

INSIGHTS

Latest news from Jennifer Gayler Garden Design

Winter 2014



I've always believed that the most successful gardens are those that don't appear to be trying too hard



Professionally designed gardens should look effortless, natural and as though they've always been there. Which, of course, requires meticulous planning and a great deal of work – and winter is the ideal time to do it.

Every project involves meetings and site visits, and the designs will usually go through several iterations before they're finalised. This all takes time, so the earlier you get started, the better. From a practical perspective, the best plants

are generally available between November and March, so if you're looking for anything unusual, or want to be sure of getting good, healthy specimens, it pays to be looking now.

If you have a garden project in mind for 2015, please get in touch so we can get things under way.

Have a wonderful winter and best wishes for 2015.

Winter gardens

From Bournemouth to Blackpool, Margate to Morecambe, virtually every English seaside resort has its Winter Gardens. Today, they're entertainment venues, but in their Victorian heyday, they were huge glasshouses full of exotic plants, bringing heady scent and riotous colour to an otherwise drab, lifeless season.

Winter Gardens were public spaces, inspired by the elaborate conservatories that royalty and the aristocracy had long been enjoying in private. They were hugely popular and sprang up everywhere in the 19th Century. London had one of the first and finest, covering half an acre, which stood in the Inner Circle at Regent's Park until the 1930s: the magnificent Art Deco example in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris is one of the few that survives.

The modern idea of a winter garden is rather different and could be yours.

For a start, it's outdoors, rather than indoors, and is based around hardy plants instead of tender tropical specimens. Nor does it have to be on a grand scale: in fact, modern winter gardens tend to be small and intimate, frequently occupying a courtyard, or odd corner of a larger plot. We've created winter gardens for a number of clients over the years: if you've got a project in mind, or just want to know more about creating a garden with year-round interest.



Garden in winter 'Mallorn'



Potted history

One of the great joys of garden design is combining plants with man-made materials and objects to create different moods and effects. This year, we've found a fantastic supplier of terracotta pots, hand-made using traditional methods by a family business in Italy that's been running for generations.

The pots are a beautiful soft pink colour that brings a touch of Italian sunshine to any garden. The craftsmanship is such that they can serve as focal points and sculptures, not just functional plant containers. Please get in touch in you'd like more details.

Our latest commissions

As well as creating new gardens for clients, we're often asked to undertake restoration work. One of our larger projects is a decade-long scheme to bring a 10-acre Victorian garden into our own age.

The whole site had been neglected for many years, and was completely run down. Hidden in its overgrown depths, however, we found some authentic Victorian gems. Over the last year, we've been restoring rhododendron walks and azalea dells, replanting orchards and an arboretum, and introducing areas of meadow grass to break up large expanses of lawn. We've also updated the flower borders, and cleared masses of rampant vegetation to open up incredible views to the South Downs. With its blend of the imposing and the intimate, it's a magical and inspiring place.



The complete works

Another recent project proves that you don't need a huge space to create something truly special. In this case, the client had a courtyard linking the main house with an orangery. They wanted a garden that would provide year-round interest when both walked through and viewed from the windows.

Reflecting the house's woodland setting, we commissioned a sculptor to create a pair of deer, as a focal point for the courtyard. We also asked a local metalworking company to make a new iron gate to complement the wrought ironwork elsewhere in the garden, and add to the garden's sense of seclusion and privacy. The planting is based around shape and texture, and providing colour and fragrance right through the year.



The perfect finishing touch



Having seats, tables and other furniture custom-made is the perfect finishing touch for a special location, and gives your garden a genuinely individual character.

We commission pieces on behalf of many of our clients, and work with a firm of local craftsmen who've stayed true to the old-fashioned ways, and create furniture of real beauty, quality and integrity. We generally specify French oak, as it looks wonderful and lasts practically forever! If you'd like to see examples of bespoke pieces we've produced for clients, please drop us a line.

Contact

Jennifer Gayler creates beautiful, practical gardens that reflect and express the clients' personalities, while meeting their precise individual requirements. It's a subtle, organic process, in which clients can be as involved as they wish. Extravagant or intimate, formal or fanciful, the result is a garden that truly belongs to the house and the landscape, and looks as though it's always been there.

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