



## BEEN THERE, DONE THAT GETTING A GARDEN DESIGN JOB

**James Scott MSGD**, MD of Hertfordshire-based firm The Garden Company, offers tips on getting your dream job in garden design

**When I am hiring staff**, I always look for evidence of the person's passion for great design and beautiful gardens. I'm less likely to be impressed by someone telling me that their long-term goal is to be a top designer than someone who can tell me what gardens they have visited in the last year, what impact those gardens had and why. I also like to ask candidates which designers have creatively influenced them.

**When looking at CVs**, I like to see an overview of qualifications with the most relevant ones described more thoroughly than others: do include things that are not design-based but that are still relevant to the job (for instance, a full clean driving licence). Also list work experience, highlighting anything relevant to the job.

**Prepare your portfolio** by arranging your work so it is simple to review, interesting and visually appealing.

**When preparing for an interview**, research the company, the role and the people you expect to meet. Ask to have a copy of the role description in advance and use the company website plus social media

activity to get a feel for the company. Read your interviewer's LinkedIn profile if you can.

**Prepare your answers to questions** that you can reasonably expect to be asked – you can find lots of examples online – and prepare your own questions too. Good examples of questions include: what are your expectations from a person in this role during the first three months? What is the typical career path for someone in this role?

**When it comes to the interview itself**, what you say matters, but so does how you say it: this is important in a role where a key job requirement will be to talk naturally and positively to clients. So, act with confidence (even if you don't feel it!).

**Help the interviewer out** and don't just give one-word answers to a carefully-thought-out question. Make sure to emphasise your personal accomplishments, ie "I did this" rather than "we did this".

**It's OK to ask about salary or benefits**, but not as your first or only question.

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## MEDIA OF THE MONTH



### VIEW FROM FEDERAL TWIST BLOG

"Is planting *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Llandaff' an immoral act?" That was the intriguing post title that first drew me into James Golden's blog. I've been reading it ever since, relishing the opportunity to follow a blow-by-blow account of the development of an influential American garden.

In 2006, Golden began developing his garden, Federal Twist, in Stockton, New Jersey. At the same time, he began charting its progress in his blog. "The site was not a good one (heavy, wet clay) for a garden, so I approached it as an experiment," he explains. It was secluded, yet Golden was able to share this private space with a worldwide audience from the start.

And the benefits of sharing his experiences online were manifold. "I quickly realised the blog was a way to meet garden people all over the world, and I've subsequently visited people in several other countries. Most importantly, I've made contacts and some close friendships as a result of the blog," he explains.

Thirteen years on, both the blog and the garden are going strong, and Golden has retired from a career in marketing to concentrate on his garden, and to also begin a garden design practice.

Many gardening blogs major on extensive photos of gardens, with little in the way of insightful text, but Golden's blog manages to do both, beautifully and intelligently. In addition to thoughtful reflections on the role of native and non-native plants in planting design – hence the dahlia reference above – Golden includes reviews of salient books, ruminations on visits to other gardens, profiles of individual plant species, and the occasional guest post from the likes of Italian landscape architect Giacomo Guzzon. That mix makes it a must-read for anyone involved in the design of gardens.

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