

How can I make my country garden look better? 8 tips for an attractive plot

Revamp a rustic backyard with these easy, expert tips from garden professionals



(Image credit: Future)



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The look of our yards changes through the seasons, and most people with a green thumb know that their plot has a 'sweet spot' when it looks its best.

But there are ways to extend the life and looks of our country-style backyards, so our outdoor space looks better for longer.

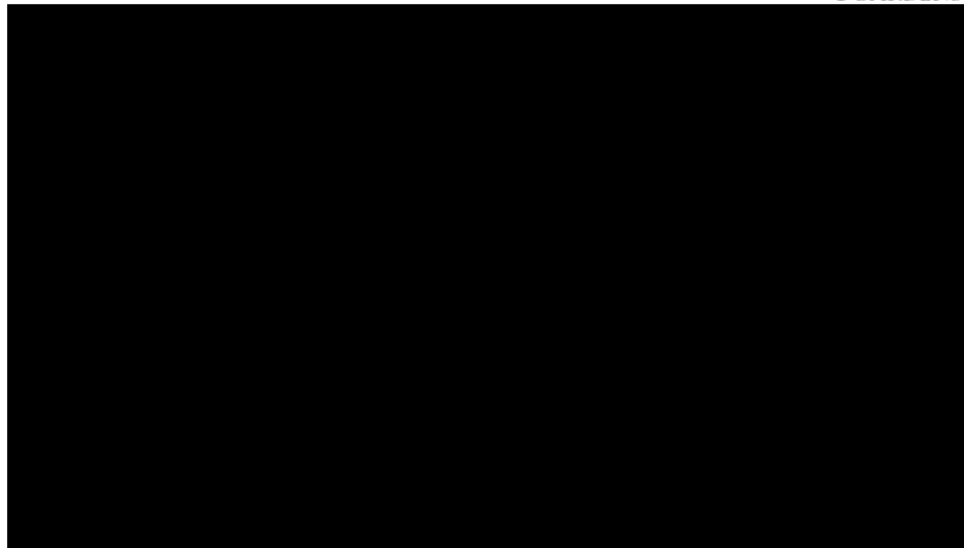
'This is particularly true in a country garden, which by its nature is relaxed, informal and slightly ragged around the edges,' says Lucy Searle, global editor in chief of Homes & Gardens. 'While you wouldn't want a rural plot to be overly manicured, there are ways to help a country garden look better when it seems past its best.'

HOW TO MAKE A COUNTRY GARDEN LOOK BETTER – EXPERTS SHARE THEIR TIPS

Whether you want a quick tidy-up or a more long-term approach to your landscaping and design, there are simple ways to enhance your [country garden ideas](#) to bring longevity to planting schemes and elevate the look of your outdoor space.

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We asked garden designers and plantspeople for their in-the-know tips on how to make a country garden look better, at any time of year.

1. PLANT FLOWERS FOR PICKING



(Image credit: Leigh Clapp)

Not only will you have gorgeous blooms to bring inside, but the rows of flowers will make your country garden look better, too – you could even decide to pick half and leave the rest to brighten up your borders. Planning a [cut flower garden](#) has suggestions for the best flowers to grow.

‘Choose a relatively sheltered spot that gets a lot of sun. Planting in rows makes weeding and supporting your plants easier,’ suggests Tamsin Westhorpe, gardener at [Stockton Bury Gardens](#) and author of [Diary of a Modern Country Gardener](#).

‘If you don’t have a dedicated spot to grow flowers to cut, [sweet peas](#), [gladioli](#) and [dahlias](#) all work well for [kitchen garden ideas](#). [Cottage borders](#) and [herb gardens](#) can all offer opportunities for brightly colored bulbs and perennials with a long picking season, and shrubs with interesting foliage.

2. MAKE IT LOOK GOOD ALL YEAR ROUND



(Image credit: Peter Reader Landscapes)

Your backyard may be filled with color and interest from spring through fall, but it doesn't need to let you down out of season. Consider winter garden ideas to make your country garden look better at any time of year.

'Landscaping with evergreens is important as a general rule in a garden, but in more rural areas, having green structure in winter can be a valuable element for maintaining interest, ensuring the space looks green and cheerful in the winter months,' explains garden designer Fabienne Maitland Robinson, lead garden designer at plant company Dig, which provides pre-designed flower beds, including plants and planting plan.

'Try not to cut perennials and grasses that have interesting winter seed heads. In winter the frost will create beautiful structures, and the seed heads are also beneficial to birds which feed on them.'

3. BRING THE COUNTRYSIDE INTO YOUR GARDEN



(Image credit: Future / Rowan Isaac)

Use the landscape around you to add to your backyard's charm and make your country garden look better. This is also a trick that garden designers use for their small gardens ideas to make spaces look bigger.

'If your garden backs on to fields or views of open countryside, make it appear to extend into the wider landscape by choosing a boundary that is less obvious,' suggests garden designer Tim Newbury, author of Garden Design Bible.

'Remember, the more space around you, the more likely you are to be exposed to the prevailing weather,' Tim continues. 'Choose your views carefully, preferably in the direction that does not bring strong or cold wind. If you can't do this, narrow your views down and frame them with trees to break up the wind.'

4. TEND THE LAWN – BUT NOT TOO MUCH



(Image credit: Getty Images)

‘A light touch in a countryside garden such as mown paths through grass or wildflower areas, will maintain subtlety and connect to the surrounding area,’ says lead garden designer Fabienne Maitland Robinson of plant company Dig.

That said, an overgrown, weed-filled lawn won’t make your country garden look better. ‘In the main growing season, the extra sunlight means you want to be mowing every two or three days, or at least once a week if your schedule is tight. Your grass will grow quicker in the summer, and it’s better to cut little and often than all at once,’ explains Carlos Real, Lawn Care Expert and Managing Director of TotalLawn.

‘In general, you shouldn’t take off more than one third of the height in a single mow, as this will put the plant under unnecessary stress, and it may discolour if you overdo it.’

Knowing how to edge your lawn is a country gardener’s secret weapon. For the finishing touch, use an edging tool to define your lawn with a crisp

5. FOCUS ON THE PATIO



(Image credit: Leigh Clapp)

Having an area of your garden close to the house that you keep in top shape is a fast-fix for the question, How can I make my garden look better? It will be the first part of your plot that you see from your house or step into, and sets the tone for the rest of your backyard.

‘Start with the planting,’ suggests garden designer Nikki Hollier, founder of Border in a Box. ‘I love scented plants such as Pelargonium Tomentosum, Lavender and Lemon Verbena.’

Next, create a focal point. ‘Great patio ideas might be a firepit or beautiful candles on a coffee table to create a cozy look in the evening. Include festoon or fairy lights during the summer evenings for additional ambiance. During the day you can create a floral tablescape with small pots of plants and pebbles,’ Nikki says.

‘Sweep the paving and give everything a good clean before you start. It’s amazing the difference it makes!’

6. ADD CONTAINERS FOR INSTANT COLOR



(Image credit: Francesco Maltinti / Alamy Stock Photo)

Pots and planters filled with bright and fragrant flowers are just some of the container gardening ideas that can lift the look of your country garden in an instant.

Use pots on our deck, along the edges of paths or steps, and even dot them among your borders to fill bare patches.

'Bulbs are important for pops of colour in the border throughout seasons,' says Alex Hollingsworth from Dig. 'Bulbs for spring, autumn and winter mean that you can change it up each season and each year. Just be wary of animals eating them, particularly squirrels! To avoid this, you can place gravel (not too much) within the soil above the bulb and this will deter them.'

7. DESIGN CHILD AND PET-PROOF BORDERS



(Image credit: Dobbies)

The most beautiful country garden border can be flattened by a stray soccer ball or a dog running through the planting. If that's an issue in your backyard, the answer is to introduce child- and pet-friendly plants that are robust, resilient and recover quickly from any damage.

'Many plants will recover quickly from occasional interaction with children and their activities, but there are some that will not tolerate regular abuse

On the margins of play areas and borders, Tim suggests using plants that will escape relatively undamaged or that will recover quickly. These include *Alchemilla mollis*, *Viburnum davidii*, geranium and geums.

Low maintenance garden border ideas will also provide attractive planting with the minimum upkeep to keep your country garden looking better.

8. ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES TO YOUR COUNTRY GARDEN TO MAKE IT LOOK BETTER



(Image credit: Getty Images)

Beautifully patterned butterflies fluttering among your borders is an evocative sight in a country garden and will always make it look better. To attract butterflies to your garden, focus on creating a garden for pollinators by planting flowers that will attract them to your yard.

'Plant bright, fragrant and nectar-rich flowers – butterflies are particularly attracted to buddleja shrubs (aka the butterfly bush),' says Sean McMenemy from Ark Wildlife.

While you may not want to leave too much fallen fruit on the ground if you