

LIVING

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WINTER GETAWAYS

Stunning Essex staycation spots to enjoy this season

WIN!

Tickets to the ballet

What's on

Illuminations, concerts, pantos, New Year cheer and more...

Feeding the FAMILY

Joe Swash on dinners at Pickle Cottage

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Must-try restaurants for 2023

SHOP LOCAL

Celebrating small businesses from Broxted to Thorpe Bay

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GARDEN GROW-HOW

Defy the winter blues with advice from Leigh-on-Sea-based **Katrina Kieffer-Wells** of Earth Designs Garden Design

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BETTER PERSPECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY**

Most gardens are designed without much thought as to how they will look in the cold, winter months, which means by autumn, as plants die off and trees lose their leaves, the average British garden becomes a sea of dull brown. But it doesn't have to be that way...

With a little planning and imagination you can have a garden that transports you to warmer climes whatever the time of year. We can't guarantee the weather to match, of course, but don't let that stop you from creating an outdoor space that celebrates places you love and brings joy all year round.

Starting your design journey

Find the essence of the place you want to recreate – from tropical to Mediterranean, or poolside vibes. Choose shapes, colour palettes, patterns and planting design to reflect the feeling you want to evoke. Layer with appropriate details and accessories, like lighting, pots, materials and water features.

Still stuck? Here are four examples to get you started:



Escape to the Med

Bring the Mediterranean sunshine closer to home by working with a palette of azure blue and white in your paving, painted render or woodwork. Patterned tiles make spectacular backdrops or focal points on walls, water features and raised beds. Add elements of red and purple in your planting, alongside tall grasses. Invest in some large terracotta pots and fill them with olive trees and lavender.



A touch of tropical

A tropical garden embraces colour and life in abundance. You'll need plenty of greenery, with a mixture of spiky fronds and large leaves. Palm varieties are ideal, especially when planted in large, colourful planters. While combinations of lush foliage and soft ferns look stunning against dramatic or dark painted backdrops.



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Poolside glamour

If you want boutique, poolside glamour in your backyard, you will need hot pinks, deep blues and brilliant whites. Add a touch of the tropical with palms and pay particular attention to your furniture and accessories, which will add to the luxurious feel.

Retreat chic

If you would rather create a quiet retreat, take inspiration from the Japanese garden. Mix natural materials like natural wood, water and stone. Stick to a colour palette of green, white and yellow. Use bamboos, tree ferns and creeping plants that grow between paving. Throw in a dramatic acer to bring a deep red contrast and gorgeous focal point all year round.

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

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