

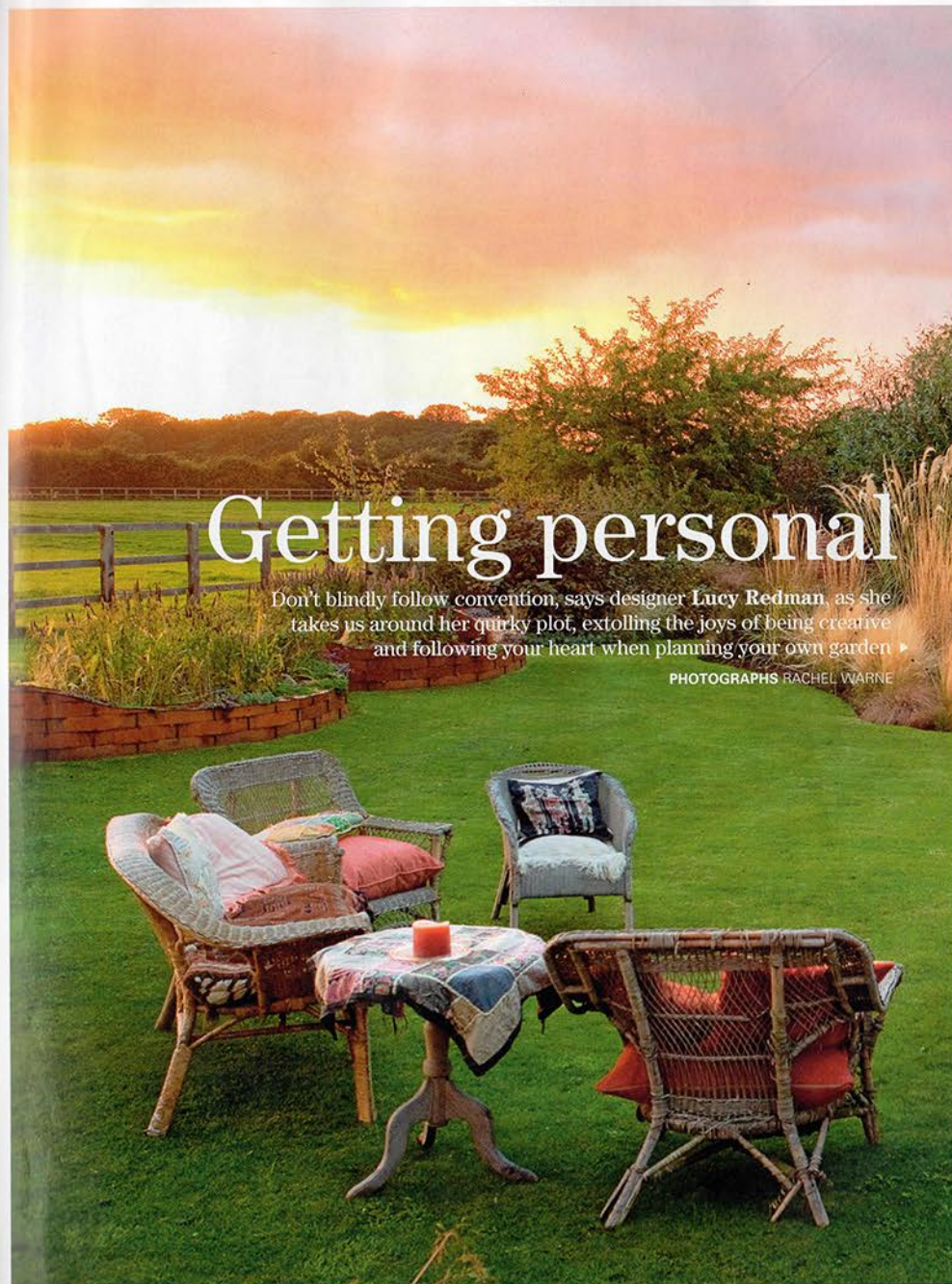


**1 SHERPA**  
er Cultivator  
nd vegetable gardens.

It's 1300 Watt motor is quiet but tough enough to handle most soils.

and FREE Delivery in the UK

**PowerMagic**  
umber one for garden machinery



# Getting personal

Don't blindly follow convention, says designer **Lucy Redman**, as she takes us around her quirky plot, extolling the joys of being creative and following your heart when planning your own garden

PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

I am a sucker for anything unusual. For me, the garden has to be a space for our seven- and 10-year-old girls to play in, but our plot also has to be decorative, and really productive as well.

Our pretty thatched house sits in the heart of the quiet village of Rushbrooke, two miles southeast of Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. The three-quarter-acre garden wraps around the house. When I met my husband Dominic 13 years ago, this garden consisted of a row of poplars, a beech hedge, a walnut, an old apple tree and two clashing roses on the front of the house. Together, we set about transforming this rather uninspiring space into a quirky garden in which I could be really creative and where I could integrate pieces of art.

On arrival at the garden gate, one is dwarfed by the 10ft sculpture *Vessel*, by well-known garden sculptor Maryanne Nicholls. It sits in the Asian Border, which is filled with choice plants, such as *Koelerutaria paniculata* 'Fastigiata', *Clerodendrum trichotomum*,

*Viburnum betulifolium*, *Jasminum mesnyi* and *Disporopsis pernyi*. All of these plants thrive in our sandy soil. I used the brilliant book *Travels in China* by Roy Lancaster for inspiration. Then the lovely Rupert Eley from The Place for Plants at East Bergholt kindly sourced my plants, including the Japanese spicebush (*Lindera obtusiloba*), which has unusual tri-lobed leaves that turn from deep purple in spring to yellow in autumn.

**'Beth Chatto spent four hours in the garden and discussed every plant in the borders - it was a**

The terracotta-toned *Vessel* looks magical at night when lit by subtle uplighters, and provides an impressive focal point and colour theme for the Long Borders, which run along the front of the house. These contain unusual plants such as *Lonicera involucrata* - a wacky shrubby honeysuckle with red bracts, yellow flowers and soft black berries. Opposite is the much admired oak-leaf hydrangea - *Hydrangea quercifolia* Snow Queen - whose white panicles catch the eye and whose massive leaves turn deep red in



Please visit our website [www.deepdale-trees.co.uk](http://www.deepdale-trees.co.uk)  
T: 01767 262636 F: 01767 262288





I am a sucker for anything unusual. For me, the garden has to be a space for our seven- and 10-year-old girls to play in, but our plot also has to be decorative, and really productive as well.

Our pretty thatched house sits in the heart of the quiet village of Rushbrooke, two miles southeast of Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. The three-quarter-acre garden wraps around the house. When I met my husband Dominic 13 years ago, this garden consisted of a row of poplars, a beech hedge, a walnut, an old apple tree and two clashing roses on the front of the house. Together, we set about transforming this rather uninspiring space into a quirky garden in which I could be really creative and where I could integrate pieces of art.

On arrival at the garden gate, one is dwarfed by the 10ft sculpture *Vessel*, by well-known garden sculptor Maryanne Nicholls. It sits in the Asian Border, which is filled with choice plants, such as *Koelerutaria paniculata* 'Fastigiata', *Clerodendrum trichotomum*,

*Viburnum betulifolium*, *Jasminum mesnyi* and *Disporopsis pernyi*. All of these plants thrive in our sandy soil. I used the brilliant book *Travels in China* by Roy Lancaster for inspiration. Then the lovely Rupert Eley from The Place for Plants at East Bergholt kindly sourced my plants, including the Japanese spicebush (*Lindera obtusiloba*), which has unusual tri-lobed leaves that turn from deep purple in spring to yellow in autumn.

**'Beth Chatto spent four hours in the garden and we discussed every plant in the borders - it was a joy'**

The terracotta-toned *Vessel* looks magical at night when lit by subtle uplighters, and provides an impressive focal point and colour theme for the Long Borders, which run along the front of the house. These contain unusual plants such as *Lonicera involucrata* - a wacky shrubby honeysuckle with red bracts, yellow flowers and soft black berries. Opposite is the much admired oak-leaf hydrangea - *Hydrangea quercifolia* Snow Queen - whose white panicles catch the eye and massive leaves turn deep red in

autumn. Further up the border, *Trifolium ochroleucon* lights up the darkness with its greeny yellow flowers in May and June.

Being quite a Womble, I enjoy collecting other people's rubbish. In a skip I once found a lovely decorative gate; it now opens onto the beech cloister with its woven metal turf tree seat. A few years ago, we were hugely honoured to have Beth Chatto come and look around the garden. She spent four hours here and we discussed every plant in the borders - it was a joy. She sat on the tree seat and as she looked down the long borders, she

said: 'I could look at this view for hours.'

Further along in the garden, through the Purple Meadow, a dark glade of purple hazels camouflages the children's willow igloo. From here, you can look across the Copper Beech Spiral towards the Trampoline Borders, which are ablaze all summer long with the seriously flowery *Papaver rupifragum* 'Flore Pleno', which seeds happily through stately white spikes of foxtail lilies (*Eremurus himalaicus*). Look closely, and *Bouteloua gracilis* delicately



PREVIOUS PAGE, OVERLEAF Lucy Redman's garden has a laid-back charm that means it's the perfect place to sit and relax in the evening. OPPOSITE Box spirals and *Sedum 'Matrona'* punctuate the pink and purple beds, also home to *Lactuca perennis*, *Clerodendrum bungei*, *Indigofera pendula* and clouds of *Galega bicolor*. ABOVE The white walls of the house set off this frothy display, featuring *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, *Aronia melanocarpa* 'Autumn Magic' and *Hydrangea quercifolia* Snow Queen, and are the perfect canvas for the climbing rose 'Albertine'.

flutters between the many tufts of white-flowering *Libertia grandiflora*.

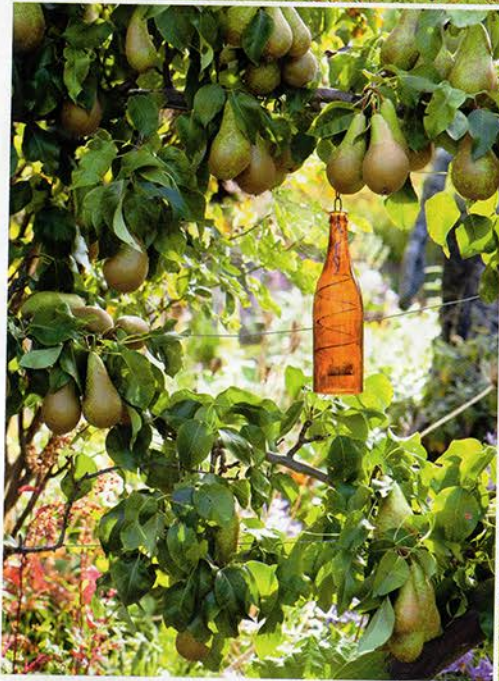
The sedum-roofed pavilion is home to The Lucy Redman School of Garden Design, where I run short courses. The view from the pavilion shows part of the 20m-long undulating Celtic Racetrack, where 250 sedum and sempervivum plants create a textural tapestry. Its five compartments start the year with a sea of blue *Camassia quamash*; then *Agastache rugosa* 'Liquorice Blue' and its white form send the bees into a frenzy.

Opposite is the Grass Bed, planted with tall *Cortaderia richardii*, stripey *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Overdam' and the tactile *Stipa tenuissima*. The rare plant *Polygonum scoparium* has thousands of little star-like white flowers, which emerge from the plant stalks and last through August and September. Little delights pop up throughout the year in between the grasses, starting with dwarf white *Narcissus* 'Thalia', then the elegant *Ornithogalum magnum*, followed by a show of *Allium sphaerocephalon*.

Continuing around the garden, you must cross the bridge, and then you reach the Daisy Path. Made of sandstone, marble and polished Japanese stones, and set in coloured concrete, it is flanked by purple hazel and a grey grass called *leymus*.

The willow tunnel adds an informal division between the curved lawn area and the more formal Pebble Parterre. I sourced the design from the mirror-backed 1930s gate (which picks up on the period of the house) and replicated it on the lawn. It ▶





TOP *Anemathelle lessoniana* softens the edges of the sedum-roofed pavilion, where Lucy holds her garden design courses. ABOVE LEFT This tea-light holder looks particularly attractive hanging from *Prunus communis* 'Conference'. ABOVE RIGHT Lucy describes her hens as her 'living sculptures'; they wander freely throughout the garden, adding to the liveliness of the plot. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP A charming woven metal turf seat made by Lucy's husband Dominic surrounds an ancient apple tree. BOTTOM RIGHT *Walking Man*, designed by garden sculptor Maryanne Nicholls.



looks amazing all winter while the rest of the garden is sleeping, and especially when the frost settles on the grass, transforming it into an even more eye-catching feature.

In spring, the parterre comes to life with flowering bulbs such as snowdrops, crocus, delicate snake's-head fritillaries and finally *Narcissus bulbocodium*; after which, the beds start to come into their own and take over the colourful display.

The pink, purple and white bed reflects the colours of the kitchen from which it is viewed, and is planted with *Sedum* 'Matrona', *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' and *Romneya coulteri*. Four box spirals add structure to this floral composition.

All the seeds scattered about, slugs on foliage and crumbs from visitors' cakes are enjoyed by our free-ranging chickens; my living, walking sculptures, whose home - which I call 'The Palais du Poulet' - was created using more reclaimed items.

My unusual Bulbs and Rhizome Borders span the seasons in interest, but my particular favourites are the delicate autumn snowdrop, *Acis autumnale*, a tiny treat that suddenly pops up and makes you smile. Another choice specimen is the giant pineapple lily *Eucomis comosa*, which goes

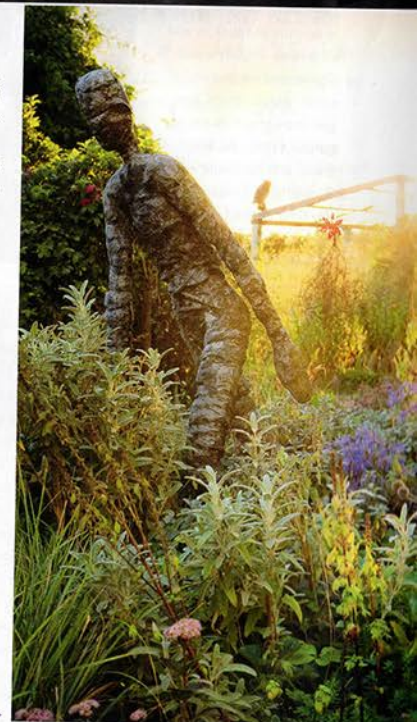
on flowering until the frost zaps the stems. I am collecting more and more varieties of *eucomis* as time goes on, as their flowers and spotty stems are a real delight.

Beyond our tiny plant nursery is Dominic's Potager, which is laid out as two concentric circles and surrounded by a rollercoaster hedge complete with porthole. Humour is added to the space with a sculpture by artist Cary Norman (see [www.carynorman.com](http://www.carynorman.com)) whose fantastic verdigris colouring looks fantastic with brassicas.

Dominic and I love showing people around our garden, whether individually or in groups, and I also encourage art groups to come and paint here. I just love playing with plants and sharing my creation with fellow garden lovers - it's my therapy.

*The Lucy Redman Garden*, 6 The Village, Rushbrooke, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 0ER. Open every Friday, from 1 April to 30 September, 10-5pm. Check out the website for information on short garden design courses held at The Lucy Redman School of Garden Design. Tel: +44 (0)1284 386250. [www.lucyredman.co.uk](http://www.lucyredman.co.uk)

Turn over for garden notebook ►





## The notebook

**Lucy Redman's garden** covers three-quarters of an acre and has sandy loam soil. It is mostly south facing and has quite an open aspect on a pretty flat site. She has some problems with fireblight and hungry stray sheep!



### GET CRAFTY

Create fun areas to run around or hide in, such as labyrinths, parterres (*left*), land art, tree seats or even a willow 'igloo'. You'll have the satisfaction of saying your item is home- or handcrafted and not mass produced. Use local artists (Lucy loves [www.maryannenicholls.co.uk](http://www.maryannenicholls.co.uk)) or learn a traditional craft, such as willow weaving or dry-stone walling.



### GROOVY GREENHOUSE

Lucy painted her greenhouse a pretty bluey-green (*left*) and added a brass handle, which 'made it look several thousand pounds more expensive than it actually is!' If you haven't got room for a greenhouse, Victorian or repro clothes look very stylish and can be moved around the vegetable plot as and when required. These mini-greenhouses also look good as purely decorative items.

### SITTING PRETTY

Relaxing seating areas are vital in any garden, but particularly so when there is so much to look at and admire as in Lucy's plot. These shabby-chic country-style chairs are just the right style for her garden (*right*). Adding some soft cushions and a simple table creates just the right ambience for a relaxing morning coffee or afternoon tea.



### PICTURE PERFECT

Lucy likes to group her reclamation finds together by colour, material or style. For instance, a few galvanized grey metal items, such as this watering can and planters (*right*), make a pretty composition without looking too twee or artificial. Create your own variations on a theme and go with your own style, and you'll find you have a truly personal plot.



### LUCY'S TOP TIPS

- **Be original.** My aim is to create a garden that reflects my love of art and plants.
- **Give traditional elements a modern twist.** The tree seat my husband made is made of strips of woven metal - it will look wonderful when it rusts!
- **Don't buy mass-produced sculptures.** Support an artist - it may even be cheaper. Integrate your sculptures with your garden. Our stunning *Walking Man* by Maryanne Nicholls boldly strides through a bed adding drama and interest to the garden.
- **Encourage children into the garden.** I help a charity called Eastfeast ([www.eastfeast.co.uk](http://www.eastfeast.co.uk)) that works with children and teachers to develop outdoor 'classrooms'.



### CONTACTS

#### GARDENS TO VISIT

- **The Fullers Mill Garden**, West Stow IP28 6HD. Tel: 0870 8030248. [www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk](http://www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk)
- **Ickworth Park**, Horringer IP29 5QE. Tel: +44 (0)1284 735270. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)
- **The Walled Garden**, Langham Hall IP31 3EE. Tel: (0)7772 457063. [www.langhamherbs.co.uk](http://www.langhamherbs.co.uk)  
Also home to the Bellflower Nursery. Tel: +44 (0)7879 644958. [www.bellflowernursery.co.uk](http://www.bellflowernursery.co.uk)
- **Wyken Hall Gardens**, Wyken Hall, Stanton, Bury St Edmunds IP31 2DW. Tel: +44 (0)1359 252372. [www.wykenvineyards.co.uk](http://www.wykenvineyards.co.uk)

#### RECOMMENDED NURSERY

- **The Place for Plants**, East Bergholt Place, Suffolk CO7 6UP. Tel: +44 (0)1206 299224. [www.placeforplants.co.uk](http://www.placeforplants.co.uk)