



All you need to know...
**GARDEN
LANDSCAPING**

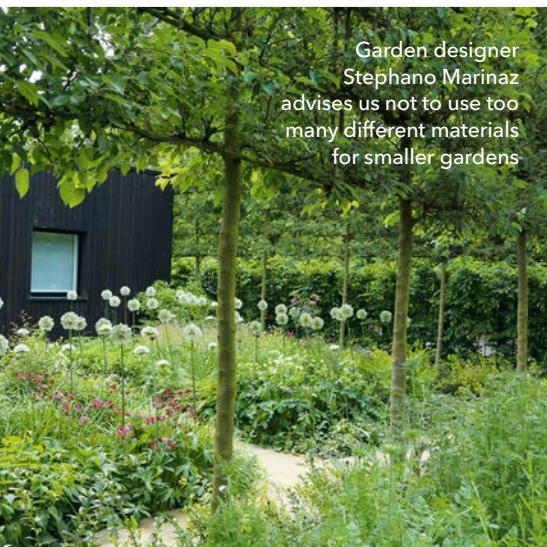
PATHS, WALLS AND RAISED BEDS ARE THE BEDROCK OF A COUNTRY GARDEN. HERE'S OUR EXPERT GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR DESIGN



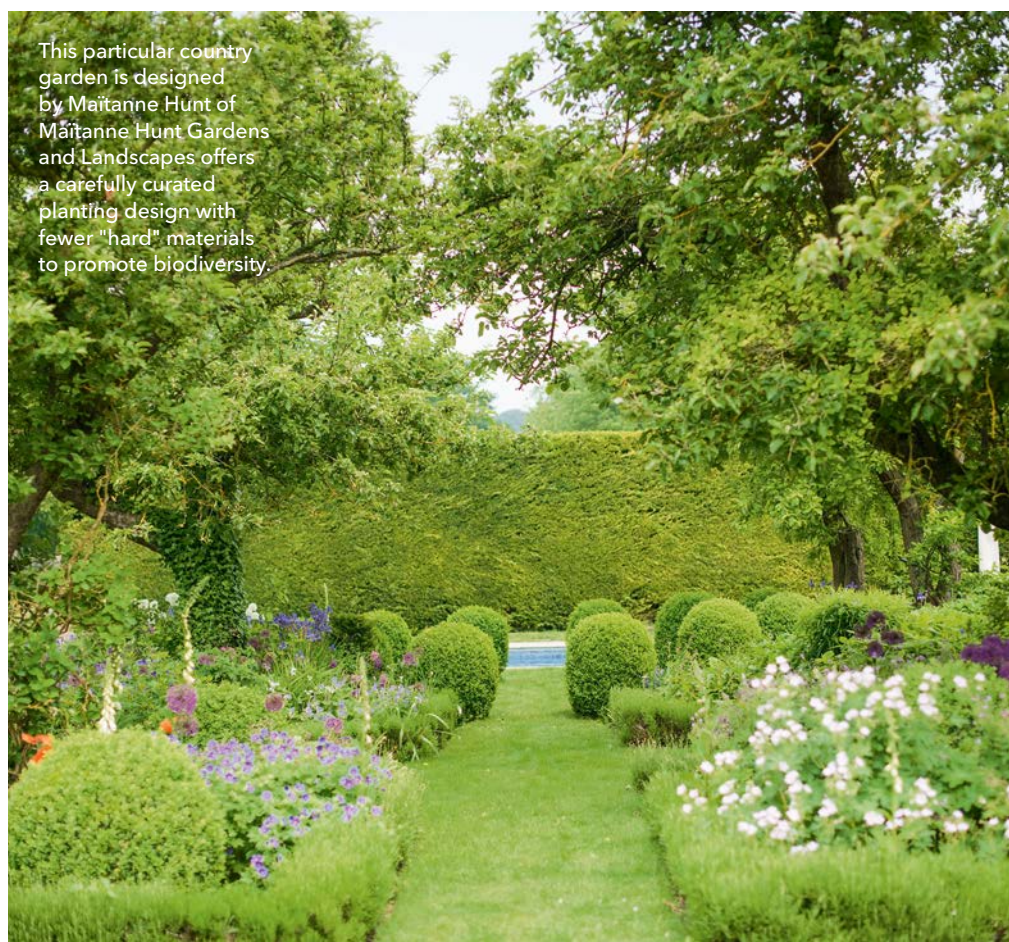


This particular country garden is designed by Maitanne Hunt of Maitanne Hunt Gardens and Landscapes offers a carefully curated planting design with fewer "hard" materials to promote biodiversity.

James Scott of The Garden Company LTD uses neutral colours (soft greys and buffs) that will help to showcase the softscaping and be sympathetic to the planting colour palette.



Garden designer Stephano Marinaz advises us not to use too many different materials for smaller gardens



Flowers may add the beauty and flourish to your garden, but it's the hard landscaping that provides the 'bones'. The garden of a country house is the link between it and the surrounding landscape, so consider this aspect carefully when planning the design of your plot. Your property may even be listed, or you might reside in a conservation area, which can effect the garden design you go for.

HOW DO I PLAN MY DESIGN?

There are some fundamental questions to ask yourself before embarking on a landscaping journey, says James Scott from The Garden Company.

'On a practical basis, think about what do you need from your garden and how will you use it? What design aesthetic do you aspire to? This can be harder to define, but it is vital to understand the characteristics that will give your garden a special feel and help it to connect with your home and its

wider surroundings,' says James. 'Finally, ask yourself what opportunities or challenges are presented by the site itself.'

SHOULD I CREATE DIFFERENT GARDEN AREAS?

The initial ideas for a new garden are always focussed around the flow of the space. A sense of intrigue can be achieved by linking areas with romantic pathways and swathes of planting, for example. In a country garden, continuity between the house and the garden is vitally important. This can be achieved by choosing materials in the garden that are sympathetic to the house and its architecture – such as slate, stone or timber, for example.

Take into account the light conditions when deciding on what to include in the different areas of your garden. The final jewel in the crown of your landscape design will be the planting, says garden and landscape designer Maitanne Hunt. 'You'll want to select plants that provide year-round interest, such as



For Maitanne Hunt, a garden becomes an essential extension of the home, with separate zones for dining, living and playing to be

evergreens, hedges, trees or topiary that give structure to a garden when perennials have died down.'

DO I NEED A GARDEN DESIGNER?

If you're struggling with your vision, a qualified garden designer will show you how to extract the best from your space. 'A professional will also be able to advise on planning permission,' says landscape architect, Stefano Marinaz.

DO I NEED A LANDSCAPER TOO?

This profession is significantly different to other types of building construction and requires specialist knowledge. It's important to seek out a good landscaping company rather than regular builders, who may not be familiar with some of the 'basics' of building gardens rather than houses. Landscapers are trained in hard and soft landscaping skills, which essentially means that



Cheryl Cummings has planted mounds of grasses and flowering hummoks to soften the edges of a path.

they can build the garden and also lay turf, plant trees, shrubs and perennials which the garden designer has specified.

DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

When in doubt, always consult your local authority. It's better to compromise slightly on your design than have to make costly amendments further along the line. For example, your trees may have



Stefano Marinaz prefers to locate the seating area away from the house, depending on the size of the garden.

tree preservation orders, or there may be an underground stream of which you are unaware. Planning officers will always appreciate a design which is sympathetic to the local style and architecture.

WHAT MATERIALS SUIT A COUNTRY GARDEN?

According to garden designer Cheryl Cummings: 'Hard materials used in the garden need to sit well with the fabric of the house, and



Here James Scott has brought in elements such as a gazebo and sculpture which draw the eye to the destination areas that are pleasant to spend time in

with the internal flooring if they are to flow seamlessly. They need to look appropriate to the setting and any existing garden materials, so for many reasons a locally sourced material, often stone, makes sense.'

Maitanne Hunt suggests Corten steel for edging. 'The rust-red, earthy tones of the steel blend well into rural projects.' Whereas James Scott feels that neutral colours work well. 'Stone in soft greys and buffs will help to showcase the softscaping and be sympathetic to the planting colour palette.'

HOW DO I INCORPORATE A VEGETABLE GARDEN?

Although you may have the space for a large vegetable garden at some distance from the house, it's good to incorporate a beautiful kitchen or herb garden into the ornamental space, too. Pottering about in your own orderly set of raised beds before dinner and

selecting a few homegrown herbs or vegetables can be a wonderful way to enjoy your country garden.

IS THERE A PERFECT BALANCE OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING?

'It's important to balance any landscaping with the size of your house; the walls of a larger house present significant vertical hard surfaces,' says Cheryl Cummings. 'If there are large trees around the boundary or a big open view, the scale will mean that narrow paths and small plants will appear insignificant, so the paved surfaces need to be appropriate to the scale of the house and surroundings.'

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Of all the aspects involved in creating a new garden, hard landscaping takes up the biggest proportion - usually about 75 per cent of the total project cost. If budget is an issue, it is possible to do the work in stages.

WILL A WELL-DESIGNED GARDEN ADD VALUE TO MY HOME?

'A beautifully executed garden adds immediate appeal and desirability,' says Cheryl Cummings. 'When it comes to the crunch, we buy a home, not just a house, and this year more than any other we have really valued our gardens.'

Sourcebook Our pick of country garden landscape experts

- For wildlife-friendly design, Cheryl Cummings, gardendesignerwales.co.uk
- For bespoke, handcrafted places, The Garden Company, thegardenco.co.uk
- For historical restoration and reconstruction of landscapes surrounding listed buildings, Stefano Marinaz Landscape Architecture, stefanomarinaz.com
- For all sizes and budget, Maitanne Hunt Gardens & Landscapes, maitannehunt.com