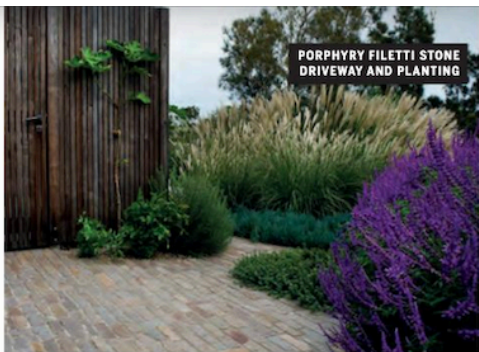


INSPIRE



PORPHYRY FILETTI STONE DRIVEWAY AND PLANTING



FLOAT HOUSE BY PITSOU KEDEM ARCHITECTS



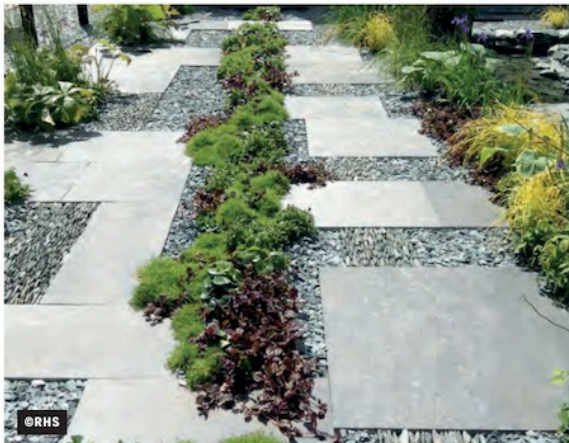
INSPIRE

DAVID HARBER - DARK PLANET SCULPTURE, COLORADO

DEMISE OF THE FRONT GARDEN



FOODSCAPING BY MINISTRY OF THE FENCE



@RHS



TIVOLI EVORA HOTEL, PORTUGAL

Combine this with planting around and beneath the vehicle with low-growing, hard-wearing plants. Plant in small spaces and add trees, shrubs and bushes where you can, and consider planting in containers and window boxes.

“OUR ROSE-SCENTED GARDENS HAVE BEEN MADE OVER FOR OUR CAR-DEPENDENT NATION”

Sustainable Urban Drainage or grass block pavers (also known as turf block pavers) or grow-through pavers, are another alternative. Made of concrete or recycled plastic, they have open cells that allow grass to grow through them. They are a porous, eco-friendly option for driveways and parking areas, and walkways. They reduce stormwater runoff which is one of the most significant sources of water pollution as the rain runs over asphalt and concrete, picking up oil and road pollutants and washing it into our rivers, streams and bays. If time and budget constraints dictate the use of concrete, then choose a fast-draining one that soaks up rainwater rapidly.

Sean Murray's 2015 Chelsea garden demonstrates how to incorporate parking in a front garden. It includes trees and other forms of vertical planting, a water feature, a place to sit, and integrated car parking on hard landscaping, interspersed with gravel and hard-wearing plants placed



URBIS WATERBOWLS

below and around the car. There is always a compromise, but a mix of hard and soft landscaping that is designed ecologically and is also easy to maintain is the way forward.

Rills and reflecting pools are enjoying a renaissance. They add an architectural and ornamental element while inviting wildlife into the garden, transforming the landscape into a living sculpture. The beauty of a rill is in its quiet flow through the garden, while it reflects the sky in all its weathers and offers an ever-changing visual dynamic.

Adding black dye or a black base such as polished black granite increases reflection and depth, and using a low jet fountain creates gentle ripples rather than offensive noise.

The front garden layout needs to signal where people should go, and whereas a direct path to the front door is clearly practical, think about using large stepping pads, or strips of stone interplanted with low plants or grave to break the journey up visually. A small tree will



BELLA FOXWELL: LONDON DOORS



also help add privacy to upstairs windows and mask the view from street level.

Create festoon doorways and frontages with flowering climbers, topiary balls and window boxes. Use shrubs or planted trellising to screen unsightly dustbins and drainpipes and create the illusion of space especially where it is in short supply by using mirrors to guide the eye and reflect interesting features.

If you are lucky enough to have a front garden with a view, then you may want to enjoy this fully by adding a viewing platform or deck to the house frontage, or pithing the front garden itself.



ANJI CONNELL DISCUSSES THE DECLINE OF GREEN FRONT GARDEN AREAS AND PROVIDES ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SIMPLY HAVING A CONCRETE DRIVEWAY

The English front garden, once a pride for homeowners, has seen its floral displays disappearing in their millions, vanishing under slabs of paving stones, concrete and asphalt to become a prized parking spot.

Of course, compared to keeping a garden, concrete requires far less of our attention, time and money. However, the loss of our front gardens not only impacts on the aesthetics of our homes, but can also inflict significant damage on our communities and environment.

Hedgehogs, bees, common birds and insects are all suffering as their homes and food sources vanish and our air quality is suffering too. We need trees and plants more than ever to soak up pollution, particularly in urban areas.

A simple lawn on its own provides a very limited habitat for pollinators and other animals and requires adequate planting to make up a healthy, diverse ecosystem. A lawn, furthermore,

also consumes an enormous supply of water and fertiliser to keep the grass green and healthy.

Tim Davies, managing director at David Harber ponders: "It's strange that we spend so much time and money on designing, building, planting and maintaining our rear gardens, yet very few people ever see them."

"Depending on the garden size, parking the car is the biggest issue aesthetically - who really wants to look out of the front window at a parking bay? Because we tend to position our vehicles as close to the front door as possible, any aesthetic beauty available to us is ruined," says Andrew Duff, managing director of Inchbald School of Design.

When parking is restricted to our front gardens and therefore unavoidable, there are alternatives to creating a traditional concrete space. A carpet of reinforced, hexagonal-shaped plastic mesh set into the soil that holds grass seed will give you a lawn that you can drive over and provide a space for parking that, most importantly, allows drainage.