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# Mwaah

Issue 3

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# Cool & Contemporary

Mwaah's Garden Goddess, Pat Fox, shows how a modern house in Old Harlow works well with a highly stylised garden that has dramatically ditched the lawn in favour of a stunning water feature.

This garden is in Old Harlow and adjoins a house that is about ten years old. We've been rather radical and got rid of the lawn completely, worth considering if you are short on space. People often keep their lawn when their garden might work so much better without it. I am not advocating all lawns should go, but do you really wish to keep it – after all they are such high maintenance.

Colin and Jenny Black contacted us to help them give their rather overgrown garden a new identity. Their previous garden lacked structure. They had seen several contemporary gardens at Chelsea Flower Show and they loved the idea of incorporating elements from these into their own outdoor space. Water was a major priority for them both and so we created two bespoke water features – a raised fish pond and a long narrow Rhyll.



Above: the water feature incorporates a sculpture available from Aralia.

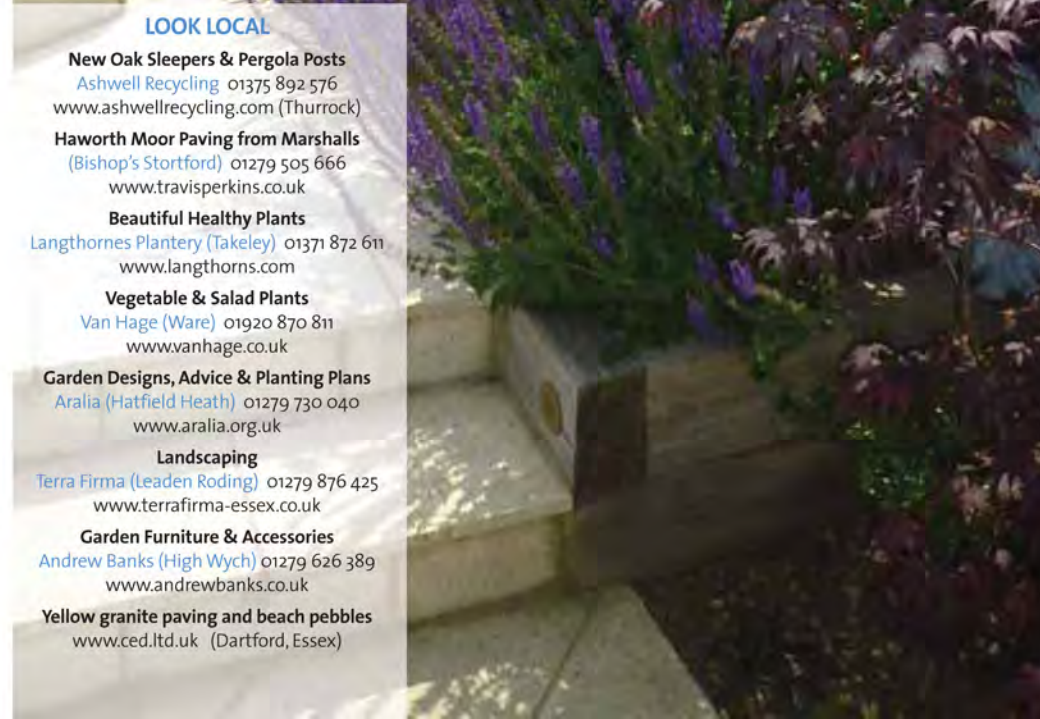
The raised fish pond doubles up as casual seating, and the Rhyll offers a stunningly dramatic feature that stretches the full length of their garden which we designed with lines at 45 degree angles to the house so exaggerating the overall dimensions and making the garden look much bigger.

The Rhyll was further enhanced by narrow strips of beach pebbles which give a textural border to the granite paving. The inclusion of a simple galvanised steel sculpture adds a real focal point. Use these sparingly – too many and the garden can look too cluttered and busy!

The garden also included a U-shaped raised bed for edible crops and a pleached

Hornbeam hedge to provide height and screening. A pleached hedge is effectively a hedge on stilts - a clear stem of around 1.8m with the hedge on top. These are relatively expensive but do provide instant height, which adds a touch of scale and drama to any garden setting. If you have the patience you can buy them as very young plants and train them yourselves.

Colin was such a sweetie that he even came and gave us a hand with our garden at Chelsea Flower Show last year, what a super client. But now Colin and Jenny have their very own Chelsea Garden, right in the heart of Old Harlow. A little birdie told me that they can't bear to be parted from it and have chosen to stay at home this summer rather than holiday abroad. I'm chuffed to pieces and am really happy that they are taking pleasure from seeing it evolve and grow. I know it is in safe hands. 🌿



**TOP TIP**

**PAT'S CONTEMPORARY CHECKLIST**

- Do you really want/need the lawn? If no, ditch it!
- Use light coloured paving, such as pale granite and Travertine, to make your garden look bigger and more spacious.
- Lay your paving lengthways to take the eye away and create perspective and increased length
- Introduce focal points with the clever placement of sculpture/ornaments or specimen plants
- Create 'journeys' around your garden, even in the smallest plot you can squeeze in a circular route from a to b, this makes your garden so much more enticing
- Use bold blocks of planting of the same species to give a more contemporary look (*Lavenders, Allium's, Salvia, & Grasses*)
- Incorporate evergreen edging using *Buxus Sempervirens* to provide crisp neat edges all year
- Roses are back big time – they work just as well in a contemporary garden as they do in a more traditional setting

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