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Outdoors **Homes & Property**

# It won't be underused if it's undercover

With a well-planned outdoor space you can enjoy a London garden all year round – even when the sun refuses to shine

**W**HO needs an extra room tacked on to the house, when the garden can be made into another room – one you can use all year round?

Pattie Barron



White hydrangeas on the sidelines about the kitchen area and make a striking contrast. "The flowers keep going for a long time, and they hold on through winter. I use them a lot in town gardens because they're great for shade, and are easy to look after."

At the end of the plot, a modern garden building now stands in the footprint of the old shed, and has been given a decked surround of Western red cedar. Broad stepping stones in the new lawn break up the green expanse and lead to the unobtrusive rectangular spa, which, when not in use, looks like a reflective pool. "We changed the usual ceramic spa tiles for Italian glass

**'We put a light high into a tree, angling it so it looks like moonlight shining down on to the garden'**

mosaic, which gives a better finish," says Rowe.

Planting is simple here, as in the rest of the garden: lavender, agapanthus and froths of Mexican daisy Erigeron, with box cubes bordering the spa pool. "Box cubes are my signature plant," says Rowe. "I use them a lot to divide up spaces. They're useful when you want an instant effect, rather than waiting for hedging to grow." Further privacy is provided – as well as blossom in spring – with the addition of pleached ornamental pear trees forming a hedge at high level, all around the garden fencing.

Lighting, believes Rowe, is essential in London gardens. "The clients

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Easy living: a modern building, weatherproof sofas and a canopied dining area make this garden an extension of the house



Water therapy: stepping stones lead to an in-ground spa

wanted a lot of lighting, but it can look Las Vegas if you do too much. We added lights under the lip of each step from the terrace to the lawn, and lit up every stepping stone leading to the spa. What looks great, too, is moonlighting on the lawn: we put a light high into a tree, angling it so it looks like moonlight shining down on to the garden."

**DON'T MISS**  
follow Pattie Barron's gardening blog at [homesandproperty.co.uk/blogs](http://homesandproperty.co.uk/blogs)



Dine out: an outdoor kitchen has barbecue and side burner

## GET THE LOOK

- Hire the designer, Charlotte Rowe: 020 7602 0660; [charlotterowe.com](http://charlotterowe.com)
- Garden furniture imported from Spain: [bivaq.com](http://bivaq.com)
- Glass table by Manutti: from [moderngardenscompany.com](http://moderngardenscompany.com)
- Jacuzzi spa by Millaquia: [millaquia.co.uk](http://millaquia.co.uk)
- Garden building by The Garden Escape: [tgescapes.co.uk](http://tgescapes.co.uk)
- Kitchen barbecue and side burner by Fire Magic: [fire-magic.co.uk](http://fire-magic.co.uk)

## See it buy it

**See it:** Godinton House delphinium festival



GARDENERS who love delphiniums should head to Godinton House, Ashford, Kent, next week where about 150 plants of 50 different cultivars are in full glorious flower within the Walled Garden.

This Sunday is Delphinium Society Day, where experts will share their secrets and sell seed and plants; Wednesday June 20 offers a live jazz evening held among the delphiniums in aid of St John Ambulance; Friday June 22 is National Garden Schemes Open Day, and on Sunday June 24, weather permitting, a jazz orchestra will play in the afternoon.

The gardens are open from 11am to 8pm all week, while the house, which is Jacobean, is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 2pm to 5.30pm, with the last tour at 4.30pm.

Adult tickets are £5 for the garden, £8 for the house and garden, with children going free.

For more information visit [godinton-house-gardens.co.uk](http://godinton-house-gardens.co.uk)

Purple reigns: delphiniums at Godinton House next week

**Buy it:** A Guide to Bearded Irises



AMERICAN plantsman Kelly Norris has a thing for irises – and a nursery in Iowa called Rainbow Iris Farm. His passion for these perennials is clear on every page of *A Guide to Bearded Irises* and his advice is for beginners and enthusiasts alike. If you can't decide which iris to grow, his list of must-have cultivars, selected for looks, bumper flower crop and ease of cultivation, is invaluable. The book costs £25, but readers can buy it for £19 inc p8p by calling 020 7372 1703 or emailing [smcneallay@timberpress.com](mailto:smcneallay@timberpress.com) and quoting offer code B1612 before July 31.

Far left: Parisian Dawn; left, Dollie And Me