

Little at Large

EVERYBODY wants a front garden that looks wonderful all year round, but requires minimum work.

In reality, front gardens are often abandoned to do their own things and money and efforts are concentrated on the back garden where space and privacy are more appealing. But front gardens are very important.

They are constantly on display and create the first impression of your home to visitors and passers-by. They are often quite small areas and so simple designs which keep to the scale of the garden usually work best.

A single specimen tree with all-year-round appeal, a well chosen combination of shrubs and herbaceous perennials can all be very effective and cheap. As for hard landscaping, remember that you are welcoming people in, so go for a sound use of materials to provide a firm, non-slip, dry access, well lit at night.

Before you rush into making any changes to your front garden, a little planning is vital, so write a list of the existing features you want to keep and the improvements you want to make. It pays to be aware of what you cannot do



**Garden talk by
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so check on height restrictions for new walls and fences and the need for planning permissions.

Consider the garden's practical functions, like access routes to house, garage and storage areas. We are all becoming much more practical and entrances should reflect our lifestyles and serve the daily workings of the household. If you are planning to re-route a path, remember that the purpose of a front garden path is to lead you to the door in the most practical way and people will always take the shortest cut when laden with shopping bags.

It is also important to try to mark the name or number of your home as clearly as possible and ensure it is visible at night as well.

The larger the letters or numbers used, the easier it is to see them from a distance, which is vital when travelling along a road by car.

Finally using a photo, sketch your front garden on an overlay of tracing paper to see how changes will affect the overall design.

Martin Little