

# OUR GARDEN CRUSH

And breathe! If we could escape into this **SERENE SPACE** for a glass of wine, we'd be far calmer cooking Christmas dinner

Just looking at this beautifully ordered yet lush green garden makes us feel less stressed, so imagine sitting on that comfy sofa while the mayhem of Christmas reigns indoors. Designed by Maitanne Hunt (maitannehunt.com), this London gem was inspired by the moss gardens of Kyoto in Japan. "The clients had recently visited the city and were mesmerised by the peaceful landscape and serene beauty of the gardens," explains Maitanne. "They asked if I could create an

outdoor living area that would encapsulate their experience and captivate their eyes and mind. The couple are passionate about art and beauty in all its forms, whether man-made or natural, which led to brave choices. Their intellectual curiosity also led to great discussions!"

## SHAPELY SOLUTIONS

The biggest challenge was melding Japanese design with real-life restrictions. "This style of garden presents a flawless image of nature with carefully manicured trees and plants and gentle curved lines," says Maitanne. "However, the clients didn't want to change the existing layout of their outdoor space, which consisted of strong straight lines of steps and retaining walls." Her solution was to use rounded elements that were dominant enough to overshadow these structural straight lines through clever planting. "I combined deciduous and evergreen trees of

strong, unusual shapes and varying heights and clipped the azaleas and *Pittosporum tenuifolium* into fat cushions," she explains.

Two curved mounds were built to mimic a mountain range, large rocks chosen for their shape and tone and carefully positioned, and a succession of smooth but irregular stepping stones laid to lead guests around the garden. Fast-growing perennial mind-your-own-business (*Soleirolia soleirolii*) creates a carpet of evergreen groundcover and is also planted in narrow channels between the buffed Yorkstone paving on the sheltered terrace.

The result is breathtaking and the west-facing 11 x 7m plot now boasts subtle beauty all year round. *Camellia japonica* 'Konronkoku' brings plentiful flowers of an unusual red tone in spring, while winter-flowering cherry 'Autumnalis Rosea' (*Prunus subhirtella*) offers delicate white blooms in the heart of winter.



Mature cloud-pruned trees bring structure and shape to the design



The clean lines of an L-shaped outdoor sofa add the finishing touch to this tranquil retreat.

Fresh green, moss-like mind-your-own-business makes a pretty, easy-care alternative to grass.