

# OFF THE PAGE

Robert and Anna Dalrymple's formal garden in the Scottish countryside is a textbook example of using strong design to create year-round interest

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An aviary sits at the centre of the Upper Courtyard surrounded by *Acer platanoides* 'Globosum' and a chequerboard of setts, grass and blocks of planting, including clipped evergreens and teucrium



In the Walled Garden, the lily pond is surrounded by a billowing willow hedge

**L**ike a well-designed book, the garden at Broadwoodside in East Lothian, 20 miles east of Edinburgh, is shaped with pleasing clarity. Stone margins frame the clipped panels of ivy that clad the walls like white paper around blocks of text on a page; pots are arranged with the careful precision of literary footnotes.

When Robert and Anna Dalrymple bought the property in 1998 it was a collection of mostly derelict buildings set in a sea of mud. Now it is home to a renowned garden, the collaborative effort of three people: Robert, a graphic designer, Anna and gardener Guy Donaldson, who has worked with the couple since 1999. Its layout was largely determined by the footprint of existing buildings and the long, relatively narrow piece of ground that they occupy. 'The planting of this garden was simply an exercise in colouring in,' says Robert.

A pair of sheltered courtyards form the heart of the garden. The Upper Courtyard is divided into a checkerboard of 25 square beds with a central iroko pavilion used as an aviary. The squares are defined by granite setts and filled with cobbles, grass or standard *Acer platanoides* 'Globosum' underplanted with mostly green plants, including clipped box spheres, creeping ground-cover *Pachysandra terminalis* and grassy *Ophiopogon bodinieri*.

Anna sees herself as the 'chaotic influence' in the garden. 'I like to fill the structure with colour using lots of bulbs early in the year, and then annuals and perennials like cosmos and dahlias,' she says. The Lower Courtyard is spacious and flowery, with quartered lawns, trained fruit trees and a large container in the middle brimful with deep-purple *Salvia* 'Amistad' ringed by *Geranium* Rozanne, both flowering well into autumn. Pots of bright blue agapanthus stand to attention in front of a wall surfaced with ivy, and a frothy border of eupatorium

and Japanese anemones is lit from below by terracotta pots filled with white daisies.

As summers can be short and winters long and dark in Scotland, planting needs to work all year round so there are plenty of evergreens. The front door of the farmhouse is framed by symmetrical groups of pots planted with standard bay, sarcococca and *Mahonia* 'Soft Caress', while ferns are allowed to seed into the gravel at the base of the wall. A topiary walk leading west from the kitchen door features Portuguese laurel, yew, box, holly and pyracantha.

The Walled Garden on the east side of the steading has a formal pond fed by rainwater at its centre. Surrounding borders are devoted to growing vegetables, herbs and flowers for cutting. Carrots are grown in a big washing copper and the wooden gate is inset with three green-painted garden forks, a bold, graphic touch that is typical of this garden.

In the wider garden there are avenues of hornbeams, a small orchard, a mini arboretum, paddocks and woodland walks dotted with sculptures. From the damp South Garden, with its monumental washed-up tree trunk and portholes set teasingly into the lawn, there are views across wide arable fields to the Lammermuir Hills.

Playful text features throughout: 'Going to the dogs' is inscribed on the gateposts leading to the dogs' graveyard and the words 'rose', 'bay', 'willow' and 'herb' are carved into individual wooden roundels. There are many salvaged objects, too, including a finial from the old Holyrood Brewery in Edinburgh and flagstones from an Arbroath mill.

It is a place of style and wit. Robert's bold design, Anna's eye for colour and Guy's expertise have combined to make Broadwoodside a serious garden that refuses to take itself too seriously. 📷

■ Broadwoodside, Gifford, East Lothian, EH41 4JQ, broadwoodside.co.uk.



Lollipop-shaped *Acer platanoides* 'Globosum' stand in squares of planting, including clipped box and *Pachysandra terminalis*



The formal pond has been treated with black pond dye to enhance its reflective quality

**GARDEN GUIDE**

**ORIENTATION** A long, narrow plot running east to west divided into smaller areas that face in all directions.

**SOIL TYPE** Heavy clay.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

Enclosed courtyards, a walled garden, topiary, clipped wall plants, sculpture and text.

“WE ENJOY SHARING THIS GARDEN WITH OTHER PEOPLE. WE HAD A FIVE-YEAR-OLD HERE RECENTLY WHO LOVED IT SO MUCH THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE”

**ANNA DALRYMPLE**, garden owner



The path leading to a red-painted gate passes evergreens, including yew, holly and pyracantha



Symmetrical mown paths criss-cross through the grass in the orchard at Broadwoodside