

Living

ESSEX

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GORGEOUS GEORGIAN

Through the keyhole at £2.25m
Great Horkesley manor

ROYALS ON-SEA

Prince Charles and
Duchess of Cornwall's
city trip to Southend

LONDON CALLING

Inside millionaire
plumber Charlie Mullins'
Thames-side pad

ARRAY OF DELIGHTS

Kem Cetinay's
Romford pub
transformation

Keeping up with the **JONESES**

Insta influencers like Halstead's
Victoria Jones are revolutionising
our home decor

Plus
STYLE &
WELLNESS
HOMES &
GARDENS
FOOD &
DRINK



GARDEN GROW-HOW

Leigh-on-Sea-based **Katrina Kieffer-Wells**, from Earth Designs, on how to put the heart back into your family garden

A family garden doesn't have to be a choice between style and practicality, a grown-up space, or a playground. It should be a place for the whole family to enjoy together, without compromising on style. Here is how to put the heart back into your family garden, so you can learn, play, grow and relax together – and look good doing it.

Areas to play, run, splash and climb

Activity areas encourage fine and gross motor development, sensory play and more, but they don't have to dominate the look of your garden. Divide areas with deep borders and tall plants, archways or decorative screens, to hide play areas and equipment.

Hide climbing frames in plain sight by building a pergola with ladders and a swing. Or install a modern water rill or spout for a stunning and playful feature.

Storage and more storage

Keep your garden clear of messy toys by utilising all available space. Areas under decks or seating, for instance, often go to waste. We build a lot of garden seating from scratch so that we can sneak in extra storage. We've even built a sand pit on wheels that slides under a bench. Whatever the size of your garden, find innovative hidey holes to make use of.



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Places to learn and grow

Gardens are excellent for learning. Even if you don't have much space, growing herbs, strawberries or tomatoes in a pot is a simple and fun way to learn about life cycles, the weather and biology. Wood stores, fruit trees, water features and berries are other simple ways to encourage wildlife. Creating sensory experiences for children to enjoy.

Cook and eat together

At the end of the day, a family garden is more than just plants and play areas, they are about being together. The act of cooking and eating together is one of the simplest and most rewarding ways to be a family. Outdoor kitchens are wonderful, but expensive. Making a comfortable and communal outdoor eating space is essential and easier. Create a place that you can relax and enjoy being together. Invest in a pizza oven, barbecue or fire-pit to enhance the experience.

Award-winning Earth Designs are members of the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Association of Professional Landscapers.

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