

The Saga guide

...to easy gardening



- Easy-care borders
- Time-saving tips
- No-fuss veg
- And so much more...



Welcome

We all want an attractive garden, but all too often it requires too much effort. Weeding, pruning, supporting perennials, dead-heading, dealing with pests and diseases, and many other jobs can take up a lot of time, leaving all too little for just enjoying the garden.

In the past, we would have been told to dig up lawns, fill in borders or ditch the vegetable plot, then pave or cover it with gravel for an easier life.

Along with some time-saving tips, this guide shows you how to avoid such drastic action by just making some simple changes to help reduce the amount of time you spend caring for your garden.

Low maintenance doesn't mean no maintenance, but for the minimum amount of work it's possible to have a beautiful and productive garden – and have a life.



WHAT'S INSIDE

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For more information about gardening, visit saga.co.uk/gardening

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Getting started

Easy ways for you to save time

We might be conditioned from an early age into thinking that there's a right and wrong way to carry out tasks in the garden, but there really isn't. There's simply a hard way and an easier way that makes looking after the garden less of a burden.

Take growing plants from seeds. The traditional method involves sowing seeds in small pots or trays, placing in a propagator and waiting for them to germinate. After this they'll need pricking out and transplanting into individual pots then hardening off, all before they're finally ready to be planted outside.

There's nothing wrong

with this, of course, but it is a bit of a palaver and you often end up with many more plants than you need. So remove the early work by buying seedlings in plugs, or ready-grown young plants.

In the past there was very little choice of varieties, so your options were limited. Not any more. Mail-order companies have cottoned on that we don't all have the time to raise plants from seed and provide an almost unlimited choice of plants. But be warned, don't get carried away when you're choosing – you still have to plant them out when they arrive.

PLANT SUPPLIERS

Jersey Plants Direct jerseyplantsdirect.com, 01534 871113
Thompson & Morgan thompson-morgan.com, 0844 5731818
Delfland Nurseries delfland.co.uk, 01354 740553

TOP TIME-SAVING TOOLS

Garden fork

An absolute must-have. Use it for fluffing up the soil, lifting mulch, mixing compost, picking up leaves and so much more.

Secateurs

A real multi-tool. Keep a pair in your pocket for pruning, cutting string, slicing open compost bags, taking cuttings and even cutting wire.



Hosepipe with spray gun

A necessity. The spray pattern on a good gun can be changed to water seedlings, established plants in the ground or cleaning the patio.

Powered hedge trimmer

Cuts hedges down to size in a fraction of the time it takes with shears. Also makes trimming back perennials and grasses a breeze, and can be used to cut evergreens into fancy shapes.

Plastic trug

A bit like a wheelbarrow with handles, but perfect for smaller gardens. Use it to carry tools, pick up plant debris and for mixing compost when planting out.

The no-fuss kitchen garden

Ten steps to successful veg

1 Be realistic about how much time you have. If you can spare only a few minutes a week, there's no point in committing yourself to an allotment. Time-strapped gardeners are better off growing veg in pots or in a small plot in the back garden.

2 Reduce your workload by dividing large areas up with paths and raised beds. Apart from making the space more manageable, it means there will be less weeding to do.

3 Gardeners traditionally dig soil to prepare it for planting in the autumn. Try 'no-dig' gardening instead. Advocates of this method remove weeds from the ground then cover it with a thick layer of leaf mould, garden compost or well-rotted manure. Young plants can be planted directly into this in the spring. It will need to be topped up with organic material each autumn.

4 Most edibles do best in a sunny, sheltered position, where the combination of heat and light will encourage them to grow and ripen to perfection. But there are many varieties of vegetables that don't need such perfect conditions, which you can try if your patch is not quite up to scratch.

5 Don't go mad and order far too many seedlings or plants, only to discover that you don't have time to look after them all. Stick to edibles that you like to eat, or that are expensive to buy or not readily available, such as spinach and Swiss chard.



6 Look out for varieties that have the words F1 hybrid printed on their packets – these have been bred to ensure uniformity, health, vigour and high yields. Similarly, those marked with a trophy have been given the Award of Garden Merit by the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society), meaning they're straightforward to grow.

7 Some vegetables are more prone to problems than others. Reduce time spent troubleshooting by growing crops that are naturally resistant or have been bred to be more tolerant of pests and diseases.

8 Tomatoes, courgettes and peppers germinate easily, so if you do decide to grow from seed, there's no need to sow the entire packet. Sow only a few more seeds than you need and save the rest for next year in an airtight box in a cool, dark place.

9 A crop rotation plan will prevent the build-up of pests and diseases in the soil. Divide edibles into three groups (roots and salads, brassicas, beans and fruiting vegetables) and grow in a different bed or area each year. In year three, plants will be back in their original position.

10 Edibles in pots are much more vulnerable to drying out than those grown in the ground, so require frequent watering. You could consider replacing watering cans or hoses with a drip irrigation system that has a programmable timer to ensure your plants are kept moist (see page 8).

TIME-SAVING TIP

When growing crops in pots, add water-retaining granules to compost to reduce watering.

TEN EASIEST VEG TO GROW

- ◆ **Courgette 'Defender'** – a downy-mildew-resistant variety that's renowned for heavy crops of uniform dark green fruit.
- ◆ **Tomato 'Tumbler'** – produces masses of cherry-sized fruit on trailing stems, without the need for removing fiddly side-shoots. Perfect for hanging baskets and pots.
- ◆ **Potato 'Sarpò Mira'** – large, tasty, floury maincrop tubers on a high-yielding plant that's resistant to blight and attack by slugs.
- ◆ **Mixed salad leaves** – Formula 1 racing champions of the veg world, ready to pick within three weeks of sowing.
- ◆ **Rocket** – these peppery leaves are ready a few weeks after sowing. All you need to do is water and pick regularly.
- ◆ **Carrot 'Flyaway'** – a tasty early variety resistant to attack by carrot fly, a pest whose eggs hatch into root-boring maggots.
- ◆ **Radish 'Sparkler'** – a globe-shaped, red-and-white skinned radish that can be eaten three weeks after sowing.
- ◆ **French bean 'Purple Teepee'** – a dwarf variety that will provide a prolific crop for a fraction of the effort. Grows well in pots.
- ◆ **Spring onion 'Feast'** – slender white stems that are resistant to fungal disease. Expect to lift six weeks after sowing.
- ◆ **Beetroot 'Boltardy'** – produces tender round roots with leaves that can be used like spinach and in salads. This variety copes with dry conditions and is resistant to bolting.

Beat the weeds

How to keep the blighters under control and make them easier to remove



TIME-SAVING TIP

Moss, algae and weeds can sometimes overrun pots and rob moisture from the roots of plants. Pull them out by hand, then top up the pot with fresh compost. Follow with an ornamental mulch of pebbles, shells or glass chippings to prevent weeds from returning.

Most gardeners have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to weeds. Spot a bright yellow dandelion in the flower bed and we're tugging the gatecrasher from the ground. It might be difficult, but try to take a more relaxed attitude to gardening. After all, there are many weeds that add colour to the garden, such as the pretty pink herb Robert, while white clover attracts bees. Whatever you do, you'll never be able to stop weeds from popping up completely, but there are ways to make it harder for them to grow and to make weeding easier.

Cover bare patches

Large areas of bare soil, such as an unused vegetable patch that has been put to bed for the winter, will soon sprout weeds. Seeds lying close to the surface will germinate quickly in mild spells to colonise the bed of soil. Some vigorous hoeing is usually required to remove them, but you can make life easier for yourself by covering the whole area with plastic sheeting, landscape fabric, cardboard or even old carpet until you're ready to start growing.

Gravel garden

Pockets of land within the garden can be covered with shingle, pebbles or gravel to make an attractive, low-maintenance alternative to a traditional bed or border. Start by covering the designated area with landscape fabric to prevent the stones or gravel from being trodden into the soil. Peg down the fabric securely at the sides to keep it in place and prevent weeds from popping up. Spread your chosen stones over the top and rake level. If you want to add some plants, scrape back the stones, and cut crosses in the fabric large enough to accommodate the rootball.



Pockets of land within the garden can be covered with shingle, pebbles or gravel for an attractive, low-maintenance area

Weeds in paths

Gaps between paths, patios and other areas of hard landscaping provide the perfect environment for weeds and moss to flourish. Some gardeners like to get down on their hands and knees to lever them out with a knife or scratch away at crevices with a special long-handled tool fitted with a head of wire bristles. Both work, but need a lot of elbow grease. Save time by zapping them with a gas-powered flame gun. These are hand-held, lightweight gadgets. All you do is pass the flame over the weeds – the tops blacken and quickly die.

Weeds in the lawn

Most lawns are affected by moss and weeds at some point. So give yours some attention early in the year. Spike and rake annually to improve drainage and remove debris. Coarse grasses can be controlled by slashing the crowns with a knife before mowing, while weeds that spread by runners can be weakened by raking the stems upright before

cutting. If you have a serious weed problem, use a weed and feed product, ensuring that the formulation is for the right time of year. These are usually for spring or autumn application.

Benefits of mulch

Covering the surface of beds and borders with a thick layer of garden compost, leaf mould or composted bark is a great way to prevent weed seeds from germinating. It has other benefits, too: it locks in moisture, keeps the roots of plants cool in summer and insulates them in winter, and helps to improve soil structure as the material decays. Ideally, mulches need spreading in autumn or spring, while the soil is damp. If it's not, soak the ground first as it's difficult to wet dry soil through a mulch. Make sure the site is clear of weeds. Apply a 5-7.5cm (2-3in) layer of material, taking care not to smother low-growing plants or to pile it up against the stems of shrubs or trees – aim to leave a 30cm (12in) diameter gap around these plants; mulches in contact with woody stems can cause bark to soften, making plants vulnerable to infection by fungal diseases.

The low-maintenance flower border

No, it's not a pipedream – you really can have one. Here's how

Everyone loves a traditional herbaceous border, but these flower-filled spaces need a lot of time and effort. If you're starting from scratch, it is possible to have a border that not only looks good but is easy to look after, too.

Getting started

Prior to planting, it's essential to spend a little time preparing the ground. After marking it out, dig the soil over (sorry, some work is necessary at this point) and improve with garden compost. Remove any perennial weeds to ensure you don't have problems later.

Easy-care plants

When selecting plants for a new border, choose a mixture of perennials, grasses and shrubs that will provide year-round interest (see page 15). Many perennials require staking, dead-heading, chopping back and dividing regularly, so try to avoid those. Evergreen shrubs tend to need less work than deciduous plants, but you will need both to provide a long season of interest. Take note of what the neighbours are growing. If you spot particular plants in several gardens it's probably because they're happy in your area. Space plants correctly to avoid cutting back too soon.

Ground cover

Fill the gaps with ground-cover plants. Apart from adding colour or interest at ground level, they will leave less space for weeds or self-seeded perennials to muscle

in. Among the best low-growing plants are *Ajuga* (bugle), *Cornus canadensis* (creeping dogwood) and *Epimedium*. Avoid invasive ground-cover plants that might become rampant, such as ivies, *Hypericum calycinum* and *Vinca major* (periwinkle).

Plant some bulbs

Once your main plants are in place, you can underplant with bulbs to provide a splash of seasonal colour (see page 11). If you decide to plant tender species, such as dahlias, cannas and pineapple lilies, be prepared to lift them at the end of the season before the frosts come.

Don't forget to mulch

Ground-covering plants will take a while to get going, so mulch around them annually until they cover the ground, to prevent weed seeds from germinating. Some mulches are ornamental – bark chippings, cocoa shell mulch (poisonous to dogs) and mineralised straw – and set plants off beautifully, while others are utilitarian – leaf mould, garden compost, composted bark (see page 7).

Watering advice

Plants will need to be kept damp until they are established. You can make life easier by setting up an automatic watering system. An effective way is to snake a porous pipe through the bed – water seeps out of small holes in the pipe straight to the roots. This can be fitted to an outdoor tap with a programmable timer that will ensure the water is applied at a set hour and length of time.

TIME-SAVING TIP
Avoid the need for staking by cutting back late-flowering perennials by a third in late May – a technique known as the 'Chelsea chop'. Sedum, helenium, rudbeckia, solidago and monarda are perennials that respond well to this treatment.

TEN BEST PERENNIALS THAT DON'T NEED STAKING



Verbena bonariensis
Grown for its purple flowers, the soaring stems of this popular perennial stand up well between plants in the worst weather.



Rudbeckia fulgida 'Little Goldstar'
A compact black-eyed Susan that produces masses of yellow daisies from summer into autumn.



Aster novae-angliae 'Helen Picton'
This New England aster carries violet-purple flowers on stout stems from late summer onwards.



Echinacea purpurea
Coneflowers are tough cookies that remain upright in poor weather even when festooned with blooms.



Hemerocallis
Sun-loving, clump-forming perennials with arching, strap-shaped leaves and blowsy blooms on elegant stems.



Astilbe
Self-supporting perennials with robust stems clothed with ferny foliage, carrying fluffy plumes of flowers in summer.



Eupatorium purpureum
Despite its height, this sensational plant remains vertical even with huge heads of fluffy pink flowers.



Delphinium 'New Millennium Dwarf'
Most delphiniums need staking, but this compact form has tall spires of colour with none of the hassle.



Achillea millefolium 'Summer Pastels'
Flat flower heads in a mix of pastel shades perch on tough stems from early summer until the first frosts.



Baptisia australis
A rugged, drought-tolerant perennial that sends up lofty spires of clear indigo blue flowers in early summer.

1 Consider evicting plants that require constant dead-heading, pruning or are martyrs to pests and diseases. Replace with perennials, grasses or shrubs that are drought tolerant, naturally slow-growing or keep their shape without the need for trimming.

2 Add a brick, bark or gravel path. Apart from looking attractive, a path will reduce the amount of growing space you need to look after and make access to the bed easier for maintenance work.



How to convert an existing border

Tips to reduce labour in the flower beds

3 Make sure you eliminate pernicious perennial weeds, such as nettles, bindweed and ground elder. Organic gardeners will need to dig them out or weaken them by cutting back regularly. Others can paint the weeds with herbicide gel.

4 Don't feel obliged to fill every gap in a border with plants. A sculpture, urn or similar ornament will provide interest and require no maintenance (see page 13).

5 Use a hoe to despatch annual weeds from the surface of borders in spring, then cover with a 7.5cm (3in) mulch of garden compost, composted bark or similar material. This should prevent weed seeds from germinating and lock in moisture to make watering easier (see page 7).

6 Freshen up a corner or edge of a border by turning it into a gravel garden. Remove existing plants, add weed-suppressing matting, then slice through it to plant drought-tolerant species. Cover matting with gravel, pebbles and other stones in different grades.

7 There's no need to cut back all perennials at once in the autumn or late winter. Cut back only as plants start to look bedraggled. Spreading pruning work out over a few months will make it less of a chore.

8 Add brick, timber or similar types of decorative edges to borders (mowing strips). They will prevent plants from escaping and make mowing easier when the lawn nestles up to your plant displays.

9 Give plants a kick-start in spring by scattering controlled-release fertiliser around them. Greedy ones will need another feed in summer. Strong, healthy plants are more likely to shrug off problems.

10 Take a more relaxed approach to plant maintenance and the look of the border. Learn to live with the odd weed, self-seeded perennial and dying flower, which attract wildlife. Finches love aster seeds, for example. Most shrubs will thrive without being pruned annually; they'll just grow taller.

BULBS: EASY YEAR-ROUND COLOUR

Bulbs are some of the most straightforward plants you can grow. Pick the right ones (those that are reliable, and flower at different times for a long season of interest) and your garden will be full of colour year after year for just the initial effort of planting them.

Best for
POTS



Eucomis

Pineapple lilies produce large flower heads over a rosette of fleshy leaves in summer. Protect from frost in winter.

Narcissus 'Tête à Tête'

A robust dwarf daffodil with golden yellow flowers that appear during February and March.

Tulip 'Orange Emperor'

Large, tangerine-coloured flowers in early spring that stand up well to windy conditions.

Best for
LAWNS



Dutch crocus

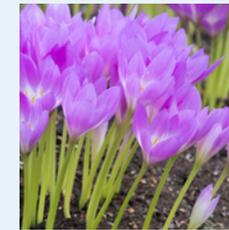
A real tough cookie, with large flowers that are white, lilac, purple or striped. These are often sold in mixed bags.

Narcissus 'Jetfire'

A strong-growing dwarf daffodil with yellow petals and orange trumpets. Once happy will multiply quickly.

Camassia
quamash
In late spring/early summer, the bulbs send up slender spikes of blue flowers with gold stamens.

Best for
BORDERS



Colchicum

Give this autumn crocus a sunny spot and it makes a clump of fleshy leaves that dies back before it flowers in autumn.

Asiatic lilies

A huge family with flowers in many vibrant forms. Their compact growth means they don't need staking.

Crocospia
'Emily McKenzie'
Clump-forming plant with orange summer flowers on tall stems. Better behaved than other crocospias.

Best for
SHADE



Anemone *nemerosa*

Our native wood anemone forms a mass of ferny foliage topped by white flowers in spring.

Scilla peruviana

An exotic-looking summer bulb, the Portuguese squill has heads of violet blue flowers above a clump of robust leaves.

Snowdrop

There are countless varieties of this early spring favourite, which prefers dappled shade under deciduous trees and shrubs.

The lowdown on lawns

There are many ways to cut down on grass care

1 A large expanse of grass or an awkwardly shaped lawn will take a long time to mow. Consider changing its design to make maintenance easier. Make the lawn smaller, round off corners and get rid of any out of the way pockets of lawn to save time. It's a good idea to add mowing strips (see page 10) around the perimeter so you can mow up to the edges, without any need to resort to edging shears.

2 Any lawn, no matter how small, needs annual maintenance. Don't avoid this. Spend a few hours each spring spiking,

removing thatch (clumps of dead grass), feeding and carrying out repairs. It will save you loads of time in the long run, as you're less likely to end up with major problems to sort out.

3 Normal turf or grass seed won't thrive in shadier gardens. Choose turf that has been created specifically for shade or a seed mix that contains grasses that flourish in low light. To keep it in good shape, cut less frequently and raise the height of cut on your mower to allow the grass to grow a little longer.

4 Fed up with all that cutting, feeding, raking, aerating and numerous other jobs it takes to keep a lawn in shape? Consider fake grass. Artificial turf has improved a lot, and is often difficult to distinguish from the real thing once it's weathered in. It comes in many styles and colours, and is even available in a variety

of piles, just like a carpet. All you have to do to keep it looking good is give it a brush from time to time.

5 They're not cheap (£700–£2,000+) but a robotic mower will take the strain out of keeping larger lawns shipshape. The rechargeable battery-powered devices can be set to cut an area defined by a perimeter wire hidden at ground level. At the cheaper end are the lightweight, cordless, rechargeable battery-powered mowers, which make speedy work of a medium-sized lawn.

Artificial grass is often difficult to distinguish from the real thing once it has weathered in. It comes in a variety of piles, just like a carpet

TIME-SAVING TIP

Hire a professional lawn-care company to look after your green sward. For an annual fee they can do everything from mowing to scarifying, and will deal with pests and diseases too.

Lawncare companies

greenthumb.co.uk,

0800 0111 222

trugreen.co.uk,

0800 021 3074

lawnkeeper.co.uk,

0845 0945 363



AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE...

Views and decorative features in the garden need little or no care

The elements within your garden – and in some cases beyond its boundaries – can play a large part in the way you use your space and its overall look. Unlike plants, these features need relatively little care (if any at all) to make a really big impact, so it's worth incorporating them into your garden design.

Arches, arbours, benches, pergolas and similar structures are decorative features with many uses. Arches can be made to create an entrance, while a pergola will draw the eye into the garden. Arbours make great focal points and can be a place to put your feet up. Grow low-maintenance climbers over them, such as different varieties of honeysuckle, for example.

If you have a great view it pays to make the most of it, whether the focal point is a church, field, river or simply a nearby tree. Rather than block the view out with a solid wall, fence or hedge, you can almost 'capture' it like a picture so it becomes a feature.

Portholes or windows – French 'clairvoyees' – can be cut into hedges and you can buy frames to help you do this easily; or an ornamental ironwork window can be built into a wall. In a larger garden, a circular moon gate is highly effective for framing a view.

Including ornaments is a great way to add the finishing touches to a garden. Tasteful figurines or a modern sculpture provide perfect focal points within an open space, or they can be more subtly placed among plants within a bed or border.



**TIME-
SAVING TIP**
Some bedding plants are hard work as they need daily dead-heading to keep them in good shape. When shopping for plants, look at labels for those described as 'self-cleaning', as they will drop their blooms naturally.

Best easy-care plants

Start as you mean to go on by choosing plants that don't need much looking after

Nurseries and garden centres are full of tempting plants, so you need to exercise caution when choosing specimens for a low-maintenance garden. Many roses, climbers, shrubs and perennials need dead-heading, tying up, pruning, feeding and numerous other jobs to ensure they thrive. Don't avoid these plants entirely, but try to choose those that will turn heads with the minimal amount of work.

Drought-tolerant plants will look after themselves once established, so you don't need to worry about watering them much. There are countless shrubs, perennials and grasses that can cope with arid conditions. As a general rule, plants with grey or silver foliage tend to be drought resistant, along with those native to the Mediterranean and South Africa. **All perennials need maintenance** but some are less demanding than others. Use those that don't require staking (see page 9) or that

spread slowly, so they don't require dividing for five years or so. Always follow the maxim 'right plant, right place' to ensure they romp away. A sun-loving perennial planted in shade will simply sulk and need constant attention. **Make shrubs the backbone** of your garden. Compact and slow-growing evergreens, along with those that retain a neat shape, will give structure, seasonal flowers and look good all year round. Deciduous shrubs tend to require more formative pruning. Exceptions include Japanese maples, or acers, *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, *Spiraea* and *Cotinus* (smoke bush). **Grasses are real workhorses** in a low-maintenance garden, adding colour, movement and long-lasting interest with their flowers and seed heads. They provide all of this with very little care. All you have to do is comb through evergreen ones to remove debris, and chop back deciduous grasses in early spring to give room for fresh growth.



Festuca glauca 'Elijah Blue'
A tough, compact grass that forms tufts of silvery blue leaves (above). Perfect in a sunny spot.

Acorus gramineus 'Ogon'
Best in full sun, it makes an architectural clump of evergreen pale green and cream leaves.

Festuca amethystina
A sun-loving grass with fine bluish foliage topped with purplish flowers in early summer.

Hakonechloa macra 'Alboarea'
A deciduous grass that grows in hummocks of yellow and cream cascading leaves, turning reddish later.

TEN EASY-TO-GROW GRASSES

Carex comans 'Frosted Curls'
Makes a graceful hummock of slender, silvery-green leaves in sun or shade.

Carex oshimensis 'Evergold'
An indestructible evergreen with dark green leaves striped with golden yellow.

Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens'
A low-growing, grass-like plant with inky black strap-shaped leaves and purple flowers.

Elymus magellanicus
A tall, tufted, vigorous deciduous grass with silvery blue leaves. Best in a container.

Uncinia rubra
An easy-going grass for sun or part shade, which forms a dense clump of reddish-brown leaves.

Carex comans bronze-leaved
Tough as old boots, evergreen grass with brown-bronze leaves – perfect for containers.

TEN EASY-TO-GROW SHRUBS

Hebe 'Autumn Glory'
A tough, compact shrub with short spikes of dark purple flowers above leathery leaves in summer.

Nandina domestica 'Firepower'
A shorter variety of heavenly bamboo with white flowers, red berries and leaves that take on fiery tints later.

Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Tom Thumb'
A slow-growing, compact evergreen with dark purple leaves. Never needs pruning.

Sarcococca confusa
Perfect in semi-shade, this glossy evergreen has tiny white, scented winter flowers.

Viburnum tinus 'Eve Price'
An almost indestructible shrub for sun or partial shade with large heads of white flowers in winter and spring.

Choisya ternata
Medium-sized evergreen with

aromatic foliage and scented white flowers through winter.

Mahonia 'Soft Caress'
A compact variety with non-spiky, slender leaves and yellow flowers.

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Miss Saori'
A white-and-pink hydrangea that keeps its colour in any soil. Light prune only.

Convolvulus cneorum
A compact, drought-tolerant shrub with silvery leaves and long-lasting white blooms.

Berberis thunbergii f. atropurpurea 'Helmond Pillar'
Upright stems of dark reddish-purple leaves for sun or partial shade (below).



The Gardeners' Directory

PLANTS & SEEDS

Knoll Gardens,

Hampreston, Dorset
knollgardens.co.uk
01202 873931

Show garden and nursery specialising in ornamental grasses with many low-maintenance gems on offer.

Crocus

crocus.co.uk
01344 578111

One of the UK's biggest mail-order gardening websites with a massive range of plants, bulbs, tools and furniture.

De Jager

dejager.co.uk
01622 840229

A bulb company offering an impressive range, including some unusual gems.

Architectural Plants,

Pulborough,
West Sussex
architecturalplants.com
01798 879213

A specialist in architectural plants, including hardy species that require little or no care.

Hardy's Cottage

Garden Plants
Whitchurch, Hampshire
hardys-plants.co.uk,
01256 896533

Famed for its displays at leading flower shows, this nursery stocks a huge range of perennials.

Mr Fothergill's

mr-fothergills.co.uk
0333 777 3936

This specialist seed company stocks lots of vegetable plug plants, along with fast-growing seed varieties, such as mixed salad leaves and radishes.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Bosch

bosch-garden.com
0344 736 0109

Time-saving gardening gadgets including cordless trimmers and mowers.

Kärcher

kaercher.com/uk
01295 752000

Manufacturer of drip irrigation sets and water timing devices.

Gardena

gardena.com/uk
0344 844 4558

For watering equipment with non-kinking hoses, snap-together parts and spray guns.

MATERIALS

Decorative Aggregates

decorativeaggregates.com 01629 630256

For a wide range of gravel, shingle, and the like for borders and paths.

Artificial Grass

artificial-grass.com
01900 811970

Specialises in fake grass with a choice of six different types suitable for a range of locations.

FURNITURE & GARDEN STRUCTURES

Primrose

primrose.co.uk
0118 903 5210

Online garden furniture superstore with a superb range of benches, seats and dining sets, as well as arbours and arches at competitive prices.

Scotts of Thrapston

scottsofthrapston.co.uk
01832 732366

Leading manufacturer of timber garden buildings and structures.

GENERAL

The New Low-Maintenance Garden by

Valerie Easton Timber Press, £14.99

A book packed with ideas, from putting together containers to growing vegetables.

Royal Horticultural

Society rhs.org.uk 020 3176 5810

The UK's leading gardening organisation. Membership entitles free entry to the charity's gardens, where you will find plenty of inspiration to create a low-maintenance garden.



For more information about gardening, visit saga.co.uk/gardening



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