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Garden design solutions: A GARDEN FOR RELAXATION

by Ian McBain

As we drift into summer, it is great time to think about what our gardens are for. I know this might sound like an odd question, but it's one of the starting points when I am beginning to design a new garden.

Strangely, one of the often aspects many new clients often is the important role our gardens can play as a space for us to relax in. When life is busy and the days seem to fly by at an alarming rate, it can be difficult to take a few minutes to pause and sit down. Being outside and listening to the birds singing and the insects buzzing busily around us can be enormously therapeutic. We should try to do it more often.

I know it can be hard for some people to 'switch off' when they are in their garden. It means



ignoring the chores that they feel they should be doing (the weeding, the watering, the pruning...), but most good plants don't really require very much maintenance at this time of year, so why not just leave them alone and let them grow? And are the weeds really going to take over if we leave them and take a quiet moment for ourselves?

One of the best ways to encourage a more relaxation is to have multiple seating choices in a garden. Yes, we will often have a 'main' seating and entertaining area with a table and chairs or a garden sofa, but I like to also create one or two additional seating options elsewhere in the space. A bench at the end of the plot can be very inviting, while a small bistro-style table and chairs can provide a perfect spot for an alfresco breakfast. And who can resist a hammock on a warm Sunday afternoon?

If you only make one change to your garden this month, please let it be finding somewhere new to sit and enjoy being outside.

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