

SMALL SPACES, BIG IDEAS

# bijou gardens

OUTDOOR AREAS ON THE SMALL SIDE CAN FEEL BIG AND BEAUTIFUL - TAKE IT FROM THESE EXPERTS

FEATURE Hugh Metcalf



Peachy pink walls enhance this compact garden

## 1 BRIGHTER DAYS

A small garden can be considered like a jewel-box powder room – take a bold approach to make it feel more impactful. I painted all the rendered exterior walls in the garden and courtyard in this peachy pink because it’s uplifting whatever the weather and also looks great with greenery.

**Jess Pidcock, interior designer and founder of King Celia Studio**

## 2 DOUBLE DUTY

Doubling up on the function of your furniture pieces can boost the usability of your garden without needing the extra space. Think storage benches, nesting tables and outdoor banquettes for the most versatile set-ups. The right furniture, landscaping and lighting are all key to making the most of a small outdoor space. Multifunctional furniture can help you maximise every inch of a small backyard and save money on outdoor seating options.

**Joseph Richardson, landscape architect and founder of Richardson & Associates Landscape Architecture**

## 3 NARROW MINDED

Trees are great for shade and privacy, but the wrong ones can outgrow a small garden. Cultivars use a term, ‘Fastigiata’, which essentially means that a tree grows in a vertical fashion. All of its branches grow vertically and quite tight to the main trunk. These types of trees have a narrow upright habit, making them look like green columns, and in this sense they provide privacy and don’t use too much space on the ground.

**Jonathan Fargion, landscape designer**

## 4 LEVEL UP

Without distance helping to create zones, landscaping is very much your friend if you want to create outdoor ‘rooms’. Consider raised areas, like decks, to demarcate a space. A raised deck can make a strong visual statement and add a lot to the landscape if placed well. In general, I try to soften taller decks with multiple levels to gradually transition between the upper and lower spaces, but sometimes you get the chance to do something bold, and I don’t shy away from it.

**Steve Ritchey, landscape designer and founder of Seed Studio Landscape Design**

PHOTOGRAPHS (1) KING CELIA STUDIO; (5) RICHARD GOODING



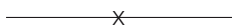
Vertical planting makes the most of narrow outdoor areas

## 5 PLANT LIFE

Where spacious flowerbeds aren't an option, you can still create the effect of lushness by focusing on vertical planting up garden walls, fences and other structures. It's something that this colourful courtyard, with greenery reaching up high, does particularly well. The previous garden wasn't great – it was very dark, cluttered, soulless and lacking structure. We decided to create a Moroccan-inspired oasis that was structured with lush greenery and trailing ivy.

**Rebecca James, interior designer and founder of Rebecca James Studio** >

## MULTIFUNCTIONAL FURNITURE CAN HELP YOU MAXIMISE EVERY INCH OF A SMALL GARDEN AND SAVE MONEY ON OUTDOOR SEATING



Create the illusion of a larger garden with a strategically placed mirror

### 6 ON REFLECTION

Including a mirror reflects and amplifies the size of a space. It can also exaggerate specific details and be used as a focal point. In this design, the mirror adjoins the owner's study. The original objective was to give him an expansive view via the mirror, which captures every element of the garden.

**Jane Stark, interior and landscape designer**

### 7 SMALL AND SIMPLE

Don't be afraid to pare back your plans to avoid overwhelm in a small space – in many cases, it can be a helpful approach. Some people prefer to keep compact gardens more minimalist, using mostly shades of green with white flowers and maybe one other colour. This tends to be a very classic look that won't overwhelm the senses. Repetition of the same plants, such as a row of evergreens or one type of flowering bush, will also help create a more minimalist feeling to the space.

**Amber Freda, landscape designer**

### 8 UNDER PERFORMING

To create an interesting planting scheme that doesn't overwhelm, embrace underplanting. Choosing compact plants that won't take over, or a couple of really architectural plants with interesting underplanting, is best. Plants that thrive in pots add different and interesting layers and herbaceous plants that grow well over bulbs make the most of the space. Having a succession of bulbs followed by summer flowering plants is a great way to keep colour in the garden.

**Florence Mansbridge, living landscape educator at the Eden Project**

### 9 THE PERFECT FIT

One size doesn't fit all when it comes to a small garden – it's crucial that you nail measurements up front to source the right pieces. Furniture pieces that are too big or too small can look awkward, make the flow and movement through a space uncomfortable and throw off the proportion of your patio or deck. Make sure there is ample room to walk around pieces and also be sure they aren't too squished together or too far apart.

**Kat Aul Cervoni, landscape designer and founder of Staghorn NYC and The Cultivation**

An indoor/outdoor look can boost the sense of space



## 10 INSIDE OUT

To make a compact garden feel purposeful, design it as an extension of your living space with furniture and other pieces that wouldn't look out of place indoors. By adding such furnishings to an outdoor space, the comfort factor invites you out. It's amazing what weatherproof fabrics are around now to replace uncomfortable timber chairs and benches. This scene is like a living room: sofas, coffee table and even a feature wall sconce at seated head height.

**Yasmine Ghoniem, interior designer and founder of YSG Studio**