

THE DESIGNER'S GUIDE TO CREATING THE PERFECT GARDEN

# *Dream* **GARDENS** & LANDSCAPES

Monthly edition | 1st October 2025



**The Last Cut of  
the Season**

**Stop 'Putting the  
Garden to Bed'**

**Get Bigger Plants  
for Less**



# Welcome.

I simply adore Autumn. How can you not stand in awe of the wonder that is leaf change? Even as a professional horticulturist I still think of the autumn season as one of nature's magical spells, and I still have so much appreciation for it year on year.

Even more now our summers are so much hotter and longer. I get a fuzzy feeling when early mornings have a light haze, dew on the ground and a little nip in the air.

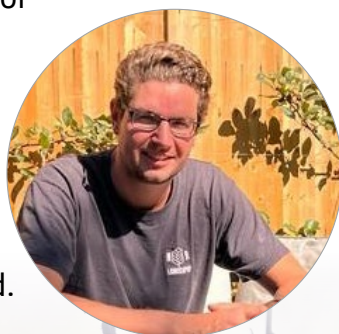
Autumn is a beautiful time and with a well-designed garden you can still enjoy your

outdoor space right up to winter. So, in this month's magazine we've shared some great hints, tips and advice so you can enjoy being out in your garden, which we all know is a great mood booster. And there's even some autumn tasks which you need to be thinking about now in preparation for the next growing season.

Gardens aren't just for summer.

**Oscar**

Owner at  
Marsland-Roberts  
Landscapes Ltd.



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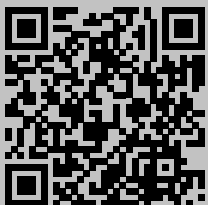
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**Cover Photo:** Love Island Inspired Garden

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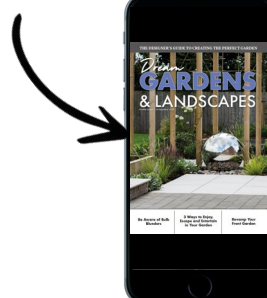
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## The Last Cut Of The Season

**W**hilst the last grass cut marks the beginning of the autumn winter wind-down, let's remember that grass never stops growing - it only slows down.

As we get into the autumn months the frequency of mowing will reduce gradually. In June, July and August you may have been mowing once or twice a week. You will have felt the need to cut in September especially as it's been warmer than normal, but approaching October once a fortnight will suffice, you want it a little longer going into the autumn.

If you find that since your last cut at the end of October your grass is still quite high, consider one final cut in November on a

fairly high setting. You may notice this if the weather is still mild.

The aim of the autumn / winter cut is to top the grass and to never trim it too short. If you cut too short, you leave the blades susceptible to frost and disease damage. Different lawn mixes recommend different mowing heights throughout the year, so if you're unsure it's best to leave it a little longer than you would in the summer.

Before winter approaches it is also a good idea to apply a fertiliser to strengthen and protect the grass from harsh conditions over winter. This ensures it emerges bigger, brighter and better come spring!

### JOBS FOR THE MONTH

- ☒ Renovate old lawns or create new grass areas by laying turf
- ☒ The arrival of frosts will come all too quickly now, so lift any remaining tender plants and bring them in under cover or protect them with cloches
- ☒ Give the garden a tidy up. October is definitely the time for clearing up - greenhouses, ponds, gutters and water butts may all need cleaning out



## Understanding The Basics Of Landscape Design

**L**andscaping is not just about planting flowers and shrubs. It is an art form that involves careful planning and design to create a visually appealing and functional outdoor space. Whether you have a small back garden or a sprawling estate, understanding the basics of landscape design is essential to create a beautiful and inviting environment.

**Principles of Landscape Design:** When it comes to landscape design, there are several key principles to consider. These principles, including balance, proportion, unity, variety, and focal point, help create visually appealing and cohesive landscapes. By incorporating these principles into your garden design, you can achieve a harmonious and balanced outdoor space.

**Assessing Your Space:** Before you start planning your garden landscape, it is important to assess your space. Consider the size, shape, and topography of your garden. Take note of any existing features, such as trees, structures, or natural elements, that you want to incorporate into your design. Understanding your space will help you make informed decisions about plant selection, layout, and hardscape elements.

When assessing the size of your garden, think about how much space you have available for planting beds, pathways, and outdoor living areas. This will help you determine the scale of your design and ensure that you create a garden that fits harmoniously within your space.

Topography is another important factor to consider when planning your garden landscape. Understanding the topography of your space will help you determine the best location for different elements in your garden,

such as terraced planting beds or a patio that takes advantage of a scenic view. Take note of any existing features in your yard that you want to incorporate into your garden design.

**Choosing a Theme:** Choosing a theme for your garden landscape can help guide your design choices and create a cohesive look. The theme you choose for your garden landscape should reflect your personal style and preferences. It should also be practical and suited to your climate and maintenance abilities. By selecting a theme that resonates with you and your surroundings, you can create a garden that brings you joy and enhances the beauty of your outdoor space.

**Balancing Hard and Soft Landscaping:** When incorporating hardscape elements into your garden landscape, it is essential to achieve a balance between the hard-landscaping and soft landscaping. Soft landscaping refers to the living elements, such as plants, trees, and grass. By combining hardscaping and soft landscaping in appropriate proportions, you can create a visually pleasing and functional outdoor space. Ensure that the hardscape elements do not dominate the landscape but rather enhance and complement the plants.

Creating a beautiful garden landscape requires a combination of artistic design, careful planning, and proper maintenance. Understanding the basics of landscape design and considering factors such as space assessment, plant selection, and hardscape integration are key in achieving an aesthetically pleasing and functional outdoor space. With the right knowledge and techniques, you can transform your yard into a stunning oasis that you can enjoy for years to come.

**GET STARTED TODAY! CALL ON 02080 872334**

# Stop 'Putting the Garden to Bed'

**A**s autumn approaches in and our summer blooms are faded it can be tempting to start tidying the garden.

You may have heard the term 'putting the garden to bed.' It's a traditional – perhaps old-fashioned – term used to tidy up the garden before the winter months ahead. Quite frankly, it's a term we despise. Among many homeowners, there is this incessant need to prune everything and not leave any browned stems. With this need comes the loss of the autumn garden.

Evergreen shrubs of course have their place, but they are not the complete answer to the autumn and winter garden. Blessed with seasonal change in this country, colour transitioning of deciduous and perennial planting should be embraced until the new growing season arrives.

## **Why You Should Leave Out of Season Perennials Until Spring**

If you're not particularly green-fingered, then ditching the autumn prune is probably music to your ears!

Designers such as Piet Oudolf, encourage us to appreciate the full life-cycle of a perennial plant, including its demise in autumn and winter. Perennials such as Rudbeckia, Echinacea, Phlox and grasses such as Miscanthus, Stipa and Calamagrostis all provide autumn structure in the garden despite them not technically

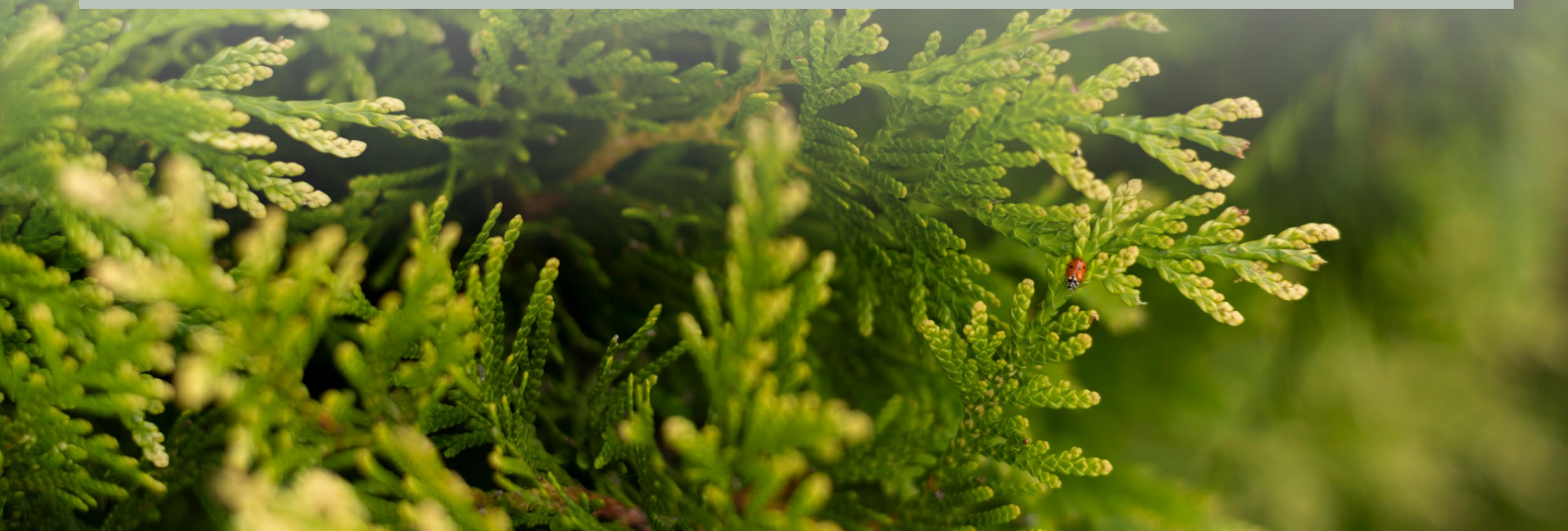
being in flower. The burnished brown stems and hardened seedhead are synonymous with autumn and should be left through the winter to fall background to the crisp frosts and maintain height in the garden.

Structural perennials continue to hold their form, yet it is still advised to prune back any soft or mush perennials which as they rot can leave a mess and harbour disease.

There are many benefits for wildlife also by putting away your secateurs. Flower seeds are an important source of food for birds, and the structure of the stems and seed heads provide habitats for many overwintering insects.

Come spring as the frosts become less frequent and the soil warms, venture out to cut back those grasses and perennials which have given you a full year of interest. Cut back browned growth to around an inch above the ground, or just above emerging fresh growth.

Not persuaded to ditch the autumn prune? Try it just one year or cut back those perennials which really bother you and keep those you can appreciate. You will be amazed at how different it makes your autumn and winter garden feel compared to cutting everything back. And the wildlife will thank you too.





## From the Outdoor Kitchen

## Homemade Sloe Gin

Making sloe gin is 'slow' but not time consuming. There's no cooking required, just patience as the sloes steep in the gin. If you start now, you'll have a tasty tipple ready for Christmas.

## Recipe

- 450g Sloe (which you can harvest for free!)
- 225g caster sugar
- 1 litre gin (any gin)

## Method

1. Prick the tough skin of the sloes all over with a clean needle and put in a large, sterilised jar
2. Pour in the sugar and the gin, seal tightly and shake well
3. Store in a cool, dark cupboard and shake every other day for a week. Then shake once a week for at least two months.
4. Strain the sloe gin through muslin into a sterilised bottle
5. Serve as below.

## Recipe Tips

If you're looking for sloes, begin with hedgerows. Traditionally used in boundary hedging around the country, the hardy blackthorn tree and its sloe berry fruits are abundant. Just proceed with some caution: as the name suggests, the trees are covered in sharp spines.

You can make blackberry brandy in the same way, substituting blackberries for the sloes and brandy for the gin. Blackberries do not need pricking. If you don't have a liking for gin, sloe vodka can be made in the same way



## Picking Sloes Berries

There's lots of debate about when to pick sloes. For the best flavour, wait until the berries are ripe. They should be a rich dark purple and should squash easily between your fingertips. It's a good sign if they've already started to drop naturally to the ground.

If you're picking them for sloe gin then traditionally you wait until after the first frost. These days, there's no reason why you can't pick them earlier, bag them up and pop them in your freezer to mimic that first frost. The theory behind this is that the frost splits the skins so the juices can flow into your gin without you having to go to the effort of pricking all the berries.

Found on the blackthorn bush commonly available in our native hedgerow, be sure to pick away from any road pollution and watch out for their rather long thorns!



## Plants for Wildlife

**S**orbus aucuparia (also known as Rowan or mountain ash) bear masses of leaves and berries which are a favourite for wildlife in woods and towns alike. It is commonly found in the wild, but also widely planted as a street or garden tree and favoured amongst our native wildlife.

Flowers provide pollen and nectar for bees and other pollinating insects, while the berries are a rich source of autumn food for birds, especially the blackbird, mistle thrush, redstart, redwing, song thrush, fieldfare and waxwing.

## IN THE VEG GARDEN

**O**ctober is really the last of the hectic months on the vegetable plot. There's little to sow and plant, but still a fair amount to harvest and store away to eat through winter. October and November are good months for serious digging. The deeper the fertile soil, the better the resulting crops. With light deep soils that don't benefit from annual digging, sow a green manure like field beans that will hold the nutrients in the soil over winter until spring, when you dig them in to add both humus and nutrient.





# Persicaria Amplexicaulis 'Firetail'

## What Looks Good This Month

**P**ersicaria is a controversial plant, mostly for its leaf shape. Persicaria is in fact a member of the knotweed family (same as docks), but before you panic it isn't anything like the invasive Japanese Knotweed we are all trained to fear. Adored by many top landscape and garden designers, Persicaria amplexicaulis has a firm place in our plant portfolio.

Prized for its late season flowering period, long-stalked narrow spikes about 10cm long, of narrowly bell-shaped, bright red to purple or white flowers, bloom from late summer through to autumn's end.

Whether your style is traditional or clean and contemporary, Persicaria seems to settle well into many garden styles. Its robust nature helps it perform reliably and its easy to care for nature, making it undemanding to maintain.

### Where to Plant:

As a fairly large semi-evergreen perennial growing to a maximum height and spread of 1.5m, Persicaria amplexicaulis is the perfect specimen for a back of the border position,



Pretty Persicaria

carrying through colour and interest well into the autumn. Plant it in bold swathes to add vertical interest in the border right through till mid-autumn and give it plenty of space. The best thing about persicaria is they do well in moist, heavy clay soil which don't drain well.

### Plant With:

Not to be put off by its dock like leaves, paired with flowing grasses and daisy-like orange blooms from heleniums, the contrast of textures and colours forms a striking and long-lasting display. A real beauty for the border. Although its red flower might sound garish, the slender spikes of flower gives a dash of colour rather than a bold impact when paired with whites, purples and oranges.

### Care:

Cut back flower stems after flowering. Alternatively, flower heads can be left on over winter for effect, then cut back in the spring. As the plants mature, lift and divide congested colonies in spring or autumn, approximately three years after initial planting.



Fuchsia Firetails

# Quick and Easy Front Garden Refresh

A seasonal change of the containers in your garden is a great way to frequently update and refresh your outlook with relatively little expense. At this time of year, garden centres become a little bare as they divert their attention to Christmas stock, but you can still get some staple container plants that will last you through the autumn and perhaps even through the winter.

Now that short-lived summer bedding plants have long gone, think a little more permanent with perennials. Rusty toned grasses such as carex, pennisetum or pheasant grass are great container plants, along with rich toned heuchera, strappy phormium and winter pansies.

**Here's our recipe for a stunning autumn display for your entrance way or patio.**

Pick your favourite container (ideally a larger one), remove the existing plants, empty the compost, give the container a rinse with soapy water (dish soap is ideal here), and replace the compost to give your new plants the added nutrients they need.

Our top plants for this autumnal display are Pennisetum 'Firework,' Heuchera 'Marmalade,' white and purple pansies and the trusty green trailing ivy. Add more quantities depending on the size of your pot. With short-term container displays, it is

perfectly advisable to cram as many plants in as possible.

Position the Pennisetum centrally towards the back of the container to add height to the display (we're designing this container with a face – or a good side, to be viewed from the front.)

Next add the heuchera (one or two plants) in front of the Pennisetum but slightly off to the side. Evenly plant two to three ivy plants around the sides of the pot. Now infill any gaps with the pansies.

Now all the plants are in position back fill around each of them, making sure there aren't any air pockets by lightly pressing the soil around the root balls; a good watering will also help settle the fresh soil.

**Whenever you are planting containers remember:**

- Stick to a limited colour palette
- Have a focal plant with height and spill plants for depth (this helps give the display balance)
- Contrast textures - Strappy plants always looks great with frothy or spilling plants.

Position your pot in full sun to partial shade and enjoy for many weeks to come as the weather changes.



# Alternative Halloween 'Pumpkins'

**W**ith Halloween just around the corner, pumpkins are top of the shopping list, or harvest list if you have the space to grow your own. While pumpkins are fantastic for 'big kids,' for smaller children, carving pumpkins may not be so easy.

We've put a list together of some alternative activities that children (and adults) of all ages can get involved in decorating for Halloween.

**Prickly pineapples:** Hollowed out the same way as pumpkins, their spiky top and mildly prickly surface gives a spooky appearance when lit with a tea light. Best for older kids, the effects are almost spookier than their pumpkin counterparts.



Prickly Pineapples

**Spooky satsumas:** Great for smaller kids as these don't need to be hollowed out. Simply draw on the satsumas with a black sharpie to make great mini looking pumpkins.



Spooky Satsumas



Ghoulish Gourds

**Ghoulish gourds and squashes:** Quite trendy among home décor connoisseurs, gourd and squashes look like pumpkins, but have more interesting skins and colours so you can really achieve spooky lanterns for your porch displays. As they're usually smaller than pumpkins, they are a little easier to hollow out.

If you still want to use pumpkins but not for spooky faces, get your kids involved in poking a few holes through the pumpkin skin and push cut flowers such as chrysanthemums into the holes for an autumnal, long lasting floral display which is perfect for the porch or for the dining table.





# Love Island Luxe

Settling into his new home, this client aspired to have an outdoor entertaining space inspired by the Love Island garden.

The new build property had plenty of potential and with a blank canvas to begin with, the space was split into key sections. At the top of the garden, an artificial lawn area for lounging and somewhere for the dog to play maintained a versatile green space within the garden. Directly opposite the lawn housed a dedicated area for a hot tub surrounded by planting and a built in



After



wooden bench for towels and shoes.

In the lower areas of the garden a sunken fire pit is perfect for gathering guests on a summer evening or lounging during the day. A large entertaining area next to it creates an inclusive area for hosting friends and family.

A Grillo kitchen and outdoor TV forms an outdoor living room complete with louvered roof aluminium pergola with screened sides, increasing the time which can be spent outdoors, even if there is a little spot of rain.



Finishing touches such as the artificial green wall, festoon string lighting and green neon sign dress the space and bring personality to the garden. Pleached trees and linear trellis form a unified boundary, creating a secluded and private space

Now along with their friends and family they can fully enjoy and utilise his entire outdoor space with three separate but interconnected zones for different activities. Careful consideration of the outside view points helps the garden become private and inclusive.

### Get The Look

- London Stone Porcelain Paving
- London Stone Off White DesignClad

Before







## Split Congested Perennials Now

**D**ividing perennials regularly will ensure healthy, vigorous plants that will continue to perform year after year. It also offers the opportunity to multiply your plants. Ideally this should be done every 2-3 years to prevent congestion and improve their vigour and its great way to increase your stock or gift to friends and family.

Divide summer-flowering plants in spring (Mar-May) or autumn (Sep-Nov) when the soil is dry enough to work. In wet autumns, delay until spring. Lift plants gently with a garden fork, working outwards from the centre to limit root damage. Shake off excess soil so that roots are clearly visible. Some plants produce individual plantlets which can simply be teased out and replanted without any tools required. These usually come away easily.

Small, fibrous-rooted plants such as Heuchera and Hosta can be lifted and pulled apart gently. This should produce small clumps for replanting. Hostas with tough, fibrous roots can be divided with a sharp spade, slicing the clump in two.

Large, fibrous-rooted perennials, such as Hemerocallis (daylily), require two garden forks inserted into the crown back-to-back.

Use these as levers to loosen and break the root mass into two sections. Further division can then take place. In some cases, a sharp knife, axe or lawn edging iron may be needed to cleave the clump in two. This seems brutal but doesn't harm the plant, it will actually benefit from some breathing room.





## Get Bigger Plants For Less

**I**f you're unfamiliar with bare root plants, they are exactly how they sound - the bare roots and crowns of plants that are in a dormant stage and suitable to plant out.

Many deciduous shrubs, trees and hedging plants, along with some evergreens, are available as bare root plants (or 'BR' as it's abbreviated in the industry) whilst they're dormant between November and March. Despite their dormancy, the roots will quietly establish and grow away below ground, ready to fuel a fabulous display of flowers and foliage once the soil warms up in the spring. In very cold winters, the bare root season can sometimes be extended through to April.

Bare root shrubs are a lot cheaper for nurseries to grow and dispatch as they don't require re-potting each year and don't incur costs for the weight of the soil when being delivered. This means they're inexpensive to buy and are a great way to get more mature, bigger plants quicker without breaking the bank.

The reason they're less expensive than traditional container grown plants and trees is because they're grown directly into the ground in fields and only lifted when they're required during the 'bare-root season.' With the current war on plastic, bare root plants are environmentally friendly, have no requirement for a container and use very little packaging to deliver them. Also, as there's no soil around the plants on arrival, valuable topsoil can be preserved and not wasted.

Bare roots are a viable choice when planting a long stretch of hedging or if you need taller plants at a lower cost than pots or root balls. However, it must also be mentioned that bare root plants do normally have a 10% failure rate. The success rate can be improved when incorporating root builders, such as bone meal into the planting pit, but don't incorporate organic matter into the backfill as this will encourage the roots to only stay within the backfilled area. Bare roots are easy to handle but should be planted quite quickly after delivery.



## How To Control Lawn Leather Jackets

**I**f you're noticing lots of crane flies (daddy long legs) floating around the surface of your lawn then you may have a leather jacket problem which could be catastrophic for your lawn if not dealt with. Leather jackets are a common lawn pest but with warm, wet and mild spring and autumns, they are becoming very more prevalent.

They are the larvae of the crane fly (daddy long legs) and live just below the surface of the lawn until they emerge as adult flies during August-October. The adult flies then lay eggs and the new grubs start feasting, starting the cycle again.

It is not unusual for recently laid turf to suffer from Leather Jacket infestation, especially in the first year or two since it

was laid. The grubs feed on the roots of the grass. The biggest indicator of an infestation is rapid thinning of the sward, starting from the shady areas or the edge of the lawn resulting in a very thin exposed sward as well as birds pecking at the lawn in their attempt to feed on the larvae.

Control leatherjackets naturally by applying Leatherjacket Nematodes containing millions of nematodes to the infected lawn as soon as the leatherjackets are discovered and the soil temperature is 10c or when the leatherjackets are active in the autumn and in mid spring.

Leatherjacket Nematodes are effective at killing leatherjackets, but are harmless to children, wildlife and pets and the lawn may be used immediately after application.



# Right Plant, Right Place

## Plants for Heavy Clay Soil

Clay soil is much maligned by gardeners and homeowners everywhere because it's heavy, sticky, and difficult to work in. But the simple fact is that clay soil gets its bad reputation because it's hard on people - from a plant's point of view, clay soil is usually not too problematic if handled well.

When it comes to planting on heavy clay soils, there are plants which will cope but it is also advised to help improve the soil to give you a better scope of plants to work with. Equally, when planting there needs to be some extra care to avoid detrimental health implications on your borders.

When planting on clay soils, the bottom of the planting hole should be broken up before planting and the sides of the hole broken down using a garden fork. If not loosened, a sump may be formed in that water can collect, resulting in probable plant death from waterlogging.

It's not encouraged to add completely fresh compost into a planting pit. When you water your new plant, water will drain through that fresh soil quickly and halt when it reaches the surrounding clay soil, resulting in water eventually pooling and rotting the plant.

### PLANTS FOR HEAVY CLAY SOIL

#### Shrubs:

- Rosa
- Philadelphus 'Belle Etoile'
- Abelia × grandiflora 'Francis Mason'

#### Perennials:

- Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm'
- Astrantia 'Roma'
- Alchemilla mollis

#### Trees:

- Malus 'Evereste'
- Betula utilis subsp. jacquemontii 'Silver Shadow'
- Liquidambar styraciflua 'Worplesdon'

Malus 'Evereste'

Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm'



# PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



## Decorative Aggregate

### PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Not to be confused with decorative gravel, aggregate moves less underfoot so you're not forever raking it to remove footprints or tyre marks.

#### Design Uses

Angular aggregate has more use than just driveways.

Aggregate is perfect for garden pathways and border coverings to suppress weeds or create an area for pots to sit

#### Works Well With

The beauty of decorative aggregate is that it complements all types of paving with its vast colour choices. Depending on the stone type, black, pink and buff can be used to tone in with limestones, granites and porcelain paving

#### Pros

Durable and cost effective. Angular aggregate doesn't shift underfoot or on drives. It is also perfect for border dressing to keep weeds down and moisture around plants the same as bark would but beneficial as it doesn't decompose

#### Cons

Still has a bad reputation of being messy and difficult to maintain (despite this not being the case).

With heavy and constant traffic it can settle and sink, so a top up is needed

### INSPIRATION GALLERY





# PUZZLE PAGE

## Can You Find These 7 Autumn Colour Shrubs?

K D N C W D Z E E U I N O I C I T B J S  
K L B C V V U I U S V O F T B R L G P I  
E B S A Y H Y F O K I T D N A G X E G N  
W V Q H H T F P N E B L J D O Z H C R W  
K O R L B K W I Y G U X M M T R J H H E  
Y I L E X O J C M L R Y O I C A V W H Q  
V N D P L U H L U N N K U W J E K W T X  
I M V X S Q A I S W U E N Q Y Y O Q Z N  
B C O R N U S X A W M Z N V Y G I F J E  
U Z S Q G F V Z L M J W D N Z L Z S H C  
X H Q O T S E J A L Y Q J X J X R B Z P  
U F J T A L W E T A L D R B X Q O P Z G  
Q M M X C X Z Q U J C A L L I C A R P A  
N W K Y S Y Y S S H R M H Y R K I C Z H  
X M U E T G D C V Y H A V T O R C F Q A  
B H Q C Y O U N V R M M O X B U Y W V N  
W X A C E R P A L M A T U M O N X M J H  
P H N Q F F M Y S K I M M I A I D N Z X  
J U A N W J A F H Y T F Z J E P H N X I  
O W E H P R P D J L T Z D L I H T O U L

### Here's Some Clues to Help You

1. Popular in containers, bears red berries through the winter
2. Commonly known as the burning bush for its autumn colour
3. Called beauty berry for its violet glossy berries borne on bear stems
4. Vibrant winter stems of yellow, green & red
5. Fragrant pink flowers borne on bare stems
6. Best known as Japanese maples, small palmate leaves
7. Synonymous with winter and Christmas, glossy leaves and red berries

*Thank You* for your continued support...

"Absolutely outstanding service. Every stage of the process, from initial discussions and idea gathering, through the garden design, visual presentations and construction was exemplary."

# Autumn is the New Summer

Extend the Pleasures of the Outdoor Season...

With a Stunning, All Year Round, All Weather Garden Design

... Call Our Friendly Team to Arrange  
**Your** Design Consultation Today



**M R LANDSCAPES**

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