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Basildon legend opens up about her turbulent love life

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GARDEN GROW-HOW

Leigh-on-Sea-based garden designer **Katrina Kieffer-Wells** shows us how to think outside the shed, with innovative garden storage solutions

Storage may not seem like the most exciting subject, but ample storage is just as essential in the garden as it is in your home. If you've got garden furniture that needs putting away or children's toys to hide, you will need storage. And if you're sporty, all that sports equipment needs to go somewhere.

Most people buy a shed, plonk it at the end of the garden, shove everything in and hope for the best. But that's not the only answer. If you don't have room for a shed or simply don't want one cluttering up your view, then there are other ways to keep your garden looking clean, tidy and stylish.

Sit on it: under-seating storage

We build most of our seating areas bespoke, from scratch. Not only does that mean we can use the best materials and make it fit perfectly in your space, but it also means we can sneak extra storage in. We often include storage underneath wooden benches and seating areas, so you only need to lift the lid to keep your patio looking spotless.

Hidey holes

Besides seating, consider other potential storage spaces that aren't being used. Do you have a raised deck or planter? Could some storage be hidden underneath? We've been known to put doors and hatches into decking to create extra space.



'We've often painted sheds to match fences, in dark greys and even black so that they blend into the background'

Designer storage spaces

Even the smallest outdoor space can accommodate some storage. Recently we had a client who loved to surf but lived in a flat in London with a tiny outdoor yard. We built a full-height bespoke storage cupboard at one end and clad it with slate grey perspex. Plenty of room for a surfboard and other gear, plus it gave a gorgeous modern, clean-line finish to the space.

Inconspicuous and eco-friendly solutions

Sheds and storage cupboards can be a feature, or they can become part of the garden. We've often painted sheds to match fences in dark greys and even black so that they blend into the background.

If you have a storage box, use a beautiful screen to hide it from view. Or, use sedum and other plants to give your storage cupboard or shed a living roof. They will help filter out air pollutants and encourage wildlife, as well as adding an extra level of greenery and colour to your garden.

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

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