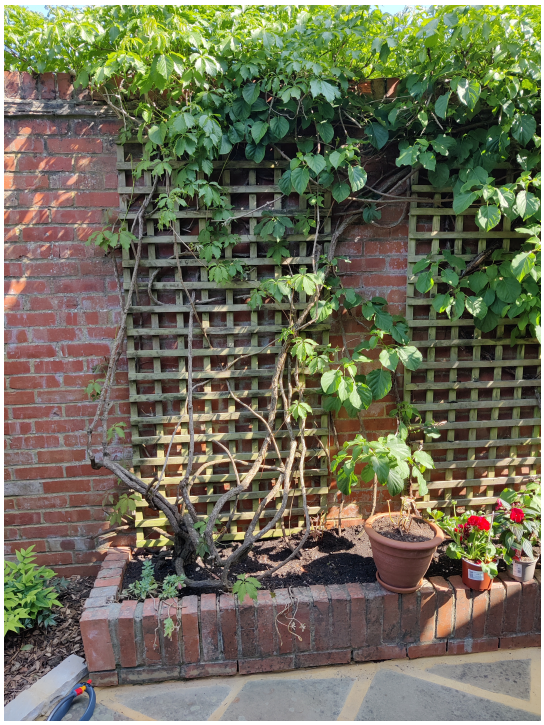
Andy’s garden tutorial

May 2025

Back Garden



1 Brick planter



Autumn: trim the Virginia Creeper back hard – give it a short back and sides and in spring it will burst forth again.

Video: [1, 00:00-00:36]

2 New Guinea Impatiens



Andy's suggestion for the brick planter.

Big colourful flowers.

We bought two red and one white.

Video: [1, 00:00-00:36]

3 Nandina "*Limelight*"



They will form a solid shape. Keep them watered.

You don't have to do anything to them. You can trim them a bit but they are almost self-pruning.

Video: [1, 00:36-01:00]

4 Laurustinus "*Vibernum tinus*"



The transplanted tree.

It will probably look sicker for a while, the leaves will fall off and then it will re-sprout. Andy is hopeful that it will survive.

Video: [1, 01:00-01:33]

5 Vibernum Dividii



Evergreen shrub: can grow to about 1 metre high.

Shape them as necessary. If they start to grow over the path clip them back. They will thicken up and form a canopy.

Video: [1, 01:33-01:55]

6 Osmanthus



Shrub.

It will form a lovely tight evergreen bundle. Let the shrubs fill the space.

Video: [1, 01:55-02:15]

7 Pittosporum



It will form a lovely solid kind of egg shaped shrub. If it gets too big, push it back: don't be scared to prune.

It will fill the space.

As the Vibernum grows, keep the two clipped as appropriate.

Video: [1, 02:16-02:30]

8 Cotinus "*Smoke Bush*"



It can reach about 4 metres tall. Let it fill the space but don't let it get massive. Let it grow to an appropriate size: whatever you feel comfortable with.

Video: [1, 02:44-03:04]

9 Choisya “*Sundance*”



Beautiful evergreen shrub.

It likes a shady environment. It will very tidily fill the space. It is a somewhat delicate plant. So we may need to clip the Photinia Red Robin to give it space.

Video: [1, 03:05-03:22]

10 Photinia “*Red Robin*”



Another shrub that will become large.

We may need to trim or clip it to allow the Choisya space to breathe.

Video: [1, 03:22-03:33]

11 Alchemilla mollis



Perennial plant. They will not get much bigger than this. They have a lovely sulphur yellow flower. They will spread a bit.

In the winter cut them right down “brutally, with an old bread knife”. If you leave the leaves on, they will rot and become messy. In the spring they will grow up again.

(RHS website says this is known as *lady’s mantle*.)

Video: [1, 03:40-04:15]

12 Nandina Obsession



Same family as the other Nandinas.

This one is called Obsession. You don’t need to prune it. It will form an tight egg shape of foliage.

Planted in a crescent as a backdrop to the Magnolia.

Video: [1, 04:13-04:34]

13 Magnolia "*Heaven Scent*"



As it grows raise the canopy upwards. As it grows, clip out the smaller fluffy branches. Select about 5 or 6 stems - let it grow up like a candelabra. Eventually no leaves until the height of the top of the wall.

Should be like a parasol or umbrella of leaves at the top.

Leave the small stems this year. Where there are two close together cut one out. Wait until next year or when the leaves are all off.

We may decide to stop it growing when it gets to about 10 feet tall. Use a telescopic pruner to keep it to that height.

Video: [1, 04:33-05:55]

14 Matteuccia struthiopteris "*Shuttlecock Fern*"



This is a colonising fern. Next year we will see baby ones growing between them. They are planted around the Magnolia and so will spread and form a solid doughnut of fern around the base of the tree.

They will grow about 80cm high.

In the winter you can cut off all the old foliage and new leaves will grow in spring.

Video: [1, 05:55-06:27]

15 Laurustinus “*Vibernum tinus*”



Another of the same species as the sick bush.

Video: [1, 06:35-06:47]

16 Griselinia littoralis “*New Zealand broadleaf*”



Close to wall. Handles low light well.

Video: [1, 06:50-06:57]

17 Japanese Laurel “*Aucuba japonica*”



Handles low light well. Don’t let them get too tall. Let them fill the space.

General advice: taller shrubs at the back shorter at the front.

Clip the shrubs once a year.

Video: [1, 06:57-07:38]

18 Osmanthus



Another Osmanthus.

Same family as the other one: it will fill the space at an intermediate height.

Video: [1, 07:57-08:06]

19 Pittasporum



Another Pittasporum. To “soften the wall”, draw the eye higher, so that we get the illusion of more space.

Video: [1, 08:06-08:27]

20 Arbutus unedo “*Strawberry tree*”



Beautiful tree.

Has a red fruit that hangs down.

Can get as tall as the cherry trees, but you can grow it as a shrub. We can let it get to roughly the height of the wall.

(Behind and to the left of the double trunked cherry tree.)

Video: [1, 08:27-08:52]

21 Acorus



Water grass around the water feature. Can actually grow in water. Not a problem if they start to grow among the stones.

No maintenance needed.

Video: [1, 09:15-09:43]

22 Erigeron "*Californian fleabane*"



Little daisy. Will form a carpet. They will fill the area and will flower for about 10 months of the year.

If they self-sow somewhere else: keep them in their place.

When they die back in winter, can chop them back with scissors.

Video: [1, 09:47-10:34]

23 Geranium Rozanne



Blue and white flower. Will flower until the frost comes. All the same colour.

Daisies and geraniums mingle together and “form a fruit salad”.

If they get tired in summer you can cut them back in half and they will have another spurt of growth.

Video: [1, 10:36-11:55]

24 Magnolia Grandiflora



This is the evergreen magnolia as opposed to the deciduous one (see *13 Magnolia ‘Heaven Scent’*).

It has a white saucer flower 150 mm across.

As with the other magnolia, raise the foliage up by cutting suitably.

In a few years it should reach head height.

As it is evergreen it may drop leaves at various times.

Video: [1, 11:55-13:08]

25 Weigela variegata



Shrub: variegated leaf and pink trumpet flower.

Allow to fill the space - shape accordingly.

Video: [1, 13:08-13:25]

26 Star Jasmine



Train up using the wires and around the Qalaat sign.

Will flower in late spring and early summer and will be very fragrant.

Video: [1, 13:52-14:15]

27 Syrian Hibiscus “*Hibiscus syriacus*”



Between the two Jasmines.

We need to flatten it (“*espalier*”) up the wall to the base of the Qalaat sign.

Video: [1, 14:15-14:45]

28 Hydrangea



Hydrangeas at the base of each magnolia. They will have a lace cap flower.

They were bought as blue but may have pink flowers instead because of the alkaline soil.

Don’t let them get too big.

We can leave them unpruned for the winter as the flowers will protect them from the frost. Then in spring, cut them back harshly and they will grow again.

Video: [1, 14:48-15:30]

29 Wisteria



Train it along the wires.

Wisteria flower on last year's wood.

Do not cut back before they flower.

When it has finished flowering prune it then, and it will flower next time on the previous year's growth.

Video: [1, 15:31-16:30]

30 Rock rose



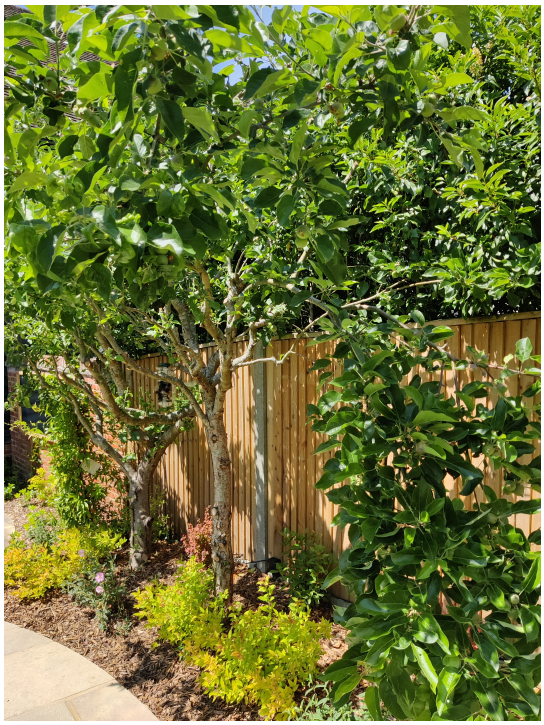
Loves sun.

Papery flower.

Medium height: shape them accordingly.

Video: [1, 16:42-17:05]

31 Apple tree



We will need to remove excess branches and parts of branches.

Video: [1, 17:35-18:04]

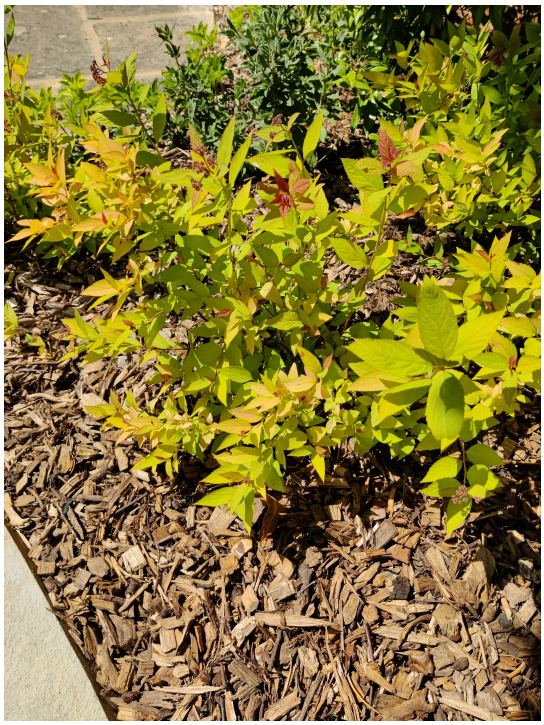
32 Bay tree



Don’t let it dry out because it has been transplanted.

Video: [1, 18:04-18:27]

33 Spiraea “*Goldflame*”

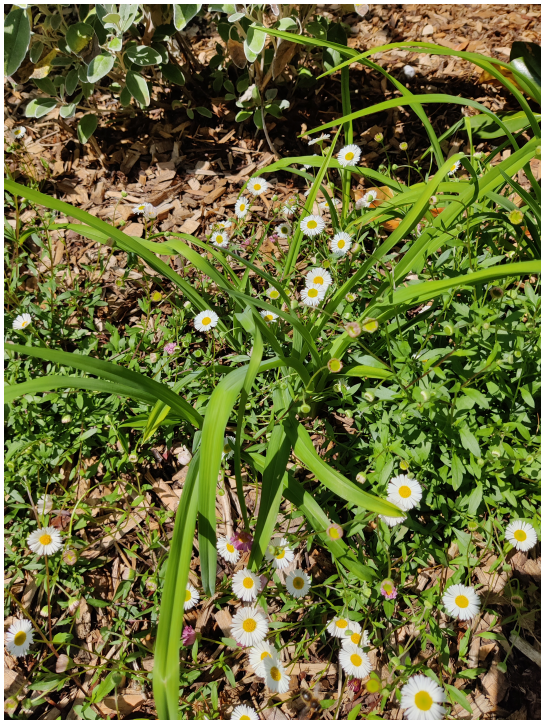


Will have a pink fluffy flower.

They are deciduous and will lose their leaves.

Video: [1, 18:27-18:48]

34 Daylily



These are growing wild from the old garden among the daisies.

Andy recommends keeping them if we like their flowers.

Video: [1, 18:48-18:52]

35 Berberis



They are tall and thin with a columnar growth habit.

They have prickly thorns, and will lose their leaves in winter.

Video: [1, 18:58-19:20]

36 Rock Rose



Another species of Rock Rose. Will have a purple flower.

Likes sun: beware of allowing the apple tree to shade it too much.

Video: [1, 19:20-19:38]

37 Star Jasmine and Solanum on the post and trellis



Solanum: same family as tobacco and potatoes. Will grow quickly.

We will need a telescopic pruner.

Next year will go to the top of the trellis.

Video: [1, 19:38-20:20]

38 Pachysandra



Will form an evergreen carpet.

Soil in this area is shallow with concrete underneath so we need to ensure it does not dry out.

Video: [1, 20:26-21:00]

39 Hart's tongue fern



Next spring: cut all the old leaves off, just before the new ones appear.

Video: [1, 21:00–21:40]

40 Mahonia "*Soft Caress*"



Will form a tidy mid-sized shrub. Don't let the star jasmine grow all over it.

Video: [1, 21:42–21:56]

41 Climbing Hydrangea



They like a semi-shaded situation. Let them grow up. They grow slowly.

Video: [1, 22:10-22:49]

42 Fuschia "*Genie*"



A golden fuschia. Don't let it grow right up in front of the mirror, but let it come to the base of the mirror.

It's a tough plant.

Video: [1, 22:49-23:04]

43 Perennial Bed



No shrubs in this bed. All of these plants get cut down to the ground in the winter.

Video: 23:24-23:33

44 Helenium "*Sahin's Early Flowerer*"



They will grow up to the bottom of the window with a beautiful burnt orange-red flower.

When they have been flowering for about a month the flowers start to wilt and form a seed head.

If you cut that seed head off in mid-summer, it will flower again.

So you can double the flowering time if you dead-head it half way through.

If it looks as if it might fall over you can get metal support rings which in springtime you put over each cluster to stop them from falling.

Video: [1, 23:35-24:35]

45 Verbena bonariensis



A purple verbena – they grow about 5 feet tall. It has a lovely purple flower for much of the year.

In the winter cut them back to a few inches above the ground, and next year they will spring up.

They don't need any support.

They do self-seed quite a lot: if you find there are baby ones all around. on a hot day, take a hoe and disturb their roots and let them wither in the sun.

We just want to keep four clusters of these – if they grow everywhere, weed them out.

Video: [1,24:36-25:40]

46 Scabiosa "*Butterfly Blue*"



Beautiful flower: will form a clump. When they finish flowering, pinch with your thumbnail to take the old flower heads off – it will keep it fresh and keep them flowering.

In autumn cut them back and in spring they will grow up again.

Video: [1, 25:41-26:02]

47 Catnip



It is a type of mint and like mint it has square stems.

It flowers prolifically.

If it gets tired during summer, cut it back to half size and it will flower again.

In the autumn cut the whole thing back – “put it to bed for the winter”.

Video: [1, 26:03-26:43]

48 Geum “*Totally Tangerine*”



Astonishing colour. Flowers for a long period of time. Intended to contrast with the other plants in this bed. Symmetrical design.

Video: [1, 26:44-27:23]

Front Garden



49 Euonymus fortunei "*Silver Queen*"



Rambling ground cover. Will become a solid foreground mat. Should grow to about two feet high: keep it shaped, don't allow to grow over the path or hedge.

Video: [2, 00:51-01.15]

50 Purple leafed smoke bushes



More of these.

Will grow to the height of the wall.

Video: [2, 01:15-01:25]

51 Variegated Griselinia



This is the variegated type of Griselinia.

We have three of the other type at the back under the holly tree.

Will grow into a nice shrub.

Video: [2 01:26-01:44]

52 Portuguese Laurel Hedge



Will form a hedge all around. It is sprouting well.

Grow it to the height of the top of the wall. Clip it once a year, in February (illegal to clip in spring) and shape it.

By the end of summer this year it will already look like a hedge and be continuous.

It should not be allowed to get more than 2 feet wide – don't allow it to get out of hand.

Video: [2, 01:54-03:44]

53 Silver birch "*Jacquemontii*"



They have a satin white trunk, and will get whiter with time.

The hessian tree ties will rot away naturally. The wooden supports can than be snapped out of the ground (after a year or two).

Lift the canopy up so that it starts above the height of the wall. Allow to grow to 4 metres. Use telescoping pruners.

Video: [2, 03:45-04:53]

54 Japanese Holly Fern



Next spring they will look sad. Chop then off before they re-open to get new growth.

They like shade. The greener ones that are currently more in the open are sun burned – they will be happier when there is more shade over them.

Video: [2, 04:53-05:42]

55 Blue Campanula



In the corners by the step. Currently very small.

They will produce copious blue flowers like a carpet. Give them plenty of water.

Video: [2, 05:42-06:12]

56 Bergenia



Almost like an ornamental cabbage.

They will grow all around the patio.

When they finish flowering you can dead-head them.

Video: [2, 06:12-06:50]

57 Hydrangea “*Annabelle*”



Will have a big white spherical flower.

Video: [2, 06:50-07:03]

58 Astelia “*Silver Spear*”



This is a New Zealand plant, with silvery leaves.

In spring cut it back to ground level – otherwise it will get too big and out of proportion.

Video: [2, 07:03-07:42]

59 Photinia “*Red Robin*”



More of these to form a backdrop.

Video: [2, 07:58-08:18]

60 Daphne



Will flower in late winter. They will grow about a metre high: shape them accordingly.

May need to move the light from under it.

Video: [2, 08:19-08:48]

61 Rock rose



As also at the back.

They like a lot of sunlight.

Video: [2, 08:50-09:06]

62 Buddleia "*Butterfly bush*"



Currently suffering from aphids: leaves are deformed. Needs aphid spray (or soapy water).

From Turkey / Iran. Can grow 2 to 3 metres tall.

Will have spikes of purple / pink flowers, which butterflies and bees like.

You can cut it back hard, and it will grow again.

Video: [2, 9:39-10:32]

63 Rosemary



This is a prostrate growing Rosemary, which will always grow flat like a carpet.

Keep the Rosemary clipped away from the more delicate plants.

Video: [2, 10:32-11:36]

64 Euphorbia



It has an irritant milky sap, so be careful when touching or pruning it.

Forms a silvery-grey mound.

In the winter you can cut it back but not too severely. Shape it to file the space.

Video: [2, 11:36-12:10]

65 Buddleia



Another Buddleia with different coloured flower.

Video: [2, 12:10-12:19]

66 Clematis



Two varieties, one on each side of the arch.

The one away from the house is called “*President*”.

Next year they should grow more powerfully sprout heavily.

Will grow quickly to the top and flower, but then it will die back.

Then when it does so you can cut it back to a foot above the ground.

Next spring it will grow back up again.

Video: [2, 12:19-13:20]

67 Honeysuckle



Transplanted from by the front door.

Keep it under control, because they can get thicker and woodier, so that there is a cloud of dead twigs.

Clip it to keep it fresh.

Video: [2, 13:20-13:45]

68 Trachycarpus Palm



Single stem palm, planted in clusters of three.

New leaves come at the top. Older leaves will hang down at the side and start going yellow.

Cut off those old leaves with secateurs. Keep cutting tidily close to the trunk.

They will grow up to the height of the gutters in time, but very slowly.

The form a stunning vertical element in the garden.

Video: [2, 13:49-14:40]

69 Agapanthus



Will have a beautiful blue flowering spike. Cobalt blue pompom of flowers.

Video: [2, 14:58-15:18]

70 Red Hot Poker



Some of these are mixed with weeds. Their leaves are fleshier than the grass that they may be mixed with.

As they establish themselves we need to put slug bait around them, because slugs may try to eat their flower buds.

Video: [2, 15:18-16:58]

71 Nandina domestica



A different variety here – it will grow quite tall.

Allow it to grow up. No need to prune.

Video: [2, 17:12-17:28]

72 Euonymus



Another Euonymus.

Will grow to mid-height. Handles shade well.

Video: [2, 17:30-17:39]

73 Californian Lilac "*Ceanothus*"



Let it grow up between the windows, but not to obscure the windows.

Maybe put some wires on the wall to train it between the windows.

Video: [2, 17:40–18:04]

74 Astelia



Another Astelia.

Cut back every year down to the ground. In spring let it grow up again.

Video: [2, 18:03–18:11]

75 Olive



Could grow up to gutter height.

Raise the canopy: clean branches to the top of the window, so that you can look through it and it lets light in.

Video: [2, 18:20-18:42]

76 Blue Iris



Blue iris which we left in place.

There are some yellow red hot pokers below them.

Keep pots a little distance away so that light gets to these.

Video: [2, 18:58-19:26]

77 Epimedium



Stunning ground cover. Next year they will start to colonise and get bigger and bigger. They will form a solid carpet along the front.

OK to let them spill over the edging a bit.

In the winter they will start to die back. Cut all the leaves off before the new leaves come. You will see the new buds appearing. Cut the old leaves off before it becomes impossible because of the new buds. When you see furry tiny buds trying to unfold, that is the time to cut the old leaves off.

Video: [2, 20:14-21:25]

78 Euonymus



Also from Euonymus family. Form it into a ball.

It will become a yellow pompom amongst the ground cover.

Video: [2, 21:31-21:41]

79 Multi-stemmed palms



Baby stems are starting to form. Each palm can have seven or eight shoots of babies. Select the main stem and three of four of the young shoots. Other shoots: cut off with a pair of secateurs.

These are very slow growing.

Video: [2, 21:41-22:57]

General advice

Weeding

Constant vigilance.

Look out for tiny shoots, weeds hiding close to plants, grass among the red hot pokers, etc.

Fertiliser

Once a year apply slow release (controlled release) fertiliser. It is in the form of pellets and releases nutrients throughout the growing season.

Do it once in the spring (will cost about £80 for the whole garden).

First time: Spring 2026.

Spring

- **Fertilizer**: apply controller release fertilizer everywhere.
- **Hydrangea**: in spring, cut them back harshly and they will grow again.
- **Hart's tongue fern**: cut all the old leaves off, just before the new ones appear.
- **Helenium**: if it looks as if it might fall over you can get metal support rings which in springtime you put over each cluster to stop them from falling.
- **Japanese Holly Fern**: in spring they will look sad. Chop then off before they re-open to get new growth.
- **Astelia**: in spring cut it back to ground level – otherwise it will get too big and out of proportion.

Summer

- **Geranium**: if they get tired in summer you can cut them back in half and they will have another spurt of growth.
- **Helenium**: if you cut that seed head off in mid-summer, it will flower again.
- **Catnip**: if it gets tired during summer, cut it back to half size and it will flower again.

Autumn

- **Virginia Creeper**: trim back hard.
- **Scabiosa**: cut them back.
- **Catnip**: cut the whole thing back.

Winter

- **Alchemilla**: in the winter cut them right down "brutally, with an old bread knife". If you leave the leaves on, they will rot and become messy. In the spring they will grow up again.
- **Shuttlecock Fern**: in the winter you can cut off all the old foliage and new leaves will grow in spring.

- **Californian fleabane**: (the little daisy-like flowers.) When they die back in winter, can chop them back with scissors.
- **Hydrangea**: we can leave them unpruned for the winter as the flowers will protect them from the frost. Then in spring, cut them back harshly and they will grow again.
- **Perennial Bed**: all of these plants get cut down to the ground in the winter.
- **Euphorbia**: in the winter you can cut it back but not too severely.
- **Epimedium**: in the winter they will start to die back. Cut all the leaves off before the new leaves come. You will see the new buds appearing. Cut the old leaves off before it becomes impossible because of the new buds. When you see furry tiny buds trying to unfold, that is the time to cut the old leaves off.
- **Portuguese Laurel Hedge**: trim in February: illegal to trim hedges after that.

