

# LIVING

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## STYLE SISTERS

HOW TO SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME WITHOUT SPENDING A FORTUNE

## IDYLIC RETREATS

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*Plus*

HOMES & GARDENS  
ARTS & CULTURE  
STYLE & WELLNESS

## HERD *in* the CITY

Elephants stomp into Southend

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Fun days out in Essex





# GARDEN DESIGN DIRT

Why is everyone talking about dry gardens?

BY KATRINA KIEFFER-WELLS OF EARTH DESIGNS



Summer is a tough time for gardens (and gardeners) with the endless watering required to keep our gardens alive, and it's getting tougher all the time thanks to the effects of climate change. Our home county of Essex is one of the driest areas of the country and often suffers long periods of drought throughout the year, but summers are becoming hotter and drier everywhere.

Which is why one of the biggest talking points in garden design right now is xeriscaping, or dry gardens.

## Is a dry garden not a dead garden?

Far from it. The term "dry garden" in fact refers to a garden that only needs rainwater to survive.

Plants are drought resistant and beds covered by gravel or stone to keep water from evaporating. Thirsty lawns are minimised or ditched completely in favour of patchwork planting. With plants growing over rocks, in planters or between stones, pathways and patios.





**Low maintenance, big reward**

A properly designed dry garden can pack in a cacophony of colours and textures. Herbaceous plants, ornamental grasses and wildflowers thrive in dry gardens and bring plenty of colour and movement, without needing constant watering. And no lawn means no mowing and often minimal weeding too.

**Street cred and environmental cred**

Dry gardens are also “hot” right now because of their environmental credentials, the most obvious being the reduction in water use. But the plants used in dry gardens also tend to be great for pollinators, encouraging wildlife and biodiversity.

**What plants should I choose?**

When designing a dry garden area look for a mixture of evergreen shrubs and drought tolerant plants. Mediterranean varieties, succulents and cacti tend to do well, as do salvia, verbena and echinacea, poppies, lavender and red hot pokers. Use a mixture of heights and textures, planted and potted to create plenty of interest.

**Start small and grow**

If you’re not ready to give up your lawn just yet, try converting one bed or area. Once you feel more confident you can extend the look. Or give us a call and we can work with you to find solutions that you’re happy with.

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**For more design inspiration and advice, contact award-winning garden designers Earth Designs. Earth Designs are members of the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Association of Professional Landscapers. info@earthdesigns.co.uk 01702 597587**



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