

Your 2014 checklist

Gardening guidelines, trends and tips by Landscape Designer Franchesca Watson



Trends in the garden move a little slower than other forms of fashion but there are definite shifts in what we want. As most planting takes at least three to five years to really get going, the decisions you make about what to plant and install, in order to achieve the look you desire, are not as easily reversed as changing the curtains. Here's my selection of what's in and what's out:

ON TREND

EXTREME APPROACH Don't sit on the fence – go completely natural or completely manicured for an undiluted look.

DINING PODS These areas in the garden are specifically designed for eating alfresco. They marry architecture and garden and act as a shelter from the wind or sun, with raised floors, kitchen equipment and storage as well as seating.

ASTROTURF Stop resisting it – sometimes it's the most responsible solution. The newest ones are really good.

FIRE PITS/BRAZIER These will always appeal to our African hearts.

FERNS They are just right for the look needed now, combining great form with naturalness, they are the epitome of the ultimate green space.

HERB LAWNS This medieval idea is really hot right now. Try chamomile or indigenous *Lasiospermum bipinnatum*.

OLD-STYLE PLANTS Some plants never go out of style (like blowsy old-fashioned roses) and carnations and pinks are newly back in.

METAL EDGINGS Stainless steel and other metals replace the traditional cobbled edging. It's about being discreet.

GRASSBLOCKS This cellular grassed paving is so much better than a hard, solid driveway or parking area in terms of allowing percolation of rainwater and greening up your space.

TREE HOUSES FOR ADULTS Imagine your office in a tree.

VEGETABLES Bigger than ever before, vegetables look great in the garden, they're the healthy option and they keep us connected to nature.

ON THE WAY OUT

DECKING Unless at the beach, decking has become too ubiquitous and is often used in the strangest locations.

MULTIPLE SCULPTURES

One great sculpture is all you need.

VERTICAL GARDENS These are too trendy by far to last. They're high maintenance and not sustainable.

GRAVEL AND RIVER STONES

They're very tired now – opt for other materials that do the same trick, such as local slate broken up.

GABIONS The trend to use these as features is getting boring.

OVERLY SCULPTURAL PLANTS

Things are much more subtle now; we look for form that does not smack us between the eyes.

PAST THEIR PRIME

PIZZA OVENS However they're designed, they never seem to look good.

WIND CHIMES AND DREAM

CATCHERS Hippy favourites.

STEPPING STONES These are a no-no, especially set diagonally on a lawn.

DRIP TRAYS UNDER POTS They can make the best pot look pedestrian. Rather try discreet feet.

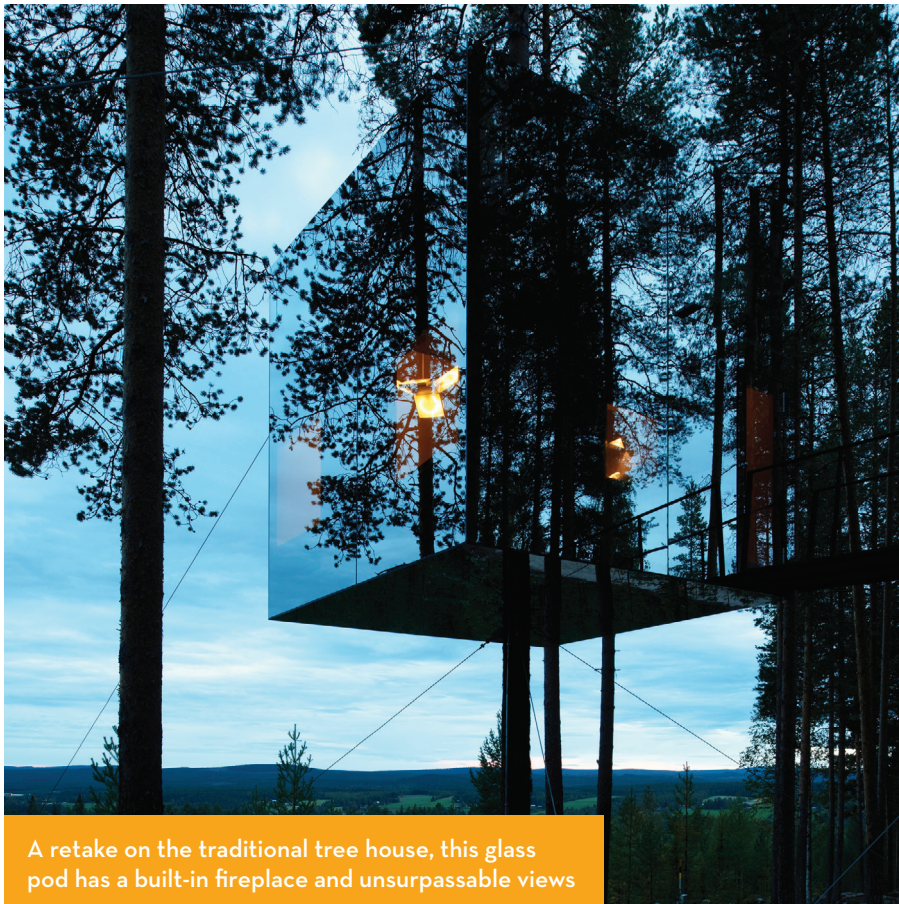
LOLLIPOPS They're just cruel.

LAVENDER AND ICEBERGS

Can't we think of a better combination?

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A retake on the traditional tree house, this glass pod has a built-in fireplace and unsurpassable views