

**GARDEN
PROFILE****THE SPACE**

A simple courtyard plot overlooked by the house extension

THE WISHLIST

Somewhere to sit and socialise that offers the owner a chance to be bold with her plant choices

DESIGN CHANGES

Paths that visually elongate the garden and lead to a seating area; large plants and hot colours; decorative elements to create focal points and give the illusion of space

HB
BIG
IDEAS
for SMALL
SPACES

A COLOURFUL COURTYARD GARDEN

This gorgeous blend of lush planting and artful design tricks is a masterclass in how to create a sense of space

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Garden designer Janey Auchincloss has given her small outdoor space some structure by planting strong textural trees and shrubs including a loquat, a Chinese rice-paper plant (*Tetrapanax*), tree ferns and pittosporums



HOW TO DESIGN FOR SMALL SPACES

- ★ **Plant for structure** using ornamental and productive trees.
- ★ **Combine plants** that offer texture and colour, and include showstoppers for different seasons.
- ★ **Use structures** such as obelisks to create focal points that repeat.
- ★ **Use annuals** such as the castor oil plant and Mexican sunflower for interest and foliage in summer.
- ★ **Choose garden objects** that offer dual benefits: the Corten steel water tank captures rainwater and offers a low-level focal point.
- ★ **Use plants to screen** out neighbouring properties.

Although garden designer Janey Auchincloss works with clients on larger-scale projects, her own courtyard garden in Suffolk is a brilliant example of how a small space can fizz with colour and texture and entice visitors into every corner. The 18 x 7m garden is where Janey tries out plants she loves, but might not dare to use in her clients' gardens, as they tend to be bright, brassy and perhaps a bit too bold for their tastes. Some are also tender and possibly too high-maintenance. Janey wanted her own garden to showcase her plant choices, allow her the freedom to 'play' with plants and at the same time offer a place to sit, eat, drink and socialise. And she also needed somewhere to store tools and garden furniture.

CLEVER COMBINATIONS

First, Janey planted trees and shrubs including a loquat, a Chinese rice-paper plant (*Tetrapanax*), tree ferns and pittosporums to give the garden structure. Although space is in short supply, she has packed in plants that offer height or spread and have strong textural or foliage features, as well as good colour. The result is a luxuriant combination that leads the eye along the paths to the brightly coloured sitting-out structure at the end of the garden.

SPACE MAKERS

Designed so that it feels much larger than it is, the garden has no lawn, which means Janey has been able to pack in more plants. The paths are made from reclaimed sandstone set into a grid pattern that picks up the metal grid lines of the house extension running down one side of the garden. As you walk through to the seating area, the journey is turned into a jungle-like adventure by the plants hanging over the edges of the path.

Repetition of focal points, such as the metal obelisks that Janey designed herself, is another design device that tricks the eye and creates a sense of space. Colour is useful here too: hot shades come straight out at you, while the cool ones recede, drawing the eye into the centre of the large beds. Janey has turned this on its head and used the hot colours of crocosmia and bugle lily (*Watsonia*) to pull the eye into the centre of the border.

'Blocks of strong colour work best in this small space,' says Janey. 'So I avoided a dolly mixture of shades and chose large plants that make bold statements. This also adds to the illusion of space.'

INDOORS AND OUT

As the extension looks out over the garden, Janey makes sure there's year-round interest. In summer she has tender perennials making a one-season show, such as the brightly coloured *Coleus* 'Campfire', with its dazzling leaves. She has also included the purple *Salvia* 'Amistad', which holds its own well in a border and the Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch') that seems to shine a light in every corner of this compact yet abundant garden.



A reclaimed sandstone path leads the eye past structural foliage, bold planting and decorative obelisks to a brightly coloured seating area at the back of the garden.

