

**Let's Grow**  
BORD BIA  
**Bloom**

# Easy Steps to Dream Gardens

Garden Designs from Bloom Award-Winning Designers



## The Family-Friendly Garden

DESIGNER: MAEVE O'NEILL



# Easy Steps to Dream Gardens

## What is 'Easy Steps to Dream Gardens'?

Brought to you by Bord Bia Bloom, Easy Steps to Dream Gardens is a new initiative designed to help you plant your own show garden at home.

We have worked with seven of Bloom's award-winning show garden designers to create individual garden designs suited to every lifestyle and location.

## What are the benefits of using garden designs like these?

The gardens have been designed by some of Ireland's top garden designers and landscape architects who are experts in assessing outdoor spaces and creating beautiful designs that meet the needs of garden owners.

These designs have been carefully considered to provide year-round interest and are tailored to suit various conditions. There is a solution for almost any garden, whether it sits in full-shade, dappled shade or enjoys all-day sun.

## How have the gardens been designed?

The seven designs are based on a garden size of 15 metres x 9 metres. However, elements from all the designs can be adapted to suit your own outdoor space, whatever the size or location.

Each of the seven design packs in the series feature an easy-to-follow planting plan and detailed planting information. Colour-, scent- and nature-friendly, the planting plans can be implemented in your garden

# The Family-Friendly Garden

DESIGNER: MAEVE O'NEILL



**This south-facing garden is designed to grow with your children.**

'There are many practical things to consider when planning a garden for a family with small children. The space has to work for the parents as well as the kids and it needs to adapt as the children grow up,' points out landscape architect, Maeve O'Neill.

Her design for this split-level garden features three distinct zones: a patio with a vibrant raised bed encased in Cor-ten steel; a lawn with a solid wall where the children can play ball; and a relaxed seating area at the back of the garden. There you'll find a green-roofed\* playhouse with a sandpit and a studio room which can be used for an office or storage, or converted into a den when the kids are older. A pergola adds privacy, creating an intimate space to enjoy the morning sun.

The planting throughout this garden is designed to encourage pollinators and wildlife. Low maintenance and low toxicity, it suits a busy family with young children who have a keen sense of adventure. 'The plants are robust and will stand up to exuberant play,' says Maeve. 'You don't want to be the parent that's always shouting "be careful off the plants!"'

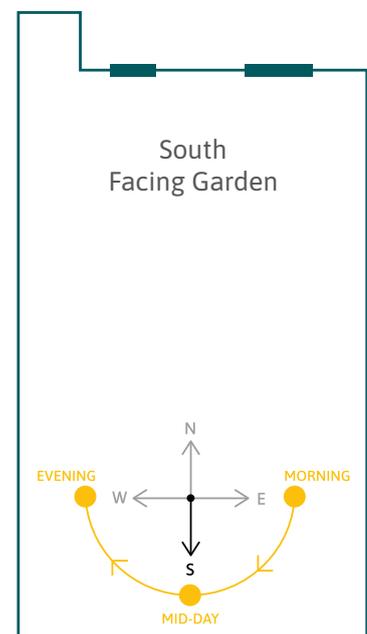
Maeve discovered how useful a wall is during lockdown when her kids spent many hours knocking a ball against a wall near their home. 'You can get so much variety of play out of a solid wall. Plant grasses or creeping plants such as *Soleirolia soleirolii* (Mind Your Own Business) along the base which will survive being repeatedly hit and trodden on.'

The planting list for this garden has been carefully selected to ensure the colour palette, height and texture work together, explains Maeve. 'For instance, the green and purple tones of the grasses and Alliums in the foreground work with the yellows and whites of the climbers around the pergola. Being selective like this helps to create a more cohesive design for your garden.'

**\*Note:** Ensure your shed structure/roof is strong enough to take additional weight before adding a green roof. Please seek professional advice before embarking on this project.



**Maeve O'Neill** is a landscape architect, sculptor, former art teacher and design fellow in UCD and founder of Realise Landscape Architects. She has won a number of awards at Bord Bia Bloom including a Gold Medal in 2019.



Maeve's advice for creating a family-friendly garden.

**Colour palette:** Aim to work with the selected perennial plant list as any additional seeds and bulbs will be threaded through these plants. Don't go too wild with the colours of the seeds and bulbs that you choose. Too many clashing colours can make a garden look disjointed.

**Toxicity:** Choose plants with low/no toxicity if you have young children or pets who are likely to sample the contents of your garden.



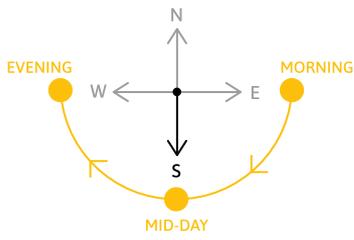
**Planting:** Planting plants close together minimises the amount of weeding you will need to do.

**Drainage:** The plants in this plan suit free draining sandy soil. One of the cheapest materials that you can add to your soil to improve its texture is sand. The tiny particles will help break up the soil, increase drainage and help aerate the soil for better root development. Add sand or a 3cm thick layer of mulch every year. Do this in mid- to late-spring, when the herbaceous perennials are dormant, or later in September.

Don't do it when the plants are up in summer.  
(Note: do not use builders sand, but horticultural sand from a garden centre)

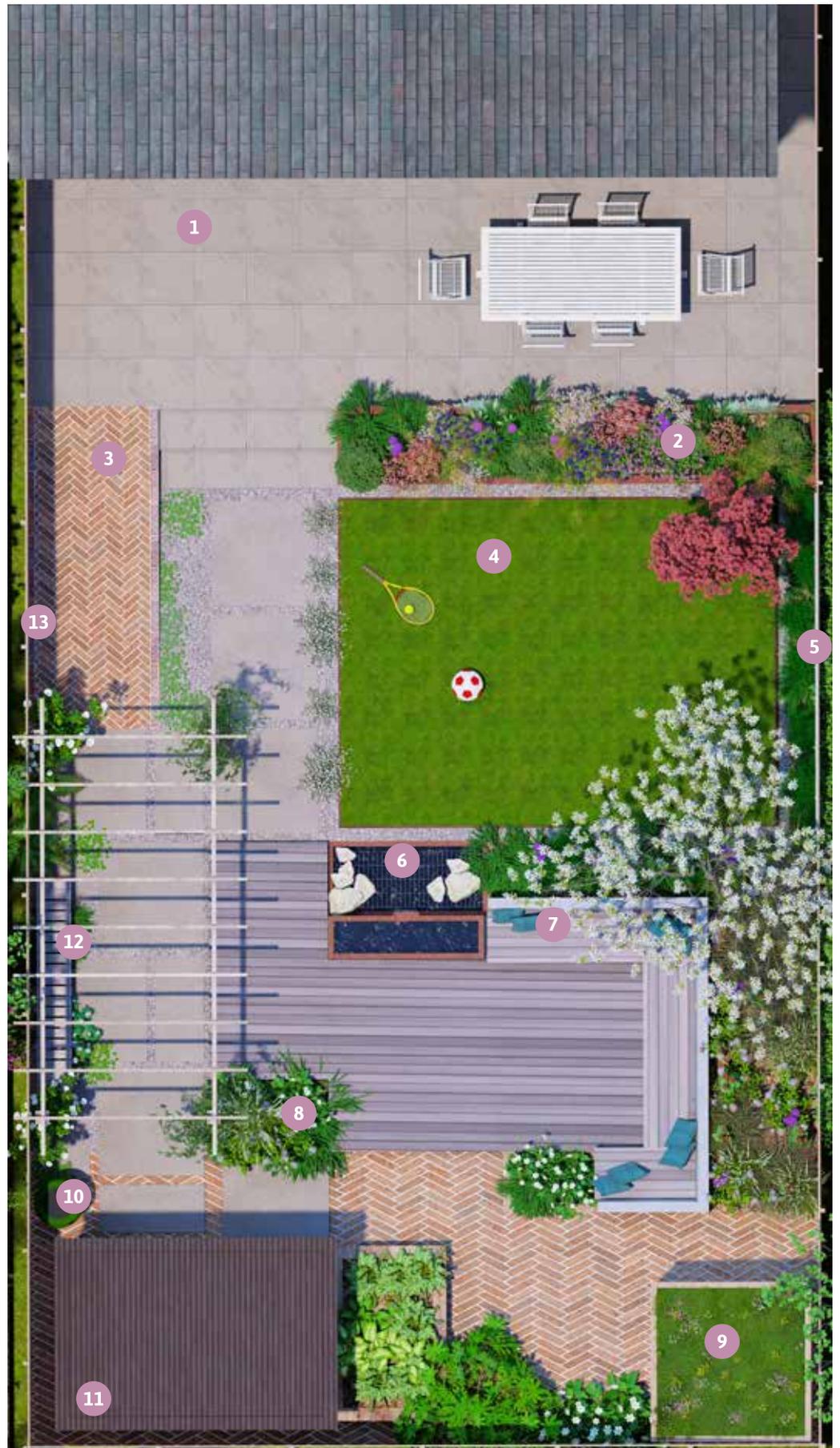
# Garden Plan

## THE FAMILY-FRIENDLY GARDEN



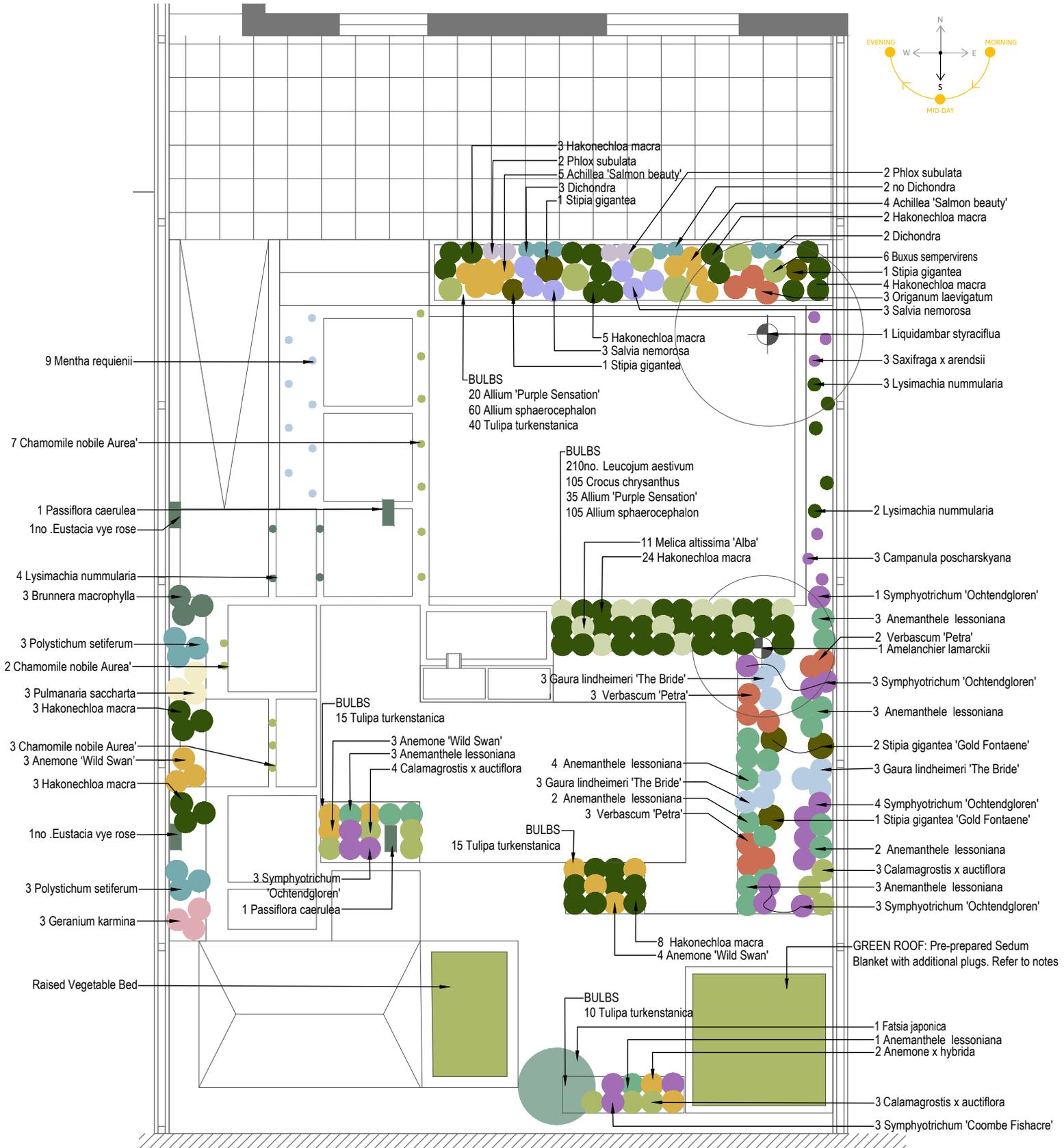
South Facing Garden

- 1 Patio
- 2 Corten steel planter
- 3 Ramp
- 4 Lawn
- 5 Rebound wall
- 6 Water feature
- 7 Concrete bench
- 8 Planting
- 9 Playhouse with sand pit underneath
- 10 Water Butt
- 11 Garden room
- 12 Pergola
- 13 Slatted fence to perimeter



# Planting Plan

## THE FAMILY-FRIENDLY GARDEN



Garden size | 15m X 9m



| Plant   | Pot Size               | Qty |
|---|------------------------|-----|
| <b>Trees</b>  |                        |     |
| Amelanchier lamarckii (Multistem)   | 15/20L                 | 1   |
| Liquidambar styraciflua 'Slender Silhouette'  | 15/20L                 | 1   |
| <b>Perennial + Bulbs - AREA 1.5m<sup>2</sup> (Area 1)</b>   |                        |     |
| Anemanthele lessoniana  | 2L                     | 1   |
| Anemone x hybrida 'Honorine Jobert'   | 2L                     | 2   |
| Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'  | 2L                     | 3   |
| Fatsia japonica   | 10L                    | 1   |
| Symphytotrichum 'Ochtendgloren'   | 2L                     | 3   |
| <b>Spring Bulbs - Plant in groups of 10</b>   |                        |     |
| Tulipa turkenstanica  | Grade 5/6              | 10  |
| <b>Raised Bed - Garden Veg - AREA 1.8m<sup>2</sup> (AREA 2)</b>   |                        |     |
| Courgettes, Onion, Lettuce, Beatroot, Green beans - personal choice (buy plug plants or from seeds)   |                        | 1   |
| <b>Perennial + Bulbs - AREA 7m<sup>2</sup> (AREA 3)</b>   |                        |     |
| Anemanthele lessoniana  | 2L                     | 17  |
| Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'  | 2L                     | 3   |
| Gaura lindheimeri 'The Bride'   | 2L                     | 8   |
| Hakonechloa macra   | 2L                     | 24  |
| Melica altissima 'Alba'   | 2L                     | 11  |
| Stipa gigantea 'Gold fontaene'  | 2L                     | 3   |
| Symphytotrichum 'Coombe Fishacre'   | 2L                     | 11  |
| Verbascum 'Petra'   | 2L                     | 9   |
| <b>Spring Bulbs - Naturalised Bulbs</b>   |                        |     |
| Scatter the bulbs across the planting area and plant each where it lands, using a sturdy trowel or bulb planting to dig to the recommended depth for the plant. Cover with soil and gently firm around to fill any pockets of air. Bulbs to be planted in single species groups of approx 10. |                        |     |
| <b>Spring Bulbs - Plant in groups of 10</b>   |                        |     |
| Allium 'Purple Sensation'   | Grade 5/6              | 35  |
| Allium sphaerocephalon  | Grade 5/6              | 105 |
| Crocus chrysanthus 'Cream Beauty' (reference for substitute: salmon coloured)   | Grade 5/6              | 105 |
| Leucojum aestivum 'Gravetye Giant'  | Grade 5/6              | 210 |
| <b>Plant in groups of 3 and 5 - AREA 1.5m<sup>2</sup> (AREA 4)</b>  |                        |     |
| To grow amongst small boulders and pebbles against a West facing wall   |                        |     |
| Campanula poscharskyana (Trailing bellflower)   | P9                     | 3   |
| Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea' ( Creeping Jenny) vigorous growth   | P9                     | 5   |
| Saxifraga x arendsii 'Touran pink'  | P9                     | 3   |
| <b>Groundcover between cracks in paving slabs shade or sun AREA 4m<sup>2</sup> (AREA 5)</b>   |                        |     |
| Mentha requienii  | P9                     | 9   |
| Chamomile nobile evergreen  | P9 or direct from seed | 12  |
| Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea' ( Creeping Jenny) vigorous growth   | P9                     | 4   |

| Plant   | Pot Size  | Qty   |
|---|-----------|-------|
| <b>Perennial + Bulbs AREA 1.5m<sup>2</sup> - Plant in groups of 3</b>   |           |       |
| Anemone 'Wild Swan'   | 2L        | 3     |
| Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'   | 2L        | 3     |
| Geranium karmina (Cranesbill)   | 2L        | 3     |
| Hakonechloa macra   | 2L        | 6     |
| Polystichum setiferum (Soft shield fern)  | 2L        | 6     |
| Pulmanaria saccharta  | 2L        | 3     |
| <b>Climbers</b>   |           |       |
| Eustacia vye (Syn. Sts. Francis and Claire)   | 5L        | 2     |
| Passiflora caerulea (Passion Flower)  | 5L        | 2     |
| <b>Shrubs, Perennial s + Bulbs - AREA 4m<sup>2</sup> - Plant in groups of 3</b>   |           |       |
| Achillea 'Salmon beauty'  | 2L        | 8     |
| Buxus sempervirens (Box balls)  | 5L        | 6     |
| Dichondra 'Emerald falls' ( to be planted on edge of planter to creep down)   | 2L        | 7     |
| Hakonechloa macra   | 2L        | 14    |
| Origanum laevigatum 'Herrenhausen'  | 2L        | 3     |
| Phlox subulata 'Emerald Cushion Blue'   | 2L        | 4     |
| Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna'   | 2L        | 6     |
| Stipa gigantea 'Gold fontaene'  | 2L        | 3     |
| <b>BULBS</b>  |           |       |
| Allium 'Purple Sensation'   | Grade 5/6 | 20    |
| Allium sphaerocephalon  | Grade 5/6 | 60    |
| Tulipa turkenstanica  | Grade 5/6 | 40    |
| <b>Green Roof - 2m<sup>2</sup> total</b>  |           |       |
| Extensive - sedum and herb roofs using seeds and plug plants for a low maintenance roof. Pre prepared Sedum Blanket : PLUS feed additional plugs into this. Consider grass roof plant lists and include sedums, wildflowers, herbs and grasses:- *Traditional Plugs * Irish Provenance Native Species Plugs seed mix. |           | Plugs |
| Linaria vulgaris (Common Toadflax)  |           | Plugs |
| Lotus corniculatus (Bird's-foot-trefoil)  |           | Plugs |
| Papaver rhoeas 'Mother Of Pearl' (Field poppy)  |           | Plugs |
| Saxifraga 'White Pixie' ( Saxifrage)  |           | Plugs |
| Thymus serpyllum (Creeping thyme)   |           | Plugs |
| <b>Kitchen Herbs + Bulbs in pots (AREA 8)</b>   |           |       |
| Rosemary, thyme, mint, parsley, lemon balm etc.   |           |       |
| <b>Perennial + Bulbs (AREA 9)</b>   |           |       |
| Anemanthele lessoniana (New Zealand wind grass)   | 2L        | 3     |
| Anemone 'Wild Swan'   | 2L        | 3     |
| Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster' ( feather reed grass)  | 2L        | 4     |
| Symphytotrichum 'Coombe Fishacre' (Aster)   | 2L        | 3     |
| <b>Spring Bulbs - Plant in groups of 10</b>   |           |       |
| Tulipa turkenstanica  | Grade 5/6 | 10    |

### 3D view of feature planting

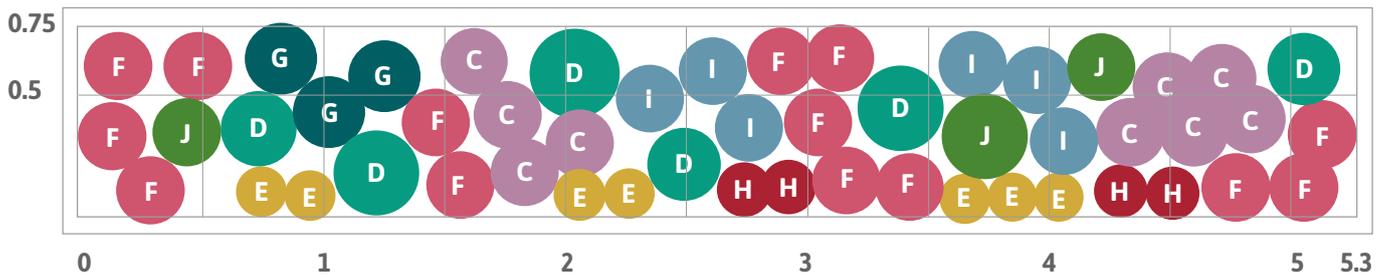


### Border Area



### Planting Plan

#### Grid - 0.5m



\*Note: Bulbs for this Border - 20 Allium 'Purple Sensation', 60 Allium sphaerocephalon, 40 Tulipa turkenstanica

This border suits an aspect that gets sun for a large part of the day and brings colour and structure to the view from the windows.

A vibrant raised bed encased in Cor-ten steel acts as a focal point when viewed from inside the house, while softening and screening the patio behind it. The green and purple tones of the grasses and Alliums in the foreground work well with the tones of the two trees behind, an Amelanchier and a Liquidambar both which provide colour in spring and autumn.

The grasses include the golden wheatgrass, *Stipa gigantea* 'Gold Fontaene' and the Japanese grass, *Hakonechloa macra*, which has lush green foliage which provide texture and movement along with sound, adding to the sensory experience.

The popular Allium 'Purple Sensation' adds architectural structure, with its purple pompom heads in summer, and the seed heads which follow adding year round interest. Achillea 'Salmon Beauty' adds a splash of bronzed orange reflecting the colours of the Liquidambar (Persian Ironwood) tree behind, while a splash of blue to reflect the Alliums is provided by the beautiful Phlox 'Emerald Cushion Blue'.

'The colours have been chosen carefully,' says Maeve. 'The purples and bronzy oranges look fantastic against the ornamental grasses and these plants are long flowering and great for a family garden.'

You will find the full list of plants and a planting schedule in the **planting plan**.

#### Border Plant List

|   |  |
|---|--|
| A | Allium 'Purple Sensation'              |
| B | Allium sphaerocephalon                 |
| C | Achillea 'Salmon beauty'               |
| D | Buxus sempervirens (clipped Box balls) |
| E | Dichondra 'Emerald falls'              |
| F | Hakonechloa macra                      |
| G | Origanum laevigatum 'Herrenhausen'     |
| H | Phlox subulata 'Emerald Cushion Blue'  |
| I | Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna'            |
| J | Stipa gigantea 'Gold fontaene'         |
| K | Tulipa turkenstanica                   |

# Easy Steps to Dream Gardens

To view the other 6 Dream Garden Designs visit  
[bordbiabloom.com/dreamgardens](https://bordbiabloom.com/dreamgardens)



**The Coastal Garden**  
by James Purdy



**The Entertainers' Garden**  
by Linda McKeown



**The Easy Care Garden**  
by Oliver Schurmann



**The Shared Spaces Family Garden**  
by Nicola Haines



**The Nature Enthusiast's Garden**  
by Jane McCorkell



**The Plant Lovers Garden**  
by Patricia Tyrrell

# Common Questions

## What is a planting plan?

A planting plan is a comprehensive guide which shows you what plants to plant in your garden and where to plant them in order to achieve a successful planting scheme. All seven planting plans featured in this series are easy-to-follow and can be adapted to suit your garden size and aspect.

## Can I still use the plans if I don't have a 15m x 9m garden?

Yes, for each design we have focused on a specific border which can be implemented in your own garden, regardless of size. The plans include a grid in each downloadable pack which can be repeated to suit the size of your border. Staff in your local garden centre will be able to offer further advice if required.

## I only have a balcony or a window box. Can I still take part?

Yes, many of the plants featured in this series are suitable for container gardening (e.g. window boxes, hanging baskets and planters). Here are some useful tips to help you get started.

## Where can I buy the plants?

The designers have chosen plants that are grown in Ireland and are readily available in garden retailers around the country. All the plants are available to purchase throughout the year, while bulbs can be purchased in the autumn.

## How much do the designs cost to implement in my own garden?

The cost depends on a variety of factors, including the condition of and access to your garden and whether you want to invest in hard landscaping features. The focus borders in this series are a great way to liven up your garden on a budget. Many of the perennial and annual plants featured are very affordable and can help you add colour and interest without a significant outlay.

## Is the aspect of my garden important when choosing a garden design?

Aspect is the direction a garden faces – north, south east or west - and determines how much sun or shade a space receives. Each of the garden designs has been designed for a specific aspect, so before choosing a design, find out the aspect of your own garden here – [link here](#)

The direction your garden faces will determine how much sun it will get throughout the day. For example, an east-facing garden will get good morning sun.. A south-facing garden will get sun for most of the day in summer, while

gardens that face west will get sun from late morning/ early afternoon through to the evening. North-facing gardens tend to be shady and a little cooler. However, they may have sun to the rear of the garden which may be the best location for a seating area.

## What other factors I should consider when choosing which garden design to plant in my own garden?

Good garden design starts with research and planning. Once you have found out your garden's aspect, the first step is to survey your existing garden. Your local garden centre is the best place to get expert advice on the following considerations:

- **Your location** – is your garden in an exposed coastal or upland location or a less exposed, sheltered location?
- **Your soil** – understanding the soil in your garden will inform what plants will work best for your plot. Soil textures vary from heavy clay to sand, while the ph. of your soil can vary from acid to alkaline. Once you understand the soil in your garden you can determine what you might need to do to improve it. The condition can be enhanced by adding soil conditioners such as farmyard manure or compost.
- **Changing levels** – is your garden flat or does it slope towards/away from the house? Is water runoff an issue? Do you need steps or terracing? This will help you plan any hard landscaping features. You should seek professional advice if you have drainage issues or notable level changes.
- **Adjoining properties** – what impact, if any, do adjoining properties have on your garden? Do neighbouring buildings or trees cast shade on your space? Do you need to add planting or structures to provide privacy in your garden?
- **Usage** – do you have small children or pets that are likely to try eating your plants? Look for plants with low/no toxicity. Your local garden centre will be able to offer further advice on this.
- **Measurements** – finally, measure your garden and plot it out on paper. Using graph paper will make it easier to plot your dimensions. Alternatively, you can print out the grid sheet we have provided at the back of this downloadable garden packs.

Once you have surveyed your garden and assessed your needs you can select the Dream Garden Plan that works best for you.

# Common Questions

## When should I start planting?

Pot/container-grown trees and shrubs can be planted year-round when the ground and weather conditions are favourable. It's important to remember to water trees regularly during the drier months until the tree is established, which is typically after two years.

Bareroot hedges are planted during the dormant season, which runs from November until early March. Plant these when the ground and weather conditions are favourable. As with trees, remember to water a new hedge during spells of dry weather.

Spring and summer bulbs such as Daffodils (Narcissus), Crocus, Tulips and Alliums are planted the previous autumn.

## What is hard landscaping?

Hard landscaping is a term to describe the hard elements in your garden such as stone, concrete, and gravel. It generally refers to paths, patios and other built structures such as pergolas and water features.

If you are skilled at DIY you may be able to undertake some elements of the design yourself and there are plenty of resources available in online blogs and YouTube to

help you do this. However, if you are considering adding complex hard landscaping features to your garden then you may be better served hiring a professional. Hard landscaping is a long-term investment and should last throughout the lifespan of your garden so it is important to get it right from the outset.

## What basic skills do I need?

Check out [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie) to get advice and tips that can help you hone your gardening skills.

## What equipment and products do I need?

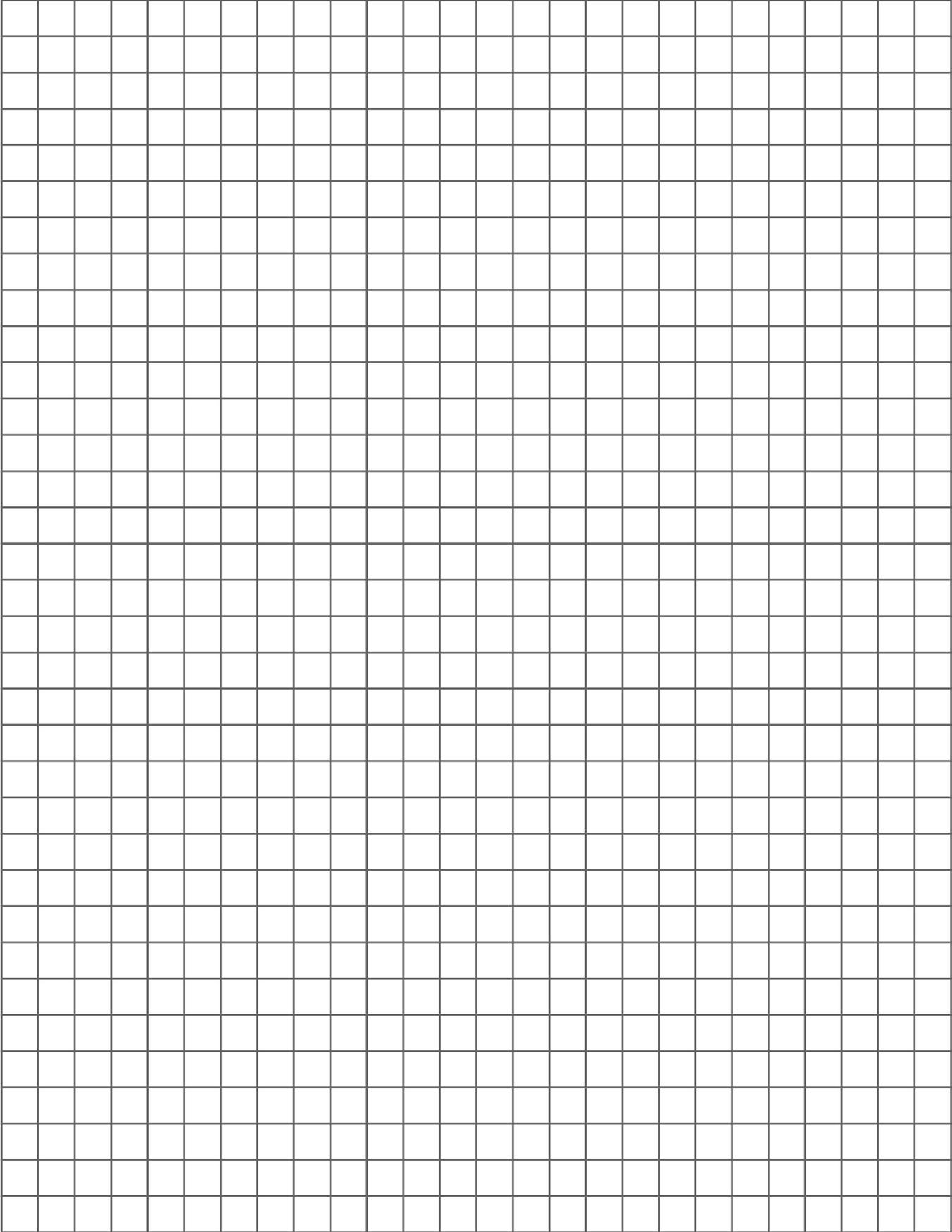
These 8 gardening essential tools and products will help you get started:

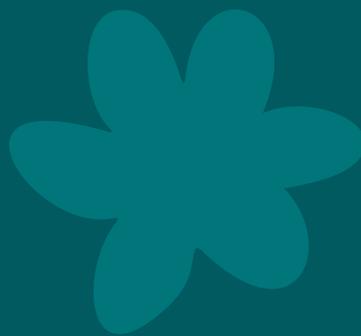
- Measuring tape
- Spade
- Fork
- Hand trowel
- Hand fork
- Rake
- Secateurs
- Compost

# Glossary

- **Evergreen:** An evergreen plant keeps its leaves all year.
- **Deciduous:** A deciduous plant sheds its foliage in winter and produces new leaves in spring.
- **Trees:** Trees are typically large, evergreen or deciduous plants that have a single trunk, although they can be trained into a multi-stem (see below). If your garden is small opt for a species that suits your space, such as an Acer or Amelanchier lamarckii. Your local garden centre will be able to help you choose the best option for your space.
- **Shrubs:** Shrubs are evergreen or deciduous woody plants with several main stems near the ground. Smaller than a tree, they help add form and structure to your garden.
- **Perennials:** Perennials are plants that die back to the ground in the winter and re-emerge the following year.
- **Biennials:** Biennials are plant that live for two years. They typically produce foliage in the first year and flowers the following year. Like perennials, they die back to the ground in the winter and re-emerge the following year.
- **Annuals:** Annuals are plants that live for a year or less. These are great options if you wish to add colour to your garden on a tight budget.
- **Climbers:** Climbers are deciduous and evergreen climbing plants that can be trained to climb up trellises, fences or walls.
- **Bulbs:** Bulbs, such as Daffodils or Tulips, provide seasonal colour. They are planted in the autumn and flower throughout the spring.
- **Topiary:** Topiary is the art or practice of clipping shrubs or trees into ornamental shapes.
- **Multi-stem:** A multi-stem tree is a tree that has two or more stems. These have been trained to grow together by planting two or more single-stemmed trees in one hole or pot.
- **Coppice:** To coppice means to cut a tree or shrub back to ground level periodically to stimulate growth.
- **Espalier:** An espalier is a fruit tree or ornamental shrub whose branches are trained to grow flat against a wall, supported on a lattice.
- **Pleached:** A pleached tree or shrub features branches that are entwined or interlaced to form a hedge or provide cover for an outdoor walkway.

# Grid Sheet





**Let's Grow**  
BORD BIA  
**Bloom**

[bordbiabloom.com/dreamgardens](http://bordbiabloom.com/dreamgardens)