

CREATING A KITCHEN GARDEN

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Kitchen gardens are making a comeback in recent years, these gardens are designed to be productive and look amazing. While it won't be as big or as productive as a traditional vegetable garden it's none the less satisfying having one. The aim of this type is to have what you need in the now and to design it for all year round harvesting and interest. I will walk you through how to design and create one and talk about what you can grow. We have written about the history of the kitchen garden so you should check that out.

A kitchen garden is supposed to be close at hand, convenient and pretty. That's what makes it different, more convenient and much more suitable for a small back garden or a patio. The layout of a veg garden traditionally

had a water source in the center and surrounded by 4 asymmetrical beds of veg, fruit, herbs and / or ornamental plants.

DESIGN IDEAS

For those of you with a garden that needs revamped then here are a few design ideas

- 1. Creating raised beds - creating them out of wood, willow, bricks, logs etc. The material is up to you but what's inside is more important and you can plant in trailing plants to cover up the material it's made from such as nasturtiums or snow-n-summer to name a few so don't worry about that too much. The raised beds can be side by side with paths going through them like this-*
- 2. They can be plots on the ground edged with wood, plants such as annuals i.e. marigolds (they're also very good for pollinators and deter flying insect pest due to their pungent smell)*

For those with a limited amount of space, a kitchen garden can be in any size. For those of you with a small amount of space or maybe you just want a small kitchen garden here are a few ideas.

- 1. A productive patio, with this you can get as creative and wacky as you want or as simple as you need. The basic idea is some planters with veg, fruit trees, you can create a herb box, a place for your squash or a cut and come again to name a few or maybe a bag with potatoes ? just anything edible. In the examples there is an apple tree in a 40l container with strawberries at the base, some young mesembryanthemum flowers in tin cans (can be subbed for leafy greens)*



2. *A few potted plants, if you don't want to go all out then just one or two pots or windowsill planters with low maintenance veg like chard, onions, spinach.*

3. *Grow walls, a pallet as is with a landscaping fabric such as terram nailed to the side with the most planks and filled with top soil and manure or a pallet with some pockets built in.*

here are some pictures for inspiration-



WHAT PLANTS ?

All herbs grow well in containers, there are however ones that favour shady areas such as mint- peppermint and spearmint, marjoram, parsley.

Herbs for sunny areas are chives, rosemary, sage, dill, borage (you can also make a very good plant fertilizer from this), chamomile and lovage. If you have a very sunny and dry area a herb garden might be a good idea for there.

When growing vegetables there are ones that favour and grow best in cool shady areas, like leafy salads- loose leaf lettuce, rocket, mustard leaves, swiss chard and spinach!. All of these can create superb salad beds on your shady patio or in the garden. They will also provide all seasons and kale such as 'Nero de toscana' will be there all winter also and looks amazing. When making this bed some nice additions are nasturtiums for their



peppery taste and violas as an intercrop when plants are small radishes are indispensable. If you have a bit more space and a shady plot in the garden then you might opt. For head forming lettuce such as cos, romanian and crisphead.

Veg for your sunny area are some fruit forming ones such as tomatoes as they need the full sun to ripen their fruits, chillies, peppers, beetroot, squash, pumpkins and carrots, beans and peas.

Currents, gooseberries, blackberries and raspberries can grow in sun or partial shade.

BEST TIME TO START THE GARDEN AND HOW TO ACTUALLY DO

IT

When it comes to the digging and if you are doing allotments then the best time for that will be from autumn through winter (providing it isn't all wet then don't do anything with the soil). The reason you want to start it then is because the cold weather will break up the soil particles and kill any diseases/pests that might be lurking.

When it comes to planting out then spring time and the same for when your sowing veg / herb seeds and then successional sowing the rest of the year. If you're just wanting to plant up some pots then this can be done all year round depending on what you're growing. If you're wanting to plant a small patio fruit tree for example then this can be done if bare root in autumn-winter or potted any time during the growing season. Any questions or just to share what you've done, email us at cardenden@orevalleyha.org.uk