

current gardening trends in South Africa



by *renée wright*

Gardening trends must of a necessity relate to the way that we live, as the garden is simply an extension of our homes and hence an extension of our living space. Security concerns have given rise to the popularity of security estates and with many South Africans opting for the relative safety of these developments, garden sizes have shrunk dramatically. A small garden surrounded by almost disproportionately large homes and high perimeter walls, has created new challenges in a number of areas, driving current trends in gardening.



- Narrow, high passages have called for new ways in which to deal with the creation of vertical height. Perspective murals and custom made wrought iron decorative items have seen an explosion in creativity in meeting these challenges through creative trellising, plaques, wall shelving for pots and a myriad of other decorative options.
- Planting design has undergone a surge of discretion and re-evaluation. Plants need to be chosen much more carefully to be able to cope with unusual climatic zones, i.e. full shade in the morning and blazing afternoon sun. Growers have also met the size challenge in producing many compact versions of old favourites, for example a small Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow shrub.
- We have started to use ornamental grasses much more freely to provide constant colour contrast in the garden and are far less reliant on flower power. Growers again are meeting this trend magnificently with the constant supply of new and exciting varieties. This meets the client's demand for a colourful garden throughout the year with the minimum of maintenance.
- Our heightened awareness of our combined responsibility in managing our precious water resources collectively more responsibly, have resulted in a new awareness of indigenous plants and their use have increased dramatically.
- Our constant need for tranquillity in our gardens have also resulted in clever new ways of incorporating water features into smaller spaces and still keep it safe for our children. ☞

In short, we have had to learn to use our compact spaces smartly, whilst coping with some unique new challenges without sacrificing our need for a beautiful and restful garden living space as an extension to our homes.



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