

LIVING

ESSEX

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JOE SWASH

"I've always been paternal...
but I didn't think I'd have
this many kids!"

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CHRISTMAS *in* ESSEX

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GARDEN DESIGN DIRT

Magical gardens and enchanted landscapes

BY KATRINA KIEFFER-WELLS OF EARTH DESIGNS



Christmas is a time of magic, nostalgia and tradition, and it's a time of nostalgia in the gardening world at the moment too. The traditional English garden is making a comeback. In large part, this is due to a much more modern story. A growing awareness of our environmental impact in the garden has seemingly brought elements of the traditional English garden style full circle.

Because as it turns out, some are - rather spiffingly - more environmentally friendly than their modern garden counterparts.

Is it possible then, that a return to a more traditional garden look will spell a happier ending for us all? Perhaps, but there's more than one reason to embrace the enchanted garden. Or at least, an emerging style that plays homage to the overgrown and enchanted places of classic childhood literature and fairytales. After all, what's not to love about wildflower meadows, secret doorways, magical creatures and the promise of adventure?

The enchanted garden look

It's fairly simple to recreate the enchanted English garden look with a few key elements. ➔





A mixture of traditional plants, wild flowers and natural materials, for example will bring the look to life, with or without a country manor at your disposal.

In place of crumbling stone walls, try making a rockery or stepping stone pathway. Plant tumbling creepers and trailing plants between stones to create a magical carpet of soft blooms. Sedum, pinks and bellflower, for example, will produce a tapestry of colour come summer.

Down at the bottom of the garden

Climbers are also good for the rambling, enchanted look. Wisteria and roses, or honeysuckle and clematis. Grow them in a mixture of whites and yellows, or pinks and purples. Entangled over archways or draped over arbours to create mysterious doorways and spellbinding spaces.

Fairy tale endings

As well as rewilding, herb gardens are also popular and very in keeping with the magical country garden theme. Mix them together in beds, or stuffed in a pile of mismatched pots. Play with combinations of poppies, heathers, daisies and lavender in beds, alongside grasses and fragrant herbs like rosemary, chives and thyme. Add small fruit trees like cherry, plum or apples for height and clouds of fairy tale blossom in springtime.

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