

LOW- MAINTENANCE GARDENS

10 simple steps to
beautiful, easy &
stylish outside spaces



CAROLINE TILSTON

Photography by Steve Gorton

Tiny

It would be difficult to make a garden of this size high maintenance. In a space 3m by 4m there's a limit to how much you can do, but this garden is a wonderful and exciting use of a small space and it fits in perfectly with the main idea of this book – you don't have to have plants in a garden to make it beautiful!



Before



The space was designed by the owner, architect Simon Gill. He has defined a space within the garden with an oblong of grass and added interest to the minimalist composition by incorporating a unique water feature.

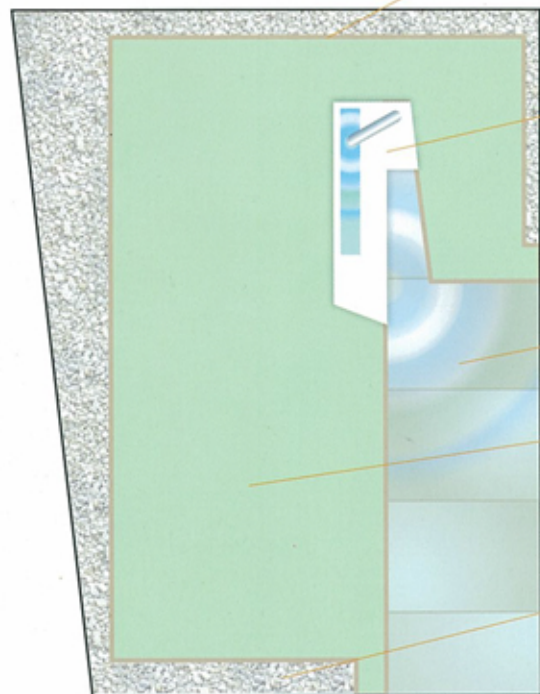
Making a feature yourself is a great way to get the perfect object. This one is made of concrete and if you want concrete, you'll need to employ a specialist to make up the feature. Another option is to use fibreglass; again you'll need a specialist fabricator to make it up for you from your drawings.

My favourite part of the water feature is the shallow pool which sits directly outside the sitting room door; it is clever and quirky and brings the water right into the house with its reflections.

The only plant life in the garden is the grass. It's an important feature, giving a green plane all through the year and setting off the light bright marble and limestone around it. But it could just as easily be artificial grass reducing the maintenance further.



Garden Plan



Even though the garden is tiny, Simon has still made his own shape within the space – the line of the grass doesn't follow the line of the wall. Instead it makes a good regular oblong lined up with the house.

The main feature of the garden is a water feature designed by Simon; it is made from concrete with a stainless-steel spout.

This limestone area is part of the water feature – it forms a shallow pool which reflects sunlight up into the house.

The grass is really the only maintenance issue here, and the owner and designer of the garden, architect Simon Gill, is probably going to replace it with artificial grass to cut down the maintenance still further.

There are three materials on the floor. Tumbled marble cobbles for a white bright effect. Grass for all-year-round greenery and limestone for a smooth and sleek look to the base of the pool.

► The water feature is made from poured concrete. A stainless-steel spout pours water down a rill and out into the pool.





▲ At one end a shelf hides outlet pipes. ► The water feature was designed by the owner, architect Simon Gill. This channel is made from concrete which has been 'bush hammered', basically knocked about with an uneven hammer to give it a rough texture. Why? So the water trickles and sparkles down the channel rather than running smoothly.

▼ For once the neighbours' greenery is adding to the composition. These fronds hanging over the fence make a pretty pattern against the sleek white wall. ▼ The water in the pool has been cleverly designed to cast reflections up into the rooms inside the house, so sunshine dances on the ceiling.



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Some of the most wonderful, exciting and innovative, contemporary gardens are also incredibly low maintenance. These new designs rely on great structure and exciting materials - low maintenance doesn't have to be all hard surfaces and drab planting. Here, Caroline Tilston shows you how to treat your garden as you would any other room in the house, designing, decorating, lighting and styling it. A world of possibilities is opening up for stunning gardens that also happen to require minimal care.

- Illustrated with specially drawn garden plans
- Packed with highly practical tips and quick-fix solutions
- Includes in detail 10 beautiful gardens to inspire
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