

AUTUMN BRINGS TIME TO REFLECT



In the garden with Wendy Matheson

In our garden autumn always brings a sense of relief from the busy and perpetual chores of tending to a summer garden.

The orange, reds and browns of late flowering perennials and the soft hues of oat coloured grasses swaying in the October winds and glistening in the low sun are an annual delight.

There are many wonderful late flowering plants that will give weeks of interest well into the

Book of the month

Close: Landscape Design and Land Art in Scotland. Photographs by Allan Pollock-Morris. Essay by Tim Richardson. ISBN 978-0956033819.

A wonderful book of visuals and comment encompassing some of Scotland's truly great gardens and garden makers. Including Glasgow's Hidden Gardens, Cambo House, Little Sparta and the Garden of Cosmic Speculation.

winter where the seedpods and faded flower heads give splendid form and add interest to a winter garden.

As the daily routine of garden tending tails off with the slowing down of the growing season we can start to relax allowing us to reflect on the previous summer season. At Boath we sow thousands of seeds each spring for the kitchen garden which feeds the restaurant and continue to sow in succession for year-round production. This keeps us pretty busy all year round but adds extra work load in the summer when other areas of the grounds are needing attention such as the perennial borders and the bog garden. In autumn, however, when we have time to take a breather, we get fired up over seed catalogues and seed collecting from the various plants that we want to propagate from for next year.

Extra time on our hands also allows us to take note of the development of the various areas of the garden that we want to change and improve.

October is an ideal time to take stock of what the garden has become and where you would like it to be in the future; a time when there are still plants visible albeit some beyond flowering and when you are able to visualise what plants to discard or move and where to change shapes and planting combinations.

This can take some time, but if you do feel dissatisfied with your garden, it is time well spent.

Things to consider doing this month:

- Take cuttings and save seeds. Cut back, clear away detritus and pick remaining apples, plums, etc
- Give the lawn a final cut
- Start to collect ideas from books, magazines, photographs, etc for inspiration next year

The reassessment of your garden may be necessary for a number of reasons: family circumstances changing i.e. children growing up and no longer need to have that football net or basketball hoop dominating the space; young children or grandchildren need to be considered if spending long periods of time with you; physical challenges such as wheelchairs, bad backs, hearing or sight impairment may need to be catered for. Retirement can have a huge impact on your time and money resources, adjusting to the new circumstances can be somewhat bewildering for some people – do you spend more time in the garden because you can or do you make it easier to garden because you don't want to be at home as much and the golf course is beckoning!

You may have moved house and inherited a garden which is either unsuitable or not to your liking – seeing a few seasons go by in a new garden can help to assess what you don't like, even if you don't yet know what you want.

You might just be bored with the garden that you have tended for a long time and be in need of a makeover – not many of us live

with the same wallpaper forever.

There are some people, of course, who are just not that into it! Personally I find this a strange and bizarre state of mind however there are apparently well adjusted, rational people out there who just don't like to garden! They do, however, like to look out onto a well-ordered, attractive and useable outside space.

There are many reasons it maybe necessary for us to take the time to carefully reassess our garden requirements. We all know of very good books and TV programmes that can help and inspire, however sometimes it just has to come from within. To fall in love with your space and engage with it as part of your everyday life and not regard it as a thorn in your side that needs to be mown or weeded continually, time spent in the initial stages of redesigning is vital in attaining the spirit of the place or "genius loci" in the words of Alexander Pope.

All gardens large and small have the potential to add greatly to our way of life, whether just for aesthetics or for getting your hands dirty and not forgetting the added value it puts onto your home.

So, this autumn why not have a good long think about where you can change and improve the space you have and where can you incorporate that wow factor!



CONTACT WENDY

If you have any questions or you would like any advice on garden design or garden makeover please contact Wendy at her studio: info@wmgardendesign.com