

Living

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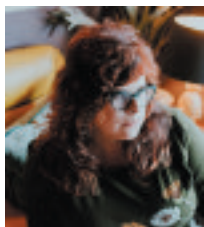
Plus
STYLE &
WELLNESS
GARDENING
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Exclusive

GREG SHEPHERD

TV dad on family, difficult
bedtimes and Brentwood life





GARDEN GROW-HOW

Leigh-on-Sea-based **Katrina Kieffer-Wells, MSGD** on how dads can get the most out of their garden

Gardens are good for everyone, including dads. Even if you're not an experienced gardener, the garden is bursting with opportunities to spend quality time with your children. From growing fruit and veg, to talking about biology, the weather, colours and seasons. Not to mention being the perfect place to play games and have amazing fantasy adventures. But it can also be an essential retreat from work and family life. Giving you time and space to relax and de-stress.

Grow together

Set aside a small area of the garden to grow together with your offspring. It doesn't have to be big. A small planter, window box, or patch of earth dedicated to your growing adventure. Buy some seeds and away you go. Or turn it into a science experiment by growing veg from kitchen scraps. Anyone can grow tomatoes and peppers from seed, for example. Extract a few seeds from your salad and dry them on some kitchen roll for a few days, then plant and go. Who knows what you'll learn and grow together.

Relax outdoors

What do you do to relax? Whatever it is, there's a way to do it outdoors. From sports to cooking and reading, get some vitamin D while you're doing your "thing".

Some cleverly positioned seating away from the house in a spot that catches the sun is perfect for escaping with a coffee and an excellent book.

Gardening itself is actually a great stress-reliever, because it's both physical and



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rewarding. But if you prefer cooking to relax and have the budget, invest in an outdoor kitchen. Or simply get a pizza oven and enjoy summer evenings making pizza with the kids.

Improve your work-life balance with a garden office

If you'd like to work from home more, consider installing an outdoor office. There are some amazing designs out there to suit every need. It will give you a quiet space away from the family to concentrate on work. But being closer to home allows you the chance to get more involved in your family and local community. Better still, share the space with your partner so you can both get a better work-life balance.

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