

A mowing edge is a lovely addition to the garden. This is a border of paving slabs, which are set slightly lower than grass level to facilitate mowing and prevent the grass from growing into the beds. This is best used in formal and large gardens.

#### Roses

A special mention should be made of roses, and the return of English roses, which come in many shapes and forms, from small ground covers to large climbing & rambling shrubs. These roses are highly scented and generally have very full, double blooms. These can be considered for the body of the garden.

### Planting suggestions

**Framework plants:** Podocarpus, Acer varieties, Cupressus, Ilex varieties, Betulas, Ginkgo biloba

**Body plants:** Roses, Abelia, Aster varieties, Hypericum, Cistus, Rosemary, Lavendula, Berberis, Daisies, Artichokes, Indian Hawthorns

**Fillers:** Hosta, Campanula, Day lilies, Cleome, Geranium, Penstemon, Statice, Lamium, Violets, Grasses

**Specials:** Daffodils, Freesias, Nerines, Gladiola, Lilies, Dahlias, Impatiens, Aqualegia

Happy Gardening!

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# Country Gardens

An expert guide to planting an English Country garden



**GardenCare**



## What is an English country garden?

An English country garden is a garden filled with beautiful flowering annuals, perennials and shrubs. It is a charming, gentle combination of colours and textures. The garden should be planned and planted in such a way that, year round, there is always something in flower or a foliage combination to give you colour or interest.

## Ingredients for your garden

### Focal points

The most important ingredient is an object that will act as a focal point. Traditional favourites include benches, arbours, armillary spheres, sundials and fountains. Be as creative as you like, using an old wheelbarrow or a beautiful old urn for example.

The size of your chosen "feature" should be in proportion to the size of the garden. A tiny sundial could easily be lost in a large garden.

### Framework

The plant material needs careful thought. Choose a few plants that would make a strong framework (See list). The framework is built up using plants like trees and large shrubs that keep their form all year round. When choosing these plants, bear in mind the eventual

shapes are upright, weeping, and columnar. These plants can be used to frame views, create visual barriers and add a feeling of permanence to the garden. Always consider the shade cast by the tree as this will influence your choice of plant material.

## The Body

The body makes up the majority of the planting plan. These plants will generally make or break our design. "Body" plants consist of shrubs and perennials (see list). These plants mark the changing seasons and they tend to have a longer flowering season than trees. Perennials are useful because they grow quickly and fill up gaps in one growing season.

Choose your plants carefully so as to have a good selection of both evergreen and deciduous plants. Try also to combine different textures and different colours together for maximum impact. Remember that flowers come and go but leaves and stems are visible all year. When you are planting, consider the soil's fertility as well as the amount of water available to the plants.

## Fillers

Fillers are the small and dainty plants that are used to fill in between and close up the gaps. They generally fall into the category of annuals and small perennials

(see list). Again, try to get a range of different textures and colours, all of which should flower at different times. A useful idea is to incorporate attractive herbs and vegetables into the design. This will serve a dual purpose of adding attractive foliage and form as well as providing fresh produce.

Annuals are useful as they can provide masses of colour for each different season. A completely different look can be achieved each year if you so desire. Annuals reward with lots of colour for very little effort and often flower when everything else is in a lull

## Special plants

Special plants are the little finishing touches needed in a garden. They are usually small and short-lived but can provide a burst of colour at different times of the year. Bulbs are a good example (see list). They can be left in the ground and will appear every year. If you plant at least 4 sets of bulbs at different times of the year, you will have many months of pleasure from them.

### Ground coverings

Most gardens have large tracks of gravel to act as walkways but stepping stones and sleepers are all suitable. The most natural look is achieved when the plants trail into the pathway to give a slightly softer, untended, natural look.