

Creating views and vistas

Your garden may look out over countryside or towards a block of flats, but either way, the views within your space can be enhanced with careful planning. A combination of framing and screening, using barriers, archways and pergolas, can create a memorable experience as you move through your plot, glimpsing the next view as you go.

PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

While one ingeniously planned vista can be very gratifying, developing a sequence of changing views is even more inspirational. Different views can be devised by varying the sizes of open spaces, using screens to mask changes of use, and adding focal points. Designing viewing positions, for example by adding a seat, or orientating a path along a vista, will also focus attention in particular directions. Remember, too, that the view looking back from the end of the plot should be considered, as well as the main view from the house. The secret is not to reveal everything at once. This plan for a long, thin family garden, by designer Fran Coulter, shows you how these ideas work in practice.



③ THE TOOL SHED
The slim shed on the patio is both decorative and functional, adding a focal feature to this area of the garden.



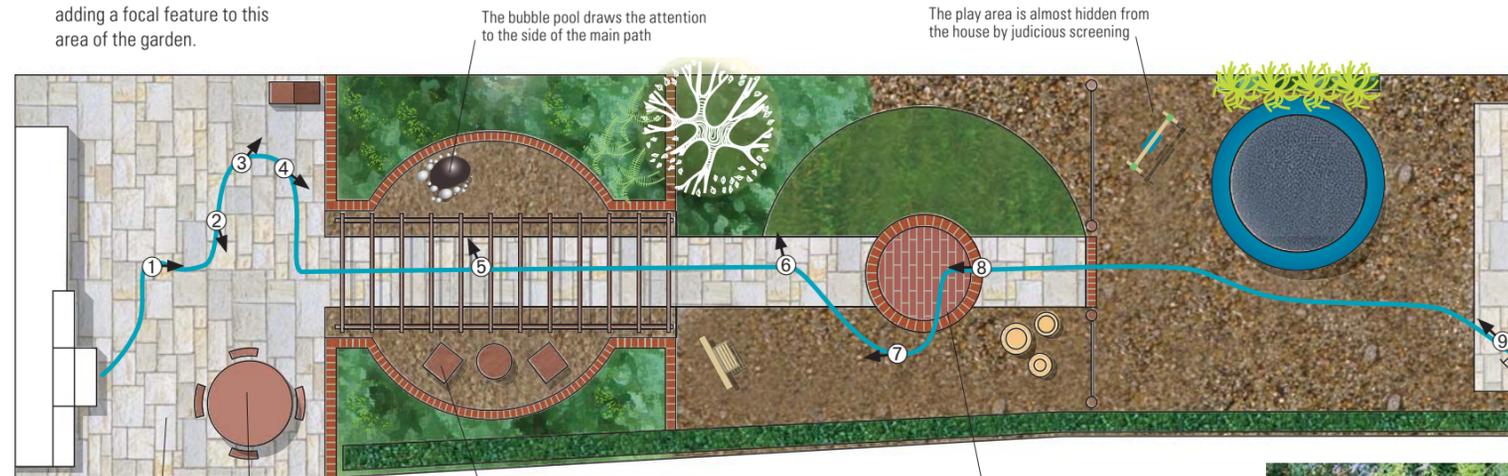
④ LOOKING THROUGH PLANTING
From this angle, looking across the planting to the seats beyond, the pergola looks quite different and the garden takes on a more organic, less formal appearance.



⑥ SHADY CORNER
Beyond the pergola, the garden is more open and has a different character. This area is hidden from the house, and quite shady, providing the owner with an opportunity to use a different range of plants, such as leafy hostas.



⑦ RELAXING FAMILY AREA
This swing seat is tucked around the corner, just beyond the pergola and faces towards the brick circle and the shade garden.



House
The paving here is also used for the path through the pergola, providing continuity

Circular table and chairs for outdoor relaxation, and entertaining

From a second, more secluded seating area, the eye is drawn towards the bubble pool

The play area is almost hidden from the house by judicious screening

A container of white-flowering roses stands on this brick circle, drawing the eye down the garden from the house



⑤ WATER FEATURE
A glance to the side reveals another eye-catching feature. Hostas and grasses frame a discreet, low bubble pool.



⑧ FOCAL POINT
Circular features break up and soften long, straight lines. The pot is a focus for this space and can be viewed from all sides.



⑨ PLAY AREA
The play area is hidden behind a semi-transparent screen, which separates it, both physically and visually, from the rest of the garden.

KEY
— route through the garden
➔ direction of viewpoint

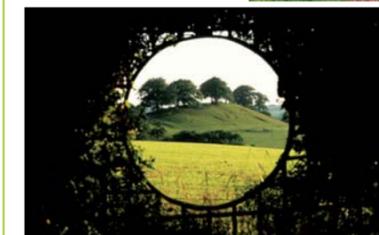
BORROWING BEAUTIFUL VIEWS

If you can see the surrounding landscape from your house, try connecting it visually to your own garden. Consider framing a key view, or opening up your garden, using a discreet barrier, such as a low hedge or picket fence, to link it to the wider landscape. Think about the view in different seasons and consider what it will look like in winter when trees and hedges are more open. You may also need to adapt your own garden planting to blend it into the landscape.

> BLENDING IN
Here, there is no clear boundary between the garden and the land beyond. One becomes the other, and the garden seems to stretch as far as the horizon.



∇ FRAMING A VIEW
This window to the outside world is perfectly focused on a tree-topped hill.

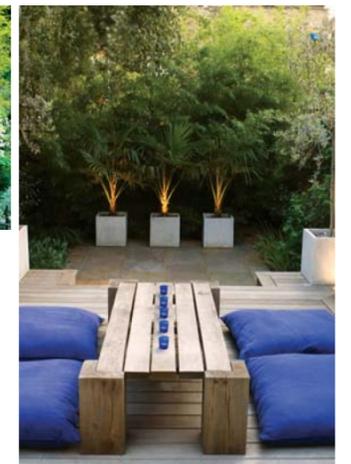


DISGUISED UNATTRACTIVE VIEWS

Not all views are good. Within a garden, especially a small one, there will be areas of utilitarian clutter, such as sheds or household bins, which are not especially attractive and may need screening. Neighbouring houses may overlook the property, spoil the view and compromise privacy. Tall planting or screens can help to hide eyesores, but if these are not an option, try adding an attractive focal point elsewhere in the garden to distract and lead the eye away.



^ COVERING AN OLD SHED
Garden sheds are often unwelcome focal points. This rambling climber is a good summer disguise, less effective in winter.



> SCREENING NEIGHBOURS
The tall bamboo screen blocks the view to the neighbouring property and provides an attractive backdrop to the planters.



① VIEW FROM HOUSE
This is the most important view in the garden and dictates the layout. The pergola reinforces and frames the view, and the inclusion of a flower-filled container as a focal point in the middle distance draws the eye forward.

② EATING OUTSIDE
The table and chairs are near the house, and are set against a simple green hedge, which creates a comforting sense of seclusion.