

# GLO BAL GAR DEN REPORT 2010







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# THE GLOBAL GARDENING PASSIONS RE-CREATING EDEN 2010

**IN SEARCH OF EDEN.** IN THE FALL OF 2009 WE SET OUT ON A JOURNEY, SEARCHING FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF GARDENING. WHAT IS GARDENING ALL ABOUT? WHAT DO GARDENERS DO, THINK ABOUT, LIVE FOR? WHAT IS AT THE HEART OF MODERN GARDENING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE GLOBE?

The mission was to find the drivers, passions, and expressions of modern gardening, as expressed by those who care the most – passionate garden lovers. To find true garden lovers, we chose the driver that is reshaping the world more than anything else: the social media landscape. Here passionate garden lovers express their worldview everyday in hundreds of thousands of blogs and blogposts.

Therefore we browsed through thousands of blogs and tens of thousands of blog posts in 13 markets across the globe. We also used computers to analyze over 1.4 million blog posts (see table) in the search for what's hot and what's not.

As a complement, we checked Internet searches related to gardening, to see whether what is at the heart of true garden lovers also holds for the general public.

What we found was thrilling: Although most gardeners would not personally describe their passions and efforts as an attempt to re-create Eden, this is exactly what they are doing. Eden derives from the ancient Greek and Hebrew words for "closed garden," but probably stems from the Semitic word *dn*, which means abundant or lush. In traditional mythology, Eden represents the unspoiled place of perfect harmony, away from the dangers and noise of the world.

Since Eden is our dreams' desire, the image of Eden varies from person to person. So do the dreams of the perfect garden. To some, the dream is a lush garden, with an abundance of flowers and greenery. To others, the dream is about people, joy, and play, where the garden is the scene of activities rather than a place

of peace and harmony, or maybe a place to grow your own chemical-free and unspoiled vegetables.

But dreams of Eden are influenced by the zeitgeist and culture. Therefore the "re-created Eden" varies across the globe and over time. There are trends to be described and analyzed. This report presents the top gardening trends across the globe, derived from close study of the people who really know what gardening is about: the passionate bloggers of the world of gardening.

Remember that since we depict the world of gardening through the eyes of gardening bloggers, what you meet will not always reflect the mainstream gardens of a specific country, or what you read in newspapers and magazines. Most often, gardening bloggers do not represent the mainstream, but rather the cutting edge, showing the way to the future – though they would never admit that personally.

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COUNTRY	NUMBER OF BLOGPOSTS ANALYZED BY SOME ANALYZER
Australia*	118.060
Brazil*	110.599
China*	18.742
Denmark**	3.000
France*	60.169
Germany*	118.385
Norway**	8.000
Poland*	57.926
Russia*	168.620
South-Africa <sup>1</sup> *	36.074
Sweden*	46.698
UK*	361.964
USA*	308.107
<b>Total number of blog posts</b>	<b>1.416.344</b>

\* Based on gardening blogs and blogs with other main subject writing about gardening  
\*\* Based on only gardening blogs

<sup>1</sup> South Africa analysis based on English language, for further reference see section South Africa

Kairos Future is an international research and managing consulting firm that helps companies understand and shape their futures.

# EDEN FOUND

## – TOP TEN GARDEN TRENDS

What are gardening lovers across the globe passionate about? What do they express in their blogs, or talk about online?

To find out, we went through thousands of blogs, manually and automatically<sup>2</sup>, and we identified the key topics discussed and expressed. From a list of about forty topics we invited bloggers to select the ones about which they felt most passionate. That gave us

a list of ten themes, topics, and trends – some more “eternal,” others more contemporary and temporary.

With the list, we went out to see how much and how each theme was discussed across the globe in 13 selected countries. Based on that search we came up with a top ten list of the hottest topics according the blogging gardening community.

### TOP TEN GARDEN TRENDS

TREND	Short description	Top three trend in the following countries
1. Kitchen Gardening	From China to Brazil and from Australia to Sweden – all over the world, the kitchen garden is in vogue.	Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, South-Africa, UK
2. The Organic Garden	Whether in South Africa, Germany, France, or Russia, organic gardening is on the rise, giving consumers access to healthy, inexpensive organic fruits and vegetables.	Australia, France, Germany, Russia, South-Africa, USA
3. The Feel-Good Garden	The calm and serenity of a garden provides a soothing experience for modern day man, which many bloggers describe as purely addictive.	China, France, Germany, Sweden, UK, USA
4. The Designed and Artistic Garden	Gardeners express themselves and their personalities through the style of the garden, making every garden into a personal piece of art.	Norway, Poland, Sweden, UK
5. Re-Creating Wilderness	Instead of growing flowers in neat flower beds, wild gardeners prefer to let nature run its course and declare their independence from traditional gardening conventions.	Australia, Norway, Sweden, USA
6. The Social Garden	All over the world people gather in gardens for celebrations. Weddings, birthdays, or just an informal get-together with friends – the garden is the place to be.	China, Denmark, Poland
7. Urban Farming	Gardening interest and gardeners have all but vanished from the modern metropolis. However, young urbanites increasingly turn to gardening as a way of reconnecting with nature and contributing to a more sustainable way of life.	Brazil, South-Africa
8. The Lush Garden	The lush garden is quite the opposite of the wild garden since it is planned, designed, well-organized, and requires a lot of work from gardeners, who are nonetheless happy to make this effort.	Denmark
9. Container gardening	So what do you do if you don't have the space or the time to create your fantasy garden? You use pots and containers!	Brazil
10. Greenhouse Gardening	Although mainly a Nordic phenomenon, the greenhouse is an important topic in the blogosphere. The greenhouse is more than just a place to grow plants – it's also a symbol that the gardener means business.	Norway

<sup>2</sup> See table in section Introduction or in section Method for specification of analyzed blogposts per country with the SoMe Analyzer tool.









#### WHAT'S GARDENING ALL ABOUT?

Unlike what many people might expect, gardening is not about showing off. Of course, most passionate gardeners want to show the results of their efforts, to receive appreciation and accolades, just like everyone else. But that is not why they garden. The value of gardening is intrinsic, not extrinsic. The value is not the applause, but the inner pleasure of having fulfilled an aim, or created an inner dream, created a personal inner Eden.

That is also why there is little competition in the world of gardening, at least among passionate bloggers. Of course the British compete with their pumpkins at garden shows, but that is not at the core among garden lovers. Most garden lovers work in their gardens for themselves, not for others.

One consequence is that gardeners are not affected by contemporary trends. They are not trendy. They even despise and reject trends. To them, gardening is eternal, eternal joy, an eternal objective. Nevertheless, without knowing it, they are trendsetters.

#### IS GARDENING HOT OR NOT?

For several years gardening has been the hottest of the hottest – at least in some parts of the world, such as fast-moving markets like China and Russia, where the annual growth rate<sup>3</sup> in the *gardening and outdoor living market*<sup>4</sup> has been about 10 percent or more between 2002 and 2008<sup>5</sup>. The gardening and outdoor living market consists of five subcategories: Plants, Shrubs, and Growing Media, Outdoor Living, Garden Buildings, Garden Tools, and Garden Utensils<sup>6</sup>.

Even developed markets like the Scandinavian market have experienced a gardening boom in recent years. In Sweden, the market grew almost 30 percent between 2002 and 2007 and in Denmark about 23 percent. In all these fast-growing markets, analysts such as Data-monitor, forecast continued growth over the next five years at a decent, albeit lower pace.

On a global level, the passion for gardening and housing is driving the market to new peaks, but at a slower pace. Annual global growth was 2.8 percent between 2004 and



2008. The forecast for 2013 is lower, 1.8 percent annual growth, which is lower than the current global growth rate. According to Datamonitor, the total market in 2008 was about USD 167.5 billion, including 10.8% (USD 18.1 billion) in garden tools.

However, growth in the gardening and outdoor living market is not evenly distributed. For instance, the market in Austria has been slowing down by almost one percent annually for years and is expected to continue on that trajectory. The same is true for countries such as the UK and the US, where the market decreased by 0.6 and 0.9 percent annually, respectively, between 2004 and 2008. The markets are growing in other large markets such as Germany and France, but at a fairly slow rate.

So, whether gardening is hot or not depends on where you look. It is definitely hot in markets such as China, Russia, Brazil, and Poland. But not as hot everywhere.

COUNTRY	SPENDING PER CAPITA, USD	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE <sup>8</sup> , PERCENT <sup>3</sup>
Austria	201	-0.9**
Brazil	22	7.1*
China	11	13*
Denmark	237	4.2**
France	221	2.2*
Germany	162	0.7*
Norway	126	3.1**
Poland	76	4.0*
Russia	45	9.3**
Sweden	250	5.2**
Switzerland	62	2.6**
UK	108	-0.6*
US	164	-0.9*
Global 2004-2008		2.8*
Global forecast 2008-2013		1.8

*Annual spending on gardening and outdoor living per capita and annual market growth in some countries in the study<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>3</sup>For calculation of market value, see Appendix.

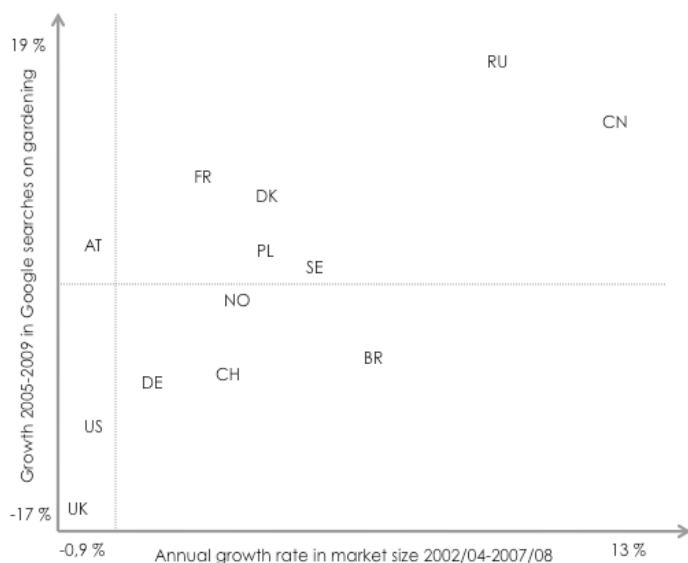
<sup>4</sup>For full definition, see Appendix.

<sup>5</sup>Source: Various reports, Datamonitor 2008 and 2009. For information on Datamonitor, see Appendix.

<sup>6</sup>For full definition, see Appendix.

<sup>7</sup>Source: Various reports, Datamonitor 2008 and 2009. For information on Datamonitor, see Appendix.

<sup>8</sup>Different time periods depending on available data, \*\*2002-2007 or \*2004-2008.



Market growth and change in Internet searches on "gardening" in a number of countries

#### HAND IN HAND: MARKET GROWTH AND INTERNET SEARCH

Another way to assess the heat in different markets is to look at Google searches. We found a strong correlation between the relative number of Google searches on gardening and the annual growth rate<sup>9</sup>. An increase in relative Google searches could mean that gardening is becoming relatively more popular, or a growing trend in the population, which would be parallel to a market growth rate greater than the average growth in private consumption.

The diagram shows that markets with slow or declining growth, such as the UK and US, also have a relative decrease in Internet searches, whereas in fast-moving markets, such as Russia and China, Internet searches are also increasing at an above-average pace.

#### WHO ARE THE TRENDSETTERS?

On December 3, 2009, the New York Times had a book review on the latest garden trend: Japanese gardens. The review covered four recent books. So, you might think that Japanese gardens is the latest trend. But think again. Check it out on Google Insights and you will find that the topic was much hotter a few years ago, at least in the US. In relative terms it was at least twice as hot in 2004 as it was in 2009.

So, maybe the experts writing the books or

commenting on them in the media are not the experts after all – and definitely not the leaders. They are just picking up on what has already happened. A real trend looks more like the one at the next page, which depicts searches on "urban farming" in the US.

#### BLOGS, BLOGS, BUT NOT ONLY BLOGS

Blogging has become a popular activity across the globe, especially in mature Internet markets such as the US and Scandinavia, as well as in countries like China, where some experts estimate the number of bloggers at over 100 million. In Sweden the number of active blogs is about 300,000, which means one active blog for every thirty Swedes.

In the US, Scandinavia, the UK, and China, gardening blogging is popular with many blogs that cover all aspects of gardening. In other countries, such as Austria and Switzerland, blogging is less popular and the active gardening bloggers are so few that it is hard to draw any general conclusions about online activity.<sup>10</sup> Thus, following the blogs would be more like having a focus group online.<sup>11</sup>

#### FACEBOOK, FLICKR, YOUTUBE, AND FORUMS – NEW MEDIA FOR THE MESSAGE

But online gardening is not just about blogging. Besides the increasingly popular gardening blogging, there is a growing number of gardening forums and gardening groups where garden lovers share experiences, show their gardens and exchange tips and tricks. In addition, people share pictures on Flickr and videos on Youtube.

Facebook alone has more than 500 groups on gardening. Using the French and Spanish word "jardin" gives 225 groups with members ranging from only a few to several hundred.

The largest Facebook groups have several thousand members, including *Organic gardening* with more than 18,000 members, *Guerilla gardening* with 2,482, and *I'd rather be gardening* with 20,746 on December 21, 2009.

Members are people from all over the world, including doctors from Saudi Arabia, teachers from the US, and homemakers from Europe.

<sup>9</sup>The term "relative Google searches" refers to percentage of searches related to gardening.





Google searches on "Japanese gardens" in the US. Source: Google insights.



A real trend looks more like this one, which depicts searches on "urban farming" in the US.

The groups have different purposes. *I'd rather be gardening* "is for the amateur to the connoisseur gardener." Members upload pictures of flowers and well-designed gardens; they share their thoughts and ask for advice. At *Organic gardening* the focus is clearly on "organic," and people are much more interested in crops, vegetables, and greenhouses, as well as organic fertilizers and pest control.

*Guerilla gardening* has a slightly different approach: "Calling all urban gardeners! Fed up with scruffy parks, nasty weed-ridden backlots and grim railway embankments? Want to add some joy, beauty, and possibly even organic veg to people's lives around you? Fancy a flash-mob stylee bit of garden action? Then join guerilla gardeners and help me make a plan!" The objective of the group is simply to make cities and urban areas more beautiful.

The Guerilla gardening group blog is full of examples of such community projects. For example, Berliner Birthe Schmidt writes: "Today I had my first kind of guerilla gardening experience. In our street there is an abandoned space between sidewalk, parking lots and the street itself, where former tenants (a nature

study initiative) had left a bed with some plants around a huge maple tree. Me and a neighbour started to fix up a low fence made of branches when an elderly man joined in to help. We also raked the space, planted and sowed some new flowers and enjoyed it."

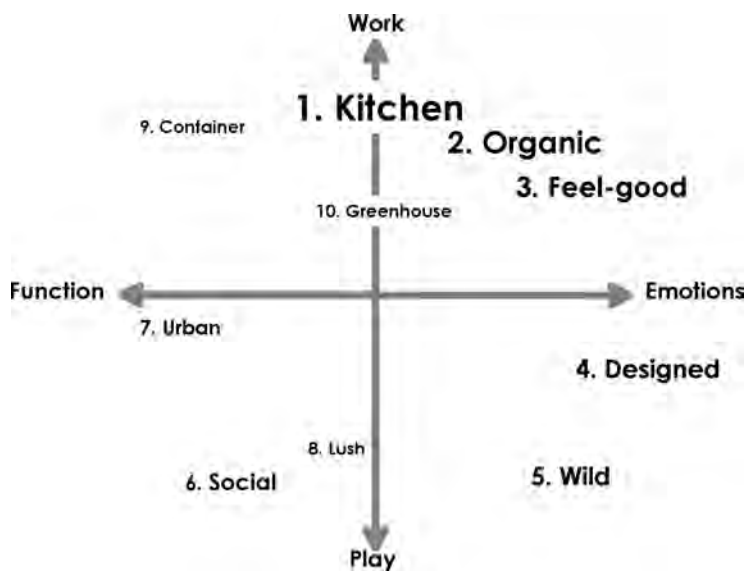
#### THE GLOBAL GARDENING MAP – WHAT'S HOT IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

So what are the hottest topics among passionate gardeners across the globe? Using a combination of statistical and in-depth analysis of specific blogs we found ten general themes or trends. When looked upon from a more holistic perspective they seem to fall along two dimensions:

- The work-play dimension: When gardening is seen more as work producing for instance vegetables versus having a garden to be in and enjoy.
- The functional-emotional dimension: When gardeners emphasize the function of the garden as for example an extra room or a social space versus when the purpose of gardening is to get the emotional and/or the aesthetic benefits of the garden.

<sup>10</sup>See table in section Introduction or in section Method for specification of analyzed blogposts per country with the SoMe Analyzer tool.

<sup>11</sup>For this reason we excluded Austria and Switzerland from the blog analysis.



Map showing various gardening trends and themes. The size of the text indicates the strength of each theme in the gardening blogosphere

The northeast corner of the map shows passion for the garden as safe-house or a secret place in which to withdraw from the alarms of the outside world. The garden is a place for recreation and relaxation. That does not necessarily mean that the garden should be free of work. Quite the opposite; for many, the practice of organic gardening involve finding inner peace. It is the ultimate “feel good” experience.

To others, the pleasure of gardens and gardening is related to “sculpting” the garden using rock, hedges, or ponds; landscaping on a small or large scale.

For most gardening bloggers, these passions seem to be intrinsic. They do not do it so much for others as for themselves. It is the activity itself – the carving, planning, cultivating, creating – that makes them feel good. The passion for gardening is much more closely related to being than to having, to use the terms of psychoanalyst Erich Fromm.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from the organic, kitchen or artistic “feel-good” gardeners are the gardening bloggers who emphasize the social aspects of the garden. They frequently discuss lush gardens filled with greenery. Their gardens are more like extended living rooms than small farms, and the actual gardening activity is more a means to an end

(the perfect garden) than a goal in and of itself.

The northwestern part of the map shows bloggers who discuss small-scale gardening. In many cases this trend refers to urban gardening on balconies or indoors, in pots and containers. This trend is fairly strong in some parts of the world and is also related to rooftop city gardening. Flickr alone has more than 13,000 photos of rooftop gardening, one more imaginative than the other.

#### THE MAIN TREND: FROM LUSH FLOWERS AND GREENERY TO ORGANIC KITCHEN GARDENING

So, what is the main trend in gardening? In a long-term perspective there is definitely a trend moving away from the flower garden toward a more varied garden, where the vegetable garden plays a certain role. The first lady’s decision to plant a vegetable in the White House was just the tip of the iceberg. The fact that the White House’s kitchen garden is organic, using organic seedlings, fertilizer, and insect repellents, further illustrates the trend towards the organic kitchen gardening, which started years ago among the gardening public.

But just as the White House will keep its rose garden bordering the oval office, most gardeners keep their beloved flowers too.

However, the trend toward organic and kitchen gardening is fundamentally a combination of two separate trends, one going north in the map above, one east (see picture on next page). In a time-constrained society people tend to think that the time they spend doing something should either be “transformative” or have a higher value and lead to a greater good. Moving eastward illustrates the first trend (transformation), moving upward the second (greater good). Together they build the present trend toward more ecological, transformative, and aesthetic kitchen gardening.

#### KITCHEN GARDENING: NOT AN EASY TASK

Switching from flower gardening to kitchen gardening is not always easy; quite the opposite. The general opinion among gardeners is that a kitchen garden requires much more



work and care than just having a garden for its beauty and appearance. The soil needs to be prepared, pests and insects need to be dealt with, weeding is a constant chore, and crop rotation must be planned from year to year.

Healthy growing (organic or ecological) also involves extra work and may require new techniques or education. Despite the work and the constant maintenance of the kitchen garden it is very popular among almost everyone with an interest in gardening. Garden novices experience the happy surprise of growing vegetables; ready-to-eat-vegetables cause joy and excitement, while providing additional inspiration to experiment.

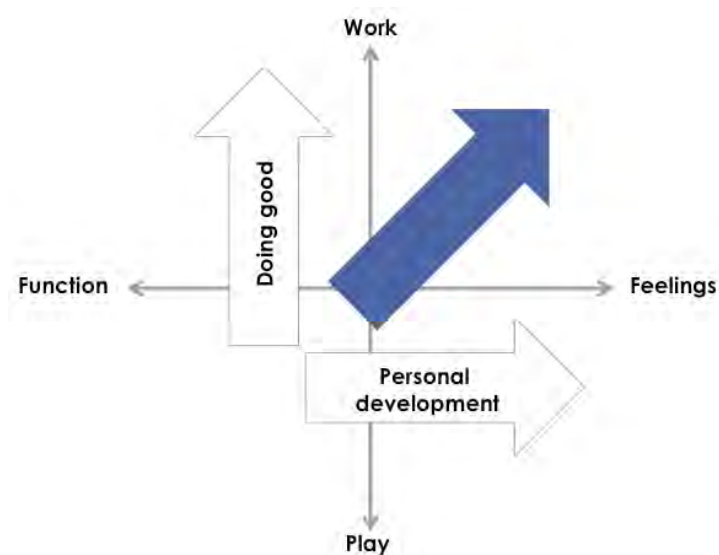
The pride of harvesting from either pots on the balcony (as the Clinton family did) or in the garden (like the Obama family) can almost be compared to the joy of showing off a newborn baby; almost all gardeners seem to feel like proud parents of the harvested crops and happily share photos of their garden achievements.

Or as Ms Obama said in an interview in The New York Times on March 19, 2009: "There's nothing really cooler, than coming to the White House and harvesting some of the vegetables and being in the kitchen with Cris and Sam and Bill, and cutting and cooking and actually experiencing the joys of your work."

#### PUBLIC GARDENS

##### – A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

One might assume that gardening bloggers stick to their own gardens, but that is definitely not the case. Most passionate gardeners are constantly seeking inspiration – in magazines, from fellow-gardeners, through organized garden tours. Garden tours are popular in all countries. Visiting famous parks and gardens



Two major trends in contemporary society drive gardening away from flowers toward organic kitchen gardening

provides tips and inspiration. The theme of public parks is also fairly common in gardening blogs, especially in Russia, Poland, and France. Bloggers comment on the beauty of the parks, the inspiration they provide, and the important role the parks play in providing the public with opportunities for recreation and aesthetic experiences.

#### TOOLS ARE NECESSARY

##### – BUT NOT THE BIG ISSUE

Anyone who has ever tried to do any construction or gardening projects at home knows the importance of good tools. Still, the tool lover Colleen Vanderlinden is not very representative of the majority of bloggers, because tools are not often discussed in blogs. It might be a bit surprising that tools are not a very big issue in the world of gardening blogs and forums. Few gardening bloggers talk about their favorite

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*"I'm one of those people who can stroll the garden tool aisle of my local garden center or big box store for, literally, hours. The sizes, shapes, and colors of just about every type of garden tool under the sun can be fun, but it can also lead to lots and lots of wasted money. I can't even calculate how much I've spent on garden gadgets, tools, and other general 'gardening stuff' over the years."*

COLLEEN VANDERLINDEN, CO-AUTHOR OF EDIBLE GARDENING  
FOR THE MIDWEST AND ACTIVE GARDENING BLOGGER.

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tools. Few express their passion for tools, although some admit that they, like Colleen Vanderlinden, can spend hours and too many dollars on new tools.

When tools are discussed it is most often either in terms of quality or in the context of guilt. Most bloggers are keen on finding the tools that may last for years, tools that can become their favorites. Equipment that does the job it is supposed to, and does not cause any problems. Therefore, quality is a key issue, and gardeners in forums advise one another on which brands to go for and which to avoid. The advantages and disadvantages of various brands are often discussed in detail. Among semi-professional bloggers, recommendations and suggestions about choosing the right category of tool are often part of the blog. Quality provides joy and nobody ever regrets purchasing a high-quality tool.

But quality is not just about function and durability. It is also about design. Female bloggers in particular sometimes discuss how they select tools based on their cute or romantic design.

Maintenance is the second topic in relation to tools. Not only do tools represent function and fun, they also take time and attention. Since tool maintenance is not a top priority for most gardeners, the equipment tends to be forgotten. Bloggers feel guilty because they don't care for their tools properly; they may forget to take them in for the night or even for the winter.

In general, the gardening blogging community seems to be divided into two segments with respect to tools – the majority, to whom tools are just tools, meant to work but nothing more, and the minority of tool collectors, to whom tools are a central part of the gardening experience. And as can be expected, the majority of the minority is male. Tools, and especially motorized equipment, still comprise the men's world.

#### LAWNS – A LOVE-HATE STORY?

Just as tools are hygiene factors, so are lawns. Most gardens have a lawn, but very few gardening bloggers are passionate lawn bloggers. Lawns need care. Lawns take time. The lawn-

mower is noisy. Having a green and moss-free lawn is challenging in many parts of the world. And for most people, even a perfect lawn does not provide the same joy or admiration that a perfect kitchen or rose garden can give. To most, the lawn is functional.

Nevertheless, although the lawn is a central and necessary part of the garden, it is also the basis for the garden as a social environment, extended living-room, and playground. And a well-kept lawn is still an important marker.

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*"The lawn is often the showcase of the garden. So let's keep it in the best condition since its inception."*

POLISH BLOGGER

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Although gardening bloggers consider lawns to be a minor topic when compared with flowers or vegetables, there are still passionate lawn bloggers who, at least for a period of time, devote a lot of time and attention to the lawn and discuss their whereabouts frequently. Most are male, while the average gardening blogger in most countries is female. They often have detailed knowledge about what kind of grass to use, how to plan the lawn, when to sow, how to plan the "cutting season," which fertilizers to use, and what pH-level to go for to get an optimal soil balance. Lawnmowers and trimmers are also commonly discussed topics, and they discuss technical aspects of their favorite brands and makes in detail.

Sometimes they express their frustration over not being able to grow the lush lawn of their dreams, the one into which they can "sink their toes." Sometimes they discuss the uneven fight against unwanted weed or animals such as ants, slugs, or moles – the number one peeve, especially in the US.

Among those who fail to succeed in keeping up with their dreams, an upcoming theme in some countries is grass replacement, in terms of both ground cover substitutes and artificial grass. Outsourcing of lawn care is also a frequent topic.



#### PESTS AND ANIMALS

In Internet forums, discussions about pests frequently arise – slugs, insects, and even deer and badgers. Gardeners seek advice about their problems and how to get rid of them. Just as gardening involves a constant battle between life and death – what to nurture and what to kill – so too do pests and animals. Some you want to keep, others you want to get rid of. Among the most welcomed are birds, bees, and butterflies.

#### BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THE HIGH TECH GARDEN

Technology has increasingly become the backbone of modern society and passionate gardeners use the latest IT solutions to share their experiences online. Still, as we've seen, they usually aren't tech freaks, and definitely not when it comes to gardening. Gardening, for most gardening bloggers, means being in the garden and using hand and mind to create their

dreams. Sometimes technology can even be a barrier, keeping the gardener from reaching the peak experience.

However, gardening still entails a number of mundane tasks, even for committed gardeners. Mowing the lawn is one, watering another. In addition, there are annoyances to eliminate and desires that are difficult to fulfill with limited space or time, where technology and innovation can provide new opportunities with innovations like automatic irrigation and automatic mowing.

Finally, the majority of gardeners are not the hard-core passionate gardeners that tell the world about their whereabouts. They are the ones who fight an uneven battle with their ambitions to achieve and maintain the garden on a decent level, with a minimum of time and effort. As sophisticated passionate gardeners move ahead, the majority tries to follow, and then supporting technology is a necessity.



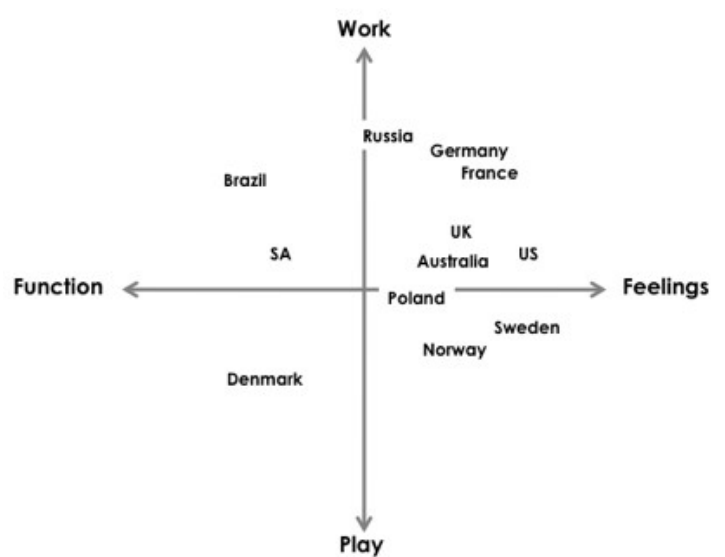


#### GARDENING PASSIONS AROUND THE GLOBE

So where does different countries stand on the different trends? Although we can find garden lovers of all kinds everywhere, certain tendencies can be detected. What's hot in Delhi is not always as hot in New York.

The figure illustrates the general affinities among blogging gardening lovers.

Gardeners in France, Germany, and Australia are more into organic kitchen gardening than their counterparts in Scandinavia, where designed and wild gardens are hot themes. In Denmark, with its life-loving attitude, the social lush garden is a strong theme, although kitchen gardening is also common because of its culinary aspects. In Brazil, Urban, Container and Kitchen Gardening are the three major themes, giving Brazilian gardening bloggers a slightly different position than, for instance, Norwegian or Swedish bloggers.



*Relative position of gardening bloggers in the different countries*





# 10 GLOBAL GARDENING PASSIONS

**1** **KITCHEN GARDENING** Want a taste of paradise? That's what you'll get from the kitchen garden, according to the global blogosphere. From China to Brazil and from Australia to Sweden – all over the world, the kitchen garden is in vogue.

**2** **THE ORGANIC GARDEN** Gardeners in the blogosphere do not just talk about saving the planet. Instead they are leading the way for consumers to find a no-frills way of making a contribution to achieve a better world. Whether in South Africa, Germany, France or Russia, organic gardening is on the rise, giving consumers access to healthy, inexpensive organic fruits and vegetables

**3** **THE FEEL-GOOD GARDEN** The calm and serenity of a garden provides a soothing experience for modern day man which many bloggers describe as purely addictive. However, the way in which the garden is healing differs around the globe. In China the harmonious community garden exercises body and soul, while the French

experience gardening as an innate need, reconnecting them with their natural origin.

**4** **THE DESIGNED AND ARTISTIC GARDEN** Many gardeners consider nature to be the superior force, but still cannot resist in trying to tame it. In the designed and artistic garden nature has been given a helping human hand. The style of a garden allows gardeners to express themselves and their personalities, making every garden into a personal piece of art.

**5** **RE-CREATING WILDERNESS** Although many gardeners prefer their gardens tamed, an increasing number of gardeners like their gardens wild – especially in the Western world. Instead of growing flowers in neat flower beds, wild gardeners prefer to let nature run its course and declare their independence from traditional garden conventions.

**6** **THE SOCIAL GARDEN** Did you think that gardens were just for private enjoyment? Well, think again! Whether





privately owned, or part of a public park or community garden, gardens are great for parties. All over the world people gather in gardens for celebrations. Weddings, birthdays or just an informal get-together with friends – the garden is the place to be.

**7** **URBAN FARMING** In an increasingly urban society, one would think that

- gardening is increasingly marginalized. Well, judging from the blogosphere, there is no lack of interest in gardening – or of gardeners – in the modern metropolis. Young urbanites increasingly turn to gardening as a means of reconnecting with nature and contributing to a more sustainable way of life.

**8** **THE LUSH GARDEN** Is the pruned garden with an abundance of flowers and shrubbery the first image that comes to mind when thinking of a garden? Well, this dream is reality for many hardworking gardeners around the world. The lush garden is quite the opposite of the wild garden – it is planned, designed, and well-organized. While such a garden requires considerable effort, the

dedicated gardener approaches it with a smile as the lush garden itself provides pleasure.

**9** **CONTAINER GARDENING** There are two important limits to the gardener's

- ability to pursue his or her passion – time and space. So what do gardeners do if they don't have the space or the time to create a fantasy garden? They use pots and containers. Container gardening offers flexibility, low maintenance and requires little space – it's the perfect solution for the gardener with limited time and space.

**10** **GREENHOUSE GARDENING** Although mainly a Nordic phenomenon, the greenhouse is an important topic in the gardening blogosphere. The small greenhouse is more than just a place that allows gardeners to raise plants that would otherwise be impossible to grow – it is also a status symbol suggesting that they means business with their passion.

# 1 EDIBLE EDEN

## KITCHEN GARDENING

● THE KITCHEN GARDEN IS HOT! KITCHEN GARDENS ARE THE LATEST TREND NOT ONLY FOR GARDENERS, URBAN FARMERS, AND CONTAINER GARDENERS WORLDWIDE, BUT EVEN FOR THE POWER ELITE OF THE WORLD. THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND HAS ONE AND SO DOES MICHELLE OBAMA. THE FIRST LADY STARTED A KITCHEN GARDEN AT THE WHITE HOUSE AS ONE OF HER FIRST INITIATIVES, PERHAPS SETTING A TREND FOR MANY HOUSEHOLDS WORLDWIDE.

The most common place for a kitchen garden is of course a designated area in your yard. However, as urban and container farming have grown more popular, kitchen gardens may be planted on a balcony or terrace, in a kitchen window, or even inside your apartment living room when no other space is available.

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*"Food from our backyard is about as local as it gets, we know it's seasonal because we harvest as soon as things ripen, we control the amount (if any) of pesticides and fertilizers used, there's no packaging involved, and it motivates us to learn how to cook from scratch."*

AUSTRALIAN BLOGGER

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Photo: Rodger Cresswell  
<http://www.mygardenismyspace.com/>

Many kitchen gardeners also like to cook and enjoy using fresh ingredients directly from the garden. The results are always described as delicious due to the unbeatable taste of fresh fruit or vegetables. Successful garden chefs gladly share their recipes online.

### CROPS AND BEAUTIFICATION

Some crops are international like carrots, lettuce, and potatoes, while others are more local; the selection of fruits and berries often reflects local tastes. However, there are also local mini-trends on what to grow and how to grow it. In southern France many bloggers discuss how to grow potatoes and different ways to prepare them for a good meal. In the UK it is popular to grow hot peppers, sweet peppers and tomatoes – not just because they are popular on the dinner table, but also because they are fancy, colorful, and decorative in the garden.

More exotic fruits like grapes, kiwis, and watermelon are grown in warm-climate countries, but may also be grown indoors or in greenhouses in colder climates. A colorful kitchen garden filled with exotic fruits is often a piece of visual art that is an exciting and living part of the interior scheme. Kitchen garden terraces and balconies are often viewed as extensions of the home and add to its beauty.

One part of the kitchen garden is often devoted to herbs. The herbal scent vitalizes the

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*"These days, more and more people are considering growing their own vegetables. There's no substitute for freshly picked garden produce (once you've tried it, you'll know what I mean) and it can help keep food costs down."*

SOUTH AFRICAN BLOGGER

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*"Add colour, interest and height by putting good-looking vegetables like chilies, sweet peppers and tomatoes in decent-sized, attractive containers."*

COMMENT ON GARDENING FORUM, UK

home, giving the farmer chef an extra touch of authenticity. Perhaps that is why Londoners may buy a hot pepper growing kit for two, to go with a pre-prepared dinner for two. The universal pride in growing crops is swelling through the global blogosphere and kitchen gardeners are no exception. The challenge is also what makes it so fascinating; all the work is tangibly rewarded by the great pleasure of harvesting carrots and tomatoes.

#### A SUSTAINABLE WAY OF LIFE

The healthy feeling and the great taste that come from growing fruits and vegetables keep the kitchen gardener motivated. Maintaining a kitchen garden is an easy way to make sure vegetables are organic and pesticide-free. Especially in the western world, consumers are confused about how to make their lifestyles more sustainable. The media do not provide

consumers with a clear message on how to live more in sync with nature; what the media herald as sustainable one day, they reject as artificial and insignificant the next. And buying organic food is expensive.

Growing vegetables at home gives consumers the upper hand. The gardener controls the entire process from seed to harvest and knows exactly what was used to grow the crop. From the standpoint of the kitchen gardener, organic does not have to equate with a biodynamic cultivation process; the absence of pesticides is enough. Bloggers feel that by growing the kitchen garden they are making the right choice for themselves, their family, and the world, while saving money in the process. They avoid the high prices of vegetables and view the kitchen garden as a vehicle to save both money, and the world.



Photo: Mia  
<http://miaslandliv.blogspot.com>

# 2 SAVING PARADISE

## THE ORGANIC GARDEN

THE CLIMATE DEBATE IS RAGING IN GLOBAL SOCIETY AND IS OF CONCERN TO COUNTRIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN 2006, THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE BECAME TOP NEWS IN THE WESTERN WORLD. THE DEBATE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD AN IMPACT ON CONSUMERS, AS THE ENVIRONMENT IS CONSIDERED THE GREATEST THREAT TO THE FUTURE OF SOCIETY BY YOUNG PEOPLE WORLDWIDE<sup>1</sup>. GARDENERS, WITH THEIR FAIBLESSE FOR NATURE, ARE PERHAPS EVEN MORE PRONE TO TAKE THE CLIMATE ISSUE SERIOUSLY AND ENGAGE IN TURNING THE WORLD INTO A MORE SUSTAINABLE PLACE.

But going sustainable is not easy, and many consumers and gardeners feel overwhelmed by the task. Fortunately there are many ways to be organic, described by bloggers worldwide.

### HARDCORE ORGANIC OR A LIGHTER SHADE OF GREEN?

Nonetheless, the practice of organic gardening varies across the globe. In the Western world we can see two major groups. One is the hardcore organic gardener for whom "eco-friendly" does not just refer to raising crops, but to a way of life. Hardcore organic gardeners aim for an overall green lifestyle. They care deeply about the environment, or at least harbor a strong desire to live and act sustainably in order to achieve a more eco-friendly society. They

reflect local environmental movements found in different parts of the world, with whom they share a common passion for self-sufficiency, the "buy local" movement, and living in sync with nature. However, they go green not only to save the world but also to be healthy and enjoy the good taste of homegrown foods on their tables.

Hardcore organic gardeners frequently discuss organic methods for treating,

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*"I'm strongly attracted to Green, but unfortunately the ideas remain ideas. According to permaculture, you cannot take more from nature than you give back. It's an incredibly beautiful thought, but I am miles away from it. Unfortunately."*

NORWEGIAN BLOGGER

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preparing, and mixing soil. Composting is another popular topic, and bloggers seem to be fascinated by how new nourishment can be created through composted soil and natural manure or other kinds of natural fertilizers. Hardcore organic bloggers also share advice on natural pest and insect control. Meanwhile,

<sup>1</sup> Source: Global Youth study 2006, Kairos Future





*"The first step is to grow as much local organic product as possible. The only way you can be sure is if you (or someone you know) grows it. Nothing beats this in terms of your overall health, but you will also want to know the best ways to enjoy what you have grown. Once you are growing a decent amount of organic herbs and vegetables at home, take the time to improve your chef skills. Once you can cook the raw ingredients naturally and they taste much better than unhealthy cooking, you will want to grow more. You will find yourself searching for new varieties and a whole cycle starts from 'spade to blade'."*

AUSTRALIAN BLOGGER

more traditional gardener bloggers do not share the goal of being totally in sync with organic gardening practices. They believe that simply avoiding pesticides in the garden is in itself an environmentally friendly act. Organic gardening is considered to be a new approach, even though old techniques are used. While sympathizing with the environmental movement, they are not prepared or motivated to make any major lifestyle shifts. Instead they are satisfied with small acts of sustainability conducted within the privacy of their homes.

#### SMALL ACTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORLD

The pride and good conscience of organic gardeners is reflected in the blogosphere. The implicit message is that people who practice organic gardening take on a larger responsibility that reaches beyond the immediate family. Organic gardening leaves practitioners with a good feeling of doing something right for the environment. Although organic practices may entail more work for the

gardener, practitioners seem to feel it's well worth the effort.

The reward of organic gardening stretches beyond feeling good about oneself and the world; it provides great tasting food too! A growing number of gardeners seem to be discovering that it is more fun and not at all difficult to grow organic vegetables. And discussions like these seem to fuel and inspire even more gardeners to give it a go.

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*"Anyone who's ever tasted soya beans fresh from their garden, or chewed down on home grown tomatoes and basil will know there's just no comparison to vegetables plucked from the supermarket shelf, even if they're certified organic."*

SOUTH AFRICAN BLOGGER

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# 3 HAPPY EDEN

## THE FEEL-GOOD GARDEN

● **A SANCTUARY OF SERENITY.** ACCORDING TO SOCIOLOGIST JULIET B. SCHOR, PEOPLE NO LONGER TRY TO KEEP UP WITH THE JONESES. INSTEAD, CONSUMERS TRY TO KEEP UP WITH MOVIE STARS, ENTERTAINERS, AND FICTIONAL CHARACTERS FROM TV SHOWS. THEY HAVE BECOME THE NEW ROLE MODELS FOR MODERN PEOPLE, A MEASUREMENT OF OUR OWN SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS. IF SHE IS RIGHT, NO WONDER DAILY LIFE IS OFTEN HECTIC AND TIGHTLY SCHEDULED.

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*"An hour in the garden equals a week of vacation."*

KARL PLOBERGER, GARDENER AUSTRIA<sup>1</sup>

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Bloggers all over the world seem to use the garden as a place where they can totally relax and be themselves, instead of living up to impossible ideals. The garden offers a sharp contrast to the pressures of contemporary life and provides serene sanctuary for modern man.

### FEMALE ADDICTS

Many women depend on their gardens as a necessity for feeling good. They describe themselves as addicted to both the work associated with gardening and to the ability to sit down, listen to the garden sounds, appreciate the birdsong, the scent of the flowers, and just enjoy life.

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*"But I am dependent! I could not imagine living without a garden. And I've never been without a garden in my adult life. Well, there is work in the garden, but there are also plenty of enjoyment (and exercise and relaxation!)."*

FEMALE BLOGGER DENMARK

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<sup>1</sup>Bernhard Schregelman, 2009-09-23, "Ploberger: Willkommen in meinen Garten", Salzburger Nachrichten

The majority of descriptions of feeling good in the garden come from women. However, whether they also account for the majority of those who experience feeling good in the garden is a completely different story. The women in the blogs often remind themselves that they don't have to work in the garden; they can simply walk around, letting go of all of life's pressures. Similarly, they often quote proverbs and post comments essentially saying that life is better when it's a little messy and can be enjoyed more when you feel relaxed and less compelled to maintain perfect order. Yet, the pictures posted on the blogs do not represent messy disorganization. On the contrary everything is neat, attractive, and just about perfect. This juxtaposition may be a commentary on their struggle: trying to fulfill and balance unarticulated ideals while really wanting to be themselves. In contrast, men are less apt to discuss their feelings about gardening than women. However, they seem to find calm by engaging in gardening activities.

### EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF NATURE

Growing plants and crops helps relieve stress by demonstrating that nature keeps on going, regardless of trends and ideals in the outside world. Acknowledging this process feeds a sense of tranquility, allowing gardeners to let their guard down and switch off the need for control for a while.

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*"This garden is a space of tranquility that allows us to recharge."*

FRENCH BLOGGER

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General consensus holds that people are happier if they have a garden, or at least spend time in one. Bloggers describe the relaxing feeling they get when strolling around in the garden, admiring the many colors, the growing





*"The garden has lot's of trees and a gazebo surrounded by a mirror of water and contemplative spaces that invites you to meditation and rest."*

BRAZILIAN BLOGGER

vegetation, and pottering about among the plants in slow mode. When stressed, gardening bloggers gain inspiration from the spirit of the plants just by watching them grow. This experience makes them grow and fills them with the power of nature. They describe experience their sense of satisfaction, how they feel they are part of something bigger than themselves, which puts them in an almost meditative state.

#### GARDENING

##### – FUELING GLOBAL PEACE OF MIND

Gardeners around the world discuss and share their positive feelings about their own gardens. Those who do not have a garden of their own often seek tranquility and a place for recreation in public parks or gardens. This theme is commonly described in China. The sense of calm and a healing power may well be a global phenomenon, shared by gardeners around the world.

Gardeners engaged in the soothing powers of the garden also seem to share the same interests. They become involved in issues such as "the meaning of life" mindfulness, and how to achieve harmony. Many also seem to share an interest in organic gardening and an ecological mindset.

Photo: Annette Soevndal, <http://kammertonen.blogspot.com/>





# 4 STYLING PARADISE

## THE DESIGNED AND ARTISTIC GARDEN

● **DESIGNING NATURE.** THE GARDEN IS OFTEN THE FIRST THING SEEN WHEN VISITING SOMEONE'S HOME. IT ALSO GIVES VISITORS A FIRST IMPRESSION ABOUT WHO THE GARDENER IS AND THE GARDENER'S LIFE. ARTISTICALLY INCLINED GARDENERS WITH AN INTEREST IN DESIGN CAN USE THE GARDEN AS A SPACE FOR ART AND DESIGN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

Some find the designed garden, in which nature is strictly controlled by man, to be more beautiful and unique than the more natural garden with ordinary greenery, vegetables, and flowers. For others with a weak spot for the wild and untamed, the reverse holds true. Design may be either a simple or complex process, depending on personal preference. In some countries, like the United States, both trends thrive. Design seems to be a hot topic among gardeners: landscaping has become

a discipline of its own and gardeners share tips on ornamentals, innovative methods for maintaining aesthetic gardens, and even advice on creating attractive vegetable plots.

**SCULPTURES, HEDGES, AND FOUNTAINS**  
The definition of design and methods for designing and decorating gardens differ from country to country. A parallel may be found with interior design trends that vary with factors such as culture, tradition, climate, and interna-

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*"I saw this plant combination at the Tree of Life Nursery on my last visit. I liked how the plants looked together, and added two of the three plants to my order: the gorgeous deep purple Parry's phacelia, *Phacelia parryi*, and the perky yellow desert marigold, *Baileya multiradiata*."*

US BLOGGER

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Photo: David Schmetterling, <http://montanawildlifegardener.blogspot.com>



tional trends. For instance, in Russia, it is very common to decorate gardens with sculptures, woodcarvings, and Russian-style garden furniture.

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*"Gardens would not be gardens without the various sculptures of lions, of gnomes and mushrooms, pompous to cute! (...) Our sculptures may seem to be haphazardly placed: rabbit, turtle, sleeping cat ... But, I just don't know how to integrate all of them into the landscape. (...) Oh dear! Please share your tips!"*

COMMENT ON GARDENING FORUM, RUSSIA

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Russian gardeners spend a rather large amount of money on objects and design to make their gardens look unique. In the US, Brazil, and Australia, hedges create live fences. Green plants also cover stone or walls to give a softer look that might appear less alienating than the harsh impression of high solid walls. In many countries gardeners have a passion for bodies of water; in Poland they are considered the pride of the garden.

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*"As you probably have noted, garden fountains are the most important design feature of parks and gardens. The fountain creates irreplaceable atmosphere and is the pride of any park or garden. Fountains simulate mountain streams, providing each garden with an individual personality, while producing the delicate sound of running water conducive to full relaxation."*

POLISH BLOGGER

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#### THE COST AND REWARDS OF BEAUTY

Maintaining a designed or sculptured garden is expensive according to bloggers worldwide. The gardener has two currencies: time and money. The designed garden requires a lot of time and money to create and maintain – especially when producing a work of art with greenery that requires constant care to grow and develop according to plan. In addition, creating new shapes and bringing the design to life is hard, time-consuming work. Though the gardeners enjoy the effort they put in, they also reap other rewards. A well-designed garden pays off in the admiration of visitors to both the physical garden and the blogs where posted photos receive positive comments. The designed garden allows gardeners to express their personalities, while boosting their self-esteem.

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*"A work of art in your garden can make a bold statement about your personality and taste. It can also provide color, interest and beauty in your outdoor spaces"*

COMMENT ON GARDENING FORUM, AUSTRALIA

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Although designed and sculptured public gardens are popular discussion themes among bloggers in China, for most Chinese people the idea of creating such a garden in their own backyards remains but a dream. Elsewhere, gardeners aspiring to give their garden an exciting design often seem to seek inspiration from public parks and gardens, ideas that they bring home to their own gardens. Hiring professional help has grown popular, especially in countries such as Poland, where the increasing wealth of the middle class allows for new luxuries. For the affluent, a nicely designed and well-kept garden surrounding a newly built house gives an opportunity to show off newfound wealth.

# 5 THE NATURAL EDEN

## RE-CREATING WILDERNESS

● THE GARDEN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE OF A GARDEN IMPOSING ORDER UPON NATURE INTO NEAT FLOWER BEDS SEEMS TO BE LESS EN VOGUE. INSTEAD, THE GARDENING BLOGOSPHERE SEEMS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO PREFER THE WILD AND UNEXPECTED.

Gardeners tend to prefer a wild garden for several reasons. A typical story shared by some wild garden bloggers goes as follows: It starts with just not having the time to maintain the garden. As they let the garden go and stop working so hard to keep it neat and orderly, they feel great relief. And then, after letting nature run its course for a while, the gardener looks out on the wild garden and finds it attractive.

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*"I love plants and flowers, but have no time to weed my garden. My neighbors think my garden has gone to ruin. So I thought, why not let my weeds make the garden?"*

US BLOGGER

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It seems that many wild gardeners view their natural garden as a reflection of their "let it go" mentality regarding details that are non-essential to a good and relaxed life. They claim independence from the over-demanding world. The statement of the wild gardener seems to be "Look at me! I have the guts not to care what my neighbors think of me. I follow my own taste and my own way and if you don't like it – tough!"

### A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

The wild garden concept does not vary much from country to country, but seems to reflect the same mindset all over the world. Many

gardeners tell similar – though perhaps exaggerated – stories about how they almost can't enter the garden because it has grown so wild. They proudly declare that it has turned into a playground for the weeds. The wild gardeners often vividly describe the beauty in the wildness and the intense play of color in their gardens. It seems that most quite like their gardens, want them to stay "wild-looking," and are pleased with the development.

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*"This variety of natural garden is not a problem, it's super!"*

COMMENT ON GARDENING FORUM, GERMANY

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These kinds of stories are more commonly told by young people who might have a more forgiving attitude toward what is traditionally seen as disorganization, or they may be too stressed out to care what others think. An artistic streak can often be sensed among gardeners who let the forces of nature almost or totally take over in the garden. They enjoy nature's composition and find inspiration in it.

### WILD IS SMART

The wild garden is a good option for garden owners who don't have much time and a limited budget. Starting a garden project often initi-

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*"Some people like wild gardens. They find the courage to break through the barrier of thorny bushes, thistles, and nettles which offer protection for the flowers in the middle. Be brave and reach inside – tired scratched, and bruised – and see that it was worth it. Inside is a beautiful garden."*

POLISH BLOGGER

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Photo: Philip Bewley, <http://philipsgardenblog.com>

ates sequences of needs: time to maintain the garden, buying new soil, tools, plants, flowers, and so on. It all adds up! Practicing wild gardening minimize the time spent on maintenance while keeping expenses down from minimal to none.

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*"I have a wild garden too, behind the pond. What I have found (and you probably will too) is that the birds will plant the things that they like to eat! My wild garden is a mess but I love it that way."*

US BLOGGER

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French bloggers see the wild garden as an ecofriendly alternative, where the garden welcomes nature without negatively impacting the ecosystem. By encouraging natural life in

their gardens, these bloggers hope to protect the balance in nature. Wild gardens also seem to invite a wide array of birds into the garden, much to the pleasure of many gardeners.

#### WILDERNESS CONSTRUCTED

But the wild garden is not all wild. Some bloggers, especially in the US, describe what could be called constructed wilderness. They wish to keep the garden wild in style, rather than being wild. So they sow wild plants to keep the wild look and state they are happy with whatever "pops up". A similar practice is described in Australia where many gardeners promote having wild native Australian plants in their gardens. Native gardeners often plan more than those who simply let their gardens grow out of control, but native plants still provide the wild natural garden look.

# 6 TOGETHER IN PARADISE

## THE SOCIAL GARDEN

**PUBLIC PLEASURES AND BONDING.** DID YOU THINK THAT GARDENS WERE JUST FOR THE PRIVATE ENJOYMENT OF THEIR OWNERS? IN THE BLOGOSPHERE PEOPLE DISCUSS USING THEIR GARDENS AS A SOCIAL VENUE. WHETHER PUBLIC PARK OR PRIVATE GARDEN, PEOPLE SEEM TO LOVE GARDEN PARTIES.

Public parks function as social gathering places for young people all over the world. Here, anyone can throw a party without the huge costs of renting. Or why not arrange a date in the romantic environment of blossoming flowers, as in Brazil? Bloggers in China, Russia, and Poland often comment on public parks and people describe how they get together with their friends to play and have fun. But some people just use the parks to take a walk and enjoy the beauty of plants, flowers, and water in the garden.

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*"We had a lovely barbecue on Friday evening with some friends! The sun was shining so lovely before I began to lay the table. The new rose napkins was in place! It was delicious and we had fun all night long! When the cool night air came, we used up the rosy fleece blankets and we were all cozy and had a very nice time for a couple of more hours!"*

SWEDISH BLOGGER

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Another option for those who do not have their own garden is a shared community garden in a housing area. Community gardens are very popular and can be found in countries such as China, Poland and Australia. They are often maintained by people living in a specific neighborhood. The people in the area work together in the garden, growing trees and sometimes vegetables. Community gardens seem to function like "social glue"; people spend time together working in the garden, but also use the common garden for parties, barbecues, and playgrounds for the children.

### FURTHER NORTH – MORE PARTYING?

In warmer countries like Brazil, South Africa, Australia, and parts of the United States, the garden is a natural social space. The joy and excitement of using the garden for entertainment seem to increase as you go further north. In the northern parts of the world the social dimension of the garden is weather-dependent. As the number of months when the garden may be used for parties decreases, the value of the social garden increases. In the UK and France, for example, garden parties are so important and popular that the garden can even be planned and designed specifically for entertaining.

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*"I am a big fan of outdoor parties and barbecues and know that garden design is important to create an ideal entertainment area."*

UK BLOGGER

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In the far north, the rare occasions on which people can gather for a sunny summer party



Photo: Mari Zander, <http://marizan.blogspot.com/>



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*"Today we enjoyed ourselves on the terrace with my oldest son and barbecued with children and grandchildren. The day was lovely and we had delicious food. The grandchildren went swimming in the new pool, and there was joyous life and bustle."*

NORWEGIAN BLOGGER

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are all the more coveted and exclusive.

A favorite summer activity in Denmark and Sweden is to enjoy good company with friends and family amidst the greenery in the garden. For Scandinavians celebrating birthdays in the summer, throwing an outdoor party and eating birthday cake in the garden are almost mandatory.

#### THE GARDEN PARTY – A RELAXED AFFAIR

Socializing in the garden is often a laid-back affair. The garden party has room for everyone; children can play on the lawn and there is no

fuss if a cup of juice is spilled or if food drops on the ground. Socializing comes first at a garden party; the garden can be tended later. During the summer, household chefs are often happy to move outdoors. Barbecuing has gained in popularity all over the world, especially among young gardeners. Bloggers exchange recipes, discuss what grill to use, and share outdoor furniture tips. The essence of the barbecue is to enhance the experience of eating delicious food and enjoying good wine in the company of friends through the ambiance of the garden.



# 7 METROPOLITAN PARADISE

## URBAN FARMING

**● CRAVING FOR PARADISE.** INCREASINGLY, ALL OVER THE WORLD, PEOPLE LIVE IN ASPHALT JUNGLES. ACCORDING TO UN REPORTS, IN TWENTY TO THIRTY YEARS 75 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S POPULATIONS WILL LIVE IN CITIES, COMPARED WITH 50 PERCENT NOW. IN MODERN CITIES WE ARE SURROUNDED BY A GREY LANDSCAPE, BROKEN UP ONLY BY SHIMMERING NEON LIGHTS AND BRIGHTLY COLORED FLASHING ADVERTISING SIGNS. THE HECTIC, ARTIFICIAL METROPOLITAN LIFESTYLE URGES US TO MOVE FORWARD— IN TIME AND IN LIFE, NEVER LOOKING BACK.



Photo: Anna Forsaeus,  
<http://www.botaniccity.com/balkongliv/>

*"In the last years, herb gardens have been what those who live way meters up from the asphalt want as they are longing for the earth and plants."*

BRAZILIAN BLOGGER

Albeit alluring with its potential pleasures and successes, the metropolitan lifestyle takes its toll on all of us. We long to escape the fumes of the asphalt jungle and crave the serenity of times gone by. Perhaps this is why many trend consultants consider urban farming to be one of the most up and coming trends for the new decade; this is certainly the case among bloggers worldwide. The trend is strongest in the US, UK, China, Brazil, and Russia, though it is weaker in the Scandinavian countries. Perhaps interest is lower in Scandinavia because nature and traditional gardens are so accessible there.

### INDOOR AND OUTDOOR URBAN FARMING

Urban farming may be practiced both indoors in pots, or outdoors on terraces or balconies. The typical indoor urban farmer does not just cultivate decorative plants and flowers as part of the interior scheme. Rather, they practice vegetable gardening, and in some countries like Russia and France, bloggers note that these vegetables make a substantial contribution to the household budget. However, although the crops may be edible, they also contribute to the beauty and personality of the household.

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*"Most of us likes to eat citrus fruits, but beyond their delicious taste the plants are also the original, exotic pride of our apartment"*

POLISH BLOGGER

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Indoor farming is more common in less forgiving climates such as Russia and Scandinavia. Urban farmers in Russia carry on with their hobby throughout the cold winter, growing vegetables indoors and turning their glass-covered balconies into winter orchards. Indoor gardening is also practiced where the possibilities for a spacious garden are limited, such as in France, China, and Brazil. Indoor



gardening bloggers discuss how they may imitate nature to create optimal climate and growing conditions. Popular topics include what fertilizer to use and how to achieve proper lighting and humidity.

#### PRIDE AND PROGRESS

Urban farming is not limited to vegetables; practitioners grow cooking herbs and perhaps some strawberries so they can serve a special dessert. Many urban gardeners are novices and express great pride; but they are also pleasantly surprised when their efforts actually pay off and a red tomato appears.

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*"It was in the spirit of petulance that I first installed a bathtub on my terrace and started planting in it. I didn't seem to have inherited my mother's green fingers but after quite a few failed attempts, I began to realize that actually I wasn't a terrible gardener. True, I wasn't very good at the pretty stuff but my vegetables always seemed to thrive."*

UK BLOGGER

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Experienced and dedicated urban farmers have developed their interest into an art. They grow flowers, plants, and vegetables in sync with the changing seasons. For instance, dedicated urban farmers in Sweden may grow flowers in the spring, tomatoes in the summer, and a variety of salad greens and even potatoes. For the extremely dedicated urban farmer, plants are a virtual necessity and if they have a balcony garden, they view it as an extension of the apartment.

#### LARGE-SCALE URBAN FARMING

Urban farming seems to have expanded beyond the individual practices of consumers. In Sweden, the term "city agriculture" was introduced this year to describe this phenomenon. City planners, architects, and developers of commercial property such as shopping malls, all plan for green spaces

<sup>1</sup>Available on website: [www.fitch.com](http://www.fitch.com)

<sup>2</sup>Plantagon International is a collaborative effort between SWECORP Citizenshop and North American Indians of the Onondaga Nation.

and planting in their indoor and outdoor environments.

Retail design & branding consultant Fitch is one company that describes such a development<sup>1</sup>. In its film on the future supermarket, parking lots have been transformed into planting plots and the ambiance is based on biodynamic thinking, taking inspiration from the old agrarian society.

Plantagon International is another example<sup>2</sup>. The company plans to build its first supersized greenhouse in an international metropolis over the next three years. The greenhouse will be a huge vertical farm that can provide locally grown vegetables on a large scale to city residents.

The larger trend may be in response to a global commitment to climate change and the transformation into a sustainable society. One thing is certain: urban farmers who practice this trend do not care much about the fashion factor. They focus on enjoying the fruits of their labor – fresh, organic, healthy food and feeling connected to Mother Earth.



# 8 A PRUNED EDEN

## THE LUSH GARDEN

● **DREAMING OF EDEN.** WHEN ASKED TO CLOSE THEIR EYES AND THINK OF A DREAM GARDEN, MANY PEOPLE IMAGINE A LUSH, GREEN GARDEN WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF FLOWERS AND SHRUBBERY. TO LET ONE-SELF BECOME ONE WITH NATURE AMONG GREEN BUSHES AND TREES SEEMS TO GIVE PEOPLE A RELAXED NATURAL FEELING, WHICH GARDENING BLOGGERS CRAVE. WOMEN IN PARTICULAR, ALL OVER THE WORLD, SEEM TO LONG AND STRIVE FOR THIS TYPE OF DREAM GARDEN.

The lush garden is not a wild garden – it is planned, designed, and well-organized. While such a garden requires considerable effort, the dedicated gardener approaches it with a smile. In most cases, lush gardeners work with ease and pleasure because gardening is their passion and they love to spend as much time as possible in their gardens.

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*"This year, the Jerusalem artichoke bloomed especially early and was exceptionally beautiful. The stalks were about 3 meters tall and crowned with many bright yellow flowers."*

GERMAN BLOGGER

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Photo: Margith Bonde Clarup, <http://emilies-hjoerne.blogspot.com>

### THE MAKING OF THE LUSH GARDEN

The kind of flowers and greenery favored varies from country to country, depending on climate and local taste. Discussions in South Africa often revolve around maintaining a lush garden year round, while this topic obviously does not arise in Norway. In Australia, keeping the garden lush may pose a challenge, since the lush gardener is plagued by seasons with little rain or drought.

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*"Many native plants are water-economical, and so they thrive in our climate. Native plants are a much more efficient option for the garden than imported flowers that are unable to live in Australia's sweltering summers."*

AUSTRALIAN BLOGGER

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In fact, gardeners all over the world are at the mercy of the weather gods. Discussing the weather is therefore common among gardeners worldwide. With too little rain, the plants will dry out, while too much heavy rain combined with storms will destroy the plants.

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*"This year we went 'garden crazy' – we dug up our ugly old lawn and replaced it with flowerbeds, paths, and a greenhouse. When the children were young we needed a big lawn for playing soccer, badminton, and other activities that require space. But now that the boys have grown up, we can admire the flowers instead."*

DANISH BLOGGER

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*"I am extremely fond of my roses, and would love to have a rose garden with lots of scent and color."*

NORWEGIAN BLOGGER

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#### ADORING THE LOVELY MS ROSE

Roses and other colorful flowers are commonly found in lush gardens. Women all over the world are devoted to gardens filled with cutting flowers and love to admire and find inspiration in other gardens.

The roses are almost treated like beauty queens. And in fact, countries like Norway and France hold annual "Ms Rose" beauty contests. Nevertheless, looks are not everything for lush gardeners. They often have detailed knowledge about the objects of their desire and refer to them by their Latin names, discuss the best way to cut the roses, and how to feed them so they continue to flourish.

#### DESIGNING THE LUSH GARDEN

But who should design the lush garden? Here, opinions differ; Poland and Denmark may serve as examples illustrating the contrasting views. In Poland the general opinion is that garden design requires a professional designer or landscape architect.

Danes couldn't care less. They have no problems whatsoever designing their own garden. In fact they are more likely to see this process as part of the fun. The lush look is extremely popular among gardeners in Denmark. Danes prefer a variety of flowers and bushes, preferably the kind that almost take care of themselves - so the gardener can relax, unwind, and enjoy the beauty of the garden.

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*"Today's gardens can be stunning, even when designed for individual clients who have their own plot of land."*

POLISH GARDEN DESIGN BLOG

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# 9 PARADISE IN A POT

## CONTAINER GARDENING

**GARDENING LIGHT.** WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE TIME OR SPACE TO CREATE A LUSH, ELABORATE GARDEN? YOU USE POTS AND CONTAINERS, AND THAT IS WHAT PEOPLE ACROSS THE GLOBE DO – IN CHINA AS WELL AS IN THE US. POTS AND VASES MAKE GARDENING POSSIBLE AND EXCITING EVEN FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE VAST AMOUNTS OF SPACE OR LOTS OF TIME FOR GARDENING.



Photo: Nina Bergström,  
<http://blogg.expressen.se/tradgard>

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*"Even the smallest patio or porch can boast a crop of vegetables or a garden of flowers in containers. Planter boxes, wooden barrels, hanging baskets and large flowerpots are just some of the containers that can be used. The container gardener is limited only by his imagination."*

GARDENINGGUIDES.COM

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"Eden Contained" is a trend closely related to urban farming. However, it has grown so popular that it may be considered a separate discipline. In the US container gardening seems to be an established term in cyberspace. The trend is strongest among bloggers in the US, China, and Brazil, but it is gaining in popularity among urban gardeners worldwide. Since container gardening is all about creating a mini-Eden, without having to care for a whole garden, it may be described as "gardening light" – adapted to the modern day, stressed out metropolitan human.

### MAXIMIZED CONTROL AND PASSION

The alluring wild element of the garden can pose problems for gardeners. Weeds, pests, and uncontrollable weather can all become overwhelming, even for those who crave the connection to nature.

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*"Since I spent my childhood pulling weeds from our vegetable garden, I prefer to do my gardening in pots. Then you control the world – or at least to the extent that's possible".*

SWEDISH BLOGGER

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Container gardeners cherry-pick the very best of Eden and leave the nuisances behind. Perhaps that's why it fits so well with our modern day lifestyles where we want to maximize the pleasurable things in life and minimize everything we consider boring.

### PRECISION GARDENING

Although container gardening gives the gardener an upper hand against weeds, it is far from simple. It is conducted within the strict constraints of its practitioners – limits of space and time. Often container gardening seems to be much like writing a haiku poem. You do



not have much space to fill, so everything you do must be precise. Bloggers spend so much time discussing the parameters under which container gardening is practiced just because of the very specific conditions required – type of pots, appropriate plants and vegetables, soil preparation for individual species in specific types of pot or container, lighting conditions, and the special use of fertilizers when using pots and containers.

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*"The vegetables most demanding when it comes to light are tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and lettuce. For normal growth of the plants need light for 12-16 hours a day. Fluorescent lamps are best for the purpose."*

RUSSIAN BLOGGER

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#### EDEN IN A POT

Container gardening is not just about content, or what plants to grow – the choice of pots is equally important. That's also why innovative and unusual pots are so important to container gardeners and in blogs they share tips on their most creative solutions for others to see and use.

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*"One of the keys to making a successful container garden (...) is to not be afraid of being bold. Try putting them in unconventional containers. I have put them in funky shallow baskets as well as a modern, brushed aluminum window box and both looked great."*

BLOGGER USA

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The most popular solutions are those that the gardener has personally invented. They often use containers intended for other purposes and transform them to work for gardening purposes. Bloggers around the world obviously take great pride in sharing their solutions

with others and that this creative element of container gardening is rewarding for them. If you can save a buck by re-using packages of muffins (USA) or moon cake boxes (China), so much the better!

#### THE FLEXIBLE GARDEN

In the last decade the makeover has become part of daily life. We are constantly looking for ways to improve ourselves as well as our homes and gardens. TV shows and magazines feed us with news on how to update ourselves in accordance with the latest trends. And although gardeners seem to be quite indifferent to the chase for the next big thing, they like variety. If your garden is in pots, so much the better. It is much easier to give your yard a makeover if the plants are in pots than rooted in the earth. The container gardener may move them around, replant the garden in new pots, and easily add to or entirely change the whole mixture of vegetation.

Photo: Wang Tao, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/jantess>



# 10. THE HOUSE OF EDEN

## GREENHOUSE GARDENING

**DREAMING OF THE LITTLE EXTRA HOUSE.** FOR MANY GARDENERS, HAVING A GREENHOUSE IS A MUCH-DESIRED DREAM. THE HOUSE OF EDEN ENABLES GARDENERS TO INDULGE THEIR PASSION FOR GARDENING, REDUCING THEIR DEPENDENCE ON SEASONS AND PROTECTING THEIR CROPS AND PLOTS FROM HARSH WEATHER CONDITIONS. SINCE GREENHOUSES ARE EXPENSIVE, OCCUPY SPACE IN THE GARDEN, AND REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE MAINTENANCE, THEY REMAIN BUT A DREAM FOR MANY GARDENERS.

The blogosphere describes hardcore garden enthusiasts who can invest time and money to expand their garden with a greenhouse as lucky people who seem to hold a relatively high status among other gardeners. Those whose greenhouse is large enough can enjoy it as an extra room, a place to have dinner on a late summer evening with friends when the weather does not permit outdoor entertaining, as is popular in Denmark. Some greenhouse gardeners consider this little extra luxury to be a must when choosing a greenhouse; it must be large enough for both plants and people.

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*"The greenhouse plants have finally grown so much that it is really nice to sit there and totally enjoy the atmosphere. It's so nice to sit there and drink a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, while picking some tomatoes and taking care of the plants"*

DANISH BLOGGER

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Nevertheless, the large greenhouse is not the only way to create a house of Eden. People who cannot afford a real greenhouse or simply don't have the land, admire and even purchase mini-greenhouses that can be placed on a balcony or indoors by a window to grow plants faster. As more people practice urban farming,

the demand for smaller portable greenhouse solutions may increase. Who knows when we will see the next generation of urban houses of Eden?

### EVE PLANTS WHILE ADAM BUILDS

The little house of Eden clearly reflects traditional gender roles. Men are involved in the building of the house and discuss related engineering topics: heating, lighting, and materials. In many countries men also share advice on how to design and build greenhouses. Meanwhile, women mainly focus on the types of plants and flowers they can grow in the greenhouse and share the joy of having a greenhouse with other bloggers.

### A NORDIC PHENOMENON

In colder climates such as in Scandinavia and Russia, greenhouses open up a new dimension in the gardening world by lengthening the season and enabling a wider range of plants and flowers to be grown without worrying that they will be destroyed by bad weather. Of course, people who live in warm climates do not have the same need for a greenhouse, and therefore do not seem particularly interested in this theme.

Although greenhouses are rather common in northern countries, it is still the garden enthusiasts who have one. The bloggers engage in lively discussion of the perfect greenhouse and what's suitable for their particular settings. This discussion seems to

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*"The time comes in every gardener's life when you start to hanker after a greenhouse: for over-wintering tender exotics, raising tomatoes and just pottering about in."*

UK BLOGGER

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intrigue dedicated gardeners.

When the greenhouse is finally in place, the search continues. Now bloggers discuss humidity control and how to fertilize the soil to achieve the best results. The main topic is, of course, how to grow plants, fruits, and vegetables, spanning everything from seeding

and the care required when handling seedlings, <http://9haven.dk> to the care of fully grown plants, which requires the right amount of water and protection against pests and insects. The task of cleaning the greenhouse is also discussed; this duty often marks the closing of the gardening season.

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*"This year my husband gave me an arched greenhouse made of polycarbonate (he was tired of covering my old greenhouse every year). I can't get enough of it! Doors, large windows. The water doesn't drip on the plants ... A miracle! (but expensive ...). Planted tomatoes in it in late April; all survived freezing temperatures outdoors without heating. If it keeps well over the winter, next year we'll set up another greenhouse for cucumbers."*

RUSSIAN BLOGGER

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# 13 COUNTRIES

## SUMMARY



■ **USA THE TRIUMPH OF THE AMATEUR** In the United States, the gardening expert is out, while the wisdom of the amateur gardening crowd is in.

■ **UK TRYING FOR GOOD LOOKING OFFSPRING** In Britain, gardening is more than just a hobby; the British treat their garden plants as growing family members, carefully following the each step of development in the plants.

■ **SOUTH AFRICA GROW YOUR OWN CULTURAL MIX** Roses, agapanthus, and aloe – why not? In South Africa, only taste and imagination limit what can be grown.

■ **AUSTRALIA ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS DOWN UNDER** In Australia,

being eco-friendly means more than just practicing kitchen gardening. Love of native plants helps organic gardeners to pursue their goals in an unforgiving dry climate.

■ **FRANCE RE-CONNECTING WITH EDEN** The French blogosphere is filled with poetry celebrating how gardens help modern man to express a suppressed craving for nature.

■ **GERMANY THE SMART GARDEN** In Germany, the garden is all about getting the most pleasure out of the least effort. Smart gardening is therefore the number one goal for German bloggers.

■ **POLAND FASHIONISTA PARADISE** Creating a personal paradise is important to the growing group of affluent Poles. And that paradise





should be chic and well-maintained, with the sound of splashing water.

■ **SWEDEN RECLAIMING HOMEMAKING**

Do you believe that Swedes are among the most modern people in the world? Well... think again! At least when it comes to gardening, Swedes are anything but progressive.

■ **DENMARK GOURMET FARMING**

In Denmark, joie-de-vivre leaps out - not just because Danes use the yard as a social space, but also in how they practice gardening.

■ **NORWAY THE WAYS OF THE ROMANTIC**

**MS ROSE** Everything is chic in the Norwegian floral paradise, as long as the weather gods are kind.

■ **RUSSIA THE SELF-MADE EDEN** In Russia gardening is a challenge to be taken seriously – it takes hard work both physically and intellectually to keep a flourishing garden going.

■ **CHINA THE HARMONIOUS GARDEN**

Chinese gardening is all about harmony, from health and recreation to beauty, exercise, and gastronomy.

■ **BRAZIL POP-UP GARDENING**

In Brazil, nothing can stop the passion for gardening. No space? Squeeze in a few pots here and there and you may be on your way to your own personal paradise.

# USA THE TRIUMPH OF THE AMATEUR

IN THE UNITED STATES, THE GARDENING EXPERT IS OUT, WHILE THE WISDOM OF THE AMATEUR GARDENING CROWD IS IN.

**Amateurs rule the net.** Passionate amateurs rule the American gardening blogosphere. Expert opinions not only drown in the loud conversation online – they are directly confronted and questioned by rebellious amateur gardeners. Online, experts have no more clout than, say, *The Garden Rebel Blog*.

The New York Times spotted an increase in the number of books devoted to Japanese gardens, but these are already out of fashion on the Internet.

References to Japanese gardens are in steep decline in the blogosphere, and Google searches are down 60% since 2004. Gardening trends in the U.S.

seem to spread from the blogosphere periphery, contradicting expert advice at the center.

## IT'S GREAT TO FAIL

This trend may not be so strange in a country where everyone shapes their own fortune. In the US, much as in Russia, the gardener is self-made. However while Russians bloggers are self-made and describe how they do everything from scratch, US bloggers declare their independence by refusing to adhere to authorities, such as gardening experts. Nonetheless US bloggers seem to love sharing experiences with other bloggers. Stories of failure are posted as frequently and as proudly as tales of success. Overcoming the difficul-

ties on the journey toward the perfect garden is what matters. The blogosphere turns out to be the perfect place for people to document this journey, as well as to reach out to people with similar problems and share advice on everything from kitchen gardening to water irrigation.

## WILD IS HOT

American gardening bloggers favor gardens

that are somewhat rebellious. One hot trend is the Wild Garden, referred to by some as the Weed Garden. Some bloggers give accounts of watching their

gardens deteriorate and give way to weeds because they don't have enough time to take care of them. As time went by, however, these bloggers started to like the wild look of their gardens and decided not only to keep that look, but to maintain it. Posts keep popping up across the blogosphere from people with new ideas on plants that can be sown to get the wild garden look. Bloggers are motivated not just by the low maintenance cost, but even more so by the artistic feel of such gardens.

## AND SO IS URBAN FARMING

In the coastal states – especially Washington, Oregon, Massachusetts, and New York – urban gardening and urban farming are other hot

*"I was taught that 'a weed is a plant out of place,' but what authority determines a plant's proper place?"*

US BLOGGER





trends, not just because of limited space in cities, but because sustainability and self-sufficiency are on the rise more broadly. This trend is also reflected in a surge in organic gardening. Urban gardening is often carried

out indoors, mostly in the convenient form of container gardening and with the positive effect of producing exotic ingredients for the kitchen.

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

- 1. Re-creating wilderness [TREND 5]
- 2. The organic garden [TREND 2]
- 3. The feel good garden [TREND 3]

## USA IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	307	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	46,716	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	50.5	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	164	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail		Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	74	Internetworldstats





# GREAT BRITAIN

## TRYING FOR GOOD LOOKING OFFSPRING

IN BRITAIN GARDENING IS MORE THAN JUST A HOBBY; THE BRITISH TREAT THEIR GARDEN PLANTS AS GROWING FAMILY MEMBERS, CAREFULLY FOLLOWING EACH STEP OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLANTS.

*"Luckily, living away from the ground in urban London means that the only pests I have to deal with on the balcony are horses – as in clothes horses, laden with wet clothes and competing for space alongside plant pots, grow bags and watering cans!"*

BRITISH BLOGGER

### **Gardening for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.**

Since Britain has a proud history of gardening, many people expect the British to have an innate gift for gardening and to view it as a way of life, rather than just a hobby. Judging from the gardening blogs, this also seems to hold true. British gardeners are often extremely concerned about their yards and gardens, more so than gardening bloggers in other parts of the world. Several British, mostly middle-aged women, live and breathe gardening and when spring comes they have spent the whole winter planning the design and plants for the coming



season. But gardening is not limited to people with large yards.

Urban gardening is the hottest thing in London and edible gardens may be found on roof terraces or balconies, while apartments seem to be full of green life. Even the mayor of London is on board, as he has stated that land should be allocated for farming in the city. An additional sign that gardening is important in Britain is that garden tools are popular and well received gifts for birthdays and wedding anniversaries.

PROTECTING THE OFFSPRING

The British seem to treat their gardens as if they were their own children. They seem to be part of the family, where every change and development is noted. Like proud parents, the British also want what is best for their gardens in all aspects. No synthetic chemicals should be used. Instead they believe in using natural products such as organic fertilizers, pesticides, and composting.

Bloggers express a feeling of personal assault when their gardens are attacked by pests and unwanted animals and are very protective against pests and animals in their garden. Their “baby” should not be attacked and they put up barriers of sand, ash, and soot to try to stop the invasion.

IT’S ALL ABOUT LOOKS

To many bloggers, their yards and gardens are a part of their identity. Just as the gardeners groom themselves to look beautiful and be stylish, the yard and garden are subjected to the same process. Constant weeding and trimming in the often artistic garden keep the lush yard

*“My greenhouse cucumbers always succumb to red spider mite. Hostas act like a magnet to the local snail population. Well, I’m not having this! I’ve been fighting back, organically of course, especially on crops I’m going to eat or feed the family.”*

BRITISH BLOGGER

filled with flowers. Although the kitchen garden mainly produces vegetables and other edibles, it’s no excuse to just let it grow without considering its potential beauty. The British kitchen garden is described as stylish, with attractive vegetables grown in raised beds or in fancy pots and containers. It is, of course, preferable if they also taste good, but in many cases appearance seems to be more important.

TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

- 1. The designed and artistic garden [TREND 4]
- 2. The feel-good garden [TREND 3]
- 3. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]

GREAT BRITAIN IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	61.1	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	35,445	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	6.6	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	108	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail		Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	76	Internetworldstats





# SOUTH AFRICA

## GROW YOUR OWN CULTURAL MIX

ROSES, AGAPANTHUS, AND ALOE – WHY NOT? IN SOUTH AFRICA ONLY TASTE AND IMAGINATION LIMIT WHAT CAN BE GROWN.

**A black diamond on the rise.** South Africa is a country in transition. Since 1994 the middle class has grown into a substantial part of the population. And the middle class is no longer a white phenomenon. The new black middle class, popularly referred to as the “Black Diamond,” is booming. In 2007 the Black Diamond had grown by 30 percent in just one year and the number of black middle-

*“The garden is looking incredible – green and lush after the good rains. My herbs are looking strong, the roses are in their second flush and the agapanthus has huge heads of purple flowers.”*

SOUTH AFRICAN BLOGGER

class families living in metropolitan suburbs had grown from 23 percent to 47 percent during the same period<sup>1</sup>.

The new proud black middle class wants to make sound investments and considers suburban homes and gardens to be visible marks of success. Thus, South Africa has increasingly moved toward being

a melting pot of different cultures, people, and traditions.



## TRADITION AND NATIONAL PRIDE

This mixture also seems to be reflected in the gardening world. The English heritage of the South African gardens is ever present in the blogosphere. Traditional English plants such as roses, petunias, and begonias are popular topics of discussion; how to grow them perfectly – indoors or outdoors – seems to be a never-ending subject of interest. However, alongside this heritage the interest in native plants and their beauty is also a popular subject. Many South African gardeners enjoy the warm climate and grow exotic plants such as aloe plants. However, these seem to be quite separate interests that are not necessarily reflected in gardens. Instead, the South Africans create their own cultural mix.

This latter interest in particular is shared by bloggers in Australia, who are also interested in their native heritage and its preservation. Occasionally South African bloggers discuss specific plants that they believe are part of their original national heritage only to find that they actually share these plants with Australians. As one blogger commented, once upon a time the two continents were attached, so it is only reasonable for certain plants to be part of the shared heritage of both nations.

## LAWNS –PART OF BEING A SERIOUS GARDENER

Although not quite making it to the top three blogging themes listed below, how to create the perfect lawn seems to be a popular subject among male South African bloggers. What kind of grass to use, how to water and fertilize it, and technical details such as the soil pH balance are popular topics. Frustration at the inability to grow a lush lawn is ever present. After seeing the lawn fighting for its life through winter, “hanging on to life by its bare stolons,” as one blogger puts it, the need for reassurance is great. And just like the rest of the world, the South African gardening on-line community comes to the rescue, with loads of advice and encouragement.

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*“When I got serious about gardening, at first I wanted what every self-respecting gardener wants: a beautiful, lush, soft lawn, the one that gives you sheer pleasure to sink your toes in.”*

SOUTH AFRICAN BLOGGER

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## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. Urban Farming [TREND 7]
2. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]
3. The organic garden [TREND 2]

## SOUTH AFRICA IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	49.1	World Bank
Official language:	English	English speaking 45% <sup>2</sup> First language 8.2% <sup>3</sup>
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	10,109	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	N/A	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	N/A	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	N/A	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	9	Internetworldstats

*“I have planted some vegetables in my organic garden. I used nourishing fertilizers to plant them. Now they grow well and I feel happy although I need to spend a lot of time on them.”*

40-SOMETHING FEMALE BLOGGER

<sup>1</sup> Black Diamond 2007, University of Cape town’s Unilever Institute & TNS Research service.

<sup>2</sup>www.southafrica.info

<sup>3</sup>Statistics South Africa: www.statssa.gov.za



# AUST RALIA

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS DOWN UNDER

IN AUSTRALIA BEING ECO-FRIENDLY INVOLVES MORE THAN JUST MAINTAINING A KITCHEN GARDEN. THE LOVE OF NATIVE PLANTS HELPS ORGANIC GARDENERS PURSUE THEIR GOALS IN AN UNFORGIVING DRY CLIMATE.

**Environmental awareness.** In Australia environmental awareness is high, which is also clearly reflected in gardening. Organic gardening is widely discussed in the blogosphere and especially popular when it comes to kitchen gardening.

In the Australian blogosphere, organic gardening is often synonymous with kitchen gardening. Aussie bloggers practice organic kitchen gardening in order to reap the health benefits from pesticide-free fresh fruits and vegetables.

### WITHOUT WATER IN PARADISE

In a country with constant drought, water is

a big issue, and for some it has become the issue. For gardeners fed up with the drought it is helpful to concentrate their gardening

efforts on drought-tolerant native plants.

Native plants are environmentally friendly as they often are able to retain moisture and extract moisture from the soil more effectively than non-native plants.

This way, the garden may be kept green despite the water

scarcity. The cultivation of native plants may be seen as a celebration of the unique Australian fauna, found nowhere else on earth. Native plants also need little or no maintenance, but still have beautiful flowers. This fits well with the laid-back Australian mentality; the Aussie

*"Food from our backyard is about as local as it gets, we know it's seasonal because we harvest as soon as things ripen, we control the amount (if any) of pesticides and fertilizers used, there's no packaging involved, and it motivates us to learn how to cook from scratch."*

AUSTRALIAN BLOGGER



bloggers seem to take it easy in the garden as well as in life.

#### ANIMAL VISITORS ALLOWED BUT CONTROLLED

Birds and butterflies are welcome visitors in natural organic gardens where gardeners aim to replicate an ecosystem. But the interest in nature appears to be somewhat ambivalent, as the many wild animals coming into the garden are not necessarily contributing to the future prosperity of the garden. A popular subject in the blogosphere involves the challenges of keeping unwanted visitors from the animal and insect world at a respectful distance from the garden. Insects, caterpillars, and opossums are among those unwanted creatures that the Aussie bloggers mention most often. "Know your enemy" is the battle cry of the Aussie bloggers. And so gardeners may plant garlic to deter flying insects, while using mint and sage near cabbage to repel the cabbage fly. The goal is to keep the garden pest-free and plant diseases away without using chemicals. Meanwhile, birds are encouraged to thrive and be frequent visitors, adding to the beauty of the garden.

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*"In the middle of my backyard I also have about 70m<sup>2</sup> of drought tolerant lawn. As most gardeners know even drought tolerant lawns need to be watered throughout the summer. Although I am a water miser in the garden my lawn is my indulgence. During a hot summer's evening there is no better place than to sit on the lawn with family and friends and enjoy the rest of the garden. A green lawn always makes a hot day feel so much cooler."*

AUSTRALIAN BLOGGER

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## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. Re-creating wilderness [TREND 5]
2. The organic garden [TREND 2]
3. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]

## AUSTRALIA IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	21.3	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	35 677	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	N/A	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	N/A	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	N/A	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	80	Internetworldstats



THE FRENCH BLOGOSPHERE IS FILLED WITH POETRY CELEBRATING HOW GARDENS HELP MODERN PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEIR SUPPRESSED CRAVING FOR NATURE.

**Big dreams of unspoiled nature.** As in Rousseau's *Emile*, love of nature and harmony permeates the French blogosphere. The lush, natural, and preferably organic garden serves as an inspiration for a poetic celebration of the garden. Gardening seems to be explained by the French bloggers as an expression for an innate human need, derived directly from the creation of humankind and our supposed origin in the Garden of Eden. It is not just the garden in its physical form that provides soothing experiences to the French bloggers. The practice of gardening itself also creates a sense of harmony and seems to connect humankind with its origins. It

*"Almost all civilizations have their own mythology to explain the origin of the world and the birth of their society. These myths are often a mix of fantasy, symbolism and historical facts. Our (religion) tells us that God, after creating the world, created the first man and placed him in a garden called Eden."*

FRENCH BLOGGER

seems that gardening helps the French to feel like natural humans rather than stressed-out postmodern citizens of the world.

#### SMALLER REALITIES

No matter how important worship of nature may be, the great, lush, and spacious garden remains but a dream for the masses in France. The small kitchen garden seems to pose an interesting and affordable alternative to French bloggers. As it requires less time and effort, this type of gardening is well-suited to the hectic schedules of everyday life in France. Here French bloggers grow a wide variety of species such as beans,



turnips, cabbage, potatoes, and zucchini – only imagination limits the choice.

Although small kitchen gardens seem to embody the practical, whether located in the French countryside or downtown Paris, they also allow the French to connect with the Garden of Eden.

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*“The garden is a universe created by the gardener; having nature as an ally, creates harmony; decoration of nature, ambiance and colors imposed by the seasonal changes (...) (You feel) reassured yet alerted by an environment that awakens your senses that may allow (the gardener) to listen fully, in total (to the voice of nature).”*

FRENCH BLOGGER

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The process of raising plants and vegetables from seed to full figured form is described by the French bloggers as pure magic. Home-grown vegetables provide the “best of the earth’s energies” while saving money for the French household.



## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. The feel-good garden [TREND 3]
2. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]
3. The organic garden [TREND 2]

## FRANCE IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	62.1	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	34,045	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	N/A	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	N/A	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	N/A	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	69	Internetworldstats

*“I have planted some vegetables in my organic garden. I used nourishing fertilizers to plant them. Now they grow well and I feel happy although I need to spend a lot of time on them.”*

40-SOMETHING FEMALE BLOGGER

# GER MANY THE SMART GARDEN

IN GERMANY, THE GARDEN IS ALL ABOUT GETTING THE MOST PLEASURE OUT OF THE LEAST EFFORT. SMART GARDENING IS THEREFORE THE NUMBER ONE GOAL FOR GERMAN BLOGGERS.

**Smart environmental gardens.** Germany is known for its dynamic green tech industry and ambitious efforts in the renewable energy area. The goal is to generate 30% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020. Garden bloggers, it seems, are stepping up to the challenge, doing their part by taking measures such as installing solar garden lights.

However, there are limits to the practice of environmentally friendly gardening. In the world of garden blogging, no one promotes the idea of the low maintenance garden as vigorously as the Germans. They want a beautiful place where they can slow down from a stressed life. And since gardens are for relaxation, not hard work, there are limits to the effort one is willing to invest in going green. It's all about being smart and as long as it is smarter to be eco-friendly, the German gardener is more than willing to contribute.

## PROBLEM-FREE GARDENS

Balance is important to Germans bloggers. Beauty seems to be synonymous with greenery

and color, but only up to a point - it should not overtake the garden. The garden should still be controlled, planned, and organized. For most German bloggers, a lush garden seems to be much more important than a wild one. However, this does not mean that birds and animals

*"Solar lights are not only environmentally friendly (...), they also save a lot of work."*

GERMAN BLOGGER

are not welcome in the garden, but it has to be the right animals, like cats and birds. Pests like ants and moles are banished from the

garden and intruders are fought vigorously, though preferably without harming them unless absolutely necessary.

For Germans, color is important, and color means flowers. German gardeners love flowers of different colors and sorts. In the blogosphere they describe how to plan and create arrangements with masses of perennials. Their choice of flowers reflects their taste for the smart, problem-free garden. Germans seem to seek out species that require little care and live for many years. Inspiration for garden arrangements often seems to be taken from popular garden travel tours while visiting different countries in Europe.





#### SMART KITCHEN GARDENERS

Smart German gardeners have also found ways to have a simple yet productive kitchen garden. Often only a limited variety of vegetables are grown, not only because of lack of space, but also as a way to keep the garden simple and easy to maintain. Judging from the blogosphere, the top choices in many places around Germany include red-glowing tomatoes and popular herbs in pots and containers, which make them suitable for urban gardening. Like herbs, they can be grown in a pot, a garden or on the smallest balcony.

Tomatoes seem to be popular as they may be grown quite easily, require little space, and

above all, bloggers contend that homegrown tomatoes taste so much better than mass-produced ones. Little effort but lots of joy – just the way the German gardener likes it.

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*“When living in the city you have to compromise and find a way to have a garden anyway. One good way may is the balcony. You can grow beautiful herbs and tomatoes, and with some luck even fit in a table and chairs. ”*

GERMAN BLOGGER

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## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. The organic garden [TREND 2]
2. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]
3. The feel good garden [TREND 3]

## GERMANY IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	82.3	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	35,613	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	13.2959	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	162	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	N/A	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	66	Internetworldstats

# POL AND FASHIONISTA PARADISE

CREATING A PERSONAL PARADISE IS IMPORTANT TO THE GROWING GROUP OF AFFLUENT POLES. AND THAT PARADISE SHOULD BE CHIC AND WELL-MAINTAINED, WITH THE SOUND OF SPLASHING WATER.

**A garden for me.** Gardening is in vogue in Poland. Polish gardening is a direct reflection of the country's twenty years of constant, dramatic progress. The practice seems to have turned from just growing plants to an increasing emphasis on the use of gardening space. The garden has transformed to become a place where people can enjoy themselves, relax, and commune with nature.

Gardening has also become a serious hobby. Many gardeners invest large amounts of time and effort in the goal of creating a modern garden that reflects the latest trends. Some gardening bloggers have even turned their landscaping hobby into a profession.

## A GARDEN FOR OTHERS TO SEE

Polish gardening bloggers seem to invest a lot of time, money, and energy in their gardens,

and dream of having a beautiful garden for others to visit and admire. That may be why Polish gardens seem to be anything but a private affair.

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*"We want our garden to look like a work of art."*

POLISH BLOGGER

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The bloggers describe how stylish gardens are used as social spaces. Popular topics among

young Polish bloggers include the best way to throw a garden party and what furniture to use. Using a public or community garden for a social gathering

appears to be quite common for those who do not have a garden of their own.

## SOURCE OF PRIDE AND FRUSTRATION

Bloggers in Poland describe how they work with water and lighting to add beauty to the

*"We not only desire to have the space necessary to live, but also to create special places which attract nature."*

POLISH BLOGGER





Photo: Agnieszka Idziak, <http://pikininigardens.blogspot.com>

garden in order to create a fashionable garden. The sophisticated gardens become a source of great frustration as the tiring maintenance tasks accumulate. For example, cleaning and rinsing ponds and fountains are subjects of great

frustration. In winter, fashionable upscale Poles enjoy their sophisticated indoor winter gardens from which they may look out on the beautiful winter landscape while staying warm and cosy inside.

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. The designed and artistic garden garden [TREND 4]
2. The social garden [TREND 6]
3. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]

## POLAND IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	38.5	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	17,625	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	N/A	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	N/A	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	N/A	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	52	Internetworldstats





# SWE DEN

## RECLAIMING HOME-MAKING

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SWEDES ARE AMONG THE MOST MODERN PEOPLE IN THE WORLD?  
WELL... THINK AGAIN! AT LEAST WHEN IT COMES TO GARDENING, SWEDES ARE ANYTHING BUT  
PROGRESSIVE.



**Traditional roles rule the garden.** In the World Values Survey, Sweden is depicted as having the most modern values in the world. Swedes pride themselves on their gender equality, where men take parental leave and find it natural to do their share of the household chores. Nonetheless, when it comes to gardening Swedish bloggers are anything but progressive. It's all about tradition and being like grandma in an updated, trendy, yet old-fashioned country style.

#### A SAFE HOUSE

Blogging gardeners in Sweden seem to long for a simpler life, away from our hectic, over-commercialized contemporary society. They find this simpler life in their gardens, which may explain why natural gardens are popular in Sweden. Gardening in itself is a soothing experience and part of the larger housekeeping chores carried out by the woman of the household.

Even though Swedes are often considered to have achieved gender equality, traditional gender roles are clearly reflected in gardening practices. The life and interests of the female Swedish gardener revolve around the family, creating a warm and beautiful home that all

family members can enjoy. She likes to throw small parties, when she cooks, bakes, and prepares every detail meticulously. She is very proud of her garden and enjoys hearing people admire it. She likes to socialize on the Internet with other gardeners and share experiences, tips, and thoughts with them.

#### WOMEN IN COMMAND

Women are absolutely in the majority in the Swedish gardening blogosphere. From their thirties to their sixties, female Swedish gardeners orchestrate their partners, who help them by doing manly things in the garden. Digging holes, moving the lawn, and building new flowerbeds are all typical male duties in the Swedish garden.

Although female Swedish gardeners seem to be very traditional, they do not want to let go of their working lives, nor do they seem to feel oppressed or unequal. Instead they seem to be restoring the value of homemaking as a legitimate and valuable contribution to family life and society, rather than a trap that prevents equality. For female Swedish gardeners, the garden and their homes are sources of pride, pleasure, dreams, and leading a good life.

*"I like making jam and syrup. I don't keep that a secret. It is so simple and yet the result is really good. And then you feel so house-proud and good about yourself."*

SWEDISH BLOGGER

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. Re-creating wilderness [TREND 5]
2. The feel-good garden [TREND 3]
3. The designed and artistic garden [TREND 4]

## SWEDEN IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	9.06	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	37,383	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	2.2663	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	250	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	2.5	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	89	Internetworldstats

# DEN MARK GOURMET FARMING

IN DENMARK THE JOIE-DE-VIVRE LEAPS OUT - NOT JUST BECAUSE DANES USE THE YARD AS A SOCIAL SPACE, BUT ALSO THROUGH THEIR GARDENING PRACTICES.

**Grow your own – enjoy with friends.** Danes, like their northern neighbors, are big gardening spenders. With its strong agricultural tradition, gardening in Denmark also serves as a basis for pleasure and tasting sensations.

The Danish blogosphere is filled with the joy of growing food and bringing it to the table. The kitchen garden is therefore the most important part of the yard for Danes. As the Danish climate is much more forgiving than the harsher climate in Sweden and Norway, the Danes enjoy trying different crops and experimenting with new exciting variants of herbs and vegetables. However, while traditional farmers grow crops to make a living, the Danes are fueled by their passion for

enjoying the finer things in life – food and drink in the company of friends and loved ones.

#### JOIE-DE-VIVRE AND PLAYFUL ARTISTRY

The Danes are known for being laid back and for their joie-de-vivre; the way they garden

is no exception.

Danish gardens, as portrayed in the blogosphere, are often very colorful and lush, reflecting the generous and joyful nature of their owners. Many Danish gardens reflect artistry and playful design, as the interests of their owners tend to run in that direction. They cannot be bothered with new trends,

showing off, or following too much advice on how to garden. Instead their garden is a haven

*"I am cooking chili today again. Now it simmers on the stove and it shall do so for the next 3-5 hours. It will taste good, I'll tell you! There are so many great taste nuances in chili. (...) This time I'm using Christmas Pepper and Jamaican Bell, they have a strength of 2-3. (...) Chili is not the only thing I have in my dish; my baby aubergines are almost ready."*

DANISH BLOGGER



of enjoyment where they sit and relax in their own greenery and abundance of flowers.

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*"The greenhouse plants have finally grown so much that it is really nice to sit there and totally enjoy the atmosphere. It's so nice to sit there and drink a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, while picking some tomatoes and taking care of the plants."*

DANISH BLOGGER

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The garden is by no means a private matter in Denmark. Danes practice gourmet farming and invite friends and families to garden feasts, enjoying the fruits of their gardening labor. The garden and even the greenhouse are for socializing. For example, when installing a greenhouse, being able to sit together and enjoy a dinner with homegrown veggies or just enjoy the lush atmosphere is as important as using it to grow flowers or crops.



Photo: Karina Bentzen, <http://frauputz.blogspot.com>

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. The social garden [TREND 6]
2. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]
3. The lush garden [TREND 8]

## DENMARK IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	5.5	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	36,604	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	1.3032	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	237	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	2.2	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	84	Internetworldstats



# NOR WAY

## THE WAYS OF THE ROMANTIC MS ROSE

ALL IS CHIC IN THE NORWEGIAN FLORAL PARADISE, AS LONG AS THE WEATHER GODS ARE GRACIOUS!

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*"In my garden I would like to have the old-fashioned kind of flowers that my grandmother used to have. I also have two cats running around hunting after mice and living a relaxed life in the countryside."*

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NORWEGIAN BLOGGER



**Flowers for women.** In Norway, a love of flowers permeates the blogosphere. Detailed pictures of flowers are posted in abundance and roses of all kinds seem to be the favorite flower of the Norwegian gardener. Although Norwegians also grow vegetables with great pride and joy, their love of flowers seems to relegate veggies to a limited part of the garden, while flowers are grown in abundance.

As in Sweden, the floral garden is an all female affair. However, Norwegians seem to be even more romantic and craving of beauty than their Swedish neighbors.

The ideal seems to be the traditional English rose garden. There is even a widely commented contest, "Ms Rose," where rose enthusiasts can submit pictures of their loveliest specimens.

AS ALWAYS

– OLD-FASHIONED AND CLOSE TO NATURE  
The romantic taste of Norwegian bloggers is

*"I am very fond of my roses, and wish myself a rose garden with lots of scent and color."*

FEMALE BLOGGER NORWAY

also reflected in their other interests, such as their choice of design, movies, and literature. Romantic films like Jane Austen movies inspire their old-fashioned country lifestyle. "Shabby-chic" is how they describe their style, but when looking at the pictures they post, they seem all chic and not so shabby.

The bloggers love wildlife and nature. They invite birds and animals into their gardens, but their love of animals is complicated, since deer love to feast on the gardeners' highly coveted

rosebuds. As the weather in Norway is quite unforgiving, and heavy storms and rains can do long-term damage to the garden, bloggers discuss this source

of fear. Maybe that's why Norwegians love their greenhouses so much. The greenhouse opens up a new world for the gardeners since it prolongs the season and makes it possible to grow lots of different plants and flowers to fuel the abundant floral beauty of the Norwegian garden.

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. Re-creating wilderness [TREND 5]
2. Greenhouse gardening [TREND 10]
3. The designed and artistic garden [TREND 4]

## NORWAY IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	4.66	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	58,141	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	0.5882	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	126	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	1.1	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	91	Internetworldstats



# RUSSIA

## THE SELF-MADE EDEN

IN RUSSIA GARDENING IS A CHALLENGE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY – IT TAKES HARD WORK BOTH PHYSICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY TO KEEP A FLOURISHING GARDEN GOING.

**Gardening – a great challenge.** Love of the beauty in Russian nature is part of the Russian soul and it is perhaps therefore gardening seems to come natural to Russians. However, the climate poses many challenges for Russian gardeners. Accordingly, gardening in Russia seems to be serious business. The general approach to gardening among bloggers is quite professional and that may be what it takes to be a successful gardener in the unforgiving Russian climate. Gardening is not just a hobby and a way of providing kitchens with great tasting ingredients – it is also intellectually challenging. Bloggers have extensive knowledge of every aspect of gardening in the difficult weather conditions and work hard to get the results they want.

**HOMEGROWN – CHEAP AND HEALTHY**  
Russian garden bloggers like their vegetables homegrown and prefer to eat them, rather than commercially produced crops. In the cities, urban farming is practiced in apartments, and as in the rest of the world Russians are as proud of their harvest as any nation. Urban gardeners often get a head start by planting vegetables and even exotic fruits in winter in order to enjoy them the following winter when the Russian climate puts an end to the fall harvest.

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*“Once my wife was given a pineapple on March 8. The idea of planting the pineapple came from the stories of our parents who, in Soviet times, visited Africa (and grew them there). After two years (...) in late October the pineapple blossomed (...) and a small fruit appeared. In late April the fruit reached full ripeness, turned yellow and looked very yummy. We cut it and ate it. The taste was sweet and very aromatic (...) but the fruit was small. Because Moscow is not Africa.”*

COMMENT ON GARDENING FORUM, RUSSIA

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Organic gardening is not only considered healthy, as it avoids chemicals; it is also cheap. Collecting leaves, vegetables peels, and other natural things to prepare humus for your own garden is inexpensive.

#### DO-IT-YOURSELF

The summer season starts in spring, when Russian city-dwellers head to their dachas





on weekends to pursue their passion for gardening. The Russians are self-sufficient and do their own home maintenance and gardening.

Professional services are considered desirable, but are often rejected by bloggers as too expensive. They say that cutting costs is not the only reason for self-sufficiency. The creative process of building a personal paradise seems to fuel the Russian passion for gardening and they enjoy the work. After all, what gives more satisfaction than eating the fruits of your own hard labor?

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*"I didn't throw away the old tub. Instead I closed up the drain, painted the inside to make it look like the bottom of a river and dug it into the ground, put in a pump and turned it into a fountain. Along the edges, I placed flowers in pots and planted bushes. Beautiful!"*

RUSSIAN BLOGGER

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## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]
2. The organic garden [TREND 2]

## RUSSIA IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	140	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	16,139	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	6.32	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	45	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	1.7	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	32	Internetworldstats

# CHINA

## THE HARMONIOUS GARDEN

CHINESE GARDENING IS ALL ABOUT HARMONY, FROM HEALTH AND RECREATION TO BEAUTY, EXERCISE, AND GASTRONOMY.

**Back to the roots.** People in China today live amidst rapid and profound change. The face of entire cities changes almost from one day to the next. In Shanghai alone, 25 million square meters of property were demolished in one decade and replaced by 4,000 skyscrapers – twice as many as in New York. In this ocean of change, it is not strange that the Chinese are looking for islands of peace and harmony. And so the Confucian concept of harmony runs as a theme through Chinese gardening blogs. The Chinese blogosphere tells stories of the garden as a place to drink tea, practice tai chi, and take evening walks with friends and neighbors.

The harmonious garden is not just a place to satisfy the soul, but also the stomach. Vegetables and spices are often grown indoors and on balconies – private outdoor gardens are a luxury for the fortunate few in China's crowded cities.

A surge in interest in organic gardening is reflected in the blogosphere, not so much for idealistic reasons but for its contribution to a healthy diet. Married female bloggers in particular let their readers know that they spend a small fortune on organic gardening books.

### INFLUENCES FROM ABROAD

In an increasingly global environment, the Chinese are exposed to both Western and traditional Chinese influences. New ideas blend with traditional culture to shape the harmonious garden. Nowhere is this as obvious as in the case of the garden as a place to seek physical balance: the workout garden. Residential community gardens across China have turned into creative blends of gyms and

playgrounds where people of all ages can – and do – exercise. But harmony is not just for the body; it is visual as well.

Pots are not just for convenience in the indoor garden – they

are also decorative. Few other countries can boast such exquisitely designed pots as those found in China. In outdoor community gardens, or in large private gardens, the Chinese also like to decorate with sculptures and beautiful stones.

In a country where space is scarce, lawns are viewed as a luxury. Perhaps that is why gardening tools in China are low-tech: hand shears, shovels, and scissors are enough for most urban Chinese gardeners. While few can afford private lawns, many seem to take great pleasure in them when using residential community gardens.

*"The garden in my residential community is covered with green and is very peaceful and harmonious."*

30-SOMETHING MALE BLOGGER





The harmonious garden is often a public garden, a private garden in China is often portrayed like this by bloggers.

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. The social garden [TREND 6]
2. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]
3. The feel good garden [TREND 3]

## CHINA IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	1338	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	5962	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	14,3	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	10,7	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	N/A	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	0,27	Internetworldstats

*"I have planted some vegetables in my organic garden. I used nourishing fertilizers to plant them. Now they grow well and I feel happy although I need to spend a lot of time on them."*

40-SOMETHING FEMALE BLOGGER

# BRAZIL

## POP-UP GARDENING

IN BRAZIL, NOTHING CAN STOP THE PASSION FOR GARDENING. NO SPACE? SQUEEZE IN A FEW POTS HERE AND THERE AND YOU MAY FIND YOUR WAY TO PARADISE!

**Urban gardening in pots.** In Brazil, a house with a big yard may be a luxury, but that's no excuse for ordinary people not to have a garden. The Brazilian blogosphere intensely discusses urban gardening, container gardening, and indoor gardening. Brazilians do not view lack of space in the garden, or the complete lack of a garden, as an obstacle; they squeeze in whatever they can wherever they have some leftover space at home.

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*"Little space is no excuse; a small place can always be found for fruitful plants, seasonings and aromatic plants at home. Small squares with 20-cm high raised beds in the ground, hanging pots, boxes against the wall and enormous pots for trees, everything is worth it to preserve that farm spirit from childhood."*

BRAZILIAN BLOGGER

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Brazilians gardeners use pots and containers on a large scale, placed outside on the balcony or roof. If no balcony or rooftop is available, the gardeners simply find room by the window. Container gardening even seems to be popular among those lucky Brazilians who have a large yard as they appreciate the easy maintenance and flexibility. The plants are easily moved around and it is fairly inexpensive to give the yard a new look just by changing the pots. Since water is costly, many gardeners put

their creativity to the test by creating a solution for recycling water. The Brazilian gardener experiences twice the benefit: they save money and they help to protect the environment.

### KITCHEN GARDEN

Many Brazilians maintain a kitchen garden even if they live in an apartment. They grow and experiment in their own small organic kitchen gardens in any available space, indoors or out.

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*"...this post is about my resolution to create a vegetable garden in my house. I took courage and planted a mini-vegetable garden on the balcony."*

BRAZILIAN BLOGGER

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Herbs and vegetables are mainly grown for eating. However, beauty is also a factor and the beauty of the vegetable seems to be highly valued. Brazilians seem to prefer to plant in decorative pots and containers that contribute to the aesthetic appeal.

### GARDEN AS PROTECTION AND SECLUSION

Brazilian bloggers with a garden of their own often plan and build living green fences around their houses and gardens. They put up a live fence instead of building a traditional wall. The live fence offers a softer look than the traditional wall. In addition it may be adapted totally to the taste and preferences of its owners.





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*"There are several types of plants that can be used as live fences. Some can be sowed (slower growth rate), while others can be planted. Everything depends on our wishes, preferences and necessities."*

BRAZILIAN BLOGGER

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The fences are designed to create privacy and security, but they may also be used to create semi-secluded spaces in the garden. Gardeners use plants and bushes instead of giving up greenery and flowers when putting up a traditional fence.

## TOP THEMES AMONG GARDENING BLOGGERS

1. Urban farming [TREND 7]
2. Container gardening [TREND 9]
3. Kitchen gardening [TREND 1]

## BRAZIL IN BRIEF

SUBJECT	AMOUNT	SOURCE
Population, millions	199	World Bank
GDP/capita (PPP) (USD)	10,200	World Bank
Gardening and outdoor living market value. Billion USD	4.4	Datamonitor
Gardening and outdoor living spending USD/capita	22	Datamonitor and World Bank
% of total retail	2.2	Datamonitor
Internet penetration 2008 %	34	Internetworldstats

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to find the trends and passions among leading hobby gardeners in 13 countries – the US, Russia, China, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, the UK, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark – and provide a global picture of gardening through the eyes of the most passionate gardeners.

To do so we identified garden bloggers on blog portals, as well as individual blogs. Using a tool for analyzing social media, SoMe Analyzer (see [www.sometracker.com](http://www.sometracker.com)), we automatically analyzed the blogs, searching for typical themes in each country. For a specification of the number of blog posts analyzed in each country by the SoMe Analyzer, see table below.

In addition we have browsed through hundreds of blogs, searching for themes manually. Based on our analysis, we identified some thirty themes and trends. In a questionnaire-based dialogue with garden bloggers, we selected the top ten about which they were most passionate.

In a second round we went back to the blogs to see what those themes and trends were about, how the bloggers described them. We also used sources such as forum discussions, Google trend searches and pictures on Flickr to gain a fuller understanding of each topic and its representation in every country in the study. We also went through a number of reports covering market data on the gardening and outdoor living market.

You are holding the results of this journey in your hand.

*Number of blogposts analyzed by country*

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF BLOGPOSTS ANALYZED BY SOME ANALYZER
Australia*	118.060
Brazil*	110.599
China*	18.742
Denmark**	3.000
France*	60.169
Germany*	118.385
Norway**	8.000
Poland*	57.926
Russia*	168.620
South-Africa <sup>12*</sup>	36.074
Sweden*	46.698
UK*	361.964
USA*	308.107
<b>Total number of blog posts</b>	<b>1.416.344</b>

\* Based on gardening blogs and blogs with other main subject writing about gardening

\*\* Based on only gardening blogs

<sup>12</sup> South Africa analysis based on English language, for further reference see section South Africa

## ABOUT KAIROS FUTURE



This report is produced by Kairos Future, an international research and management consulting firm that helps companies understand and shape their futures. With a unique holistic approach to futures analysis, strategy, and change, we are a leading organization in Europe in our niche. Our head office is located in Stockholm and we have local offices and close collaboration with partners in about 15 markets.

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## APPENDIX

### Market data

Market data in this report comes from Datamonitor reports. Datamonitor is a leading provider of online database and analysis services for key industry sectors.

### Market definition – the gardening and outdoor living market consists of:

Plants, shrubs, and growing media; buildings; tools; utensils; outdoor living.

The *plants, shrubs, and growing media* segment covers bulbs, compost, domestic fertilizer, flowering plants, seeds, shrubs and trees.

*Garden buildings* cover gazebos, greenhouses, pergolas, sheds, and related items such as fencing, paving, etc.

*Garden tools* cover manual and electric tools.

*Garden utensils* cover garden hoses, plant containers, water butts, watering cans, and other similar items like sprayers and automatic watering systems.

*Outdoor living* includes accessories, barbecues, furniture, and ornaments.

Calculation of market value: All market values referred to from Datamonitor are calculated at retail selling price (RSP) according to the source. Any currency conversions used have been calculated using constant annual average 2008 exchange rates.

### GDP and population statistics

The GDP and population data reported is from World Bank data (2008). GDP is purchasing power parity adjusted (PPP). Source: World Development Indicators database, World Bank, 15 September 2009

## ABOUT GARDENA

Gardena is Europe's leading manufacturer of intelligently simple, high-quality gardening equipment. The company is represented in more than 80 countries around the world. Today, the range extends from classical gardening tools to garden irrigation products and systems, from pumps and motorised devices to garden pond products. Gardena GmbH has been part of the Husqvarna Group since March 2007.

[www.gardena.com](http://www.gardena.com)

## ABOUT HUSQVARNA

Husqvarna is the world's largest producer of lawnmowers, chainsaws and portable gas-powered garden equipment such as trimmers and blowers. The Group is also a world leader in diamond tools and cutting equipment for the construction and stone industries. Net sales in 2008 were SEK 32.3 billion and the average number of employees was 15,700.

[www.husqvarna.com](http://www.husqvarna.com)

