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# Garden design solutions: A GARDEN WITH WATER

by Ian McBain

**Do you have any water in your garden? I am often asked to include a water feature of some sort or another in the gardens I design for my clients, and it isn't hard to see why. Water can add so much to a good garden- it can be great for sound and visual interest, it can be wonderful for supporting wildlife, and it can even help us to feel cooler on a very warm day.**

I was fortunate to visit the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May, and it was striking that water was included in every garden there. Some designers had chosen to use water as a key element of their design. Rob Hardy's brilliant garden for the Trussell Trust, for example, featured a water pool that drained on demand to reveal an additional seating area. John Howlett's container garden The Flood Re celebrated rain harvesting with a series of attractive water containers.

But the standout garden for me was the absolutely superb garden for The Children's Society designed by Patrick Clark (see photo). This garden was a triumphant showcase for recycled and reclaimed materials, and included several small water pools and a rill that flowed throughout the space. If you haven't seen any photographs or videos of Paddy's garden then I would urge you to seek them out online.

Of course, most of us aren't looking to create a Chelsea-worthy show garden at home, but we can take inspiration from the creations at the show. Rills are notoriously difficult to get right, but a simple trough or large container can become a calming water pool with relatively little work. Similarly, a bowl on the edge of a planting area can provide drinking water for birds, insects and small mammals, providing they can access the water safely. On that note, safety must always be considered with any water feature (particularly for young children or pets) but please do consider adding some water to your garden.



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