

# A Fresh Approach

At the dawn of a new year, Landscape Designer Kevin Cooper highlights, that now is the perfect time to plan and create your very own haven within the garden.

When designing a garden or outside space, there is so much more potential than just a lawn and some flowers. We have the opportunity to create a haven into which we can retreat, relax and escape the stresses of the busy world we live in.

Whether it be the humble cup of coffee on the patio while reading the Sunday papers or family and friends round for the evening BBQ, the terrace or patio plays a pivotal role within the garden, providing the natural link with and extension to the inside of the home. The choice of paving and furniture being as crucial as any other room in the house, so as to create the inviting atmosphere needed to lure one out, and more importantly a comfortable and secure feel to encourage one never to leave. A summer house or garden room can be an invaluable asset



within the garden, not only creating an inviting focal point, but giving the opportunity to use the garden in all weathers and for a myriad of uses, ranging from home office to children's den. The options are many and varied, with both traditional and contemporary being readily available, it is crucial however to choose one that seamlessly merges into the overall scheme, with sometimes the garden being designed around the garden room of choice.

As with any other part of the home, the garden room needs dressed and furnished to create a warm and inviting feel to encourage one to use the space more. An outdoor fireplace or chiminea can give the space a cosy and welcoming feel, with the flickering of the flames creating a quite magical atmosphere at night. There is a vast range of LED lighting available to complement and highlight the features of the garden and provide the chance to enjoy the space long into the evening, the atmosphere being quite unique. The range of furniture open to us is as varied as with the interior of the house, with sofas and day beds available to be truly indulgent.

An increasingly popular addition to any outdoor room is the exciting and relaxing hot tub, giving the opportunity to relax and savour the delights of being outside in the most comfortable and therapeutic of atmospheres.

The key ingredient to bringing any garden together is the planting. The warmth and beauty in this natural element creates the relaxed feeling crucial to the appeal of the garden. The plants can also be used to give the garden its three dimensional depth and character, at the same time as shelter and privacy. The use of specimen plants is important in developing focal points to lead one around the garden and soften the hard landscaping.

In the garden, we all have the opportunity to create a little haven to escape to and relax, and now, at the beginning of a new year is the prime time to start planning and designing your new garden in anticipation of the spring and summer to come, and I wish you a Happy and Peaceful New Year to enjoy it! 🌱



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