

Calm and simplicity – the modern traditionalist’s garden



Ian Shelley is a perfectionist and some years ago he looked at the boring rectangle of scruffy grass and tangled, overgrown shrubs that was his new garden in Creswick Walk and decided he needed help. Enter Stephen Crisp, gardening guru to the Horticultural Society, responsible for the Millennium beds on Willifield Green.

As you approach the house through a white painted wooden gate, you realise that this is

something special. It looks like one of the small show gardens at Chelsea. Great care has been taken to link the Arts & Crafts house with the garden. Although the front garden has a strong asymmetrical geometric design, the beds are full of traditional cottage garden perennials and shrubs and there is a Lutyens bench on the small terrace.

Traditionally, the cottage garden was a colourful jumble of vegetables, herbs, fruit and

companion flowering plants, such as pot marigolds, which acted as a deterrent to pests. Cottage style here takes the best of the traditional approach but extends the range of material. In the box-edged beds, old-fashioned plants and shrubs still form the basis of the look. There are generous swathes of hydrangea, phormium, pink and white forms of persicaria, and fuchsias. Shrub roses and bergenia under planted with the delightful erigeron daisies soften the red brick edgings to the 45-degree beds that cut into the lawn. Contemporary additions to the flower palette include rudbekias and hellebores. Pinks and purples abound, from stately cone-flowers and eupatorium purpureum crawling with bumblebees, to deep-bronze-purple heucheras and berberis.



Scented rosemary, wormwood and lavenders grow under the bay window. Plants are repeated throughout the beds, giving movement and rhythm to the dense planting. The overall effect is of a vibrant, lushly planted *rus in urbe* alive with insects and butterflies, heady with fragrance and framed by a traditional, sturdy beech hedge.

Behind the house, the mood changes. Geometric shapes hold the eye in the site. The garden has the satisfying symmetry of a formal, traditional garden where each element contributes to the emphatic stillness of the pattern. The effect is restful and calm, characterised by simplicity of line and an almost sculptural quality of space. Form follows function to create a ‘machine for living’, an outdoor room designed for entertainment and play.

The formal, urban look is emphasised by four topiaried holly balls set in a line of box-edged squares along the northern side of the plot. This is counterbalanced by an impeccable, tightly-controlled lawn that runs onto a broad patio dedicated to outdoor entertaining, with barbecue and carefully streamlined garden furniture. The children’s playhouse and Ian’s shed will eventually be screened by a beech hedge. A mirrored door on the back wall doubles the size of the garden, a cunning

designer’s trick to give an illusion of space. the National Gardens Scheme on 26 June.

You can visit this garden next year when Ian opens for ANNE CRAWLEY NGS ASSISTANT COUNTY ORGANISER

THE GARDENING YEAR

Your Garden in October

- ✿ It’s time to think about plants for free. Cuttings of pelargoniums, fuchsias, sage, rosemary and thyme root easily in pots of gritty soil in a cold frame. Clean and store seeds of annuals and perennials in envelopes.
- ✿ Put the garden to bed for winter. Weed the borders with a sharp hoe and spread a thick mulch of garden compost, spent mushroom compost, or farmyard manure. CPL deliver handy bags to your door (Tel.0845 678 99 55).
- ✿ Don’t forget the wildlife. Plant red-berried shrubs (birds prefer them to other colours) and leave some seed-heads on shrubs and plants. Clean and fill bird feeders and remember to keep topped up all winter.
- ✿ Fit grease bands round the trunks of apple and cherry trees to trap egg-laying insects that damage the fruit. Tie them on about 45cms above soil level and remove in April.

Your Garden in November

- ✿ Bring tender perennials and container plants under frost-free cover. Plant up pots of pansies and wallflowers with Spring bulbs to cheer the winter gloom.
- ✿ Keep lawns and borders free from leaves. As they rot more quickly if they are shredded, continue to mow and compost both leaves and grass in a subsidised Barnett compost bin. A 330 litre bin guaranteed for 10 years costs £20; you also get a free kitchen caddy to encourage you to compost household waste and reduce landfill.
- ✿ On bonfire night, have a care for wildlife. Check bonfire sites before lighting and only light one side so that hedgehogs and other creatures can escape.

Your Garden in December/January

- ✿ Complete the tidying of beds and borders. Prune established roses; check and renew ties on climbing and rambling roses.
- ✿ In dry, frost-free weather, prune established fruit trees and spray with tar-oil winter wash. Don’t prune plums and greengages now or you risk getting silver-leaf; they should be pruned only in July, August or September.
- ✿ Protect hostas and bedding plants by scattering eco-friendly slug pellets that don’t harm the birds.
- ✿ Tidy up the shed and clean & stack old plant pots. Get the lawn-mower serviced and oil and store tools under cover.

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Caring for the Suburb for 20 years

Window (window) *n.* an opening in a wall fitted with glass in a frame to let in light or air and allow people to see out (Sp in *Hampstead Garden Suburb* - as important to conserve the look from outside, keeping to traditional proportions.

The cheapest option is not always the best value for money

The replacement of windows with new made of inappropriate materials will visually harm your property and devalue it.

It is a popular misconception that upvc windows, for instance, are maintenance free. The average life of a well-made and properly looked after, timber or steel window, is approximately 75 to 100 years. A upvc window over this period is as yet untested, but many will fail, indeed have, within 25 to 30 years, particularly where mechanical and moving parts are concerned. These are often unable to be repaired resulting in the complete replacement of the window. Timber and steel windows can be readily repaired and are a much sounder investment.

Any alterations to houses on the Suburb must be approved by the Trust and Barnet. Replacement windows need Trust consent and we are happy to give impartial advice, free.



Ripping out timber windows for replacement with upvc is not only illegal but will in fact reduce the value of the property. Such replacements are completely out of character.



Good quality timber windows made from durable species and properly maintained will last a generation or more.



Replacement timber or steel windows can normally be double glazed to enhance the thermal efficiency of your property.



Timber windows can be easily repaired, prolonging the life of the window and keeping the character of the house.

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