

SUSIE'S GARDEN

Our gardening expert thinks outside the box to fulfil a decade-old dream of installing a pretty and practical pond

A lifelong and passionate gardener, Susie White has a free flowing planting style which owes much to herbs, wildflowers, childhood plants and unusual perennials.



It's amazing what you can do with an old trough!

Ever since David and I made this garden nearly ten years ago I have wanted a pond! It's the single best thing that you can do for wildlife and it's been on the to-do list for a long time.

There's a stream running next to our garden so there's always been somewhere for birds to drink but I wanted to have still water as well. It's been difficult to find the right site but we've finally done it!

The new pond is on an area of paving that is edged by a blue, white and silver border. Although there's a bench there, we didn't really sit on it because there was just too much paving and it didn't feel welcoming. I didn't want to dig down as it would

be a lot of work and we might hit a drain. When a friend was selling an old galvanised water trough it was the perfect solution.

David lifted the paving slabs, managing not to disturb the thyme that had grown in the cracks. We levelled the ground and surrounded the trough with gravel. I asked a landscaper friend about pond paints as I wanted to seal the inside with a black finish. He suggested Antel A1 which is water-based and can be applied to almost any surface. It was easy to put on and I was delighted with the effect.

Inside I've made a raised support for a native water plant called bogbean.

It provides an egg-laying

site for dragonfly whose larvae will use the stems to climb out of the water. It's planted in basket using aquatic compost from the garden centre and will have starry white flowers in spring.

Having plants at one end will also give a platform for birds to drink from and a scramble site for anything that falls into the water.

I've planted silver lamb's ears around the pond, their colour echoing that of the galvanised trough.

The thymes will self seed into the gravel and we can sit on the bench watching birds and bees drinking, dragonflies flitting and a whole host of other wildlife benefitting from the water.



Thyme spreading across the paving



Silver lamb's ears



Bogbean

Don't forget...

- * As they ripen, save seed of your favourites to make plants for free
- * Pinch out tips of aubergines once they have 5 or 6 fruits
- * Take cuttings of pelargoniums

Best Buys

The pond sealant I used is Antel A1 and I found its website to be very informative. This quick-drying paint comes in a variety of colours and is in two parts that you mix together. I used a roller to apply it and it was quick to do. It needs two coats and you have to use the paint within an hour or it sets. Amazingly you can clean brushes and rollers just using water and detergent. One litre costs £19.85 plus VAT from www.antel.co.uk



What A Bright Idea!

You can make a mini wetland using the runoff from a drainpipe. It takes up very little room and there's information on the WWT (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust) website. It's made using two containers such as storage boxes, one higher than the other so the overflow creates slightly different conditions. It brightens a dull corner and is a place for water plants, marginal plants and ferns.



Smart thinking

Reader's Tip

I recycled an old lampshade by placing a plant inside it. Now it brightens up a corner of my garden instead! Mrs A. Sharman, Sheffield

Email your pics and tips to: myweekly@dcthomson.co.uk



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