

Save space with living walls

Vertical planting is an ideal way to make the most of limited space and hide unsightly eyesores – but it doesn't necessarily have to involve climbers, **Hannah Stephenson** discovers

ANYONE visiting the major garden shows this year will no doubt see an array of vertical planting, featuring rich tapestries of plants in weird and wonderful structures, which aim to add colour and form to an otherwise vacant space.

Indeed, vertical planting caught on several years ago, inspired by Frenchman Patrick Blanc, a pioneer in

this field, who has transformed many buildings' facades into living art, planting rich mixtures of lush foliage plants.

This concept is ideal if you have limited space on your patio or simply want to hide an ugly wall or fence and while some of the designs you see at garden shows may seem impractical or simply too complex to construct in a modern setting, manufacturers are attempting to meet

demand with a number of simple options.

“Vertical planting has increased in popularity be-

cause it makes best use out of the urban garden where space is limited, while living walls are sustainable, eco-friendly, purify the air and reduce the heat in towns,” says Gillian Bond of Treebox, a living-wall specialist.

Indeed, it's known that plants significantly improve

the surrounding air quality, reduce sound pollution, increase biodiversity, insulate buildings and cool our sweltering cities in the summer.

Felicity Waters, landscape architect at Garden Beet, says: “The larger the vertical garden the more complex it becomes in terms of maintenance and installation.

“If you are going to install a garden above head height you need to think how you

are going to water, weed and feed the plants.

“Creating a living wall say the size of a two-storey building can look spectacular, but there is nothing worse than a dead ‘living wall’.”

While elaborate schemes are available which involve professional installation, domestic gardeners can create their own living walls and vertical plantings without having to be DIY experts.

On a small scale, Burgon & Ball has just launched its Verti-Plant. Made from heavy duty non-woven material, it features planting pockets and an internal irrigation system which allows water to filter from one

pocket to the next, while the bottom pockets are sealed to reduce drips and mess.

Priced £9.95 for two, it’s available in good garden centres and at www.burgon-andball.com.

Alternatively, you can frame a floral or foliage display in a living art frame, priced £47.99 from www.gardenbeet.com.

For something larger which you can put up yourself, Easiwall is a vertical planter comprising five self-watering troughs attached to a panel 500cm wide by 1m tall, that you fix to a wall.

Priced £159, it’s available from www.gardenbeet.com and selected nurseries.

For information visit www.treebox.co.uk.

Create as large or as small a vertical display as you like with the Woolly Wally Pocket, a new type of hanging basket or wall planter that can be used on its own or in groups to cover any wall to create a vertical garden.

Made from recycled plastic bottles, the pockets – measuring 61cm x 38cm – cost £34.99 each.

They are available from www.gardenbeet.com.

If you’re reluctant to fix anything on to a fence or wall but have limited ground

space, Vertigro, a free-standing modular system enabling you to grow your own flowers and vegetables, is worth considering.

Priced £299, it will be available from the end of March at www.vertigro.co.uk.



SMALLER SCALE: Verti-Plant, from Burgon & Ball, is priced £9.95 for two.



GOING UP: Woolly Wally Pockets, £34.99 each from www.gardenbeet.com