



Move or improve?

To say that the property market is currently “challenging” would be a massive understatement. For this reason, and others, many people are now choosing to invest in improvements to their current home rather than moving.

As well as the usual favourites, such as new carpets or an improved kitchen, improvements to the garden are proving very popular. These vary from complete makeovers to simply “gap plugging”, but an interesting development is that of changing the view. This often entails the use of trees or large shrubs for screening to hide certain objects from view, but it can equally use plants to divert attention, frame a desired view or, where space allows, to help create an altogether new vista entirely.

If however, for whatever circumstances, you do want or need to move home, here are a few simple tips to help sell your property:

- First impressions count. Most people make up their minds as to whether or not they like a property within the first few minutes, or even seconds, of arriving. An attractive front garden can on average, according to a recent study, add as much as five thousand pounds to the perceived value of a property and, more importantly, help to sell it.
- Carefully chosen and strategically placed trees and/or shrubs can help to screen off unsightly views and provide privacy, maintaining or adding value to the property (especially if your neighbours are less than perfect).
- If adding plants to help sell a property choose them carefully as some (e.g. intricate topiary hedges, Wisteria covered pergolas, etc) may scare off all but the keenest gardeners if they seem like too much hard work to maintain, or if they are inappropriate in size and growth rate to the property. If in doubt, ask – we are happy to give advice.



Photo: Choose plants carefully and appropriately. The dappled shade created by some large-leaved deciduous trees may be beautiful but will create work in the autumn, which some people may find off-putting, especially in a relatively small garden.

Plant focus – Cotoneaster



Berries swelling in early autumn on Cotoneaster cornubia

Many people are familiar with the small-leaved forms of Cotoneaster, such as *C. microphyllus* or *C. horizontalis*, which are widely used as groundcover or for scrambling up against walls. But there are larger, more vigorous types which can be used to make a real impact in the garden.

Cotoneaster cornubia has long upright to arching stems bearing glossy mid to dark green leaves, which really set off the glossy red berries in autumn. This species is semi-evergreen, meaning that it will retain most of its foliage in a mild winter, especially if planted in a sheltered position, but in cold exposed positions will put on a display of yellow and red foliage colours before shedding. Due to its vigour and upright habit we often train it onto frames for planting against walls and fences, or for use as instant ‘stand alone’ screening. The upright habit also means that *C. cornubia* can be trained to grow into tree-like shapes, making it ideal for use as a small, semi-evergreen ‘tree’ for garden use.

Cotoneaster lacteus is truly evergreen. Not as upright or as vigorous as *C. cornubia*, it still has the potential to grow quite large, but it can be easily pruned to keep it in check. Arching stems of matt-green leaves mean that this Cotoneaster is often overlooked in favour of some of its showier cousins, but its berries are equally as attractive and equally as valuable a food source to birds, for which it also acts as excellent winter cover. Given sufficient space, *C. lacteus* makes an excellent informal hedge.

Most Cotoneasters are equally at home in sun or semi-shade. The soil conditions should not be too wet, as is generally the case with most evergreen shrubs, but relatively well drained, rich, moist soils (anything between mildly acid and moderately alkaline) are ideal.



Tips for Autumn (By David Crossley)

Forget the summer that never arrived and look forward to the short days and long nights and all the surprises that your garden will or at least could reveal in the cold light of winter.

When the leaves have fallen what will you see in your garden this winter?



Aucuba japonica Crotonifolia

Will it be a cold empty space surrounding a washed out looking grass lawn or a bare gravelled or paved space?

Most people have in the past tended to ignore the look and content of a garden during wintertime but in truth our winter often starts in October and can run on into April; 6 months when at best you will merely walk out in the garden

for a few fleeting minutes on those randomly sunny days between the incessant rain, hail and snow showers.

Winter is the time to review your garden from the warmth of a cosy chair, while looking out of the window.

It is from these positions that you can identify the visible areas that need attention and consider how to add interest not just in winter but all the year round.

Examine how to make the most of each space with either evergreen plants or deciduous plants with a specific feature that can add interest by means of coloured bark, flowers or fruits and better still a combination of these features.



Spring flowering Berberis darwinii

Here are a few useful plants for inclusion in your planting scheme.

This time I have concentrated on evergreen shrubs and trees.

Aucuba crotonifolia variegata
Arbutus unedo
Berberis darwinii
Choisya Ternata and *C. Ternata Sundance*
Camelia's in variety
Cotoneaster
Eleagnus pungens maculate and *Limelight*
Eucalyptus
Fatsia japonica
Garrya eliptica
Hedera variegata types
Ilex species
Mahonia bealei and others
Nandina domestica
Phormiums in variety
Photinia Red Robin
Pittosporum in variety
Skimmia jap. Rubella
Taxus fastigiata aurea
Thuja 'Rhinegold'
Viburnum burkwoodii
Viburnum tinus

This is not an exhaustive list as there are many other sub species and varieties that are available but the above are, strangely enough, usually in stock in the wall garden.

Enjoy whatever weather winter brings, but you can add colour to your garden.

Events

"Gardeners Question Time"

At Wykeham Mature Plants,

Sunday 5th October 2008

to raise funds for
St Catherine's Hospice, Scarborough

This will be an informal charity event in The Walled Garden on Sunday 5th October 12noon - 5pm, with all proceeds going to St Catherine's Hospice, who care for terminally ill patients in a territory which covers over 1600 square miles in North and East Yorkshire and Ryedale.

The "Headline attraction" will be a "Gardeners Question Time" style panel Q&A. Panel members will include: Joe Maiden (broadcaster BBC Radio Leeds, nurseryman), Gordon Kirby (Horticultural advisor, exhibitor and judge), Nigel Harrison (broadcaster BBC Radio York, lecturer Askham Bryan College, consultant), Roger Burnett (Scarborough Borough Council Parks and Gardens, "Britain in Bloom" judge).

... with all proceeds going to
St Catherine's Hospice

Other attractions will include:

Chainsaw carving/sculpture demonstrations by Mark Bell of Mark Bell Tree Surgery (Selby)

Floristry demonstration by Jo Purdy of Hearts and Flowers (Wykeham)

Charity Raffle, tombola, charity stalls, and more.

**15% discount off
retail prices**

Entry price (including refreshments): £5. Tickets available in advance (to guarantee a good seat) or on the door.

Should anyone wish to make a purchase or place an order in the nursery whilst all this is going on, they will receive a 15% discount off retail prices.

Event Contact details: Martin Howe, Wykeham Mature Plants
Tel. 01723862406 Fax 01723865643
Email m.howe@wykeham.co.uk
or: Penny Campbell, Fundraiser
St. Catherine's Hospice
Tel. 01723 378406

Contact Details:

Wykeham Mature Plants is open to the public

Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 4.30pm

Sundays (12 - 30 November) 10.00am to 3.00pm

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