

## **Whats New in Garden Design**

Away from the glare of Television and the many garden makeover programs, Professional Garden Designers are being asked to provide a prestige service and the design solutions we come up with often reflect the many demands of our clients who have rewarding but '*time-poor*' lifestyles. Next year we can expect this trend to continue and in an effort to allow our clients to get the most from their gardens in terms of relaxation and enjoyment there will be challenging developments in the areas of

- Planting Design
- Innovative design layouts
- Lighting and irrigation
- New uses for familiar materials

### ***Planting Design***

Trends come and go in the field of Plant choice in gardens but in recent years there has been a steady decline in the complexity of planting schemes as client demand for low maintenance gardens has steadily increased.

Simple planting schemes involving the use of a limited range of exotics such as Phormiums and Cordyline species are being supplemented by such tender plants as Olea (Olive) and Nerium oleander being used in the southeast of England according to David Sisley of 'Garden Designs and Landscapes'. At a recent meeting of the British Association of Landscape Industries, David discussed the increasing demand for these 'exotic' and more expensive plants which are supplied in larger sizes in an effort to create the 'instant' garden effect.

Herbaceous perennials are becoming more fashionable again. Verbena bonariensis is seen everywhere now and we can expect to see smaller ornamental grasses being used in block planting.

### ***Design Layouts***

It is often said that a designer only designs that which he can draw and the continuing development and use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) has increased the designers ability to develop and specify plans which incorporate both organic and complex geometric forms.

Although designers such as Chelsea award winner Christopher Bradley-Hole still dress up their CAD drawings by hand to show the client, much of the hard work behind the scenes is being developed with the use of computers. My own work shown at [www.ptadesign.com](http://www.ptadesign.com) demonstrates the natural look which can be given to apparently 'hand' drawn sketches.

In 2005 we can expect to see shapes such as the ellipse being used for areas of lawn and even paved areas.

In 1999 I demonstrated at the Chelsea Flower Show how in the future the internet may be used to present to a client a virtual model of their new garden as it will appear when completed. Although some of the techniques are still beyond the budget of most people for their garden schemes, costs are rapidly coming down.

### ***Lighting and Irrigation***

There has been an huge development in the lighting industry with many new companies starting up and importing lights from the rest of Europe, the USA and Australia. At the cutting edge is the increased use of LED systems which use only a fraction of the power of conventional lighting systems and require no maintenance in

some cases for up to ten years. LED systems produce only a small amount of heat so are more suitable for incorporating in decking and even in stone paving. These lighting systems are increasingly being installed with automated control systems as are the new irrigation systems. A specialist decides on the optimum settings for maintaining the plants with the correct water supply according to the time of year. Similarly, the lighting is set to automatically come on in the evening so the garden welcomes its owners as they arrive home.

### ***New Uses for Familiar Materials***

In 2005 we can expect to see more composite materials being used in the domestic garden because the development of new epoxy resins has made it possible to bond materials together in durable forms. This is most apparent in the use of bonded aggregates in driveways and vehicle areas.

Glass is being used in schemes with light and water to animate the garden setting. Previously used exclusively in sheet form, new glass artists are creating innovative forms with this familiar material. In 2005 some of these new forms will move out of the gallery and into the garden.

### ***Conclusion***

Technology and the race to create more durable and high quality materials is continuing in all areas of industry. The increasing popularity of using professional design services is helping to bring in these fresh ideas which is moving the domestic garden industry forward into the new millennium.