



Gardenzine

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Garden Design

Vertical Gardens - Good for You, Good for the Planet


By George Ametani of Buildmat

What The Guardian called 'The Urban Green Revolution' is a growing movement. Green areas are popping up all over cities, in balconies, roof gardens and more. But why do green areas need to be flat?


This is where vertical gardens come into play. A vertical garden can be grown directly up a wall, hanging vertically. This isn't just the usual creeping plants like ivy that grow up walls though, these are entire gardens of various plants suspended on walls while causing no damage to the underlying structure. Not only do vertical gardens help the environment, they also make buildings more economical. A building with vertical gardens on its walls will stay cooler in summer and warmer in winter, saving money on air conditioning and heating. Not only that, but businesses with vertical gardens tend to get more customers, and vertical gardens also improve mental health and reduce stress considerably.




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Gardenzine Newsletter

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Julie Kilpatrick

Julie lives on the west coast of Scotland with Allan, her partner of thirty-one years, her dog, Garry and a recently rescued stray cat, Wally. At the age of twenty-one, she opened a dance studio in Glasgow city centre which won her a Shell Livewire Award for outstanding enterprise. After her attempts to expand the business ended in spectacular failure, her love of gardening inspired a career change. She studied environment and development with the Open University and trained in habitat surveying for nature conservation with the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

She began her gardening career with regular garden maintenance work in her local area before progressing to a garden design and construction business, specialising in complete design and builds and employing a team of five. When a client suggested she might like to try lecturing, she began teaching one class a week at a Glasgow college and developed a real passion for it. After a year of trying to juggle teaching and running a business, by chance, a student left a newspaper open on his desk at the jobs section and a part-time job as a home compost adviser caught her eye. It meant she could give up the business and make herself more available for teaching.

As home compost adviser, she worked on a Scottish Government funded scheme alongside local authorities to encourage the public to reduce waste by composting at home. She attended events and gave talks to local gardening groups and schools, as well as training local volunteers to help spread the word about reducing waste. She designed two show Gardens for Waste Aware Scotland, winning them a silver-gilt and gold medal for her 'Compost at Home' gardens at Gardening Scotland and Ayr Flower Show.

She currently lectures full-time, covering garden design, horticulture and landscaping topics. In her spare time, she blogs and writes about gardening and horticulture and looks after a small wildflower meadow at her local community garden. By her own admission, she is now mostly an armchair gardener—spending much of her time reading and talking about horticulture rather than actually getting her hands dirty. She loves reading about new discoveries in the world of botany and about innovative horticultural techniques. She is especially interested in plant intelligence and plant behaviour. Her favourite plant is the wild bramble and her least favourite plant is *Crocasmia*.

She is author of *The Plant Listener* and blogs at www.theplantlistener.com as well as contributing articles to *Gardenzine*.

The Plant Listener

Starting with the evolution of plants, *The Plant Listener* journeys through the life of a plant from seed to senescence, explaining plant processes and how that knowledge can be applied to horticultural practices. Interspersed throughout the book are snippets about some of the author's favourite plants. The book is written in a conversational style and avoids the use of technical jargon.

First published in 2018 by Gardenzine Publications

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Table of Contents

What if plants have brains?

PART ONE: THE EVOLUTION OF PLANTS

Plants make landfall

Putting down roots

The seed plants arrive

Diversity and the death of the dinosaurs

PART TWO: SEX ON THE BRAIN

Plants on the pull

Choosing the right matchmaker

Avoiding incest

Messing around with nature

Pregnant plants

Giving birth

PART THREE: A NEW LIFE BEGINS

Waiting for the right conditions

Abandoned at birth

The pack leader emerges

Being a good mother

Dolly the sheep ain't so great

PART FOUR: WORSHIPPING THE SUN

Reaching out to Ra

Using a ladder

Born in the sky

Living in the shadows

Too much of a good thing

PART FIVE: GETTING ENOUGH TO DRINK

The role of RAM

Surviving drought

Not waving but drowning

Coping with wet feet

PART SIX: WE ALL HAVE TO DIE SOMETIME

Annuals, biennials and ephemerals

Soft-stemmed perennials

Trees and shrubs

Life in the graveyard

Excerpts from The Plant Listener

From Part one: The Evolution of Plants—The Seed Plants Arrive

“Unfortunately to achieve lasting greatness, you have to be versatile and the gymnosperms simply weren’t versatile enough to remain dominant for long. They eventually lost their place at the top of the plant hierarchy and had to give up their crowns to the most sophisticated plants of all. “

From Part two: Sex on the Brain: Pregnant Plants: And you thought nine months was tough

“The female coco de mer takes between five and six years to bring its fruit to maturity. So now I’m impressed. That’s a hell of a long time to be pregnant! The male coco de mer plant is no less impressive, with a wonderfully phallic flower, between one and two meters long.....How could there not be an ancient legend about this rare tree? Well, legend has it, the male trees uproot themselves and stride over to the females for a night of passionate lovemaking.”

From Part three: A New Life Begins: The Pack Leader Emerges

“In almost all cases, when the dominant shoot apical meristem is lost, the plant becomes bushier as one or more of the lower branches compete to achieve the top position. It is by understanding the phenomenon of apical dominance that we can solve a major gardening mystery—when and what to prune. Once you know what the plant will do when you remove its pack leader, you will never be afraid to tackle pruning again.”

From Part six: We all Have to Die Sometime: Life in the Graveyard

“When plants die, scores of creatures rush in to take advantage of a sudden supply of food. In the wild, plants fall where they have lived all their lives and their decomposition takes place amongst the living. For plants which share their space with human gardeners, upon their deaths, they will probably be removed and interred in the compost heap. No plants live in this plant graveyard but the production of compost is so important to the health of our plants, it is vital for a good plants-person to understand what goes on in the average compost heap.”

Opening Lines from The Plant City—expected publication date, early 2021

The fondest memories I have of the home where I grew up are of being in the garden. We lived on the ground floor of a ‘four-in-block’ in Glasgow. In those days, the garden section belonging to the house upstairs was not separated by a hedge or fence, as is so often the case now. This meant that our neighbours upstairs, Mr and Mrs Watson, worked side by side with my parents, tending to their respective plots.

Mr Watson was an accomplished and knowledgeable gardener. With the help of an annual supply of manure and his own home-made compost, he grew beautiful roses to please his wife and an array of fruit and vegetables to please himself. As a child, when I got bored of playing ‘Chinese ropes’ on the lawn, I would regularly wander into Mr Watson’s part of the garden and follow him around as he worked repeating what remains my favourite word today – ‘Why?’ If the ‘why?’ was about gardening or nature, Mr Watson was more than happy to answer. When it was time for him to take a break, we would sit together on his wooden bench, watching fat bumblebees toing and froing from their nest underneath Mr Watson’s shed and he would remind me of the importance of bees and worms, but not, it seems, the importance of earwigs which were Mr Watson’s mortal enemies.

Before all that, when I was too young to have such meaningful conversations with Mr Watson, I can remember sitting on a freshly dug patch of ground while my mother worked on her plot close by. Gripped by the curiosity of the very young and the desire to taste as many strange objects as possible, I scooped up a handful of soil and put it in my mouth.....