



HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

DESIGNING THE DREAM GARDEN



Having worked for years as a designer in the luxury home building market, Sara Edwards decided to combine her design experience with her passion for plants into a garden design business. To launch No.30 Design Studio, she designed and built a show garden at RHS Malvern Spring Festival and was awarded a coveted Gold Medal and 'Best in Category'. Sara now works with discerning clientele throughout the borders and West Midlands to bring their dream gardens to life.

The global pandemic has meant inevitably people are spending more time than ever in their gardens; using them as a sanctuary and something to focus on in these challenging times. The flip side of this is that some outside spaces are just failing their owners, whether not matching their lifestyle, outdated or overgrown, or uninviting spaces devoid of plants and interest or full of old children's toys and rotting garden furniture.

My new garden design column aims to address key issues over the coming months where I will be giving tips and tricks to help you develop and improve your gardens, so they work for you. However, a well-designed garden is not just about creating something lovely to look at, it should engage, entice, and encourage you into the garden.

On a simple level, just being outside observing the birds, bees, flowers unfurling from buds to blooms, everything becoming lush and vibrant as we transit through spring towards summer; has a calming effect for your wellbeing. Nature is unphased by global events and continues as it has every year, and spending time wandering around in the garden observing these changes as the days progress is a good way to escape from any stress or worry brought on by such uncertain times.

It has been well documented over the years about the health benefits of getting your hands dirty in soil. Exposure to mycobacterium vaccae found in soil is scientifically proven to reduce anxiety and improve mood in its subjects and gardening itself is a creative, optimistic process. People plant plants or sow seed with the belief that they will grow and reward them with food or beautiful flowers, and this can be done no matter how small the space, whether seeds on a windowsill, pots on a balcony or in a garden, and no matter what age.





I was lucky enough to have a new greenhouse arrive just as the first lockdown began and it was my lockdown saviour. Having never grown anything from seed before, I embraced learning from scratch how to sow seeds, and nurturing them into maturity, with plenty of failures along the way! Tending to seedlings and plants is in its essence is a mindful activity and having that sense of pride and excitement at seeing seeds germinate or plant flowers open gives people a sense of purpose when normal activities have been so restricted.

By late summer, my deck was awash with lush foliage and flowers, from seeds, plug plants and bulbs bought online, and nurtured over the summer, and it brought me immense joy.

As a result of lockdown, even though not everyone was a gardener or knew how to sow seeds, more and more people were having a go. Viewing figures for BBC Gardeners World have never been higher, and with social media and the internet there are so many people sharing tips and tricks, how to videos and their experiences with having ago.

When it comes to people's gardens, often they were places of neglect, including my own, as our pre Covid-19 lives were busy and hectic. As a garden designer I have had a marked level of interest in people wanting their gardens designed, realising life as we knew it is not going to return just like that and wanting outdoor spaces that work for them and that they want to enjoy spending time in.

As a result of the first lockdown, I was able to clear my overgrown garden and implement a new design, and it really has transformed how we use the space and brought us a great deal of pleasure spending time in it. Join me in the coming months to learn how to transform yours.



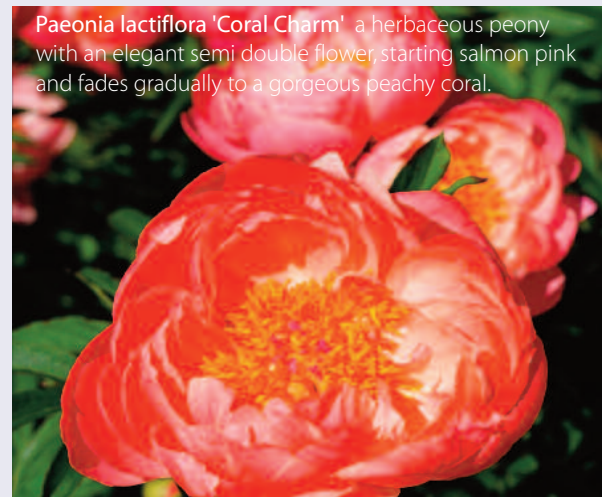
MAY 2021 - THINGS TO DO:

New Moon - May 11th, 8pm
Full Moon - May 26th 12.14pm

Plant out tender annuals, bedding and vegetables, but beware of late frosts. Remember to water containers and pots
Slug and snail defence – I prefer natural methods of garlic spray and having a hedgehog friendly garden

PLANT OF THE MONTH – PEONY

There are three types of peony – herbaceous, which die back to ground each winter, tree peonies which have wooden stems that remain all winter and intersectional or Itoh peonies, which have the habit of the herbaceous but strength and colour range of tree peonies. Grow annual climbers or late flowering clematis through the foliage to prolong the season of interest.



Paeonia lactiflora 'Coral Charm' a herbaceous peony with an elegant semi double flower, starting salmon pink and fades gradually to a gorgeous peachy coral.