

Easy to maintain between 1-3m tall we have gone with a low common beech hedge. This offers a lovely green hedge in the spring and summer and then a rich red leaf hedge in the winter – adding interest and a new dimension to the garden. Its indigenous to the UK so works well with this style of property and depending on the level of maintenance you want – it can be angled to give a more formal look. If straight, then pruning in early autumn is required to ensure thick coverage over the winter. If angled, then add a pruning in July is required to tidy it up.



To edge the borders of the larger garden area, I have gone for the first layer which are ground covering plants. For colour in the summer and spring we have the purple *Sisyrinchium bermudianum*, dying back in winter. A native alternative would be the *Geranium pratense*.

Working along side this is the small white periwinkle which flowers during the same time as the purple but starting slightly earlier and working through the autumn.. signifying the end of the colour it moves the garden into the winter being an evergreen and keeping the green ground cover in the borders during the winter.

It is low maintenance and pest free. Cut back in early spring ready for the new *Sisyrinchium bermudianum* and *Trifolium* to take their places.

To finalise the boarding edge layer, we have the perennial *Trifolium repens* 'Purpurascens', also known as purple clover. Offering the garden, a deep dark purple foliage from spring to autumn and dying off during the winter this adds a darker depth to the scheme. It gives further white flowers during the summer bringing the boarder to life. Also, low maintenance, great for beginner gardeners it is generally pest and disease free.

The next layer starts, visible on entering, with a Spiky intensely dark-violet salvia. Adding real impact through colour. It is great for cottage style gardens attracting lots of wildlife's and great for butterflies and bees. It does well during winter and can give its purple flowers from mid spring to later Autumn.

In several spots through out the garden you will find Mantra plants (also known as Common Mint), this adds another layer providing an herby fresh scent in the air. This is the one to watch as it can spread fast so may need to be cut back. It produces a fluffy like white/lilac flower in the summer months to calm the intercity of the Salvia.

In the centre of this layer and spotted around in the board the other side of the drive is the *Ballota acetabulosa* which works well with its neighbouring plants. This evergreen shrub will give the garden it's body in the winter with white green leaves. It produced small pink/purple flowers for the months of July and August.

To balance the purple of the Salvia on the right (when looking at the garden) we have a tall deep purple bearded iris on the far left. This adds body to softer lilacs and pinks of its surrounding flowers and as a contrast to the yellow behind it.

The final plant on this layer (either side of the bin area) and dotted throughout is the Astelia or 'silver spear'. This architectural plant adds a contemporary twist to the scheme and gives edge to the softer ground covering plants and grasses. It produces yellow flowers which will be peek some early spring interest before the garden moves into full flower.

In the third layer, weaved among the mint and Ballote is the striking yellow Allium obliquum which will give the real wow factor in full bloom of mid spring to summer. Adding depth of interest and playing well with the purples this will create an element of fun and enchantment.

On the final layer of the garden, running along the back fence and wall and creating a blurred edging are the grasses. Softening any hard edges and adding movement to the scheme. Yellow in winter these grasses work with the reds of the common beech to give the garden it's winter pallet.



In the summer (June to September) this moves to greens and yellow with silver/green flowers which tie together the green and silver leaves throughout and the mass of purple and yellow flowering. They require cutting back in early spring ready for the new foliage.

Completing the fifth layer and providing the all year-round interest, on the left-hand side there is a small boxus ball which will provide a nice green touch amongst the yellows and purples of the summer and the reds and yellows of the winter. These need 'framing' or 'pruning' to the required shape in later summer.



Full hardy and the plant to be allowed to grow the tallest is the Rosa ballerina, placed in the back corner of the garden area. The Hydrangea-like clusters of tiny, slightly scented, white-centred, light pink flowers are present from July to September with mid-green leaves (like many of the other plants in the scheme). The rose bush lays dormant in winter still providing the structure but providing no new roots. Cut back and de-head in early spring ready for the new growth and light pink flowers which will give a great back ground for the scheme as a whole.

In the long boarder the other side of the garden, along with the Ballote already mentioned, it has a touch of pink/purple in the Dierama pulcherrimum (pictured here together).



These grass-like flowers give the border a more informal look, softening the Ballote and adding a touch of colour getting ready for the full impact on entering the driveway. In full flower July to August it will timely with the other colours in the garden.

Easy to manage with only the need to maintain and cut away dead winter stems in early spring ready for the new year of flowers.

Finally, to finish the scheme are the two pots in the corner of the drive under the window. Here we have taken across the mint from the garden area in to one pot. Easy to grow and maintain they are a great choice for adding that informal look and the splurge of small flowers in the summer. Cut back as desired. Used for drinks, salads and more they are a great plant to enjoy in more than just looks. The scent of this plant is a really great feature adding a new dimension to the garden scheme and inviting visitors with its fresh aroma.

In the larger pot I have gone with an Iceberg Floribunda Rose bush. It flowers freely and continuously from early summer, often well into winter so starts and ends the flowering season of your garden with its crisp white flowers. Its sweet scent will act well with the mint and the softness of the white will balance well with the grey pot and mirror the tiled steps to the far left.