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GARDENS NEW STYLES

The grass of 2015 has graduated

BY ANTHEA GERRIE

NO LONGER just a place to hang out and smell the flowers, the garden has become the latest "room" to be dressed to impress.

In demand is the pergola, as seen in a Hampstead garden designed by multiple Chelsea silver-gilt winner Barry Burrows of Bartholomew Landscaping. It's not a summerhouse, as it offers no protection against rain, but it is a focal point, offering shade and "a perfect environment in which to cuddle up with a loved one or catch a little catnap."

At close on £5,000, this is serious architecture and, given the British weather, many might prefer to spend an additional 50 per cent on

a summerhouse with a roof, which can be lit and heated.

Nicola Gidlow, buyer for Outdoor Living at John Lewis, which sells a great little round redwood pavilion from Crane, says more customers are looking to add a structure that can double as a study, gym, playroom or entertaining space, as well as a store for garden furniture.

A summerhouse is a good place to store furniture – and kids

It can also be a great place to store boomerang kids: "Increasingly children are returning to the family home after university, so studios become a retreat or, at a pinch, an extra bedroom," says Gidlow, who adds that, even at £7,000, a summerhouse is a bargain compared to

building an extension. It also saves the cost and pain of having to apply for planning permission and it can move home with you.

In the garden itself, Burrows says structural planting such as topiary and formal box hedging are less popular. Perhaps as a foil to all the architecture, a free-flowing natural style is taking over, with a return to classic plants such as roses.

"Think scent, texture and colour which provide changing displays rather than evergreen formality," he urges, calling for a bold approach to mixing flower hues: "Personally, I'm favouring orange, mauve, blue and dark green at the moment."

While the lawn will never go away, it no longer has to serve as the flooring for the entire garden. "Grass is not really suitable for the placement of furniture, as the moisture from a lawn can creep into wood or rattan frames," says Burrows, who recommends hard surfacing.

FURNITURE

Architectural statement pieces are the new trend in garden furniture – think a single stunning lounge or daybed creating a focal point, as an adjunct to your dining table and chairs. Some of the best are from Roche Bobois, with sumptuous oversized couches and Indian Ocean, with its leaf-shaped Verde lounge and the Monte Carlo daybed big enough for a couple. With a happily much less hefty price tag, the Indian Ocean Radial chair also makes a great complement to a dining set.



Bold

Outdoor seating is making a big statement

▲ Saga Outdoor Collection by Christophe Delcourt at Roche Bobois. Made of acacia wood with a tobacco stain oil finish, from £3,120



▼ Monte Carlo Daybed, Indian Ocean, £4,500

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ACCESSORIES

Planters are glinting in galvanised metal and pewter, a fitting home for foliage. Some of the most affordable come from H&M, which also offers a complementary punched metal watering can. Metal is also encircling lanterns in the form of wire surrounding canvas from Shimu and a handsome birdcage-style cover on a stand from Keir Townsend.

A beautiful outdoor trolley, such as the Felix from B&D, sets the tone for al fresco entertaining, while meadow-patterned weatherproof covers from The Camouflage Company keep barbecues and tools under wraps when not in use.

▼ Metal plant pot, H&M, £6.99



▼ Birdcage garden lamp, Keir Townsend, from £590



▼ 1881 porcelain garden seat, £2,600 a pair, Mayfair Gallery, mayfairgallery.com



▲ French wrought-iron table, c. 1910, Architectural Heritage, £680, architectural-heritage.co.uk

Shiny
In the mood for
metallics



▲ Wire and canvas lanterns, Shimu, £17.50 each



▲ Felix Trolley, Cathy Azria for B&D, price on request



▲ Punched metal watering can, H&M, £12.99

COLLECTIBLES

Antiques have made their way into the garden in the form of art nouveau wrought-iron tables, 19th-century porcelain garden seats and mid-century wire loungers.

Pay a visit to salvage emporia such as Lassco, which have a great selection of one-off pieces, as well as antique dealers.

It's not all about the relics of the past, though, as the artists of today are creating the collectibles of tomorrow in the form of bronze fruit from Bull & Stein and the bronze table which doubles as a bench from Cathy Azria for B&D.

▼ Bull & Stein bronze apples, Lisa Pappou for Urban Living Interiors, from £800



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