head of business at Luxury Rattan.

COME INTO THE GARDEN

Get your outdoor furniture ready for your guests. Kensington round dining table with six dining armchairs, £4,499, Bridgman



'If natural rattan furniture is looking worse for wear, use a soft cloth to rub some olive oil into the weave. This will reduce cracking and add shine'

Greenhouse growing

People in glass houses... grow amazing plants! Here's what to consider before investing in a greenhouse for your plot

First rising to popularity during the Victorian era, a greenhouse is a must for any keen gardener. Offering a wealth of horticultural potential, it provides a setting in which the increased control over sunlight levels, temperature and soil type allows you to significantly extend the growing season, in spite of the British weather.

Even with an unheated greenhouse, you can delay the effects of frost by several weeks, maximising the yield of crops and protecting plants from frost and dampness. A heated greenhouse will help you continue your horticultural efforts throughout the bleakest months, let you cultivate tropical or sub-tropical plants and advance the growing and harvest periods by several weeks. However, a greenhouse is one of the more costly additions to a garden, so it is vital to choose the correct design and right position to ensure success.

STYLES AND STRUCTURES

While there are endless designs, sizes and shapes, there are only three main styles of greenhouses. These are the lean-to greenhouse, an abutting greenhouse and a freestanding design. Each has its own benefits and drawbacks.

A freestanding type is the classic design and stands on its own base – whether that's soil or slabs – and can be any shape and size.

Lean-to greenhouses require a pre-existing

structure – such as a garden wall, house wall or shed – to support it. Highly compact, it can also benefit from the residual heat from the wall, which will bolster the growth of plants inside.

Abutting greenhouses are a mix of lean-to and freestanding designs. Like a freestanding design, it stands on its own, but its fourth side is made up of an existing wall. The style of greenhouse you choose will depend on the space and structures available in your garden.

PERFECT PLACEMENT

For an efficient greenhouse, the position is everything. 'Your structure needs to receive as much sunlight as possible during all seasons of the year. Avoid locating your greenhouse in the shadow of tall trees, boundary fences or walls as these will obstruct light,' explains Tom Barry, CEO of Hartley Botanic.

'For lean-to greenhouses that are placed against a wall, a south-facing position is ideal. For stand-alone structures, the ridge along the top of the greenhouse should ideally run from east to west, as this will allow the sun to run along its longest side during the day,' explains Tom. But light isn't the only consideration.

'The location should catch prevailing winds for ventilation purposes but equally not be too exposed to the cold,' says Tom. 'Access to water and electricity is key, and a position on fertile soil if you want to install growing beds.'

DESIGN TYPES

From left: Brick walls create a solid base for a freestanding greenhouse; National Trust Hidcote aluminium greenhouse, £18,020, Alitex; bespoke three-quarter span greenhouse, price on request, White Cottage Greenhouses





MATERIAL MATTERS

The material used for your greenhouse will impact its price, aesthetic and durability. Aluminium frames provide a secure, neat framework and can offer slimmer sightlines, thus maximising the amount of glazing. Lightweight, aluminium frames will need to be attached to the base with screws. The material is also highly durable and will not rot, fade or warp. 'Aluminium has very few downsides, although it is often a more expensive material to use,' says Daniel Carruthers, director of Cultivar Greenhouses.

Wood offers a traditional look and will blend perfectly with any style of garden. 'It is also thermally efficient and provides strong insulation properties, meaning your greenhouse will maintain a steady internal temperature,' explains Daniel. 'However, the humid atmosphere can cause structures to warp, and often requires resealing every few years to extend its life.'

Modified timber, most popularly Accoya, combines the aesthetic of solid wood with

TIMBER FRAME

RHS Portico
cedar greenhouse
with steep roof,
from £16,901,
Gabriel Ash

the durability of metal. Exceptionally stable, it is rot-resistant and will not warp, swell or shrink. 'Accoya is also 30 per cent more thermally efficient than other typical hardwoods, providing the best growing conditions for your plants,' adds Daniel.

Galvanised steel is characterised by its strength and weight, meaning it is very sturdy – plus it is more affordable than aluminium. 'Despite these properties, it can be susceptible to rust, and the heaviness also makes it difficult to install. It's also hard to drill into, which means adding fixings to help support your precious plants is not easy,' adds Daniel.

Plastic greenhouses offer a budget-friendly option and are easy to install. However, this does mean a compromise on durability and your model is likely to last only a few years.

BASE OPTIONS

The right base can have transformative effects on your greenhouse's security and longevity. Greenhouses have either an open or integral base. 'An integral base provides greater ➔



strength and stability, which is ideal if your garden is exposed to strong winds. An integral base will also allow you to position your greenhouse on prepared soil. We'd always recommend choosing a greenhouse with an integral base,' explains Andrew White, service manager at Rhino Greenhouse. Open bases, as their name suggests, rely on solid foundations.

Once you've decided on your base, you need to think about the foundations. This would typically be hardstanding or soil.

'Hardstanding bases generally consist of either paving slabs, a concreted area or a brick/block perimeter plinth – each will provide a stable, long-lasting foundation but will cost money. Hardstanding bases are helpful if you are trying to level out a sloping or uneven site, as the hardstanding can be built up or dropped down in order to create a level base for your greenhouse,' continues Andrew.

Alternatively, you can opt for a soil base. This is cheaper and allows you to grow directly into the ground, which has both benefits and drawbacks, depending on the soil type in your garden. Only particularly durable greenhouses can withstand a less-secure soil base. The compromise is a perimeter base as 'it provides the benefit of a secure footing for your greenhouse, but allows natural drainage, or the opportunity to grow straight into the soil,' adds Andrew White.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

When it comes to glazing for your greenhouse, your main options are Perspex or glass. Perspex is favoured for its shatter-resistant,

PEAK RETURNS

From left: Premium 8x12ft greenhouse in Clay Grey, from £3,799, Rhino Greenhouses; Handmade bespoke Victorian classic glasshouse, price on request, Hartley Botanic

lightweight durability and affordability and for most gardeners, Perspex will be more than suitable. However, if you are a passionate gardener for whom only the best will do, then glass is the way to go. 'Glass is far more effective than Perspex or acrylic at trapping the heat within a greenhouse and providing an insulated environment,' explains Paul Hewitt, customer care manager at Alitex.

Glass also brings classic style to your greenhouse and will keep its looks. 'If cleaned properly, glass maintains its transparency and doesn't discolour with age, meaning that light transmission isn't affected, and your plants are able to absorb all that sunlight,' says Paul Hewitt. There are also self-cleaning options that use the sun's UV rays to clear dirt. Always ensure that greenhouse glass is safety glass so that it will shatter safely if broken, rather than splintering and leaving small shards.

PLANNING PERMISSION

In the majority of cases, greenhouses are classed as permitted development and don't need planning permission. However, there are some limits: it must be one storey; and it needs to be

less than 2.5 metres tall and not disproportionate to the size of your house. If you live in a Conservation Area or your home is listed then additional rules will apply restricting size, design and location. For information visit planningportal.co.uk.

SOURCEBOOK

CULTIVAR cultivargreenhouses.co.uk

HARTLEY BOTANIC
hartley-botanic.co.uk

ALITEX alitex.co.uk

RHINO GREENHOUSES
greenhousesdirect.co.uk

Country lifestyle



Sensory perception

In her new book *Life in Five Senses* (£14.99, Hachette), happiness researcher Gretchen Rubin explores how to engage in what we see, hear, smell, taste and touch for a more mindful life. While we likely know our key sense, we all have one that's neglected and that could boost wellbeing if we used it more. Find out yours with her quiz at gretchenrubin.com/quiz/the-five-senses-quiz/

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS
PHOTOGRAPH GETTY IMAGES





‘An ancient mulberry tree reignited my love of plants’

Alison Jenkins, horticulturalist at Damson Farm, Somerset

A serendipitous house rental in London many years ago re-sparked a love of plants that would eventually lead to a career change into garden design and horticultural sustainability for Alison Jenkins. Her first career was in the art world, but she now runs successful workshops from her smallholding in the tranquil Somerset countryside, near Bath.

‘I loved London in my twenties and early thirties and as I’d grown up in a small market town in Shropshire it felt really exciting to be somewhere where there was a lot going on,’ Alison explains. She studied for an MA in Art History at Goldsmiths College while working in galleries, organising exhibitions of contemporary art. But by the time she was 35, her interest had started to wane. ‘I spent my childhood in Shropshire, climbing trees, cycling through country lanes, and nibbling raw runner beans crisp from the vegetable patch. Living in London, I began feeling the need to be closer to open countryside again. The reality of being an exhibition organiser is that you spend a lot of time in an office in front of a screen

managing all the logistics and that was less appealing!’

But it was the property she was living in that provided the impetus. ‘I had moved into a shared house in Camberwell that had an old conservatory with an established grapevine and an ancient mulberry tree in the garden. It reignited a love of plants I’d experienced as a teenager, so I signed up for a part-time RHS training course at the local college.’ A further course in garden design with the English Gardening School at the Chelsea Physic Garden followed, with Alison also taking charge of a nearby allotment and setting up a London-based design practice. But eventually, the lure of open fields and a rural life proved irresistible, and she made the move from city to country.

Damson Farm lies in a sheltered spot just three miles east of Bath, with picturesque views over the Cotswold ➔

LEFT Alison grows a wide range of vegetables and salad crops in her garden, which she tends using permaculture principles

ABOVE Damson Farm is nestled in a quiet valley, just three miles from the centre of Bath, in an area once full of market gardens





Hills. Alison was already familiar with the area through tending the garden of a local client. 'I knew the valley well and always thought it had a special feel. It was also once full of market gardens and orchards so that was a clue that the soil would be great for growing,' she says. Once settled, Alison started picking up work through word of mouth. Her intuition paid off and the garden design business quickly flourished. 'Always listen to your instinct,' she advises, 'and offer what you feel is unique to you and your experience. Be authentic: running a business is a huge commitment but if it aligns with your passion and sense of purpose, it will never feel like a chore.'

The space has developed organically over the 20 years since Alison moved here. Today, the smallholding boasts a riot of wild planting and areas of naturalistic meadow, tamed by an extensive edible garden with rows of willow bean supports and raised beds. She also has an orchard, and a small number of sheep and chickens. Alison has grown her ideas, too, completing a permaculture design course, driven by a desire to

run the smallholding as ecologically as possible, while providing food for her family and looking beautiful. 'I remember my parents preparing windfall apples to stew and freeze for the winter,' says Alison. 'They had a natural, post-war respect for resources which I only began to appreciate later in life.'

'We have become disconnected from the natural world and we need to move towards a stronger, more intimate and respectful relationship to the earth and the ecosystem of which we are such an integral part,' she says. This is the basis of what she refers to as her second career shift – teaching regenerative farming. Alison devised a series of workshops in 2019 covering topics such as growing food, composting, botanical drawing and saving seeds. Guest hosts include Alys Fowler, with a workshop on a holistic approach to edible gardening, and garden photography with Eva Nemeth, who took the photographs on these pages. Held at Damson Farm, they attract eager participants from near and far. 'People travel from all over to attend my workshops. I even

Learn to grow with others

We pick four more horticultural courses that take place in stunning garden environments:

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The one-year diploma in Practical Horticulture Practice takes place at the beautiful RHS garden Wisley in Surrey and is highly regarded. It's worth noting also that the RHS has accredited courses covering design, biodiversity, ecology and horticulture that are on offer at colleges and learning centres throughout the country. Why not follow Alison's lead and start at your local college? It may well prove to be the springboard to a new career, rhs.org.uk

YORKSHIRE SCHOOL OF GARDEN DESIGN

Located at historic Harewood House with its 100 acres of landscaped gardens including areas designed by Capability Brown, the school offers a range of short courses, covering garden design and planting. The flagship course is ideal for determined career changers and consists of one year of learning, through on-site lectures and workshops, organised field visits and your own study, ysgd.co.uk

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN, EDINBURGH

The beautiful botanic garden dates back to 1670. Today, it is also an inspiring centre for learning, with a comprehensive range of professional courses including internationally recognised botanical and horticulture courses that take place among its amazing plant collections, rbge.org.uk

BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE, WALES

The one-year course at Troed-yr-Harn farm and Gwernyfed walled garden in Wales, teaches students organic, permaculture and no-dig principles, as well as botany, food production, ornamental horticulture and soil science, blackmountainscollege.uk

'I really enjoy the opportunity to share the land with the community of people who come here to attend workshops'

have people coming this year from Canada, Iceland and Denmark, planning trips around my workshop dates!'

Modern marketing tools such as Instagram have attracted a healthy online following but Alison has resisted putting the workshops online, even during the pandemic. 'Of course, it was frustrating as I had just started running them but the COVID experience reinforced for me how special it is to gather and learn in person. The land here has always been a source of inspiration for me, but I now enjoy the opportunity to share it with the community of people who attend the workshops. I love to see people out in the garden, gathering material for leaf printing, collecting seeds, or investigating the compost bins. I want to bring ever more creativity and craftsmanship to the workshops and my life here.'

alisonjenkins.co.uk; Instagram @damsonfarm

LEFT Growing different varieties of kale guarantees Alison a regular supply of greens throughout the winter months

ABOVE Alison leads workshops from her smallholding, with topics including edible gardening and botanical drawing



For the love of vintage

In her new book, vintage dealer Michelle Mason shares how to curate a collection of pre-loved pieces, plus what to look out for on your next trip to an antiques market

Whether your vintage collection is limited to a handful of pieces or your passion for antiques has taken over your home, chances are you can remember the first piece you owned. And that's often how the obsession starts – with a keepsake or a favourite flea market find.

We collect to archive and conserve the past; drawn to the craftsmanship of everyday objects from previous times, attracted by items of beauty or with sentimental value, and bound to heirlooms passed down through generations.

Building and curating a collection takes time, consideration and financial input but raking through salvage yards and flea markets is, for most, the highlight of the collecting adventure.

Curating your collection

As a shopkeeper I think of each collection of vintage objects as a story waiting to unfold. Whether it's a portfolio of watercolours, a selection of vintage fabrics or an Edwardian dinner service, there is often a common theme such as colour, shape, size or age to be found among all sorts of random pieces. A theme helps to create a narrative, whether it's a personal collection or a group of objects for display in a shop. It's a good way to help focus your eye when starting to build a collection.

Another way to create focus is to build a display around your 'hero' piece – use a

favourite item as a starting point and group with other items. It may be a Victorian lace panel displayed with similar vintage fabrics or an Art Deco cocktail shaker arranged with beautiful glassware. Let your interests guide your choices and you'll soon see a pattern emerge.

Planning a buying trip

Create a wish list before heading out to the flea markets and salvage yards. Write down what you need but be realistic and flexible – you might not stumble across that Louis Philippe mirror to go above the sofa or mid-century chairs but there will be other items to unearth.

If you prefer a random approach, think about colours, shapes and textures. For instance, if you're drawn towards pieces with patina and layers of paint, head towards the salvage stalls and industrial antiques. It's also worth thinking about where your collection will go. If space is limited keep an eye out for smaller items such as ceramics and artworks and style up a kitchen shelf or bedroom wall. Furnishing a whole room or a workspace will consume stock quite quickly so consider the main pieces first, such as seating, and work up towards the details.

Having a fixed budget is a good way to cap spending. It will also determine the quantity and quality of your purchases. And, as most vendors only accept cash, make sure you're prepared – as cash machines are not always available. ➔



CERAMICS

Vintage trends come and go and while it's always best to follow our own instincts and passions, it's interesting to see which items create attention at the antiques markets. The classic French confit pots, with their trademark yellow glaze, became so popular several years ago that demand saw prices more than triple.

A purse-friendly and popular vintage ceramic is TG Green & Co household pottery. Thomas Goodwin Green created the cheerful blue and white stripe, said to be called Cornish kitchenware because it resembled the blue and white beaches in Cornwall, but more likely because of the Cornish clay used in the manufacturing process. A pair of 1950s Cornishware mugs and dinner plates can be picked up for a few pounds; look for the original TG Green shield stamped on the back.



PAINTINGS & PRINTS

Whether you're on the lookout for a group of paintings or a single piece, the current appeal for all eras, from early Georgian portraits right up to 1970s abstracts, means demand is high and good pieces sell quickly. Some of the best places to uncover vintage artworks are the French flea markets, antiques fairs up and down the UK and house clearance sales and auctions. If budget isn't an issue and you're in pursuit of a heritage gem, or looking to invest in a known artist, it's worth checking regional auction houses for listings of forthcoming art sales. These are listed by department to make sourcing easier, for example, modern art, decorative arts, antique prints or Old Master paintings.

Look beyond the frames. Glass is easy to replace, an ill-fitting frame can be swapped and oil paintings often look better unframed.

‘We collect to preserve memories, to conserve the past,
drawn to the craftsmanship of objects from a previous life’

FURNITURE

Statement furniture needn't be costly or limited to upmarket pieces. By choosing what you love or, more importantly, what your budget loves, you are investing in something that will give you pleasure on a day-to-day basis. Tables, seating and dressers are, in my experience, the most popular vintage furniture requests and are frequently chosen as 'forever pieces' that can be moved from home to home or bought to add impact and focus to a newly renovated room.

Before making any furniture purchases check for woodworm; check for loose joints, uneven legs and staining or damage to surfaces and ask the seller for close-up photographs if you're unable to view the piece in person.

Try using heritage paint colours and vintage fabrics to create seamless and fitting backdrops for your vintage furniture finds and artworks.



*Love Vintage:
Sourcing, Collecting
& Selling Vintage &
Decorative Antiques*
by Michelle Mason
(£12.99,
imperial Press)

PINK GRAPEFRUIT GRANITA
WITH CARAMELISED
CITRUS SLICES



Taste of summer

Transport your taste buds on a tour of the Mediterranean,
with fresh and flavoursome recipes that are
designed to put you in a holiday mood



**BUTTER BEAN WHIP &
CRUDITÉS PLATTER WITH
A FLORABOTANICA**



Pink grapefruit granita with caramelised citrus slices

SERVES 4-6

Perfect as a palate cleanser or at the end of an indulgent dinner, this granita is refreshing and zingy. For added richness, serve with chilled custard drizzled over the caramelised citrus.

800ml pink grapefruit juice	CARAMELISED CITRUS SLICES
200ml elderflower liqueur	1 pink grapefruit, peeled and sliced into rounds
Freshly squeezed juice of 1 lemon, strained	1 orange, peeled and sliced into rounds
6tbsp caster sugar or to taste	1 clementine, peeled and slice into rounds
Gin, to serve (optional)	40g brown sugar
Chilled custard, to serve (optional)	

- 1 Stir the grapefruit juice, elderflower liqueur, lemon juice and sugar together in a large measuring jug or bowl until the sugar has totally dissolved, then strain the mixture into a freezer-proof container. Put on the lid and place in the freezer for 2 hours.
- 2 Scrape the mixture with a fork to mix it up a little, then freeze again.
- 3 Repeat the scraping method two to three times, every 1-2 hours, until the granita has a light, snow-like consistency.
- 4 For the caramelised citrus, arrange the fruit slices on a baking tray or a heatproof platter. Scatter evenly with the brown sugar and use a blowtorch for about 1-2 minutes to caramelize the surface of the fruit.
- 5 Spoon the granita into chilled glasses, add the citrus slices and serve immediately. If you wish, serve with a good sipping gin at room temperature and some chilled custard.

Butter bean whip & crudité's platter with a Florabotanica

SERVES 4 TO SHARE

Ideal for your vegan and vegetarian guests and all lovers of vegetables. The butter bean whip, with its citrus and garlic mix, is topped with sautéed spring onions, herbs and capers and is a flavour sensation.

400g can butter beans, drained	TOPPING
2tbsp olive oil	2tbsp olive oil
1tsp sea salt, or to taste	2 fresh rosemary sprigs, leaves picked
1 garlic clove, crushed	8 fresh sage leaves
Freshly squeezed juice of 1 lemon	2 fresh tarragon sprigs, leaves picked
Black pepper	2 spring onions, finely sliced
Crudité's, to serve	2tsp capers, drained
	Grated zest of 1 lemon

- 1 Using a food processor or stick blender, blend the beans, oil, ½tsp salt, garlic, lemon juice and pepper. Taste and add the remaining salt if necessary.
- 2 For the topping, heat the oil in a sauté pan over a medium heat. Carefully add the herbs, spring onions and capers to the hot oil and fry for 1-2 minutes until crisp. Use a slotted spoon to carefully transfer the fried topping to paper towels to drain off any excess oil, reserving the oil in the pan.
- 3 To assemble, use a spatula or the back of a spoon to spread the bean dip in a plate or bowl. Top with the crispy herbs and a few splashes of the infused pan oil. Sprinkle over the lemon zest and serve with crudité's.

Florabotanica

MAKES 1

60ml gin	1tsp cherry liqueur
15ml yuzu juice	½ egg white
15ml rose syrup	Edible flowers and herbs, to decorate
1-4 drops bitters	

Shake ingredients first without ice, then shake well a second time with ice. Strain into a short glass and fill with ice. Decorate with edible flowers.

**ALL-IN-ONE SALMON
WITH POTATOES, TOMATOES
& ARTICHOKES**



All-in-one salmon
with potatoes, tomatoes
& artichokes

SERVES 4

This is one of those fantastic all-rounders. It's great as a family meal, entertaining friends, casual dinner or made in advance and turned into a salad the next day.

- 2 red onions, sliced

400g potatoes, scrubbed and thickly sliced

3tbsp olive oil

1tbsp dried oregano

250g tomatoes, halved

4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped

2 fresh rosemary sprigs, leaves picked and chopped

2 red bell peppers, thickly sliced
- 4 salmon fillets, skin on

100g marinated artichokes

4 bay leaves

Sea salt and black pepper

1 lemon

Flat-leaf parsley, to garnish

Red onion, to garnish

30g green olive tapenade, to serve

Quick pickled cucumber, to serve

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6.
- 2 Put the onions and potatoes in a large baking dish and toss with 1tbsp of the oil and the oregano. Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes.
- 3 Stir in the tomatoes, garlic, rosemary and red peppers and another 1tsp of the oil. Top with the salmon fillets, drizzle each fillet with a little oil and season. Add the artichokes and bay leaves. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 8–10 minutes or until the fish is cooked through and the potatoes are browned and crisp.
- 4 Remove the baking dish from the oven. Squeeze the lemon over the fish and scatter with the parsley and red onion. Serve with the tapenade and cucumber pickle.

Coconut & semolina cake
with citrus syrup

SERVES 6

A simple revani cake is made all over Greece with a few variations. It is really lovely with a mix of semolina and coconut and drenched with syrup, making for a moist cake that is great served with Greek yogurt.

- 100g desiccated coconut

5 eggs, separated

220g caster sugar

300g coarse semolina

180ml hot water

260g Greek-style yogurt, plus extra to serve

Finely grated zest of ½ lemon

Finely grated zest of ½ orange
- 80g butter, melted, plus extra for greasing

Plain flour, for dusting (substitute with semolina for a flourless version)

CITRUS SYRUP

300g caster sugar

Juice and thinly peeled rind of 1 lemon and 1 orange

23cm square cake pan

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas 3. Butter and flour the cake pan and line with non-stick baking paper.
- 2 Scatter the coconut on a baking sheet and roast in the oven for 5–10 minutes until golden. Set aside until needed.
- 3 Beat the egg yolks and half the sugar in an electric mixer for about 5 minutes until pale. Combine the semolina and hot water in a bowl, stir through the yogurt and lemon and orange zests and add to the yolk mixture. Beat to combine, then rest for 5–10 minutes, before stirring through the butter.
- 4 Whisk the egg whites with a pinch of the sugar in an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Whisking continuously, gradually add the remaining sugar and whisk until the mixture is smooth and glossy. Fold this into the semolina mixture.
- 5 Pour into the prepared cake pan and bake in the preheated oven for 45–60 minutes until golden and the centre springs back when lightly touched. Cool in the pan for 20 minutes, then turn out onto a platter and pierce all over with a skewer.
- 6 Meanwhile, make the citrus syrup. Bring the sugar, lemon and orange juices and peel and 175ml water to the boil in a saucepan, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Ladle the syrup over the cake and leave to stand for 10–15 minutes until the syrup is absorbed. Top with roasted coconut and serve with yogurt.



Mediterranean
Summer Table
by Kathy Kordalis
(£20, Ryland Peters
& Small)

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS
PHOTOGRAPHS MOWIE KAY © RYLAND PETERS & SMALL

**COCONUT & SEMOLINA
CAKE WITH CITRUS SYRUP**





A sip of sweetness

Cooks, gardeners and supper club hosts Erin Bunting and Jo Facer share how to make your own syrups and cordials in this extract from their new book, *The Edible Flower*

There is no definitive difference between cordial and syrup. Cordial, perhaps, implies that it will be diluted and served as a drink, while syrup suggests a wider use for poaching fruit, drizzling on cakes, or adding to dressings. Both are made with sugar, water and flavourings – in this case, edible flowers.

There are a few ways to extract the flower flavours for syrup, but the primary difference is when you add the sugar. My preferred method is to add the sugar at the end of the process, once the flowers are strained, and I haven't yet found a scented edible flower for which this doesn't work.



MAKING A SYRUP

1 Put your chosen flowers or petals in a heatproof container. Removing as much of the green parts or stalks as possible results in a prettier-coloured syrup with a less bitter taste. Pour boiling water over the flowers and leave to infuse for several hours, usually overnight.

2 Taste the mixture a few times, and strain the flowers out when the flavour is strong enough. If you are looking for a deeper flavour, you can strain the flowers out, bring the liquid back to the boil, pour it over a fresh batch of flowers and leave to infuse again overnight. The resulting liquid might taste a little bitter, but that should be balanced out when you add the sugar.

3 Once you are happy with the flavour, strain the liquid through a piece of muslin or a clean tea towel, into a measuring jug. Make a note of the amount of liquid you have. Pour it into a pan and add an equal quantity by weight of granulated sugar – if you have 250ml liquid, for example, add 250g sugar.

4 Stir over a medium-low heat until the sugar dissolves, then turn up the heat and simmer for a minute before taking off the heat and allowing to cool. Pour into bottles and store in the fridge for a couple of weeks, or keep in the freezer. For a thinner syrup, use less sugar, and for a heavier syrup you can add more. ➔

SYRUP MEASURES

Use these ratios as a guide to making your syrups and cordials

CARNATION SYRUP 15g petals to 300ml water (see recipe, right).

ROSE SYRUP 15g petals to 300ml water.

MAGNOLIA SYRUP 20g petals to 300ml liquid. This makes a delicious gingery, cardamom-scented syrup perfect for use in a Moscow mule or over a sticky pudding.

VIOLET SYRUP If you can find scented violets (*Viola odorata*), the scent will be very strong, but less-scented violets will yield a Parma violet flavour. Using 10g violets (or more if you have them) to 300ml water will yield a beautiful deep purply-blue syrup that will turn pink when you add acid (such as lemon juice).

ELDERFLOWER 6-8 large heads of elderflower and 1 lemon (zest in long strips and juice) to 300ml water. Remove all the leaves and as much stem as possible.

LILAC SYRUP 30g flowers to 300ml water.

HAWTHORN SYRUP 30g flowers to 300ml water.

SWEET GERANIUM SYRUP 4 large leaves, chopped, to 300ml water. In fact, I most often just add a leaf or two of sweet geranium to another cordial; it goes particularly well with rose and German camomile.

GERMAN CAMOMILE SYRUP 10g flowerheads to 300ml water.

LAVENDER SYRUP 2tsp flowers to 300ml water.

Carnation and blackberry cooler

SERVES 2

You can extract the flavour from a not particularly scented carnation by making a syrup. The petals give up their colour in the boiling water, so if you use coloured flowers, you get a beautiful pink or red syrup that looks and tastes amazing in a cocktail. It also works without the vodka, but you might want to add more syrup to taste.

FOR THE CARNATION SYRUP (makes about 400ml)	A few basil leaves, plus extra to garnish
15g carnation petals (about 30-40 flowers)	100ml vodka (optional)
300g sugar	Juice of 1 lime
	300ml sparkling water
FOR THE COCKTAIL	A couple of carnation flowers, to garnish
50g fresh or frozen blackberries	

- 1** To make the syrup, put the petals in a bowl or jug, pour over 300ml boiling water and leave to infuse overnight, or for at least 12 hours.
- 2** Strain the resulting liquid into a small pan and add the sugar. Heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved, then increase the heat and simmer for a minute. Remove from the heat and allow to cool, then pour the syrup into a bottle or jar and store in the fridge. It should last for a couple of weeks in this way; for longer storage, I recommend freezing it.
- 3** To make the cocktail, put the blackberries and basil in a cocktail shaker or jug and crush together with a cocktail muddler or the end of a wooden spoon. Add 80ml carnation syrup, the vodka and lime juice, and shake or stir well.
- 4** Put ice cubes in two highball glasses and strain half the mixture into each glass. My cocktail shaker has a coarse strainer that means some, but not all, of the blackberry bits end up in the drink. If you like, you can use a sieve to strain the mixture and then add a little of the crushed blackberries back to the drink. Top up with sparkling water and garnish with basil or carnation flowers or petals.



The Edible Flower: A Modern Guide to Growing, Cooking and Eating Edible Flowers by Erin Bunting and Jo Facer (£30, Laurence King Publishing)

PHOTOGRAPHS SHARON COSGROVE, ALAMY STOCK PHOTOS

Make a cocktail with carnation syrup
mixed with vodka and sparkling water.
Add frozen blackberries as you stir the
ingredients for a long, cooling drink





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Garden & grow



Planting ideas

Part festival of ideas, part farmer's market and natural living showcase, Planted Country, in partnership with the National Trust, returns to the grounds of Stourhead in Wiltshire on 9-11 June. Expect talks on sustainable growing and biodiversity, nature walks and wellness sessions, plus cooking demos, all set in the cottage and walled gardens. See more at planted-community.co.uk

FEATURE ANDRÉA CHILDS

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OH SO SWEET

Bright climbing sweet peas will fill your garden with scent and colour, and they are perfect for picking so you can bring their charm indoors

'MATUCANA' The much-loved Grandiflora, discovered in South America in the 1950s, has a wonderful fragrance ->



1



2

1 'MONACO' From the new Riviera series of early-flowering, fragrant Grandifloras, this beauty resists high temperatures

2 'ALMOST BLACK' This Grandiflora has glamorous dark-claret flowers, long stems and an incredible scent

As well as filling the air with perfume, sweet peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*) inject the garden with colour throughout summer. Snipping a bunch every few days to enjoy fresh flowers in the house is one of the joys of the season and ensures these annual climbers continue to bloom for months. Sweet pea seeds should be sown in spring, but you can buy the plants in nurseries and garden centres now, ready to plant into pots and borders.

'You can sow sweet peas into the ground in spring,' says supplier Roger Parsons, 'but they are vulnerable to slugs and birds, so I prefer to start them in a glasshouse or cold frame. If they're on a windowsill or similar with limited sunlight, move them to a sunny spot outdoors as soon as they have germinated.'

Sweet peas come in a great choice of varieties and forms, each providing different shapes, colours and scents. Spencers are loved by florists for their big flowers and long stems; Old-fashioned forms boast charm, flower power, weather resilience and incredible scent, but have short stems; while Grandifloras combine a potent mix of characteristics from Spencer and Old-fashioned types.

'Queen Alexandra' (an Old-fashioned scarlet), 'Prince of Orange' (an orange Grandiflora), and 'Joyce Stanton' (a purple Spencer) are all fabulous choices for cheering colour. If you want to grow only one variety, the two-tone sweet peas look great alone. 'Duo Salmon' is a fuchsia and rose Spencer, while 'Matucana' is a purple and maroon Grandiflora that is reminiscent of the original wild sweet pea from the eastern Mediterranean.

SPECIALIST SUPPLIERS

ROGER PARSONS This family-run business is home to the national collection of sweet peas, rpsweetpeas.com

SARAH RAVEN The plantswoman is a specialist in flowers for cutting, including a gorgeous collection of sweet peas, sarahraven.com

EASTON This Lincolnshire estate is renowned for its display of sweet peas in the walled garden in June, visiteaston.co.uk



3



4



5



6

3 'BIG BLUE' A lovely cultivar for cutting, this florists' Spencer sweet pea has generous scented blooms on very long, strong stems

4 'TURQUOISE LAGOON' Blooms in pink-mauve morph to turquoise-blue on this unique Grandiflora sweet pea

5 'PAINTED LADY' One of the oldest pea varieties, the red-blush flowers mature to pink-white and exude a lovely scent

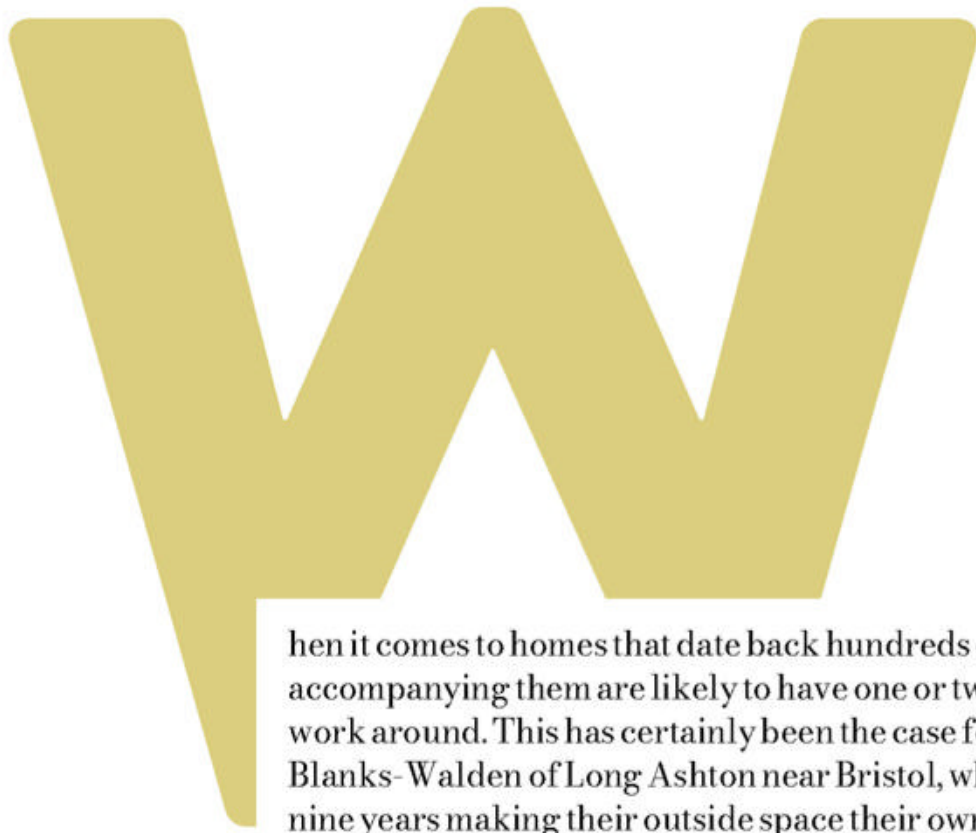
6 'BLUE VELVET' Deep-blue-purple fragrant flowers on long stems make this Spencer variety ideal for vase arrangements



NORDIC INSPIRATION

A traditional garden near Bristol has been given
a Finnish-inspired new look by its owners
Anna-Liisa and Ian Blanks-Walden

This box tree was planted
in the 1700s, while stacked
logs under the bench provide
a haven for wildlife



When it comes to homes that date back hundreds of years, the gardens accompanying them are likely to have one or two historic features to work around. This has certainly been the case for Ian and Anna-Liisa Blanks-Walden of Long Ashton near Bristol, who have spent the past nine years making their outside space their own, while respecting the legacy of those who went before them.

In particular, they've worked hard to look after the eye-catching low box hedges that frame the front of their 600-year-old cottage. Newspaper cuttings from bygone years show that a previous owner filled these geometric shapes with colourful bedding plants, but Anna-Liisa has gone for a cleaner look, filling them with bark chippings and statement planters, while a gold peacock provides a bold focal point.

'The box hedge was laid in the 1820s by William Gough and understandably gets a lot of TLC, having survived over 200 years,' says Anna-Liisa. 'It used to take a previous owner a day to trim the hedges by hand. We cut it with a petrol hedge trimmer that's used only on this one area to avoid box blight.'

Other historic features include a box tree that dates back to the 1700s, from which cuttings have been taken for The National Arboretum at Westonbirt, an old pond and a stone-built summerhouse, which looks attractive and provides plenty of valuable storage space. 'We call this structure "the pod"; shortly after moving here I fell through the floorboards of the pod, so it went on the "conservation repair to-do list" quite quickly,' laughs Anna-Liisa.

'The pond was a swamp when we came here but clearing it has been well worth the effort. We distributed the organic sludge that resulted along a 24-metre border in the garden and we're sure that's why everything is growing so well there.'

While the box hedging, tree and

summerhouse are all included in the Grade II listing given to the property, Anna-Liisa and Ian have been able to add their own touches to other parts of the multi-level garden, which was previously used for boarding dogs and was somewhat overgrown when the couple moved in. In a nod to Anna-Liisa's Nordic heritage, there's a Finnish-themed woodland area with pollinator-friendly, shade-loving plants, such as foxgloves and lily of the valley, with insect towers made from silver birch logs. Meanwhile, an ericaceous border harbours fruits such as Hinnonmaki gooseberries, blueberries and redcurrants, popular in Finland.

Other additions include nine bird nesting boxes, a drought-tolerant 'exotic' border, and wooden beehive-shaped composters that create valuable mulch for the borders.

There are raised beds filled with herbs and vegetables, which are tended by the couple's son, Theodore. They also planted sloe, fig, nectarine and mulberry trees. And in another nod to Finnish gardens, there's a family-sized wooden swing!

The couple opened their garden for the National Gardens Scheme in 2021 as a tribute to Anna-Liisa's mother Marja-Liisa Walden, who received loving care from Marie Curie Nurses. 'The Finns

love the great outdoors and being close to nature, and the calmness and space that goes with this,' says Anna-Liisa. 'No matter the area or size of space you are in, just being outside as much as possible is key.'

'It's been a labour of love doing up a house with an occupancy that can be traced back to 1403, as well as bringing the garden back to its glory days. It's a privilege to be the custodians of a very special place.'



IN THE GARDEN WITH

OWNERS Anna-Liisa and Ian Blanks-Walden live in Long Ashton, near Bristol.

GARDEN A quarter-acre garden with Grade II-listed box hedging, pond, a Finnish-inspired woodland garden, fruit trees and ornamental borders.



TOP The pristine box hedging dates back to the 1800s. Once filled with bright bedding plants, a gold statue now draws the eye



ABOVE LEFT In the simple planting scheme, unusual tulips, like this 'Black Parrot' variety, add depth to the garden

ABOVE Attractive insect towers made from silver birch logs bring an extra dimension to the shady Finnish-style woodland area

A lush garden pond with a fountain, surrounded by various plants and flowers. The pond is filled with water and has a small fountain in the center. The surrounding area is filled with greenery, including tall grasses, flowers, and a stone wall in the background. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

‘The pond is an original feature
of the garden. It was a swamp
when we came here but clearing
it was well worth the effort’





FEATURE SUE BRADLEY
PHOTOGRAPHS PETER CHATTERTON

OPPOSITE Plants soften the edges of the pond, provide cover and safe access for wildlife, and create reflections in the water

ABOVE This Scandi-inspired wooden swing chair is the ideal spot to unwind and relax while enjoying the garden



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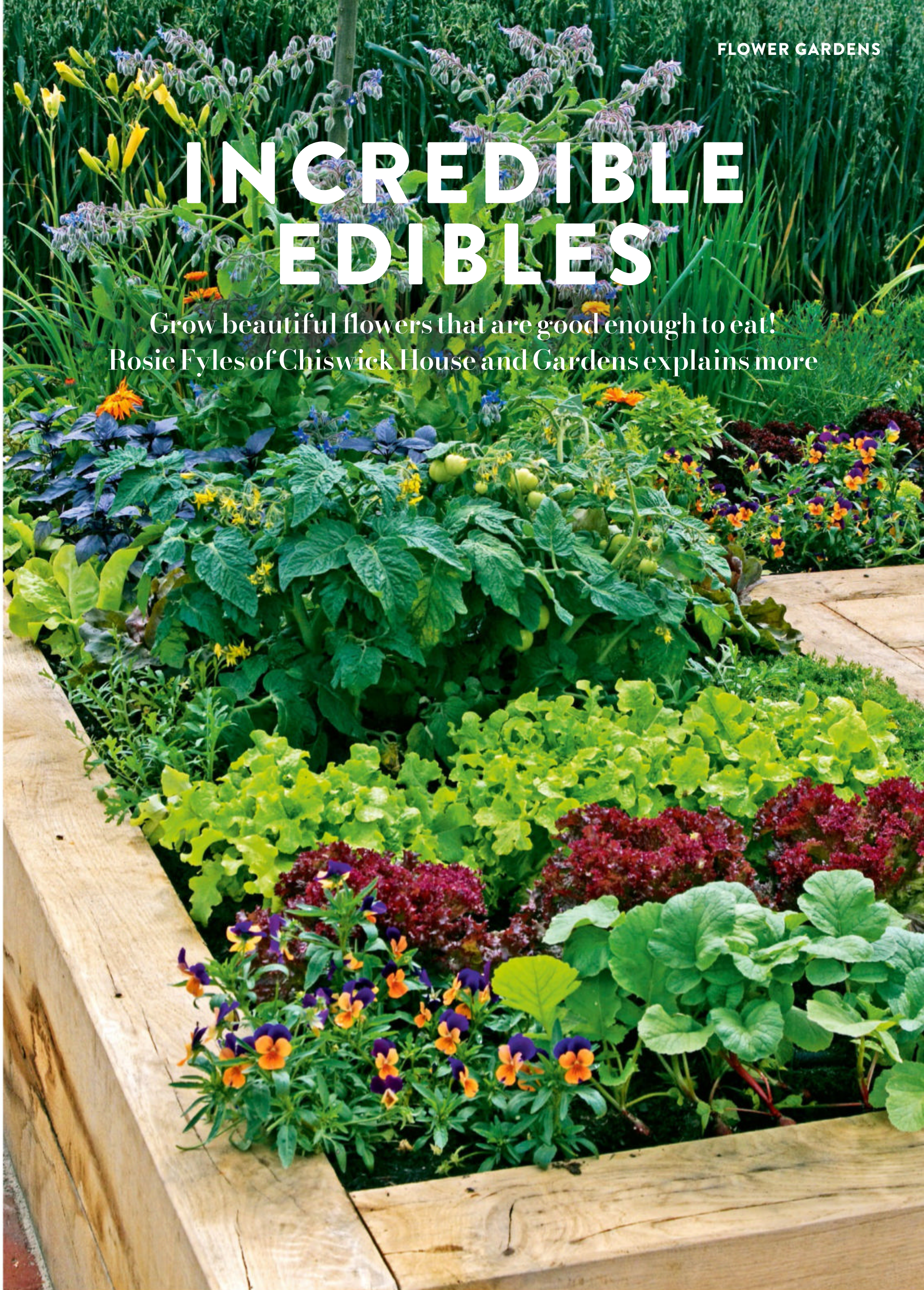


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INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

Grow beautiful flowers that are good enough to eat!
Rosie Fyles of Chiswick House and Gardens explains more





Edible flowers beautifully combine the aesthetic and the practical. At Chiswick House and Gardens, our productive growing areas date back to the 1680s, when edible flowers were a key component of kitchen gardens. It wasn't just about colour; many blooms provided flavour to salads, baking and infusions. Today, we work with community groups to grow flowering plants that they would like to use in their cooking at home, and invite visitors to 'pick their own' when we can.

At home, in a space around two metres square, you could grow enough flowers to eat and adorn your dishes throughout late spring and summer. There are a few things to bear in mind before you start – people with allergies should be careful when eating flowers; not all flowers are edible; and any flowers grown using pesticides should not be eaten. Generally, eat petals rather than whole flowers.

In terms of soil preparation, it's best to ensure it is as weed-free as it can be. You might want to weed and wait, then weed again before planting, or establish a no-dig approach. Don't worry too much about soil quality, as many edible flowers can cope with sandy soils and hot, dry weather.

My advice would be to grow a mix of perennials and annuals. For perennials, favourites include lavender, rosemary, sage and thyme grown for their flowers, not for their foliage. And mostly, the flowers have a more

At Chiswick House and Gardens, herbs are grown not just for the leaves, but for the delicate flavour of their flowers, along with pot marigolds

delicate flavour than the leaf. Also, consider: **Anise hyssop** The tiny petals and leaves have a sweet anise flavour.

Clove pink (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) With a pleasant, clove-like taste, this carnation can be steeped in wine or syrup.

Fennel These petals can be sprinkled on fish for a sweet, aniseed flavour.

Hyssop Often used to add flavour to butter or vinegars, and mixed into a salad dressing.

Tagetes 'Lemon Gem' Has a nice citrus flavour. Our favourite annuals include pot marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*) with their peppery petals that, fresh or dried, can also be used for colouring. And nasturtiums, with edible leaves and flowers, for their even stronger taste.

Many of the annuals you grow for leaves or root crops have great-tasting flowers, including peas, radish, coriander and rocket. Try them before they turn to seed. Once you have your plot established, keep picking your flowers: the more you harvest, the more flowers you will have to eat. Consider the pollinators that you're feeding by growing edible flowers, too. It's a beautiful, rewarding way to make your garden more inviting to wildlife.



Rosie Fyles is head of gardens at Chiswick House and Gardens Trust. The 65-acre Chiswick Gardens are open daily and entry is free, chiswickhouseandgardens.org.uk



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KITCHEN GARDEN

What to plant and how to tend your crop this month for a successful homegrown harvest, according to Steve Stott of Hawkstone Hall

June is a great time for planting and getting on top of the weeds in your vegetable beds, as all frosts have now passed. As we are approaching the longest day of the year, on 21 June, daylight hours increase, meaning that you can spend more time in the garden, morning and evening.

BASIL

Plant this fragrant herb in pots or straight out into beds in June, both of which I do – pots for the kitchen and herb beds for the aroma. It can be sown from February to July and picked from June onwards. Always try to choose a nice sunny, sheltered location and harvest the shooting tips regularly to keep a nice bushy plant. **Tip** Basil hates to have wet roots overnight so water in the morning if possible.



PAK CHOI

This Chinese cabbage can be used in salads and stir-fries. At Hawkstone Hall, we sow every two weeks from April to July, then harvest until the end of August. I plant in trays in the greenhouse before transplanting into beds. Baby leaves are then ready to harvest after 30 days and mature leaves between 30-75 days.

Tip Plant in semi-shade to prevent bolting.



PARSLEY

We generally grow parsley as an annual. Seeds can be sown from March until the end of June, making this month the last chance to get a leafy crop for this year. You can sow the seeds directly into the soil outside after the last frost. However, I prefer to sow into a tray and transplant when the plant is strong enough. Grow in moist but well-drained soil and be patient as parsley can take up to six weeks to germinate. Parsley is best picked when needed, cutting the stems at the base, so that new leaves grow back quickly.

Tip Feed with seaweed fertiliser occasionally.



Steve Stott is head gardener at Hawkstone Hall and Gardens, a Grade I-listed estate in Shropshire, comprising a hotel, spa and gardens. Visit hawkstonehall.co.uk

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A day in the country

The rewilding expert sips
gin and watches beavers on
the Knepp estate in Sussex

I live at Knepp Castle in West Sussex, my husband Charlie Burrell's family home, in the middle of our 3,500-acre rewilding project. My perfect day would be wandering around the place. There's always the possibility of bumping into a free-roaming Tamworth sow and her piglets, or a herd of Exmoor ponies, or some super-relaxed longhorn cows. Overhead, there could be white storks bill-clattering in their huge nests in the tops of oak trees (the first white storks to nest in Britain for 600 years were here at Knepp in 2020).

I go for a 40-minute run as soon as I wake up. My favourite route is along the green lane – an ancient droving road edged by old oaks, field maple, spindle, blackthorn and hazel on high banks, so you feel as if you're running through a green tunnel. I'd eat breakfast outside; egg and bacon, or muesli with blueberries and raspberries from the garden.

I love trawling through local auction houses, such as Toovey's at Spring Gardens in Washington, Bellmans in Wisborough Green, or Denhams in Warnham. We furnish all our glamping accommodation with upcycled or antique furniture. There are such beautiful things to be found, all with a story behind them.

By June, I'll be dropping into our own Wilding café for lunch, where our son Ned, a chef, will have rustled up something delicious from the



WILD AT HEART
Returning the land
to its natural state is
a passion for Isabella

organic veg in our Market Garden, or perhaps one of our wild range longhorn sirloin steaks cooked over coals. Afterwards, I'll be found podding a bumper crop of peas while watching the tennis at Wimbledon on TV.

My perfect end to the perfect day would be heading out with friends to show them our six-acre beaver pen. It would be around 7.30pm on a summer's evening. We'd take deck chairs and a coolbox filled with ice, tonic and Hepple gin, made by our friend Walter Riddell using juniper from his rewilding project in Northumberland. We'd sit quietly, with the scent of water mint crushed under our feet and the sun spilling through the willow leaves, waiting for a glimpse of a beaver venturing out of its lodge to begin its nocturnal work, building dams and creating a magical watery kingdom. It never fails to thrill.

***The Book of Wilding* by Isabella Tree and Charlie Burrell is published on 11 May (£35, Bloomsbury).**

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