



 Wyevale garden centres

GARDEN TRENDS REPORT

2019



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INTRODUCTION

In the year that the high street, much like the weather, experienced some of its most unpredictable conditions, the nation sought refuge in the calming surrounds of the garden. Though often faced with limited time and space, Brits' appetite for gardening is proving steadfast in a digital world full of distractions.

As the UK's largest garden centre retailer, Wyevale Garden Centres is uniquely placed at the root of the industry, with sight of the nation's shopping habits and burgeoning trends before they come into bloom. This second edition of the Garden Trends Report has combined the sales insights and expertise of the senior buying team with survey data from more than 27,000 British gardeners to uncover the key trends shaping our gardens – and the way we garden – in 2019.

Six overarching trends have been identified: Front of Show, Home-Grown Heroes, Multisensory Spaces, Health & Healing, Indoors Out and Giving Back in the Garden.

The modern revival of traditional gardens, teamed with the blurred boundaries of indoors and out, is driving new trends and motivations to get gardening. The shift towards greener, more sustainable lifestyles has extended into our gardens, with wildlife, wellbeing and the weather at the forefront of conversations.

This report explores recent developments in British horticulture and offers a holistic view to what the future holds. It takes a look at the products and plants that are gaining ground, and the driving forces encouraging new-age gardeners to put on their gloves and reap the many rewards of gardening.

BRITISH GARDEN

BAROMETER



Space-saving solutions

New breeds of plants suited to pots and containers are being introduced in greater volumes for 2019, allowing small-space gardeners to reap the same rewards in limited space. Extensive ranges of wall planters and bistro furniture sets will also trend for balconies and micro gardens



Nature nurture

The nation's love of wildlife continues to infiltrate the gardening world. Nearly 70% of British gardeners buy food for wildlife or provide a home for wildlife in their garden, and over 60% make a conscious effort to grow plants that benefit wildlife



Extraordinary edibles

Sales of large fruit and veg varieties are up 59% in the last two years, with giant strawberries, giant tomato 'Gigantimo' and giant chilli pepper 'Big Jim' most popular sellers



Easy-care cacti

The millennial-driven craze for cacti and succulents continues, with sales up 50% YOY and miniature sizes up 150% as Brits add the easy-care species to their homes, coffee tables and work desks



Hanging baskets

Over 40% of Brits now feature hanging baskets in their front garden, contributing to a sales growth of 32% since 2016, with 2018 their most popular year to date



Contemporary planting

Gardeners are breaking the boundaries of traditional borders with a more relaxed approach, mixing bedding with perennials, shrubs, bulbs, grasses and vegetables, enforcing the 'looks good and tastes good' trend

GOING UP

GOING DOWN

GOING UP

GOING DOWN



Risky species

Responsible sourcing is paramount, especially as *Xylella fastidiosa* disease threatens Mediterranean plant supplies. Wyevale Garden Centres chose to remove lines of olive trees, oleanders and polygalas in 2018, giving way to sales of native species



Time to grow

With the nation becoming increasingly time-poor, mature specimen plants are gaining ground, with sales up 35% this year



Unfriendly packaging

In spring 2019, polystyrene and plastic bags will be scrapped from centres in favour of eco-friendly alternatives, with 100% recyclable materials now used for all plant pots and pot bedding containers



Simple landscaping

Large lawns are giving way to more adventurous, mixed garden landscapes as patios, decking and gravelled areas gain ground in the garden



North-south weather divide

The summer heatwave of 2018 closed the gap for gardeners in the North, whose plants usually lag two weeks behind those in the South



The traditional veg patch

Savvy, urbanised gardeners are taking the 'Grow Your Own' sector in new directions, transforming hanging baskets and containers into miniature veg patches

SIX THINGS SHOPPERS LOVED IN 2018

The garden centre space is witnessing a shift in the way customers shop and engage with gardening content. Wyevale Garden Centres is uniquely positioned at the root of the industry's burgeoning trends, with its finger on the pulse of the gardening public. Here are six of the most popular talking points and spending habits for gardeners that swept the nation in 2018...



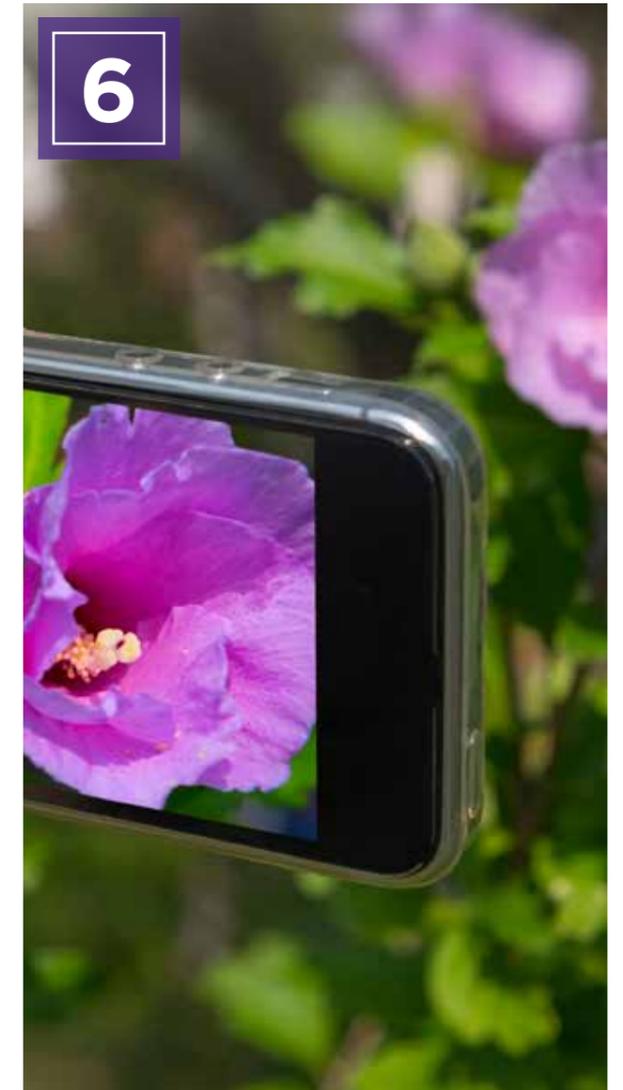
Shopping at your leisure

Away from the hustle of the high-street, Brits are searching for more relaxed shopping environments and experiences, and it's evident that garden centres supply this in spades. Not only a place to shop, they have become a one-stop destination to eat, play, relax and enjoy seasonal events for all the family. Over 62% of us make the most of the restaurant or café with each visit, while over a third of us regularly seek out in-centre activities and events. This is keeping dwell-time high for garden centre shoppers; nearly half of us spend between 30 minutes and an hour with each visit to a garden centre, while a further 19% of us spend up to two hours each time.



Everyday garden solutions

Gardening is viewed by many as complicated or too much responsibility - particularly for beginners. Over a quarter of us (26%) admit we're no experts in the garden, having just 'limited knowledge', but this doesn't slow our appetite for getting involved. In a bid to support and nurture the nation's budding gardeners, Wyevale Garden Centres launched a series of monthly jobs and projects for customers of all abilities, and is introducing 'Garden Solutions' to its centres for 2019. The dedicated areas will provide an easy guide to common gardening issues - wildlife, scent, easy-care and shade - with plants for small spaces ranged across the garden centre.



Feel-good gardening projects

Today's time-poor gardeners are looking beyond the focus of technique and expertise, and towards fun, feel-good gardening that provides a rewarding sense of satisfaction. The physical and mental benefits of undertaking outdoor projects are encouraging new waves of gardeners to put their gloves on, with an increasing drive to get children gardening from a young age.

Paws for thought

Pets are seen as fully-fledged members of the family and owners are dedicating the same level of care and attention towards their pets' healthy lifestyles as they are their own. All Wyevale Garden Centres are pet-friendly, and the majority have indoor or outdoor seating areas for you to relax with your furry friend. With British dog-owners now spending tens of billions on their pets each year, the demand within garden centres is at an all-time high. Ranges of pet products are set to expand in 2019 to meet with the rising 'pooch pound'.

Savvy spending

Shopping perks and rewards proved popular for green-fingered Brits in 2018, who sought value-for-money with each purchase. Wyevale Garden Centres witnessed extensive growth of its Garden Club members, which now comprises over four million gardening enthusiasts, with spend via loyalty schemes up 40% YOY during the peak gardening season.



Social gardening

Over a fifth of Brits now use social media as their main source of gardening advice, with platforms offering a forum to share tips, trends and tutorials. Wyevale Garden Centres' expertise now transcends the garden centre space to provide guidance for inquisitive gardeners on social media, with a growing audience of over 150,000. Weekly broadcasts on Facebook Live, led by the horticultural team, proved particularly popular in 2018 as customers sought new ways to engage with gardening content, driving viewing figures up 220% compared to the previous year.

FRONT OF SHOW

More than ever, house-proud Brits are turning their hand to gardening to make a statement with their homes. With social media spurring greater opportunities to show off, there has never been a more popular time to put gardening skills front of show – quite literally.

In a bid to stand out on the street and become the envy of their neighbours, the nation's focus is shifting towards front doors and front gardens, with every visible space being transformed into the ultimate crowd-pleaser for the public. In doing so, Brits are spotlighting novel ways to create instant impact and maximise space out front, while adding value to their property in the process.



59%
of British gardeners use potted plants in the front garden to add curb appeal.

Customer enquiries for planting in pots and containers, and how often to water, saw massive growth in 2018, with Wyevale Garden Centres' social media engagements up 178% for posts relating to hanging baskets, pots and planters. With space at a premium, these

products are the perfect fit. The growing population of savvy 'urbanised' gardeners are ensuring every plant has earned its place, with specially selected smaller ranges of climbers, shrubs, roses and vegetables allowing them to reap the rewards in the little space they have.

A quarter of Londoners claim that not having enough space is their single biggest problem when it comes to gardening...

...so it's no surprise that city-dwellers in the capital are on average three times more likely to feature window boxes at the front of their home compared to residents in other areas of the country.

Climbing versions of the famous David Austin roses have seen a surge in sales thanks to their ability to flourish in a pot or container, while smaller clematis varieties by Raymond Everson are being introduced as an attractive frame for the front door.

Cheer up your front door

Ensuring first impressions count, the prized space by the front door is seen as more than just a 'welcome mat' to your home. It is an open portal to your personality, to be nurtured, styled and celebrated.

Over 45% of gardeners now use plants or trees to dress their front doors and enhance the entrance to their homes.

As a result, sales are soaring for plants that can be bought in pairs. Twin bay trees remain a favourite for adding structural impact, and new container-friendly bamboo varieties such as the red-stemmed Fargesia 'Red Dragon' are coming this year. Increased volumes of evergreen box and topiary – in all shapes and sizes – are also being introduced to meet with growing demand. Ornamental trees, including viburnums, are also on the rise, credited to

their attractive foliage, flowers and berries. Japanese maples are proving popular for year-round appeal, with Acer 'Bi-Hoo' and 'Sango-Kaku' favoured for their vibrant stem colour in winter.

Trend-led features that can be updated at different points in the year are turning front doors into social media sensations. Wreaths are making their mark not just for Christmas but as a colourful addition year-round, while hanging baskets are fast-becoming the nation's go-to for front door dressing. Often perceived as a more traditional feature, the beloved baskets are making a comeback with the younger generation and now feature in nearly 40% of front gardens across the UK.

Hanging baskets and pre-planted pots have seen a 32% increase in sales since 2016, with particular growth across ready-planted baskets.

Not just for blooms, hanging baskets are also being transformed into miniature fruit and veg patches that both look good and taste good. Gardeners who are lacking in space and/or sunshine out back are finding innovative, convenient ways to 'grow their own' outside the front door. New ranges of space-saving containers and baskets have been introduced, such as flower pouches, flat-sided hanging baskets and wrought-iron wall planters.

Three surprising plants you can grow in a hanging basket or pot:



Strawberries ('Fragoo')



Cherry tomatoes ('Tumbling Tom' and 'Heartbreaker')



Dedicated 'patio veg' range for planting in pots

HOME-GROWN HEROES

Almost half of the British population turn to their friends and family for gardening advice, so it's no surprise the nation's nostalgia for keeping up traditions is filtering through to their plants. As old-time favourites return to our beds and borders, gardeners are also gaining a greater awareness around plant health and the benefits of UK-grown produce, putting native species back on the trending chart.

The resurgence of traditional plants

Sentiment runs through the soil for Brits and in times of uncertainty, they turn to what they know and what comforts them. Old-time favourites are seeing a resurgence as gardeners opt for 'tried and tested' varieties; from bedding classics that deliver a show for months, whatever the weather, to traditional blooms that offer attractive cut flowers.

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“Plants have the ability to connect us with our past and transcend the generations; be it recreating plant displays from our childhoods or nurturing the plants we have inherited from the gardens of friends and family. Traditional plants come with an easy-care appeal and often have the ability to withstand the UK's unpredictable weather.”

Julian Palphramand,
Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres

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Traditional plants have not only infiltrated residential gardens, but have also returned as front-runners in flower shows across the nation – from local villages to the prestigious grounds of Chelsea and Chatsworth. Today's gardeners are more inclined to break the rules with their planting schemes, encouraging new varieties of British classics to be introduced. Primroses are relishing their time in the spotlight, with 2019 celebrating the launch of the new primrose 'Sweetie', an exclusive to Wyevale Garden Centres, which can be grown both indoors and out.



Rockeries also witnessed a revival in 2018, with alpine plants accounting for over 15% of all perennial plant sales. Perfectly suited to the modern world, alpine plants have a long flowering period and are extremely easy to look after, thriving in containers and shrugging off drought and neglect. To meet with customer demand, 'The Rockery' zone will be introduced to centres in 2019, comprising alpine plants, heathers and mini conifers.

Beloved best-sellers:

Bedding:



Geraniums, winter primroses, begonias, petunias and marigolds

Houseplants:



Orchids, succulents and cacti, foliage plants

Shrubs:



Hydrangeas, magnolias, lavender

Alpines & ericaceous:



Heathers, rhododendrons

Best of British

Provenance, pests and plant quality are at the forefront of conversations in the gardening world as well as high on the food agenda. Disease threats to plants across Europe are turning gardeners' attentions to the benefits of buying British, with a stronger feeling of responsibility towards championing native species in the garden.

Over half of gardeners now make a conscious effort to buy British-grown plants, with the older generation leading the way...

59%
of 55-64
year olds

35%
of 25-34
year olds

Edible gardens are also experiencing a British boost. All vegetable and herb plants stocked by Wyevale Garden Centres are grown in the UK, with lines that were previously imported moving towards a UK supply.



"Over 85% of our plant stock is now grown in the UK, and the milder climate we're experiencing has allowed new varieties to be grown on home soil that wouldn't have previously survived. A greater awareness of plant pests and diseases is also putting provenance to the forefront of customers' minds when buying new plants."

Tim Evans,
Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres



70% of Brits see garden pests as their worst garden problem, while 54% claim plant diseases are their biggest garden headache.

To combat the threat of *Xylella fastidiosa*, a bacterial plant disease which attacks many Mediterranean plants, Wyevale Garden Centres made the conscious decision to remove olive trees, oleanders and polygalas from centres in 2018. This has given way to larger specimen conifers as well as fig trees, bay trees and palms, all of which have seen sales growth as a knock-on effect. The biggest growth has come from the Chusan palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, one of the hardier palms that can grow as happily in Surrey as it can in Shanghai.



Dahlia dreaming

The decadent flower, which first rose to fame in the 19th Century before being relegated to the nostalgic corner of the garden, is once again storming the trending charts. It's evident that they deliver all the 21st Century expectations we have for our outdoor plants: with a long flowering period that lasts until the first frost, they make fabulous cut flowers, have increasingly decorative foliage and are wonderfully photogenic.



Sales of dahlias were up 23% in 2018, with over 200,000 plants arriving in centres in 2019.

Their wow-factor flowers, which often bloom in abundance, offer value for money and have put them at the cutting edge of garden fashion. Throughout their flowering season, dahlias now dominate social media feeds as gardeners show off their achievements, while others appreciate the oversized blooms in a seasonal vase arrangement or as the centrepiece to their bridal bouquet.

Instagram now has over 1.3 million hashtags for 'dahlias', with Wyevale Garden Centres' social media engagements up 104% for dahlia content in 2018.

When it comes to colour combinations, pastels are leading the way, with new shades for 2019 including 'Iceball' (lemon-yellow and white), and 'Lavender Swirl'. New varieties of the popular 'Gardenetta' dahlia series will welcome spectacularly coloured, big blooms on plants compact enough to be grown in containers - perfect for space-starved gardeners.

MULTISENSORY SPACES

Brits are taking their gardening achievements beyond the focus of technique and expertise and instead looking towards fun, innovative displays of colour, fragrance, light and texture to create a wholly immersive space. In a bid to move with the latest trends, they are now investing in their gardens throughout the year with plants that bring these qualities to life through the seasons and enhance the look and feel of their outdoor area.

Moving with the trends

Trends for colour and outdoor styling are filtering through from the fashion and interior design worlds. Just as people choose to co-ordinate their wardrobes and living spaces, gardens are now following suit, and the younger generations are particularly swayed.

Over a quarter of under-45s say that fashion and/or interior trends influence the style of their garden, compared to just 5% of over-45s.

These style-conscious Brits are investing in their gardens year-round in a bid to constantly update and reinvent their outdoor space. During the extended hot summer of 2018, which welcomed Royal Wedding celebrations and World Cup fever to homes across the nation, Brits turned their gardens into the ultimate 'staycation' spots. Sales soared for quick-fix plants and accessories that offered instant impact for last-minute hosting and special occasions in the garden throughout the warmer months.

A third of gardeners have bought plants for a one-off occasion - from summer parties and BBQs to birthdays and anniversaries.

The internet, social media and TV programmes are just a few of the platforms heavily influencing gardeners' shopping habits, having a direct impact on sales. The immediacy and fast-paced nature of social media in particular is driving reactive sales in the garden.

21% of Brits now use social media as their main source of inspiration for gardening, with nearly 30% of 18-24 year olds turning to social media for gardening advice.



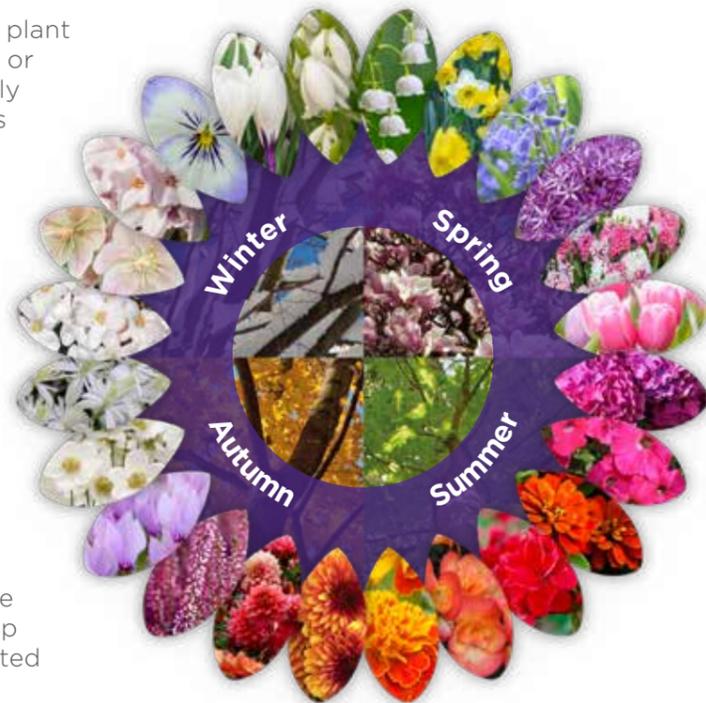
Planting by colour

Contemporary gardeners are showcasing their adventurous side, moving away from traditional planting schemes and towards more dynamic designs centred on complementary colour palettes.

Over a quarter of gardeners follow a colour scheme, with many seeing colour as one of the most important qualities when buying a plant.

A dominant colour is often accented with plant pairings that look good together for form or colour all year round, moving harmoniously with the seasons. Early summer welcomes pastel hues before the hot reds, oranges, pinks and yellows dominate later in the season. Brits' ongoing quest to turn their outdoor space into an oasis of calm, especially amongst urban gardeners, is driving sales of green and white flowered plants; while shrubs that offer multi-season interest are also increasingly popular.

Colour is not only a focal point for flowers, but also an appealing factor when it comes to stems and leaves – and the aptly-named Hydrangea 'Magical' ticks both boxes. The plant series, which provides long-season interest, has become the top-selling summer flowering shrub, up 15% YOY with particular growth in the muted pastel shades.



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“We know that customers turn to bright colours and cheery plant pots as a pick-me-up for their gardens, and with the looming uncertainty of Brexit in 2019, we expect sales of brightly coloured plants to soar.”

Patrick Wall,
Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres

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Favouring fragrance & texture

Scent plays an increasingly important role in gardeners' planting schemes. Many plants such as herbs and geraniums not only offer fragrance through their flowers but also their leaves, bringing a beautiful aroma to the garden which can later be enjoyed in vases or potpourri. The trend for small-space gardening has turned attentions toward scented plants that make much more of an impact in enclosed spaces, where their fragrance is contained. Traditional favourites such as lavender and rosemary are trending for this reason, joined by more unusual shrubs such as *daphne* and *sarcococca*.

Dual-purpose plants that are both fragrant and offer a unique, architectural look and feel are also gaining ground. Just as florists are using unexpected, seasonal elements to reinvent traditional arrangements, this approach is being reflected in the garden. Textural plants such as ferns, grasses and trailing varieties are surging in sales. Ornamental vegetables including artichoke and kale are being introduced to flower beds to add structure, texture and colour as well as space-saving solutions for gardeners with no room for a vegetable patch.

Shady dealings

Just as fragrance and colour have the ability to transport us, light also plays an essential role in the garden and is one of the most crucial factors for garden design. This not only relates to creating ambience with solar lighting, or ensuring visitors are entertained in the sunniest spots of the garden, but also getting the most from our plants using natural light and shady spots.

Shade is a major concern, with nearly a fifth of gardeners listing it as their most common gardening headache.

Weather aside, shade in the garden is a rising concern for Brits, particularly those in urban areas where gardens are surrounded by fences, tall buildings or sheltered by surrounding balconies. Whether dealing with part-shade or complete shade throughout the day, gardeners often worry that their plants won't respond well to a dark environment.

Google searches for 'shade tolerant shrubs' were up 110% in 2018.

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“Planting for a shady garden is one of the most queried topics from customers in centres and online. Many people don't know that there are different types of shade, such as dry and damp shade, and that certain plants have the ability to flourish in these conditions. The introduction of our 'Garden Solutions' area for 2019 will help customers deal with the everyday problem of shade, as well as soil conditions, lack of time and the use of colour and fragrance.”

Mark Sage,
Head of Horticulture, Wyevale Garden Centres

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Shade-loving plants include:



The 2019 Pantone Colour of the Year, 'Living Coral', has already filtered through to social media feeds and homeware design for spring/summer and is set to gain ground in the garden. Representing the fusion of modern life with nature, 'Living Coral' is a must-have for contemporary gardeners, with Wyevale Garden Centres predicting increased sales across coral ranges of:



HEALTH & HEALING

The burgeoning trend in wellness is set to be even bigger in 2019, spurring a new desire to garden both for physical and mental benefits and to reap the rewards of healthy, home-grown produce. A greater interest and commitment towards healthy eating, fitness and plant-based diets is at the root of the trend, with veganism on the rise and Brits becoming more conscious than ever about health for the mind, body and soul.

Garden therapy

It's no secret that gardening makes people feel good. With the extended summer of 2018, gardeners enjoyed a much longer season outdoors than usual, helping to keep activity levels high and combat signs of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Gardeners report a huge sense of satisfaction from the mental and physical perks of undertaking gardening projects, particularly restoring neglected gardens or creating new ones from scratch.

More than 75% of gardeners feel a sense of accomplishment when tending to their gardens, while 70% say gardening makes them feel calm and relaxed.

“We've witnessed a rise in demand for simple projects that can be achieved by gardeners of all ages and abilities. This year we launched a series of one-hour projects for customers, which spurred a 50% increase in sales of pots and similar products. Our 'Little Diggers' product range, which is designed to encourage children to garden, has also doubled in growth over the last three years”

Mark Sage,
Head of Horticulture, Wyevale Garden Centres

There's an increasing drive to get children into gardening early, growing their own fruit and vegetables as a way of encouraging them to enjoy a healthier diet. Wyevale Garden Centres' half-term Little Diggers craft events saw a 91% uplift in visits in 2018, while the newly launched and free 'learning to grow' events welcomed hundreds of children in April alone. The educational initiative invites children to grow their own fruit and veg, with the 2019 range expanding to include rainbow carrots, rainbow Swiss chard, mini courgettes, mini cucumbers and other interesting, easy-to-grow edibles.

It is evident that, for all age groups, a sense of enjoyment comes from growing tasty produce, especially when the plant offers multiple health and wellbeing properties in return.

25-34 year olds are the most likely age group to purchase a plant for its health and wellbeing properties.

A gardening project for how to create a 'mini garden kitchen in a pot' generated one of the most engaged-with posts on Wyevale Garden Centres' social media channels in 2018, showing the desire for fresh ingredients to be grown right next to where they'll be served. Herbs are savouring the moment, with over two thirds of Brits growing plants in their kitchens. An essential ingredient for the wellness trend, they are often used in cooking, for herbal teas, or simply for their aroma. Chamomile and mint are two of the nation's go-to brews, while lavender is favoured for its calming properties.

Plant protein

Brits are becoming more conscious of what they are eating and where it is coming from. The rising number of vegans, vegetarians and 'flexitarians' (vegans/vegetarians who sometimes switch up their diet to include meat) shows a greater interest in plant-based diets and the benefits they bring, with the vegan movement set to be more prevalent than ever in 2019. With this in mind, the UK's

thriving 'Grow Your Own' sector is set to surge in interest...



22%
of us state that growing our own produce is our primary reason for getting our gardening gloves on



26%
say that growing tasty produce is our biggest gardening achievement to date

Nutrient-rich vegetables gained significant ground in 2018, with sales set to grow. This has influenced Wyevale Garden Centres to bring together a vegan range high in iron, calcium and proteins for 2019, to include:

- + Watercress
- + Spinach
- + Bok Choi
- + Asparagus
- + Broccoli
- + Brussels sprouts
- + Cauliflower
- + Peas
- + Kale

“Many dark-coloured, leafy green vegetables are rich in nutrients and contain high levels of protein, and for this reason are popular additions to the veg patch or window box for health-conscious gardeners.”

Patrick Wall,
Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres

Air purifying plants

As well as improving interiors, a plant-filled environment helps people to work more effectively and improve their sense of wellbeing, which is paramount for the future as Brits are spending more time than ever indoors and in office environments. As a result, they are turning to houseplants as a solution, with air-purifying plants seeing a huge uplift in sales. Delicate looking but easy-to-maintain, the plants help to clean the air of toxins while offering an attractive desk buddy for the home or workplace.

Google searches for 'air-purifying plants' grew by 63% in 2018 compared to the previous year.

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“Air-purifying plants are fairly low maintenance and offer a more natural, cost effective and therapeutic means to tackle indoor air pollution compared to an electric purifier. They often have exotic and interesting foliage that brings instant impact to every room and has made them incredibly popular on social media.”

Ciara Sheridan,
Houseplants Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centre

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The five most popular air-purifying plants are:



1

Peace lilies



2

Spider plants



3

Fiddle-leaf fig



4

Ferns



Aloe vera



INDOORS OUT

Wyevale Garden Centres last year coined gardens as the 'fifth room of the house' and witnessed the trend come into fruition during the heatwave of 2018, where Brits' living spaces flowed outdoors. As we adopt 'greener' shopping habits, diets and lifestyles, the boundaries between the indoors and out are becoming increasingly blurred, with the trend set to reach new heights this year. Interiors are transforming into jungle-like environments, while garden designs are now reflecting the styles and layouts of interior space, with separate areas to dine, entertain, relax and be active.

Bigger, bolder and greener

For Brits, size really does matter. Statement plants and feature foliage are set to be huge in all senses of the word for 2019, replacing soft furnishings throughout the home, as well as styling cafes, restaurants and other public spaces. Though bold and dramatic in their aesthetic; oversized plants also have cool and calming effects, helping Brits to create tranquil jungles throughout their living spaces.

Houseplant sales are up 31% YOY, with huge growth in the large foliage ranges.

Leafy houseplants are bringing new dimensions to minimalist interiors while adding depth and texture to a neutral colour palette, often used as screens between open-plan rooms. Where side-tables once stood and fireplaces sit empty, layered displays of greenery and low-level planted pots are now filling the spot.

Cheese plants (*Monstera deliciosa*), kentia palms (*Howea forsteriana*), areca palms (*Dyopsis lutescens*), rubber plants (*Ficus elastica*) and yuccas (*Yucca elephantipes*) are increasingly popular due to their interesting cut-out leaf designs, which have filtered through to home interiors and accessories as well as outdoor cushions and picnic crockery.



Tropical and botanical styles continue to trend, with 2019 welcoming increased ranges of indoor palms, such as the elephant ear (*Alocasia*), banana plant (*Musa*), bird of paradise (*Strelitzia*), aspidistra (*Aspidistra elatior*) and fiddle-leaf fig (*Ficus lyrata*). Low maintenance and easily portable, these houseplants are often found in multiple rooms throughout the home.

Room to grow

The garden often serves as a multi-functional space - a place to retreat and relax, as well as to entertain, grow fresh produce and for children to play. Gardeners are introducing subtle ways of differentiating between these areas to allow the many demands of the garden to coexist together, while making best use of the space. The evolution of abstract 'rooms' outdoors is set to be a key movement for 2019.

“Surprisingly, dividing up your garden helps to make it look and feel bigger, because you can't see the whole garden at once. It also helps you to focus on small project areas with their own style and purpose, and not feel overwhelmed to do too much with a single space.”

Julian Palphramand,
Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres

With neighbours often being in close quarters, Brits are seeking ways to create secluded spots within the garden, and are turning to plants as a way to screen from any prying eyes. Towering, upright grasses and fast-growing evergreen bamboos have seen a huge surge in sales, providing privacy while also evoking a sense of calm and order in the garden.

The plants-as-furniture trend is also spurring a new demand for plants that create instant shade for patio space. With summers predicted to get hotter and sunnier, ornamental trees for patio pots, bamboo and fast-growing shrubs are set to be increasingly popular. Wyevale Garden Centres has introduced more instant impact plants for 2019, from grasses to instant hedging and statement pots for large specimens, making it even easier to create a statement in limited time, all landing in centres in time for spring.

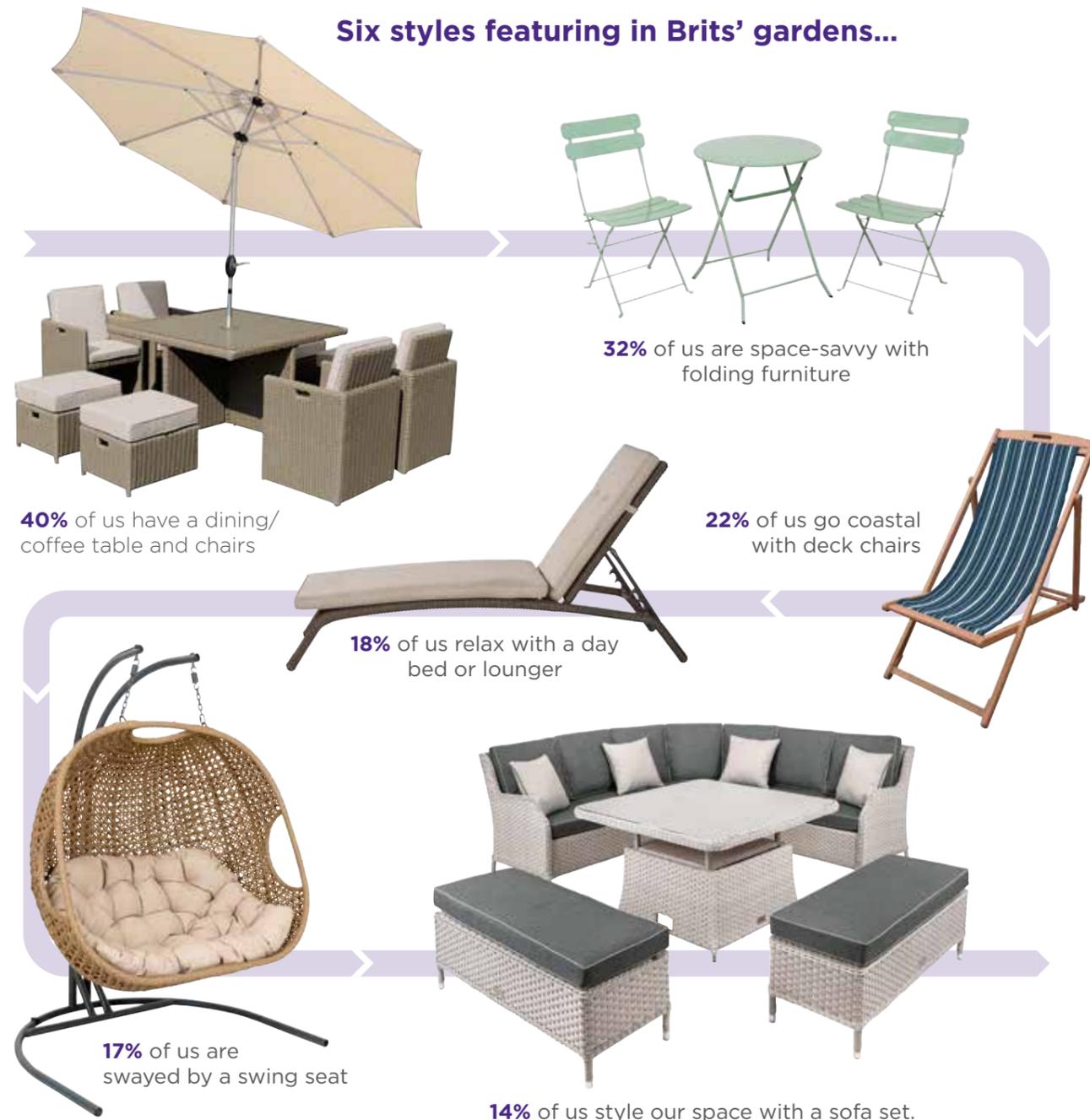
Sophisticated styling

Our gardens today are often smaller and yet much more important to us visually as a statement of our identity – a private space to enjoy as well as showcase to the world via social media. More than ever, Brits are using sophisticated rugs, cushions, swing seats, solar lighting, sofas and other interior-style products to recreate home space outdoors. Gardens have become an extension of our homes – the ‘fifth room’ – with the style of our kitchens and living rooms flowing

effortlessly outdoors through the blurred boundaries of bi-fold doors.

Homes are welcoming industrial-style finishes, with bare brickwork and concrete elements, and gardens are adopting the tones and materials of their surroundings. Rustic paving is being used to marry the home and garden, while pots, planters and furniture are being favoured in grey, earthy finishes that offer a muted palette as a foundation to be accessorised.

Six styles featuring in Brits' gardens...



Outdoor plant gifting

As the nation steers away from ‘single-use’ items and towards more sustainable, long-lasting alternatives, the gift sector is welcoming some colourful new additions.

Over 85% of gardeners have gifted or been gifted an outdoor plant.

The trend stems from Brits' desire to achieve value for money and longevity with each purchase. When sourcing new plants, nearly a quarter of Brits claim ‘how long they will live’ to be the most important factor. These savvy, eco-conscious shoppers are behind the emerging trend for gifting outdoor plants – a relatively new concept following houseplant gifting and the more traditional cut-flower bouquets.

“Many Brits begin gardening from the moment spring hits through to late-September, so it’s no surprise that when looking for a gift, people are turning to outdoor plants as a way to offer continued enjoyment throughout the season – and possibly for years to come. Fruit trees and roses are particularly popular for this reason.”

Tim Jacob, Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres

Outdoor plant gifting is already seeing varieties outside of the traditional rose proving popular, including:

- + Hydrangeas
- + Lavenders
- + Rhododendrons
- + Azaleas
- + Camellias



GIVING BACK IN THE GARDEN

A spotlight on the changing climate and new policies around sustainability are creating more engaged and savvy consumers. Today's gardeners are much more aware of the changes they can make to help protect the earth for a more sustainable future - be that on a personal, local or global level. With this comes a greater consideration for eco-friendly products and caring for wildlife, as well as a concern for how extreme weather and levels of pollution will affect our gardens in the future.

Lovely weather, we're having!

The Great British weather caused a media storm this year as Brits faced more unpredictable conditions than ever before. The icy Beast from the East swept the nation in the early spring, wiping out crops and cattle across the UK with severe snowfall. This was followed by the hottest and driest summer since 1976, which began with an unseasonably scorching late-May Bank Holiday. This period brought early sales of garden furniture (+46%), BBQs (+98%) and pot bedding (+30%) compared to the year prior.



Watering sales soared 22% YOY in May, with over 4,000 hoses, 20,000 watering accessories and 12,000 watering cans sold.

From farmers to home-gardeners, the early cold snap meant that growers across the nation started planting at the same time, without the two-week head start that southern gardeners normally get on the north. The combined influence of the Beast from the East and the hot summer saw tomatoes in Yorkshire ripening at the same time as tomatoes in the south.

However, the extreme weather was not without its complications. During the three-month scorcher, which started with the late-May Bank Holiday and lasted through to the end of August, Google searches for 'drought tolerant plants' were up 83% compared to 2017 as gardeners fought to protect their plants and produce. The switch-change from sub-zero to searing temperatures also brought a dramatic increase in pest populations, such as the greenfly.

Into the wild

Nature will remain at the forefront of gardeners' minds in 2019, with ongoing support both at home and in the community to encourage greater numbers of wildlife into local areas. Conversations around wildlife are particularly popular on social media, with Wyevale Garden Centres' engagements up 275% YOY for wildlife-related content. It's not only the birds and the bees drawing attention; the most shared piece of social content was 'how to build an insect house'. From DIY habitats and buying hedgehog houses, to using garden materials as nest spots and wildlife corridors, Brits are proving to be generous hosts...



Nearly 70% of British gardeners buy food for wildlife or provide a home for wildlife



Over 60% grow plants that benefit wildlife

Companion planting, where two or more plants are grown together for a beneficial effect, is becoming widely popular as Brits use the technique to provide a habitat for creatures in the garden, as well as an organic route to controlling pests and aiding pollination.

People are increasingly aware of the role that pollinators play in facilitating reproduction of the world's flowering plants, and their vital importance to both horticulture and agriculture. Vegetables are the surprise stars of this show, with beans, peas, rocket, courgettes and garlic all having flowers that draw in pollinators like a magnet.

Wild meadows are also expected to flourish in 2019, with Google searches for 'wildflowers' up by nearly 30% YOY. There is a growing trend towards leaving a patch of the garden less tended to, which serves both as a means to attract wildlife as well as create less work for time-poor gardeners. This 'looser', more relaxed style of gardening has been adopted by many high-profile garden designers over the past year, using a mix of herbaceous perennials, grasses and wildflowers to soften areas of an otherwise structured garden.

Environmentally conscious shoppers

Plastic has been one of the biggest talking points of 2018. The global focus on ways to reduce single-use plastic and improve sustainability is driving trends towards energy-efficient products that use less packaging and are more suitable for today's conscious shoppers.



Garden centres are seeking solutions to reduce the amount of plastic packaging generated each year, while ensuring plants and products remain protected from the conditions of the outdoors. In 2018, Wyevale Garden Centres eliminated the use of expanded polystyrene from its bedding packs and ensured that plant pots and pot bedding containers were made from 100% recyclable materials. To ensure a high success rate of plastic separation at landfill, the garden centre group also trialled easily identifiable carbon-free boxed bedding, which will continue into 2019 with the phased introduction of 'taupe pots'.



“Due to many gardening products needing to survive outdoors for lengthy periods of time – often in adverse weather conditions – the issue of packaging is always a prevalent industry topic. As the largest garden centre retailer in the UK, we see it as our responsibility to move towards more sustainable options where possible, and this will continue to be an ongoing mission in 2019, starting with the scrapping of all plastic carrier bags.”

Richard Bruce,
Trading & Marketing Director,
Wyevale Garden Centres

Bare root ranges, which offer customers top-quality plant material without over-engineering the packaging, proved hugely popular in 2018, with increased ranges of roses and soft fruit bushes being brought in for 2019. The bare root plants are dug up whilst dormant in the late autumn/early winter and the roots are then wrapped and tied to provide the simplest method of getting plants to customers in early spring.

Pollution-tolerant plants

Just like humans, plants that live in cities, industrial or built-up areas are susceptible to pollution. Urbanisation and the rise of city balconies and courtyard gardens have spurred a growing interest in pollution-tolerant plants that can withstand the city smog.

Six pollution-tolerant plants and how to care for them:



Known as the butterfly bush, buddleja produces clusters of deep scented flowers from midsummer into autumn (July to September). Rich in nectar, this fast-growing, hardy deciduous shrub attracts butterflies, bees and other insects and thrives in any well-drained soil (chalk, loam or sand).



This plant offers rich, colourful flowers with ruffled petals and golden stamens (from late winter into spring. February to April) and offset by glossy evergreen leaves, the Camellia proves that beautiful plants can also be tolerant to pollution. Plant in light shade, in shelter and in moist but well-drained, humus-rich, lime-free soil (loam) or in a container, in ericaceous (lime-free) compost.



This is a superb variety of viburnum as it has bright pink, sweetly scented flowers which open on dark stems from November to May. It's a vigorous, upright shrub, that looks good all year round and is easy to grow in moist but well-drained fertile soil (chalk, loam or sand), in sun or light shade and sheltered from cold winds.



This easy to grow barberry has spiny shoots and simple leaves. Soft yellow or orange flowers appear in spring (April to May) and are followed by small berries in the autumn. This deciduous or evergreen shrub will succeed in a wide range of conditions. Plant in full sun or partial shade, in well-drained humus-rich soil (chalk, loam or sand), although it will be tolerant of most soils as long as they are reasonably well-drained.



Chaenomeles (Japanese quince) flower in spring and produce edible fruits in autumn, which can be used for jelly-making. The plant provides early nectar for bees and thrives in any well-drained, fertile soil (chalk, loam or sand), in sun or light shade. It's great for training under house windows or on low walls and fences.



This is a handsome, vigorous, large evergreen shrub, quite different from other escallonias. With larger, glossy, rich green leaves and clusters of scented white flowers in mid and late summer (July to August). Plant in well-drained, fertile soil (chalk, loam or sand) in full sun or partial shade, sheltered from cold winds. It can be grown in the open in mild areas, but it's best grown against a south-facing wall in cold areas.



SUMMARY

This report has captured the in-depth understanding of Wyevale Garden Centres' senior buyers, along with the thoughts and opinions of gardeners across the nation, to provide a snapshot of the UK's gardening landscape in 2019. The picture is steeped in sentiment and modern creativity, with gardening shown as educational and inclusive, transcending the generations.

Amidst the wave of new trends and techniques that swept the nation in 2018, six themes in particular prove central to Brits' gardening habits today: Front of Show, Home-Grown Heroes, Multisensory Spaces, Health & Healing, Indoors Out and Giving Back in the Garden.

In times of uncertainty, Brits are turning to what they know and what comforts them, but this nostalgic nod to tradition is far from outdated. Today's intrepid, savvy gardeners are breaking the boundaries with how and where they grow their plants, and

Wyevale Garden Centres is quick to react with new ranges, projects and advice.

The digital realm is providing an open forum for conversations in gardening, connecting Wyevale Garden Centres' experts directly with their customers and driving demand for reactive, trend-led offerings. This is not only shaping how people engage with gardening content, but also cementing the role of the garden centre as a one-stop destination for inspiration, shopping and interactive experiences.

The global spotlight on responsible sourcing and sustainability is paramount for the horticulture industry and Wyevale Garden Centres is committed to staying abreast of these issues as new innovations unfold. The retailer predicts that as people gain a better understanding of the relationship they have with the planet, the more they will look to their garden as a platform for positive change.



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