



GARDENS IN THE SKY

Liz Ackerley of Poppyhead Consultancy and Grand Designs Garden Designer of the Year for 2013, shares her advice on creating the perfect Apartment Garden.

Roof Terraces and balconies offer great opportunities for gardens in the sky. They're outdoor spaces that provide opportunities for city chic living, linking with your indoor style. Whether it's fantastic views, growing food, or fabulous flowers you aspire to, here's some key design tips:

- Consider all surfaces - floor, walls and even overhead for growing plants because space is a premium
- Think containers that fit with the style of property e.g. metal, Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP), gabions. Some materials can be sprayed any colour. Use lightweight compost.



- Use walls and overhead beams to provide opportunities for vertical growing whether it's a green wall with herbs, succulents or climbing plants suited to the conditions
- Water features, lighting and seating are key considerations and extend the use or views of the space
- Don't forget clever storage

Note: there maybe considerations of weight loading, boundaries or visibility so ensure approval from building management, planners and building control before undertaking all but minor works.

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LIZ'S TOP 3 PLANTS FOR GARDENS IN THE SKY

- 01** Grasses like *Stipa tenuissima* that wafts & billows in the breeze. Grasses are well suited to roof terraces.
- 02** Mediterranean plants withstand the exposure well e.g. *Lavender angustifolia* as long as it is in sun.
- 03** Multi-stemmed Birch e.g. *Betula utilis var jacquemontii* are stunning underplanted in large pots on a roof terrace

GARDEN YOUR WAY TO ADDED VALUE

From wilderness to haven, a staged garden is just as important as your home.

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A well-presented garden can add value to your home but is also extremely attractive to buyers. In our experience a garden can make or break a sale.

Spring clean your way through your garden by weeding, cutting back bushes and removing broken flower pots.

It's amazing how much damage the winter months can have on our gardens, so get mending. Broken decking and fencing are not only an eye soar but can de-value your garden and your home.

Refreshing any bark and adding some new colourful plants can bring your garden back to life. Bare and balding lawns are a quick way to devalue your property. If your lawn has seen better days, replace it!

The cost will certainly be worth it in the long run. Trampolines, slides and toys are all great for our children to enjoy the outdoors, but they are not attractive to buyers. Try and let your plants and greenery do the talking, make sure to hide as much 'child's play' as you can for viewings.

If the weather permits, stage your garden for viewings. Put up your table and chairs and set the table as if having a BBQ. Small, simple touches such as this allow potential buyers to imagine themselves relaxing in the sanctuary you have created.

Garden your way to not only adding value but also the potential of a quick sale.

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