

# Only way is up for spot of vertical gardening

VERTICAL planting is an ideal way to make the most of limited space and hide unsightly eyesores but it doesn't necessarily have to involve climbers.

Anyone visiting the major garden shows this year will no doubt see an array of vertical planting, featuring rich tapestries of plants in weird and wonderful structures.

Vertical planting caught on several years ago, inspired by Frenchman Patrick Blanc, a pioneer in this field who has transformed many buildings' facades into living art.

This concept is ideal if you have limited space on your patio or simply want to hide an ugly wall or fence.

You can now buy anything from simple black canvas pockets with a number of holes in them for the plants, which attach to the wall, to salad and herb vertical planters, living art frames displaying a combination of plants, and troughs which will house lush green plants over a wide area of wall, equipped with water reservoirs that provide a steady trickle when it is needed.

"Vertical planting has increased in popularity because it makes best use out of the urban garden where space is limited, while living walls are sustainable, eco-friendly, purify the air and reduce the heat in towns," says Gillian Bond of Treebox, a living wall specialist.

Felicity Waters, landscape architect at Garden Beet, says: "If you are going to install a garden above head height you need to think how you are going to water, weed

and feed the plants.

"Creating a living wall the size of a two-storey building can look spectacular, but there is nothing worse than a dead 'living wall'."

On a small scale, Burgon & Ball has just launched its Verti-Plant. Made from heavy duty non-woven material, it features planting pockets and an internal irrigation system which allows water to filter from one pocket to the next, while the bottom pockets are sealed to reduce drips and mess. Priced £9.95 for two, it's available in garden centres and at [www.burgonandball.com](http://www.burgonandball.com).

Alternatively, you can frame a floral or foliage display in a living art frame, priced £47.99 from [www.gardenbeet.com](http://www.gardenbeet.com).

With larger constructions, you may have more success going for lush foliage plants rather than flowers. Good specimens include ferns, euphorbia, heuchera and geraniums. Place shade-loving varieties at the base and sun-lovers, such as geraniums, thyme and sage, at the top.

For something larger which you can put up yourself, Easi-wall is a vertical planter comprising

five self-watering troughs attached to a robust panel that you fix to a wall. Priced £159, it's available from [www.gardenbeet.com](http://www.gardenbeet.com) and selected nurseries. For information visit [www.treebox.co.uk](http://www.treebox.co.uk).

Create as large or as small a vertical display as you like with the Woolly Wally Pocket, a new type of hanging basket or wall planter that can be

used on its own or in groups to cover any wall to create a vertical garden. Made from recycled plastic bottles, the pockets cost £34.99 each. They are available from [www.gardenbeet.com](http://www.gardenbeet.com).

If you're reluctant to fix anything on to a fence or wall but have limited ground space, Vertigro, a free-standing modular system enabling you to grow your own flowers

and vegetables, is worth considering.

It is designed to hang standard sized grow bags vertically from the free-standing frame. You feed plug plants through the holes in the frame into the grow bags, place in the sun and water when necessary.

Priced at £299, it will be available from the end of March at [www.vertigro.co.uk](http://www.vertigro.co.uk), and at gardening shows.



**A vertical garden using Woolly Wally Pockets.**