



RHS HAMPTON COURT GARDEN FESTIVAL

2024

MELANIE HICK - THE 'CLIMATE
FORWARD GARDEN'



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Melanie Hick appointed as designer with ‘Climate-Forward Garden’ at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival



Melbourne-born and London-based exterior designer [Melanie Hick](#) has been chosen to create her ‘[Climate-Forward Garden](#)’ – a Get Started garden at [RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival](#). The exciting news will propel Melanie forward on her mission to help people use their outdoor space to connect with nature and each other.

At the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival (Tuesday 2nd – Saturday 7th July), Melanie’s design will be created as a template that real gardeners can use across any sunny front garden in the UK right now. The [Get Started](#) collection of gardens is designed to inspire and spark ideas for beginner gardeners. It will feature a colour palette of bright pops of vibrant hues against a muted, warm backdrop, inspired by the plants that Melanie was surrounded by when growing up in Melbourne, Australia.

Climate-forward design and sustainability is at the very forefront of Melanie’s ethos, and she is passionate about educating others, particularly about how plants are adapting to our changing environment and how best to integrate those into beautiful exterior design.

Melanie Hick said: “It is an absolute honour to be chosen to design one of the show gardens at RHS Hampton Court – it is a huge opportunity. I am passionate about showing others how to integrate climate-friendly elements into their garden design, as well as creating spaces where people can connect with nature and each other, so there couldn’t be a better platform than this.

"I'm thrilled to bring my Climate-Forward ethos to the garden-lovers at the RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival 2024 and spark conversations with new and knowledgeable gardeners about making climate a priority. Climate-Forward means putting climate in garden conversations up front, rather than making up for climate-damaging decisions later.

"The garden is full of ideas to help you do this - ground screws instead of CO2 emitting concrete, gravel as a mulch to keep in water and also to allow rain to soak away on your own property, reclaimed timber instead of newly felled timber, insect habitat built into the fencing, and a conversation pit to start those conversations."

Visitors to Hampton Court will be able to watch the reflections on the water in the central pool from the conversation pit, while surrounded by the aromas and colours of Australian eucalyptus and crepe myrtle, as well as learning how to combine drought-friendly Australian plants with the plants UK visitors will be more familiar with growing. Melanie has used drought-friendly plants, which will grow from porous, stylish gravel, while habitat poles encourage biodiversity.



Melanie said: "The space is influenced by how Australian garden design has evolved to cope with the demands of harsh climate conditions like drought and floods. I wanted to bring that ethos to a UK audience and show how they can create climate-forward gardens which are still beautiful and functional.

"The garden also shows how to lower water use, and how to use reclaimed materials and habitats to make the space feel like a retreat.

"I've used a range of earthy yet beautiful colours to reflect the tones of the Australian landscape. Visitors will be able to spot hues which are reminiscent of the dry stones of riverbeds, the rusty steel of old shearing sheds, the reclaimed galvanised steel of water tanks, and raw wood – all of which are common sights across the southern continent."

The Climate-Forward Garden has several easily implantable sustainable ideas, including using ground screws instead of concrete to secure the boundary fence to the earth, a recycled gravel which creates a soakaway for sudden downpours and drought-tolerant planting that is also mulched with gravel.

Melanie's garden is sponsored by F H Brundle, the UK's leading supplier of handrailing and metal products, and the UK distributor of Straight Curve, the rusted steel edging seen in the conversation pit, as well as the ground screws.

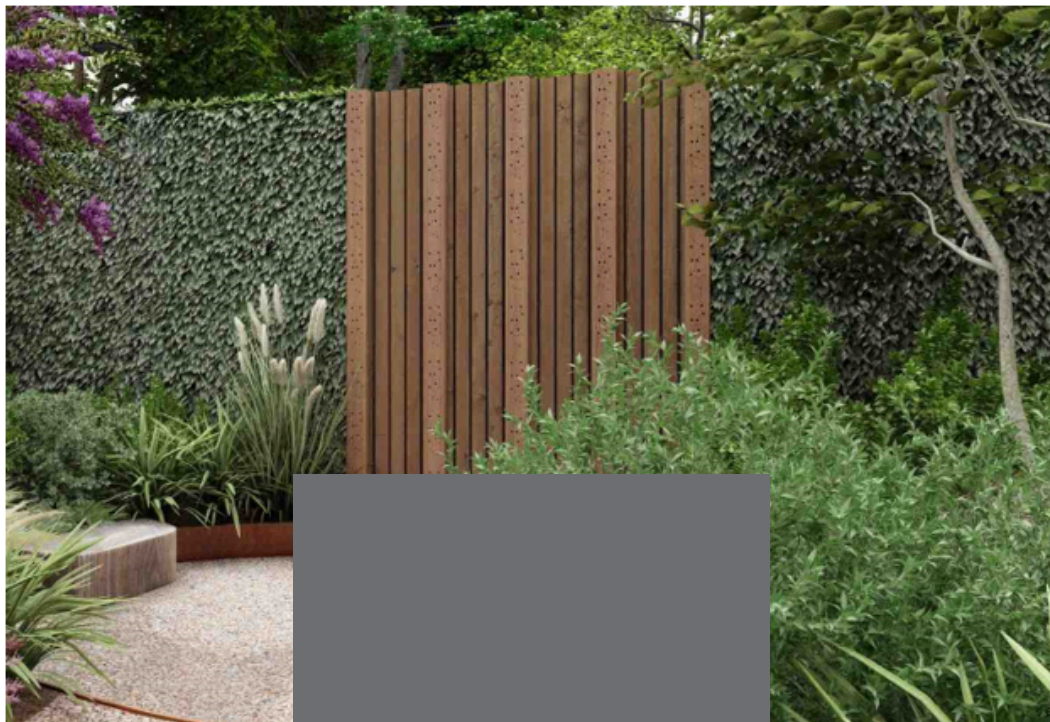
After the show, elements of the garden will be relocated to [Kilmorie School](#) in Lewisham, where children will be able to enjoy it for years to come.

MEET MELANIE HICK

Melanie Hick is a Melbourne-born, London-based bespoke garden designer specialising in creating beautiful spaces with sustainability and climate-consideration built into every layer of their creation. As a lifelong gardener and lover of the great outdoors, Melanie passionately believes in helping people to get the most out of their gardens, using them to connect deeply with nature and each other.



Expert suggests top five drought and flood-resistant plants for maintaining beautiful gardens in a changing climate



As record high temperatures continue to persist through the summer, many have turned to clever garden design to keep their gardens beautiful in the face of a changing climate.

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Melbourne-born and London-based exterior designer [Melanie Hick](#) has been appointed to create her '[Climate-Forward Garden](#)' – a Get Started garden at [RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival](#). She is on a mission to help people learn about sustainable planting, choosing varieties which will maintain their glory even throughout times of flooding or droughts.

Here, Melanie has chosen her top five hardy plants, all of which can be seen in the 'Climate-Forward Garden' at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival (Tuesday 2nd – Saturday 7th July). Melanie's design will be created as a template that real gardeners can use across any sunny front garden in the UK right now.

Eucalyptus pauciflora subsp. pauciflora

"The eucalyptus pauciflora, commonly known as snow gum, is an attractive tree which is endemic to Eastern Australia. Its hardy nature makes it ideal for changeable weather – after all, it thrives in the searing heat and very wet spells of my home country! It is often

fast growing, meaning it can provide shade very quickly, and has attractive bark, most with aromatic foliage, and clusters of small white, yellow or red flowers.”

Leptospermum scoparium

“Adding vibrant hues to the garden is *Leptospermum scoparium*, or ‘Red Damask’, a dense medium-sized shrub which will flower from late spring. Those who love adding flashes of colour to their gardens will adore this plant, as it provides deep pink-reddish flowers, set off beautifully against narrow, dark-green leaves. These pops of bright colour against a backdrop of muted, warm hues are a key element of my garden design. The ‘Red Damask’ is provides much of that interest, leading the eye around the garden.”



Panicum virgatum

“Commonly known as switchgrass, this deciduous, perennial grass grows to 1.8m tall, ideal for adding ground coverage where needed. Not only that, but it adds some pretty colour too, with airy sprays of tiny, purple-green flowers produced from mid-summer to early-autumn, and the leaves themselves turning a beautiful rich reddish-purple colour later in the year too. Switchgrass is proof that hardy plants can be both functional and beautiful. It originates from North America, where it is dominant in prairie-land, becoming famous for being both resource-efficient and low-maintenance – ideal for a sustainable, climate-forward garden.”



Achillea Millefolium

“I added more bursts of vibrant colour to the RHS Hampton Court garden by using *Achillea Millefolium*, or yarrow, a spreading perennial topped with domed flowerheads of small, dark pink flowers. This is a wonderful plant to introduce to gardens for wildlife – birds can use

yarrow to line their nests, while many insects, including beetles and moths, feed on the plant. As a result, yarrow is often a favourite to use in butterfly gardens.”

Kniphofia

“Last but not least, *Kniphofia*, also known as red-hot pokers, is a perennial plant with exotic looking flowers which add yet another pop of colour into climate-forward gardens. They flower throughout much of the year – from March to November – so are ideal for adding colour into gardens through all but the winter. Colours are wild and varied – from red and orange, through to yellow and green, and even brown and pink.”

People can visit RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival and see Melanie’s design for themselves by booking tickets [here](#). Find out more about Melanie Hick and book a call with her to see how the Climate-Forward design principles can be applied to any garden by visiting www.melaniehick.com



WHAT IS CLIMATE-FORWARD?

Climate-forward is putting climate at the front of conversations about your garden.

Style, luxury and entertaining spaces are assured, so let's talk about how all these elements can be delivered to benefit the climate.

Because we have one planet, and we know that we owe it to our future generations to take care of it.

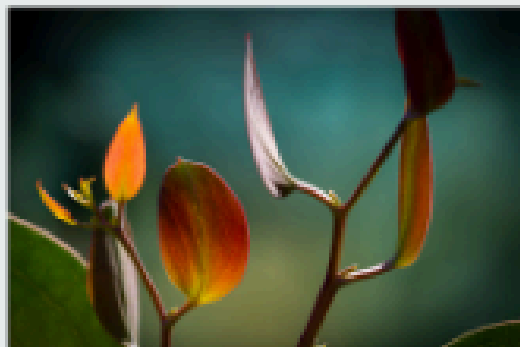
Here are five top sustainability tips that are on display in the Climate-Forward Garden.

- Look to tough plants. Many plants from Australia will endure our changing climate in the UK. Look for hardy plants that withstand frosts and drought like the Mount Buffalo Eucalyptus, a small species that suits compact gardens.
- Lower CO₂. We're using ground screws to secure our fence to do away with concrete, which emits CO₂ as it sets. You can easily do this in your garden when next replacing a fence or building a garden room.
- Think permeable. Gravel is an excellent material for sustainable rainfall management in gardens for several reasons. Gravel is highly permeable, allowing rainwater to soak away into the soil easily rather than running off and causing erosion or flooding.
- Add habitat. Creating wildlife habitats encourages biodiversity. I have added custom-made habitat poles for solitary bees of all sizes, but you could leave piles of twigs and exposed sand to treat your insects to a new home.
- Get recycling. Recycled and reclaimed timber reduces the need to fell virgin forest. Ours comes from some spectacular sites around the UK such as piers and wharves. Re-using planters like our old water tanks reduces landfill and gives these functioning items a second life.

Key plants in The Climate-Forward Garden

The colour scheme includes muted greens and gold with shots of zingy oranges and pink

Eucalyptus pauciflora subsp. *pauciflora*

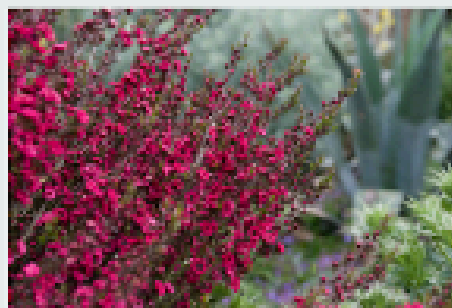


Evergreen trees or large shrubs, often fast-growing, some with attractive bark, most with aromatic foliage, and clusters of small, white, yellow or red flowers.

[Find out more >](#)

Leptospermum scoparium 'Red Damask'

'Red Damask' is a dense medium-sized evergreen shrub with narrow, dark green leaves. Flowers deep red, fully double, about 12mm in width and very freely borne from late spring.



[Find out more >](#)

Panicum virgatum 'Rehbraun'



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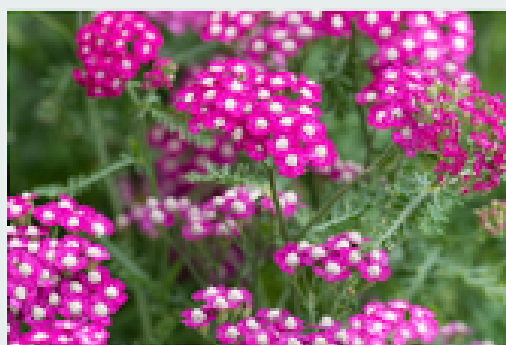
A deciduous, clump-forming, perennial grass to 1.5m tall, with flat, linear, mid-green leaves developing rich, reddish-purple shades in autumn. Any sprays of tiny, purple-green flowers are produced from mid-summer to early autumn.

[Find out more >](#)

Achillea millefolium 'Balvinrose'

A spreading perennial to about 50cm, with grey-green, fern-like foliage. Upright, branching stems are topped with domed flowerheads of small, dark rose-pink flowers from early summer to early autumn.

Pictured: *Achillea millefolium* 'New Vintage Violet'



[Find out more >](#)

Kniphofia 'Tawny King'



A free-flowering perennial to 1.2m tall, with narrow leaves and dense spikes of dull orange buds opening to cream flowers from mid summer to early autumn.

[Find out more >](#)

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

For media and press enquiries about the 'Climate-Forward Garden' at RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, and to arrange interviews with Melanie Hick or to request images and photocall opportunities, please contact the Honest Communications team:

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