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Garden design solutions: 3 tips for planning a new garden as we start a new year

by Ian McBain

A brand new year provides a perfect opportunity to plan a new garden. But making a fresh start with our outdoor space can seem a little daunting, so here are my three top tips for planning a new garden:

1. Think carefully about what we want our garden to do
It is really important that we have a clear idea of how we would like to use our garden. Is it, for example, primarily a safe and stimulating place for children (or grandchildren) to play in? Do we want it to create the perfect place to entertain friends and family? Or would we like to creat a quiet sanctury for us to unwind after a busy week at work?

2. Be honest about your current garden
Next we need to focus on our garden as it is now, and identify the parts that are working well for us, and the things which definitely need improving. Would we like it to feel more private? Is the lawn too large? Could we do with a bit more room for our garden furniture?



3. Proritise plants and nature
A good garden works for people and wildlife, so let's ensure that we have plenty of plants and create lots of valuable habitats for birds, mammals and insects. We ideally need a tree (or two), as well as a good range of shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses. A few less tidy areas would be good, and a small pond (even the tiniest area of shallow water) will be wonderful for wildlife.

Of course, there are plenty of other things to think about when planning a new garden, and if it all seems too overwhelming then I would absolutely encourage you to speak to a professional garden designer. Whatever you decide to do with your garden in 2026, I wish you a very happy new year.



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