

# AN ENTERTAINER'S GARDEN



The 'Green Egg' outdoor kitchen, featuring cream pavers and granite counter tops

## THE BRIEF

The client wanted to create something special with generous planting and seasonal interest. A new orangery was planned, and the rear garden needed to blend with and become an extension of the new, west-facing structure, providing a relaxing area in front of it, and taking maximum advantage of the evening sun and the garden view.

They wanted an outdoor space to entertain, with a bar, and garden lighting for evening enjoyment. The existing slope needed to be addressed, while incorporating a lawn to be maintained by a robot mower and a water feature.

It was important to retain the mature trees and some existing granite boulders, and they had a wish for pleached trees on the east side, for privacy. To achieve this, unique design features were required.

### Fact File

Project: The Entertainer's Private Resort  
 Designer: Dean Lacey, MGLDA  
 Constructed by: LandArt (owned by Dean Lacey)  
 Location: Stepside, Dublin  
 Area: 200 m<sup>2</sup>

## DESIGN CONCEPT

The concept for the design was to create a space that was a resort-style garden, for entertaining and relaxation. Privacy is key to feeling relaxed in one's own secluded oasis, so the retention of the mature plants and trees was essential, and exposed areas needed thoughtful consideration. In constant view from inside the new orangery, which is glazed on all three sides, the garden design needed to work hard to achieve the aesthetic required and be sympathetic to the architecture of the new building.

Creating multiple features of interest and focal points was essential to bring this concept to life. Working to my clients' brief, I set to create a design that was stylish, welcoming and private, set into the backdrop of the existing, soft woodland planting. As the new orangery was to be constructed to a high standard by talented craftspeople, it was important that hard and soft landscaping materials were chosen to ensure cohesion between the garden and orangery. To realise this concept, I needed to use bespoke and specific design features. With these in place and the concept carefully considered, the result is a special and attractive area, where family and friends can gather, surrounded by lush planting, a statement water feature, custom-built outdoor kitchen area, sleek floating benches and atmospheric lighting.

### ISSUES

When work began, we discovered a significant amount of bedrock granite which had to be removed, but fortunately, this was only in some areas. Bedrock, so close to the surface has caused some issues as time has gone on, mainly within the planted area around the water feature. The soil depth is shallow and during winter, water is slow to drain away, leaving the bed very wet. Modifying plant choices to conditions solves this problem.



View of the rear garden before development



## THE DESIGN

### HARD LANDSCAPING

A soft cream, natural limestone paving was selected to compliment the orangery floor. Bull-nosed, cream limestone was also used for the water feature capping and the wide garden steps. This was sealed to help prevent staining and the 7 mm joints were similarly grouted in a shade of cream.

We built a retaining wall on one side of the property, along the boundary, where the ground is considerably higher. Local Wicklow granite, which has warm tones that complement the limestone paving, was used to face the wall. To deal with the slope in the garden, I split the area into two levels and created two generous steps leading up to the new lawn.

For the custom, 'Green Egg' outdoor kitchen, a very simple structure was created. One side would hold the egg, and the higher side provided space for a worktop. We built the structure, again using granite, and incorporating two bull-nosed Carlow granite worktops. Two benches were designed to 'float' over the billowing planting beneath. These were strategically positioned close to the 'Green Egg' barbeque while enabling enjoyment of the west-facing aspect.

The water feature is the main focal point of the terrace. It spans the length of the orangery and creates a unique view, both from within the orangery and outside in the garden. The soothing

View of  
the rear  
garden post  
construction

The  
water  
feature is  
the main  
focal  
point  
of the  
terrace



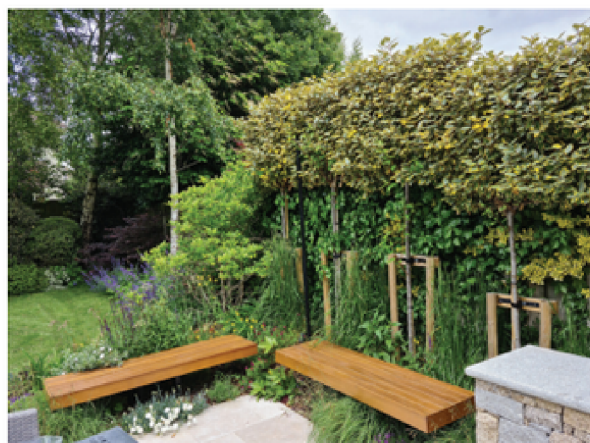
### View to the outdoor kitchen and dining area

sound of water bubbling from the gushers can be heard throughout the garden, and from the orangery when the windows are open. Beyond the water feature, on the far side of the lawn, the low, granite stone seating wall is perfectly centred on the orangery and water feature. Small button lights were installed at its base to light up the granite. The outdoor bar transformed a previously-unused area to the side of the orangery, creating a whole new, fun aspect to the garden.

### SOFT LANDSCAPING

Planting along the north-east facing boundary of this garden consists of shade-tolerant planting. The existing large shrubs, which included three mature mahonias, were retained, but we lifted the crowns on all three plants to create a beautiful,





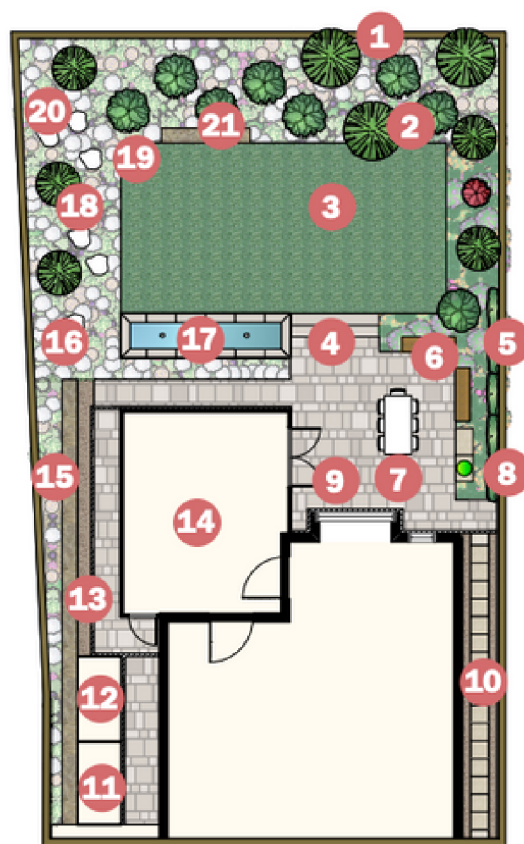
**Floating benches over grasses and perennials, in front of pleached elaeagnus**

parachute shape. This also enabled us to plant underneath them. New planting added to the existing setting included *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Dryopteris wallichiana*, *Helleborus niger*, *Sarcococca hookeriana*, *Viburnum davidii*, *Geranium 'Rozanne'*, *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost', *Hosta 'Halcyon'*, *Anemone x hybrida*, *Vinca minor* and *Pachysandra terminalis*.

In the beds to the rear of the garden, and down the west-facing borders adjacent to the lawn, we again retained all the mature trees and added plants such as *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight', *Astrantia major* 'Roma', *Phlox divaricata*, *Aster ageratoides* 'Starshine', *Oenothera lindheimeri* 'Whirling Butterflies', *Salvia nemerosa*, *Verbena bonariensis* 'Lollipop', *Geranium 'Ballerina'* and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light'.

The beds around the floating benches and patio were planted with *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low', *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna', dianthus, *Sesleria autumnalis*, *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldstrum', *Persicaria affinis*, *Convolvulus cneorum* and lavender.

We supplemented the existing trees in the garden with *Magnolia 'Susan'*, *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer', *Betula utilis* subsp. *jacquemontii* and *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood'. We also planted a line of pleached, variegated elaeagnus trees to add privacy to the patio and to block the view of the adjacent house. ●



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|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Photinia hedging 1800 mm high                            | <b>11</b> Shed  |
| <b>2</b> New and existing trees                                   | <b>12</b> Outdoor bar   |
| <b>3</b> New lawn   | <b>13</b> Pebble edging   |
| <b>4</b> Steps  | <b>14</b> Orangery  |
| <b>5</b> Pleached elaeagnus trees                                 | <b>15</b> Granite retaining wall with uplighters                      |
| <b>6</b> Wooden bench floating over grasses and perennials        | <b>16</b> New planting  |
| <b>7</b> Outdoor dining and lounge area                           | <b>17</b> Raised water feature in limestone with gushers and lighting |
| <b>8</b> Raised stonework plinth with 'Green Egg' outdoor kitchen | <b>18</b> Retained and new planting                                   |
| <b>9</b> Egyptian limestone patio                                 | <b>19</b> Metal lawn edging   |
| <b>10</b> Paving down side passage with pebbles either side       | <b>20</b> Granite boulders  |
|   | <b>21</b> Low granite seating wall                                    |

## Text and photo credits:

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**A cosy, lit-up night view of the garden**