

CONTEMPORARY GARDEN DESIGN IDEAS

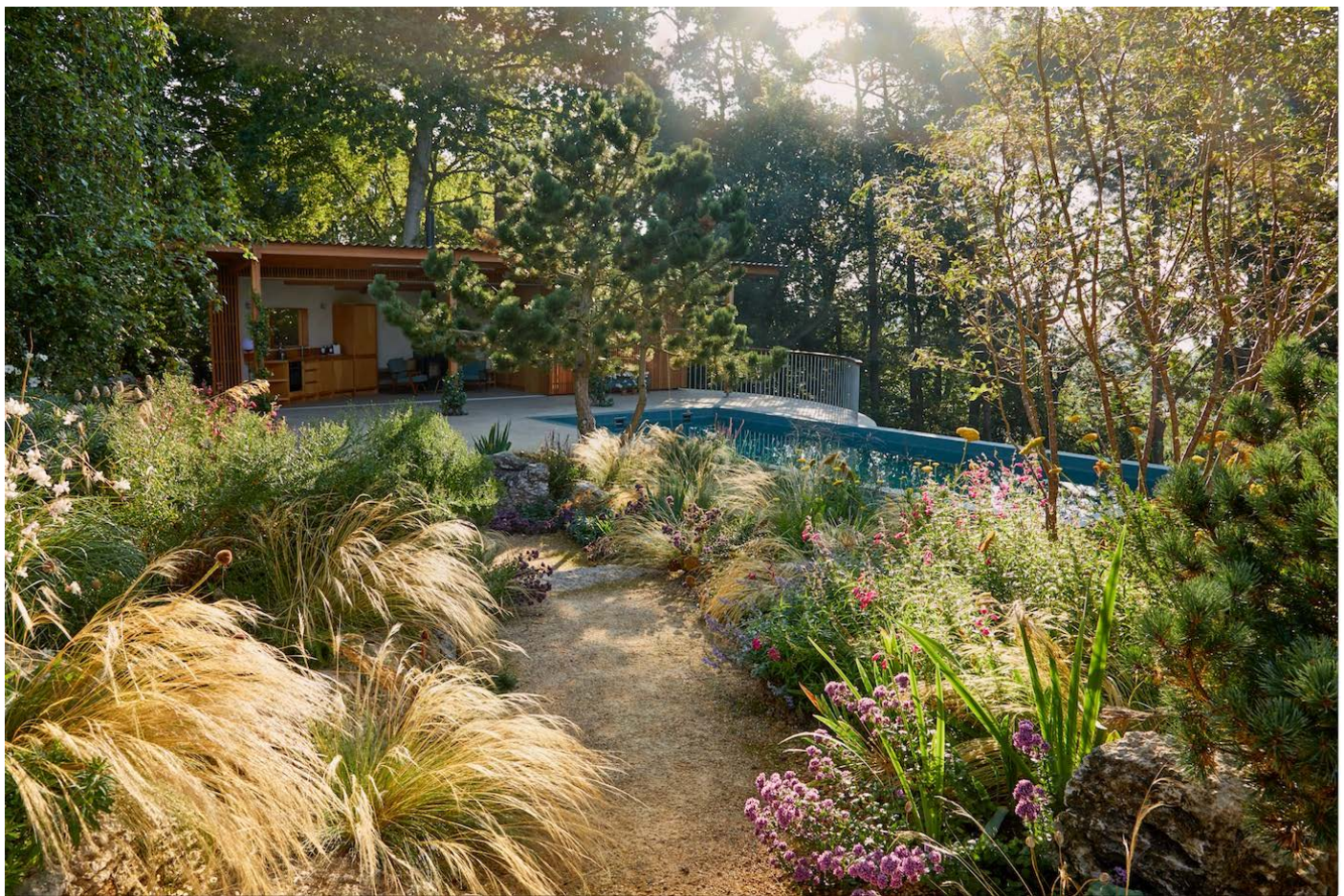
By Phoebe Jayes - Oct 3, 2022



Garden by Matthew Wilson, winner of the Large Residential Gardens & Landscapes Award. Photo: Richard Bloom

The winners of the 2022 **Society of Garden Designers** (SGD) Awards share some of the best contemporary garden design ideas from the winning gardens.

The annual SGD Awards ceremony took place on 23 September and celebrated some truly beautiful gardens created by leading contemporary designers. Discover the ingenious elements of the winning gardens and get inspiration on how to give your own outdoor space a first class makeover with these contemporary garden design ideas.



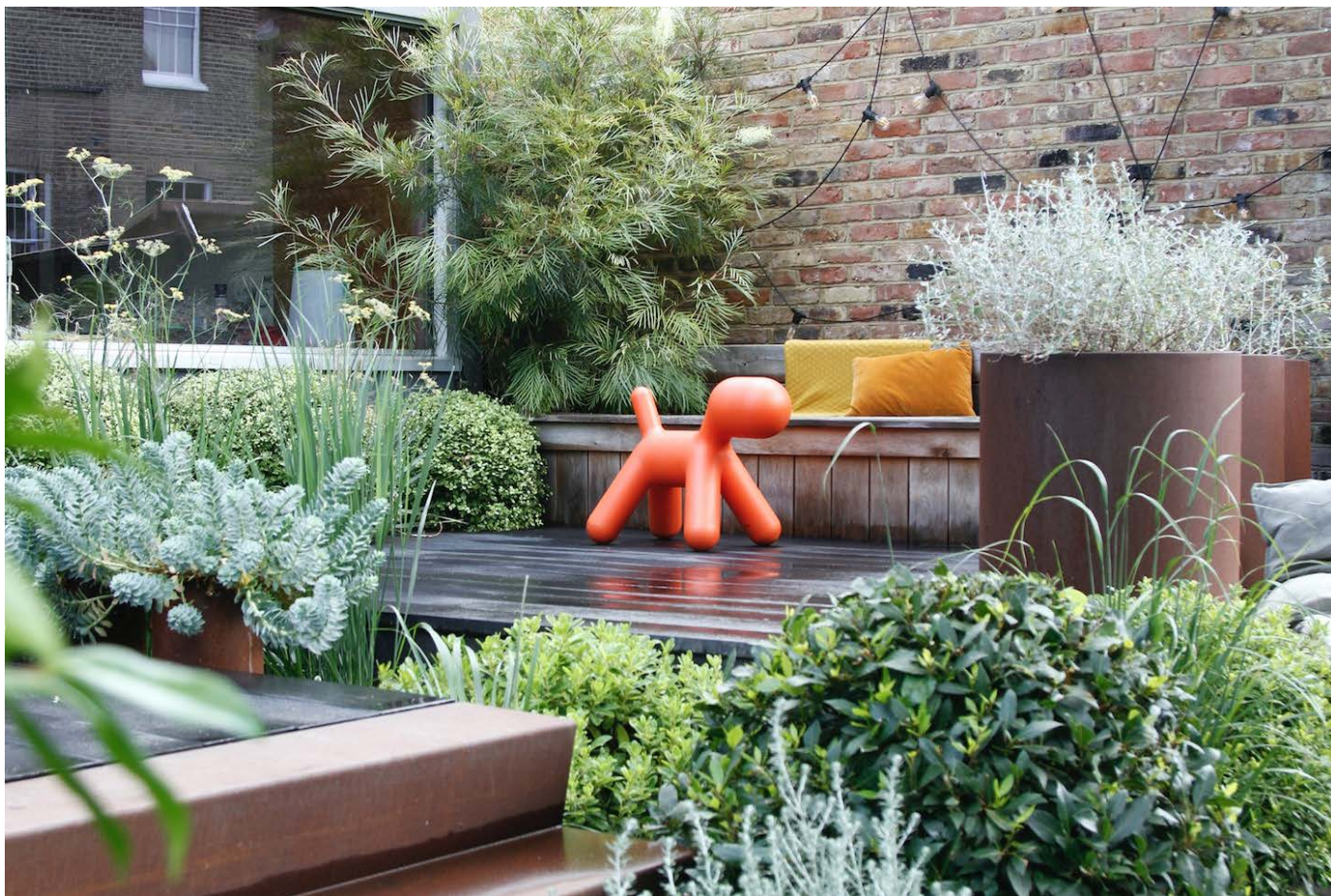
Garden by Matthew Childs, winner of the Judges' Award and the Medium Residential Award. Photo: Alister Thorpe

Prairie planting

To keep your garden looking good all year round, take inspiration from [Matthew Childs](#), winner of the prestigious **Judges' Award**.

The designer uses [Prairie-style planting](#) in his Surrey garden, combining ornamental grasses with late-flowering perennials to form distinct blocks of colour and a tapestry of height, texture and form. The result is a garden that looks beautiful throughout the year.

Prairie gardens are reminiscent of the American plains when planted on a large scale. If you're short on space, though, you could still create a prairie border or a mini prairie. Simply mix flowering perennials such as *Rudbekia*, *Achillia* and *Crocasmia* with ornamental grasses and planting in small groups. Underplant with bulbs to extend the season.



Garden by Mandy Buckland, winner of the Big Ideas, Small Budget Award

Built-in benches

Small gardens can easily become cluttered with garden furniture, leaving little room for anything else. In this London garden, however, **Mandy Buckland MSGD**, winner of the **Big Ideas, Small Budget** category at the SGD Awards, has created built-in benches which double up as storage boxes.

Created using Larch cladding, which has a natural resistance to decay, the benches are surrounded by lush green foliage to create a calm and restful environment. The planting includes tree ferns, *Fatsia* and *Hakonechloa* among sculptural clipped balls of *Pittosporum*, Bay and *Teuchrium*.



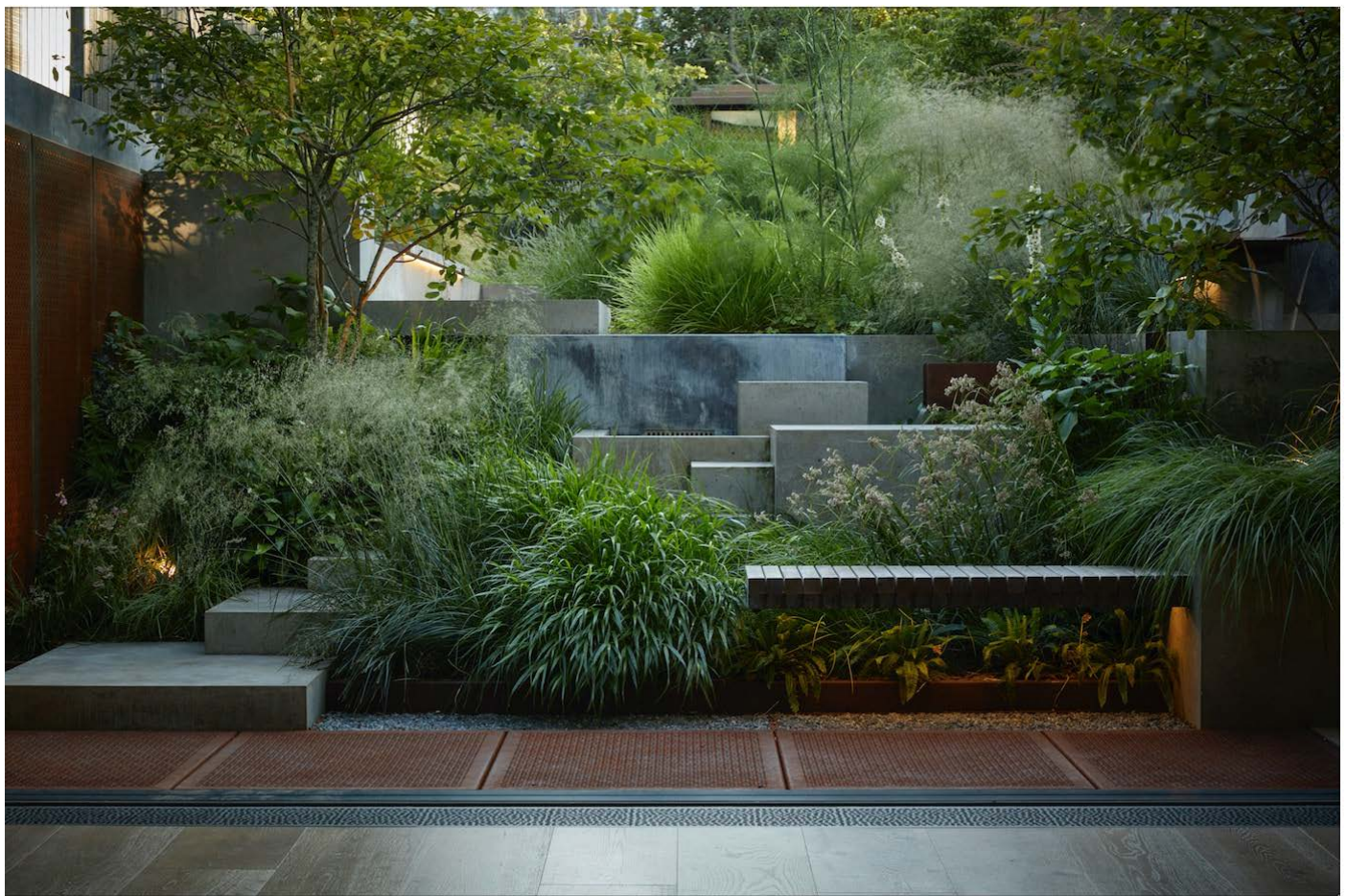
Garden by Stefano Marinaz, winner of the Garden Jewel and Planting Design awards. Photo: Alister Thorpe

Urban forest

For city dwellers looking to bring a touch of the rural to their urban life, this garden designed by [Stefano Marinaz MSGD](#) for a terraced house in London uses lush, generous planting to create the feeling of an urban forest.

Winner in two categories at the SGD Awards, **Garden Jewel** and **Planting Design**, Stefano underplants a dense upper canopy of tree ferns, Japanese Aralia and Coral-Bark Maple with hydrangeas, geraniums and astrantia. The result is a feeling of immersion that tricks you into feeling you are in a forest.

Stefano says that to get the full effect, "It's important to green up the garden parameters too so that it's hard to tell where the property ends."



Garden by Tom Massey, winner of the Small Garden Award. Photo: Alister Thorpe

Cuboid steps

If your garden is on different levels and you want a creative way to move from basement to ground level, this garden by [Tom Massey MSGD](#) has an ingenious solution.

Tom won the **Small Garden** category at the SGD Awards. In this garden, he uses blocks of cast concrete, inspired by the cubist shapes of the adjoining house, to create a series of sculptural steps. These lead through a sloped bank of lush green planting and cascading water features.

The steps are designed to bring a sense of adventure and fun to the garden. Meanwhile, the softness of densely planted grasses provides a counterpoint to the hard landscape.

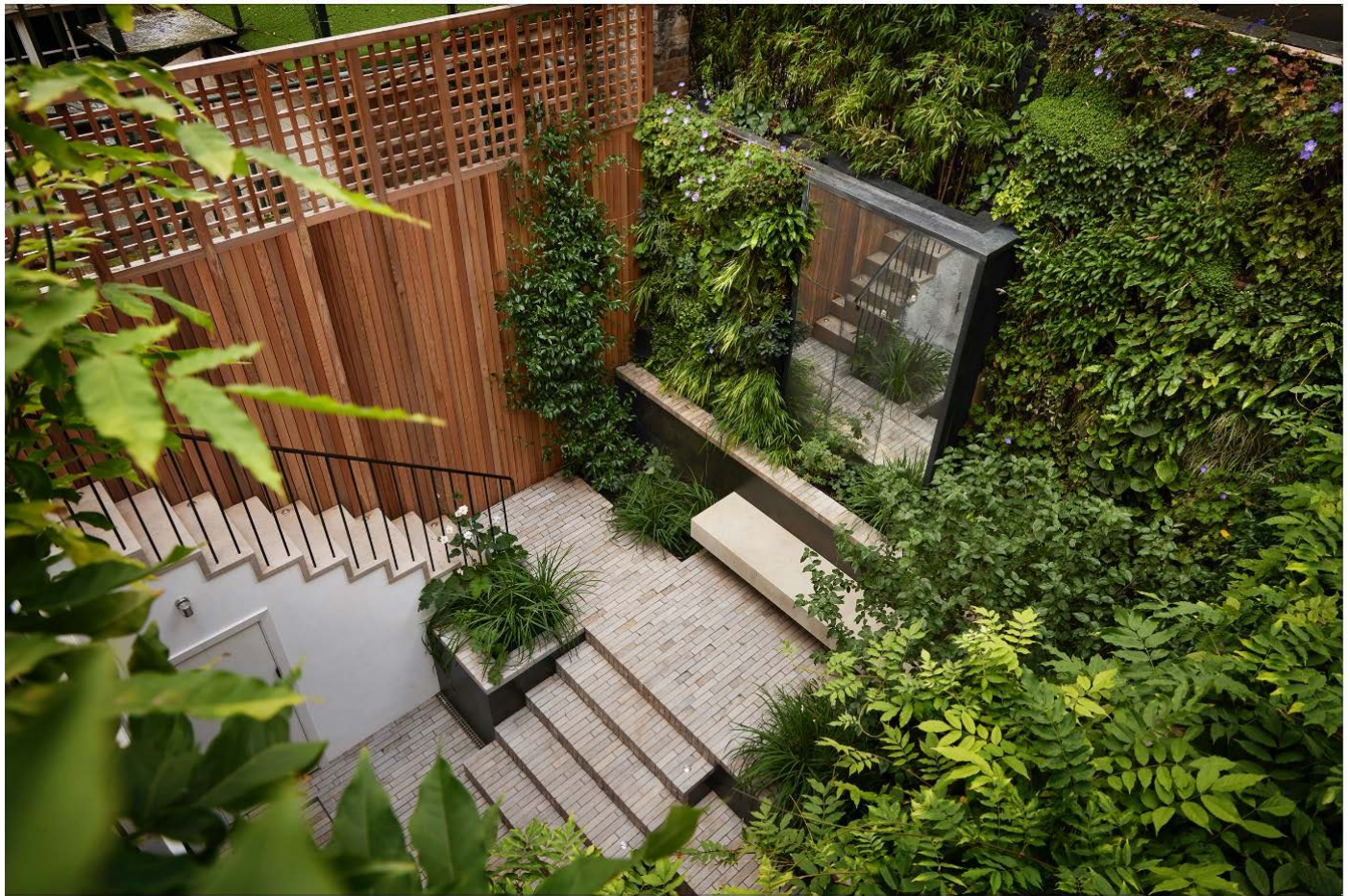


Garden by Kristina Clode, winner of the Design for the Environment Award

Wildlife friendly

If you are concerned about the environmental impact of your garden, [Kristina Clode](#), winner of the **Design for the Environment Award** for the second year running, demonstrates numerous ways you can create a garden that benefits the planet in her 'Wildlife Friendly Eco House Garden.'

Every aspect of this coastal garden in Suffolk has been designed with the environment in mind. The garden features areas for composting, rain water harvesting, an edible garden and a drought-tolerant garden. It also features wildlife friendly planting, a pond and a bog area to encourage biodiversity.



Garden by Gavin McWilliam and Andrew Wilson, winners of the Hardscape Design Award. Photo: Alister Thorpe

Beautiful basements

Garden space below ground, however small, can be an oasis if you choose the right plants, pots and materials. In this tiny city courtyard, [Gavin McWilliam MSGD](#) and [Andrew Wilson FSGD](#) combine the tones and textures of limestone paving and wood cladding with dramatic vertical planting. The result is a warm, social space for relaxing and entertaining.

Contrasting vertical and horizontal surfaces create visual and architectural interest, while an antique mirror helps to open up the space. A floating cantilevered bench in English limestone delivers a dramatic focal point.



Edible Garden at RHS Wisley by Ann-Marie Powell, winner of UK Commercial or Community Landscapes & Gardens and the People's Choice Awards. Photo: Mary Guinness

Edible Flower garden

While more and more of us want to grow our own food, many of us also want our gardens to be pretty and ornamental.

In her award-winning garden designed for RHS Wisley, [Ann Marie Powell MSGD](#) demonstrates just how beautiful a productive food garden can be. She features borders of vegetables, fruit, herbs and edible flowers.

Beautiful plants such as French marigold, red amaranth and chard appear in organically shaped beds. Elsewhere, arched pergolas festooned with edible climbers – brightly coloured squashes and exotic passion flowers, for example – demonstrate how a plot-to-plate experience can be achieved whether you garden is big or small.



Garden by Tommaso del Buono, winner of the Grand Award

Parasol trees

Nothing beats the leaves of a tree for filtering out harsh rays of midday sun. Trees transpire in the heat, so the shade beneath them is cooler than under other structures.

In this garden, which won the **Grand Award** at the SGD Awards, designer [Tommaso del Buono MSGD](#) uses roof-trained lime trees arranged in a geometrical formation. These are punctuated by topiaries of Bay and *Phyllirea* to create shading for the piazza-style terrace.

An elegant alternative to sun umbrellas, the trees add structure and a natural architecture to the garden. In a small courtyard or town garden, they can also offer privacy to those seated beneath them.