



# Garden Design Tips For Beginners

## Colour Schemes

Pick a limited range of colours you like and stick to those. This will give your garden a clear theme and make it pleasing to look at. People tend to choose purple/pink/blue/white or yellow/orange/red. But contrasts with purple/orange/yellow can also look attractive. Once you have chosen your colour palette you can try a range of flower shapes and plants types to create interest.

For hard surfaces such as paving, wood and brick only use three or four finishes/colours and make sure they complement your house finish.

At RHS Chelsea 2015 the Rich brothers (top) used muted and subtle colours to create a restful garden whereas Adam Frost (bottom) created a vibrant effect with contrasting purples, blues, yellows and oranges.



## Don't forget the Foliage!

We tend to get excited about plants when they are in flower and forget that we may only see those colours for a few weeks each year! The rest of the time we will be looking at their leaves, stems and seed heads.

So to create year-round interest choose plants with usual and different foliage shapes and colours that can create contrasting textures.

The 'Dark Matter' garden (right) included a wonderful range of foliage, as did Charlie Albone's exotic garden (left) for Chelsea 2015.



## Creating Layers

We need plants of different heights in our beds and borders to create layers of interest in the garden. Traditionally, taller plants are put at the back of a border, with smaller ones at the front. However, spikes of tall plants on airy see-through stems can also be placed in the middle or front of a border as we can see through the stems to foliage and flowers at the back.

Darren Hawkes' garden (left) used tall Echiniums and foxgloves throughout to give colour and height. While Matthew Wilson (right) planted a tall grass, *Stipa gigantea*, which has tall flower spikes up to 6 foot high that you can see through.



## Creating Views

In a small garden it is difficult to give a sense of space and a variety of views when the boundaries (fences, wall or hedges) are always close. But the gardens at Chelsea show what can be achieved.

Here are some interesting examples of how space and interest can be increased (clockwise)

framing features with freestanding walls (Kamelia Bin Zaal);

winding paths and secret, sunken spaces (Charlie Albone);

'living walls' (Fuminari Todaka), that pack plants into a small space.

