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At last, some good weather and the chance to enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of the garden!

In our summer edition of Outdoor Living & Lifestyle, we're focusing on family-friendly spaces. We take a look at a customer project that required multi-zoned spaces for all the family. And we've got plenty of tips to help you create an outdoor space that both children and adults can enjoy together.

Elsewhere, we took a trip to this year's Bord Bia Bloom festival – and we've got two garden designs to share, complete with hard-landscaping from Tobermore.

If you're feeling the pain of weeks spent digging the garden over, we've got the perfect remedy: no-dig gardening. We've covered everything you need to know about this easy gardening method right here in the mag.

Finally, we spoke with Vanessa Drew, a Tobermore landscape designer, to ask her what you can expect when you work with a landscape design consultant to bring your dream garden to life.

Plus there's a chance to win £200 of gift vouchers in our summer competition – turn to page 4 to find out more.

Happy gardening!



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This competition is open until 23:59 on Friday 12th August, 2022. There is no entry fee or purchase necessary to enter this competition Winners of this competition will be chosen at random and notified via the email provided on submission on Monday 15th August; whereupon a postal address for delivery of prizes will be requested. Prizes are as stated and non-transferable, with no cash or other alternatives offered. An alternative winner will be selected if we do not receive a response from an individual winner within 7 days of notification. Images of prizes may be required from winners for media purposes. The competition is only open to any person aged 18 or over and resident in the UK. By entering this competition you hereby agree to receive email communication with Tobermore Homeowner, including subscription to future Homeowner Email Campaigns and E-magazines. Please note you can unsubscribe at any time.



What to plant in Summer

There are still lots of things you can plant in summer that will give your garden a boost, or prepare it for the later months of the year.





Spring flowering perennials

Now's also a great time to sow seeds for next spring's flowers. Think lupins, delpihiniums, bellis and aquilegias for some stunning spring colour next year.



In summer, adding some bedding plants to fill the gaps in your borders is a great way to give an instant display of colour. If you're using bedding plants in pots, think about mixing some perennials in, too. It means you won't need to re-pot the whole thing when the plants finish flowering.



Once all your seedlings have been planted out, you might have some space in the greenhouse or on your window ledges. Why not get superorganised and sow your biennial flower seeds for next year's plants? Foxgloves, pansies, honesty, sweet rocket and hollyhocks are great biennial plants to try out.



Bulbs

Autumn-flowering bulbs such as nerines and autumn crocus should be planted in summer. Nerines love a sunny location, while autumn crocus will prefer a shadier spot.

Be sure to put both plants in welldraining soil and avoid soggier areas of the garden.



Salad leaves

Salad leaves go on a growth spurt at this time of year. But they go to seed if you don't pick and eat them quickly enough. Sow your salad seeds little and often to make sure you have a constant supply. Ideally, you should aim to sow them every couple of weeks. It's a great gardening task to do with the kids, too!







This year's Bord Bia Bloom festival in Dublin brought everyone back outside for a technicolour celebration of all things garden living.

The 2022 show - the first physical Bloom event since 2019 - saw the return of the much-missed sights, smells and sounds that make Bloom one of Ireland's most popular gardening, food and drink festivals.

Nineteen show-gardens took pride of place this year, each with a different theme - from a space with organic, edible planting to a garden designed around the stage production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast.

The 'Nature Enthusiast's Garden' (shown opposite and below) was created by Tobermore landscape designer, Jane McCorkell.

Jane's design featured a patio made from Historic flags by Tobermore, connecting with a gravel path and shaped around the circular lawn.

"People often think that a natural garden has to look uncared for but that is not the case. You can add form and function and still achieve a natural style," says Jane.

Another garden, by designer Nicola Haines, made use of zoned spaces - complete with dining area paved with Braemar Alto Silver flags from Tobermore - to create the perfect family garden layout.

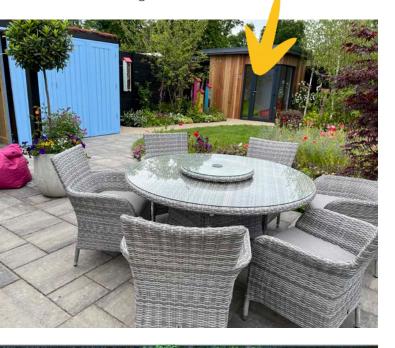
Let's take a closer look at both gardens...



Nature Enthusiast's Garden

A haven for wildlife, the garden was planted in Jane's signature natural, organic style, with a wildflower grass area and pollinatorfriendly flowers. The shrubs and flowers were selected to encourage birds, bees and other insects and included Malus 'Gorgeous', Salvia 'Royal Bumble', Buddleja davidii 'Black Knight' and Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo'.

Designed to suit every age group, the garden featured a hedgehog house that would appeal to small kids, while older children and teenagers would appreciate the easy-access bike storage and the outside room which can be transformed into a den or home office. A living wall and green-roofed storage added to the garden's eco-credentials.









Shared Spaces Family Garden

Originally designed by Nicola Haines for Bord Bia's Easy Steps to Dream Gardens, this garden was created for a family with teenagers and young adults but could be tailored to suit any household. The garden design is simple, with three distinct spaces that could be reformatted and customised as your lifestyle changes. It comprised a series of layers with planting in the foreground, mid-ground and background to give a sense of privacy and create interest from the house.

Closest to the house the space featured a table and chairs for outside dining, edged with a raised bed with grasses and perennials as a screen. Vegetable beds divide this area from a relaxed seating area at the rear - an ideal space for teenagers to gather. A pergola gives an additional sense of privacy and serves as a mount for a hanging chair.





If the thought of digging over your beds and ripping up weeds leaves you in a cold sweat, have no fear! No-dig gardening may be your new best friend.



Digging is one of those necessary evils in gardening. But luckily there is an alternative.

'No-dig gardening' is a method of growing plants or vegetables without as the name suggests - the need for any digging.

Instead of digging over your beds and borders to remove weeds and add nutrients to the soil, no-dig takes a much less labour-intensive approach with one easily-accessible and biodegradable ingredient: cardboard.

With no-dig, weeds are removed by hand, shallow hoeing, contact weedkillers and mulching. Soil organisms take mulches into the soil and rainwater washes in the goodness from fertilizers. When growing potatoes, mulches replace 'earthing up' - the process of potato shoots that appear above ground.

Cardboard is laid onto the earth and remaining weeds, acting as a biodegradable barrier that kills the weeds and stops new seeds from germinating.

With a layer of mulch applied, seeds are sown at a shallow depth, while transplants can be planted with very little disturbance to the soil below.

Your no-dig beds can be raised or flat, although flat is better if you have sandy soil as it will require extra organic matter to improve fertility.

So, if you find digging your garden a struggle, or if you have heavy, hardto-control soils, why not give no-dig gardening a go?





Quick guide: no-dig step-by-step

Step 1: Flatten weeds and grass.

The beauty of no-dig is that you only need to flatten the weeds in preparation. However, you may need to pull or dig out any well-established perennial weeds.

Step 2: Cover the bed with cardboard.

Lay thick cardboard over the entire surface of the ground. This will smother the weeds and kill them. Staples or tape in your cardboard won't break down, so be sure to remove them first. You can use a thick layer of newspaper (about eight sheets thick) if you don't have cardboard.

Step 3: Wet it down.

Next, wet your base layer by spraying water thoroughly over the top. This will soften the cardboard so that it can conform to the ground.

Step 4: Pile on the organic matter.

Add a thick layer of mulch materials, like compost or wellrotted manure over the top of the cardboard.

Step 5: Water the bed.

Water again, to keep the thick top layer wet and to soften the cardboard even more, which will help it retain moisture longer.

Step 6: Mulch over the top.

If you don't like the look of the ordinary compost, you can add a layer of mulch, like weed-free straw or shredded wood.

Step 7: Plant your garden.

Now for the fun part: planting your bed! The best thing is you can get started straight away. Once the roots of your plants reach down to the cardboard layer, it will be soft enough that they grow straight through and into the soil below.





Whether you need a paved area for socialising, kids playtime or summer barbecues, Mayfair is a versatile choice.

With three colour options – Graphite, Sandstone and Silver – these paving flags complement both traditional and contemporary homes.





"We are extremely happy with our Mayfair paving and spend a lot more time in the garden as a result."

Tobermore customer

Laid by Sperrin Paving, the project pictured here uses Mayfair flags in Sandstone with Shannon Heather block paving for a contrasting border.

The awkward-shaped space was previously laid to lawn and the customer wanted a more usable, all-weather space. With the help of a Tobermore landscape designer, the customer settled on Mayfair flags for a clean and contemporary look.

Find out more about Mayfair and get inspiration for your outdoor space. Go to the Tobermore website.





See how a family created a multi-use patio, with a summer house and kids' play area, in their large country garden.

llana Currie and her family wanted to dedicate a space in their country garden for summer socialising, relaxing and play.

"We wanted a large patio area that could accommodate a summer house and room for outdoor seating," says Ilana. "We loved the idea of having an area for the kids to play alongside, as well as some flower beds."

As a first step, Ilana spoke with a Tobermore landscape designer to get ideas for the project.

"We found the landscape design service very helpful. It gave us ideas we wouldn't have thought of ourselves. Things like sunlight, the direction of the wind and how things would look from the house. It really helped us focus our minds on what would work best."

A visit to a Tobermore Paving Centre also helped Ilana and her family decide on the right products for the garden.

"I spoke to the really knowledgeable advisors at Tobermore, who showed me a wide range of products and various ways to use them for different effects. I was able to see lots of pictures of the paving from other jobs, which really helped me visualise how our patio could look."

On the completed project, Ilana says: "We're extremely happy with how it turned out. The areas flow well together and look great. It's better than we expected!"







Garden Design with children in mind

For those of us with younger children, it can be tricky to know how to plan for an outdoor space that caters to everyone's needs.

Most gardens naturally become multifunctional spaces. You may use your garden for relaxing, entertaining, growing veg, or all of the above. Often a garden becomes multifunctional without you even realising it.

You want a space that looks attractive and gives all the features you, the adults, would like. But you also want safe spaces for children to play, with resilient planting that can withstand wayward footballs and the like.

When it comes to garden design for families, zoning your space is often the key. But, says Tobermore landscape designer Vanessa Drew, don't focus too heavily on adding permanent features for young children.

"Kids grow up fast," says Vanessa. "Once they're older and no longer want to play in the garden, you'll be left with spaces you'll want to repurpose again. I always recommend planning for the longer term, with easy-to-adapt features to keep kids happy in the short term."

Zoning a family garden

With a zoned approach, you can define areas close to and further away from your house. For example, make the area closest to your house a 'safe space' where younger kids can play independently, but where you can still see them if you go inside.

"With that in mind, make the area closest to your house the most hard-wearing space," says Vanessa. "Put your prize planting and delicate shrubbery further into your garden – as well as any fragile structures, such as your greenhouse!

"It's likely you'll want a patio area close to your house for dining and entertaining, anyway. So when the kids have grown up, the space won't need to be drastically altered."

Play equipment

For many proud, garden-owning adults, play equipment can be a pain. It takes up a lot of room, quickly goes rusty and discoloured, and becomes an eyesore.

"You can give your kids some wonderful play spaces without needing to buy play equipment," says Vanessa. "At a very basic level, a rope with a short plank of wood on the end can be hung from an existing strong tree to make a swing, for example."

"Simply putting paths and walkways through borders can bring a sense of exploration and adventure for children. This is also great for open-ended play, where you allow the children to play in an unrestricted way and let their imaginations run wild."

Trampolines are popular in gardens these days, but take up a lot of ground space.

"Get one that can be dug into the ground and made flush with the lawn," says Vanessa. "They look neater, they're safer, as you can't fall off them, and when the kids are bored with them, you can take them out and turn the hole underneath into a water feature or pond."





If the kids really want a playhouse or slide, think about the materials that would best complement your garden. Wooden alternatives are available for most play equipment (a wooden playhouse can actually be a very attractive feature) and provide a more sustainable option than plastic equipment.

Vanessa adds: "Instead of buying a small child's playhouse, you might consider investing in a large shed which can be painted and dressed up with curtains and window boxes, to act as a playhouse. When the kids have grown out of it, you can reclaim it as a summer house, workroom, garden studio, or just as a storage shed."

Planting for familyfriendly gardens

A question often put to our landscape design team during consultation sessions is what sort of planting you should choose for a family-friendly garden.

Vanessa says: "When I'm being asked to design a family-friendly garden, I'm often told to keep the planting to a minimum. But a garden without any planting whatsoever would be very bland, so it's important to get the balance right."

Homeowners may think that container planting in pots will be easier to maintain in a family garden. But in fact, containers require continual revamping, watering, feeding and repotting.

"If the correct sized shrubs are chosen, planting directly into the ground is the longest-lasting, lowest maintenance solution," says Vanessa.

"Do your research in advance and choose plants with a maximum growth size that will fit the space. For example, there are varieties of Mahonia that reach three metres in height and spread, but there are also varieties that only reach one metre. This is the same for most shrubs and trees, so choose wisely."

Year-round planting for a family garden

To get the most out of your family space for year-round interest, choose shrubs that flower or have interest at different times of the year. For example, flowering blackcurrant and Forsythia for early spring. Lavatera for summer interest, Leycesteria formosa for autumn colour and llex 'Golden King' for winter interest.

Vanessa adds, "Apart from flowers, choose variegated, evergreen shrubs which will look interesting for their foliage, even when not in flower. If you aren't sure where to start, the best bet is to ask at your local plant nursery and see if they can recommend a selection of shrubs for a family space."









Planning Your Project

What to expect when working with a Tobermore Landscape Designer

We spoke with **Vanessa Drew**, one of Tobermore's landscape design consultants, to get the lowdown on planning a project and how she works with customers.



Hi Vanessa! How long have you worked with Tobermore?

I've been designing gardens for Tobermore for 20 years. Because our work is so varied, the years have passed in the blink of an eye!

What landscape design services do you provide?

Tobermore has a few options when it comes to landscape design services. Our Bronze design package is a free, virtual consultation service. It's a 30-minute video call, during which the customer tells me what they're looking for and we discuss design ideas. I'll sketch out a design for the garden and provide a quote for hard landscaping, which the customer will receive after the consultation.

We also offer in-person or on-site consultations in Northern Ireland and ROI, where I travel to the customer and see their space first-hand.

In the past my Tobermore design work has taken me to England, Scotland, Jersey, Isle of Man and all over Ireland.

What happens when you visit a customer on-site?

I love to meet all our customers and find out what they hope to get out of their garden plan. We'll usually have a good discussion on-site and I will come up with some design ideas. I'll take photos and measure the area and then go back to the office and draw up the plan on the computer. Once this is complete, we send the plan to the customer with a quote to supply the paving. We also offer a list of recommended paving contractors who could give them a quote to do the work.

Have you worked on challenging or unusual garden spaces?

Every job is totally different and comes with challenges to be overcome. I get a real buzz from thinking up design solutions. Situations that have come up in the past include very steep sloping gardens, perhaps a very small space with a lot to fit in, and gardens that are overlooked by neighbouring houses and require screening.

I often work with customers in new-build homes, which require planting from scratch. Sometimes I recommend walling to help enclose the area and make it feel more secluded and welcoming, and also shelter it from the prevailing winds.

Why would you recommend working with a landscape designer?

A well-thought-out garden design will add value to any home and give pleasure and enjoyment for many years to come. There's an awful lot to think about when it comes to garden design and it's something you really only want to do once, then be able to sit back and enjoy your outdoor space.

A good landscape designer will help you find the best way to achieve what you're looking for and, importantly, help you avoid any costly mistakes.

What do you do when you're not landscape designing?

I live on a farm and because I often work evenings and weekends, this gives me flexibility to spend time with our animals as required. I also enjoy hiking with our dogs in the Mourne Mountains, which are just on our doorstep. We walk about 10 miles most days - that saves me having to go to the gym!





Bring your garden ideas to life with a

Free Design Consultation

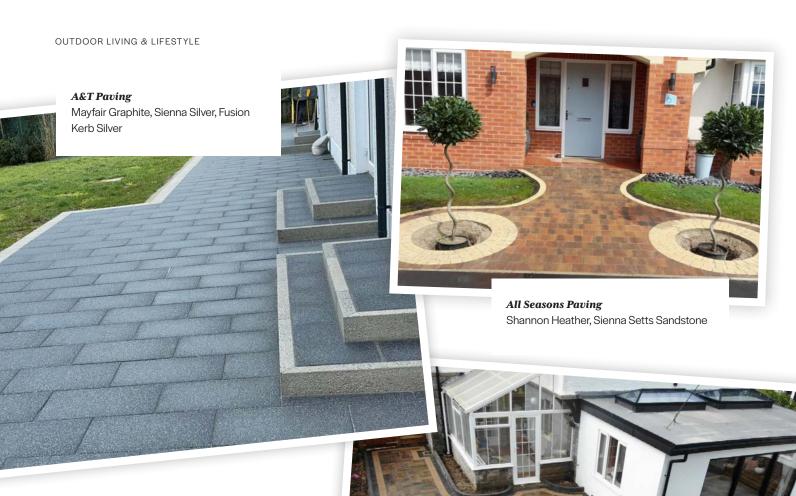
Book a 30-minute video consultation with one of our qualified landscape designers.

We'll help you...

- Design your dream garden
- Plan the perfect planting
- Find hard landscaping
- ✓ Visualise your new space

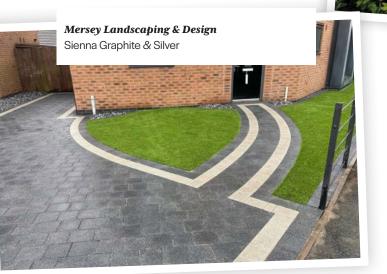
Book a free design consultation





Quick Project Pics

Take inspiration from these project photos, sent in by our Registered Contractors.



Drive Ways Historic Bracken, Tegula Setts Golden

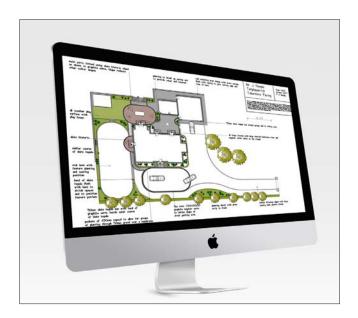
Quickly and easily find a Registered Paving Contractor near you using our 'Find a Contractor' tool on the Tobermore website.

Find a contractor



Online Tools for Perfect Planning

The Tobermore website is home to a host of digital tools and services to help you plan, design and build your outdoor space.



Landscape Design Service

Our landscape design consultation service is available in a range of packages to suit all projects and budgets. Consultations are provided on-site for our customers in Northern Ireland and ROI, and by video call for our customers in England, Scotland and Wales.

Click here to find out more about our landscape design service.

Paving Creator

Paving Creator is our free tool to help you experiment with various paving design options and products. Simply specify whether you're designing a driveway or patio, choose a 'scene' in which to view your paving, and get creative! If you like what you create, you can easily request a quote for the paving products directly through the Paving Creator tool.

Click here to find out more about Paving Creator.







Paving Visualisation Service

Bring your paving project to life by visualising your paving choice at your own property. Send us a picture of your driveway or patio area with a description of your project, advise us on what products and colours you would like for your project, and we'll send you a computer generated image of your paving choice at your home.

Click here to find out more about our paving visualisation service.

How To Buy Your Paving

You can find information on the Tobermore website about how to choose and buy paving products.

Click here to find a Tobermore stockist in your area.





