



TEN

The guide to making
the most of your
outdoor space



With many of our members spending time at home over the next few weeks, there's no better opportunity to set about curating your green space and turning it into a peaceful retreat, as well as a space for exercise and spending time with close family.

Whether you're a green-fingered homebody or a gardening newbie, tending to a huge country garden or an inner-city patio, gardening for pure enjoyment or getting the little ones involved, don't let the grass grow under your feet during this time. Our lifestyle managers are on hand to arrange deliveries, gardening services, help plan large-scale projects to be implemented later in the year, and much more.

The guide to making the most of your outdoor space



Getting started

You'll just need a few essentials to start your journey down the garden path, with gloves, pruning shears and gardening forks making up the most important elements of any basic toolkit. You can find most, if not all of the tools mentioned along with seeds and plants at most large supermarkets.

Other noteworthy additions that will ensure you cover a lot of ground include a trowel, hose and/or watering can while catching up on Monty Don's latest season of *Gardener's World* wouldn't go amiss, either. Proving that there's no wrong or right when it comes to gardening, this celebrated British horticulturist gets his hands dirty every Friday on BBC Two or you can catch up with him on [iPlayer](#) in your own time.



Gardening for... your space

It's not about how much space you have, but more what you do with it. If you have a large garden, you've got plenty of room to play with, but even small outdoor areas and balconies can prove rewarding if you think creatively. Good options for compact spaces include vertical garden walls, hanging pots and wall-mounted plants. Herbs such as basil and vegetables such as chillies take root quite easily in pots and on sunny windowsills.

If you're lacking an outdoor space entirely, add splashes of greenery to your home with plants that do well indoors such as the endlessly popular *Monstera deliciosa*, the easy-to-propagate *Pilea* (also known as a Chinese money plant) and the eternally trendy fiddle-leaf fig.

Gardening for... foodies

What could be more fulfilling for a home cook than using your own produce in a dish? Not only is it rewarding to plant your own herbs, fruit and vegetables – it also saves you from a trip to the shops now and then, while encouraging a more holistic connection with your ingredients. Some of the best plants to grow during these early spring months include chillies, tomatoes and strawberries – all of which can easily be grown in a greenhouse, on a small patio and even indoors.

If you've got more outside space to work with, other superb March and April sowing options include broad beans, beetroot, Swiss chard and salad leaves. Conveniently, herbs like parsley and basil can also be grown indoors and early spring is the time to plant them.



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There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments.

Janet Kilburn Phillips



Gardening for... nature lovers

No matter how small your garden, it can prove to be an oasis of biodiversity, providing a multitude of habitats for different species of wildlife. Welcome birds by putting out a bird feeder and bird bath, plant flowers rich in nectar (such as primrose and lavender) to appease butterflies and plant creepers, which will act as homes for insects and small animals.

You can even create your very own DIY insect hotel to help your neighbourhood frogs, bees, creepy crawlies and hedgehogs. The RSPB has its own multi-storey **bug hotel** blueprint that you can craft with items you're likely to have lying around the house as well as a handy guide for **creating nature highways and byways** for the creatures in your yard.





Gardening for... families

With the kids at home, now is the perfect opportunity to relish in the quality time you have together – teaching them a new skill and hopefully encouraging a lifelong hobby while you're at it. Keep children entertained by choosing plants with interesting leaves, fast-growing seedlings such as marigolds and poppies, or plants that provide sensory stimulation such as rattling poppy seed heads and lemon balm.

Edible flowers and plants (think lettuce and runner beans) are also excellent options and may even see your little ones following you into the kitchen, too. If you're looking for another place to start, **CBeebies** has a fantastic selection of videos to get your children inspired and involved.



Gardening for... spending time with loved ones

Making your outdoor space a social one that encourages engagement and conversation is surprisingly easy with the clever positioning of a few benches and a barbecue grid. Add another dimension by revamping an old gardening shed to be used as a gin bar in the coming months before retiring it to a winter of storing your garden furniture so as not to take up unnecessary space indoors.

You could also add a touch of ambience with colourful scatter cushions on outdoor seating and solar lamps or fairy lights in jars, allowing for an evening spent outdoors.



Gardening for... peace of mind

You need only make a few thoughtful additions to your garden or patio to transform it into a meditative space – one for reflection, reading and respite. The most important element in doing so is to keep the design of your space simple and minimalistic, while making a conscious effort to use natural materials reflecting nature.

Hang up a hammock and opt for a water feature (such as an ornamental shishi-odoshi) or wind chimes for added tranquillity. Planting perfumed bushes such as lavender will also add a soothing fragrance to your garden.

Gardening for... decor

From mother-in-law's tongue – a true statement piece – to the popular fiddle-leaf fig, plants have earned their place in the realm of decor with interior designers the world over using greenery to add stylish accents to the home.



A space can be transformed from dreary to delightful with the introduction of an elaborate indoor pot or edgy planter providing a home to the fashionable plants mentioned above. Other interesting indoor gardening ideas include wrapping English ivy around a bookshelf or placing air plants in glass hanging bulbs for a minimalistic yet trendy look.

Contact one of our lifestyle managers if you'd like any assistance in ordering supplies or booking an online consultation with a gardener to draw up future plans to landscape your garden.