



MY GRAND IDEA

—
Garden designer Marian Boswall on the transformation of a house and field into a plantswoman's paradise

How did you find this garden?

'I met the owner, who is a botanist, through one of my garden-design courses. She asked me to create a part-formal, part-wooded landscape around the timber-frame house she'd built a few years earlier.'

— **What was the site like?**

'It was a field on the Kent Weald, with both the house and an outdoor infinity pool in one corner. A conservatory faced the hedge-lined lane at the front of the house, while the views from the house at the back were restricted by small-ish windows. Both the building and pool needed to be settled more firmly into their surroundings, with more made of the scenery. The field also needed



to be drained so we could create a garden that was suited to the pollinating and productive plants that the owner wanted to grow. To do that, we needed to reorientate the focus of the house.'

— **How did you do this?**

'We worked with RX Architects (01797 330 198; rxarchitects.com) to open up the back of the house by adding a glazed extension and, inspired by the Wealden landscape, we transformed the field into a garden of variously sized rectangular lawns and abundantly planted beds. These are intersected by gravel paths and tree-lined vistas, which allow views of the countryside beyond.

'Architect Derek Rankin designed the beautifully simple, larch-clad extension with fixed glazing on two sides and a sliding door on the third. It opens up this new living space to the garden.

'We also worked with Derek to add a porch to the front door, to make that side of the house more welcoming, and ran the planting

all the way up to the property, on all sides, to soften the walls.'

— **And the swimming pool?**

'To make it feel more enclosed, without hiding it from view, we built an oak pergola over the gravel path we had run between the side of the house and the end of the pool. The weathered oak blends perfectly with the timber cladding of the house and the pergola is a lovely see-through boundary between the owner's two main living spaces – the new extension and the pool.

'It also sets you on the path towards the rectangular vegetable beds that lie beyond the pool, on towards a wildflower meadow and a boardwalk that leads across a large pond, towards an ancient 200-acre woodland that we've framed beyond that.'

GD
Marian Boswall Landscape Architects (020 7305 7153, marianboswall.com). This garden is shortlisted as Best Large Residential Garden in the 2019 Society of Garden Designers Awards (sgdarwards.com)



ABOVE The planting scheme surrounds the house with colour and texture

ABOVE RIGHT An oak pergola complements the house's cladding

RIGHT A long, tree-lined walkway leads to nearby woodland



WORDS: ARIABELLA ST JOHN PARKER PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON DODD, JASON INGRAM