



My dream garden

James Scott created The Garden Company in 1991 and runs the business with his wife and business partner Helen. Based in Hertfordshire, James and his team create places of enduring value through expert design and landscaping. They build to their own designs and also collaborate with other professional designers seeking to build projects in South-East England and North London



A SENSE OF PLACE

This family home in Bovington, Hertfordshire, sits in the gently rolling countryside on the edge of the Chilterns. A lot of planting and landscaping of its mature three-acre garden had been undertaken rather unsympathetically by previous owners. After some careful consideration over a period of 10 years living there, the owners dreamt of a transformation, beginning with an exciting conversion – turning the unused swimming pool into a wildlife pond.

The key design opportunity that we noticed was to connect the garden with the surrounding countryside and the house itself. The aim overall was to release the garden from its enclosed compartments, improve the flow between different areas and create a 'sense of place' linking together home, garden and wider setting. We also wanted to keep as much of the structural planting as possible, making subtle additions and changes with a light touch.

Views and vistas have been opened up, new paths have been made to

link areas and create a route around the garden, and new planting has been added for impact and interest throughout the seasons. Simple changes like reducing the height of a boundary hedge from nearly 8ft to under 5ft made a huge difference by opening up views over the fields beyond. A handcrafted willow arch in a hedge has replaced a conifer tree and links the garden to the adjacent woodland area.

The old swimming pool is now a contemporary wildlife pond with 'floating' stepping stones running



‘The redesign is simple in concept while the build and planting are rich in craftsmanship and detail. It was a case of subtle editing rather than sweeping change, to the satisfaction of the owners – who have since invited us to work with them on their new garden after a house move’



across it. Along the pond edges, shallow planting beds have created access to the water for wildlife, while at the far end naturalistic planting involving *rudbeckia*, fluffy *pennisetum* and *Verbena bonariensis* adds summer's-end colour before letting the garden's structural evergreens take over for winter. The terrace area surrounding the pond was redesigned to link it to the house with new perennial flower borders adding vibrancy and colour. A line of stately fastigated hornbeams has been added

to blend formal and informal areas and frame views between spaces.

Allium species were used throughout the garden to provide a variation in flower size, colour and height and also to extend the flowering period.

A North West cutting garden with four box-edged beds provides bleeding heart, peonies and alliums in spring, shortly followed by roses. The mower shed was also renovated to make a garden room – a perfect spot to relax and enjoy the soothing space. 🌿

Previous page Flowers for cutting contained by formal hedging by the house; wildlife pond with stepping stones

Clockwise from left A carefully placed pot creates a full stop to the view; a row of trees creates separation of garden areas and frames views; an old mower shed was converted to a garden building; clipped forms provide structure to more naturalistic planting



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