

# Q & A

**GOT A QUESTION?** We've got the answer, whether it's about a plant, a tricky spot or a product you need

**Q** I HAVE LOTS OF POTS in my tiny courtyard garden. How can I squeeze in more?  
*Miranda Clements, Spalding*

In the same way that town planners do, go up! Add trellis or shelves to walls, fill your space with hanging baskets, and create tiered planters. This raised planter is perfect for patios, balconies and tiny courtyard gardens. It's ideal for compact and trailing plants, or parked outside your back door packed with herbs or lettuce. Underneath there's room for more pots or for storing garden bits and bobs. **£89.99** [www.gardenessentials.co.uk](http://www.gardenessentials.co.uk)



**Q** MY FRONT GARDEN IS GRAVELLED over. How can I add some colour with plants?  
*Eileen Smith, Derby*

First check if it is permeable by pouring a bucket of water onto it. The water should soak in straightaway. If it does, this will help your plans as areas of gravel could be scraped away to grow plants and you know they won't become

waterlogged. There may already be a plastic or fabric membrane below to help weed control. If so, you'll have to make a small cross in it, just large enough to insert the plant's rootball. Then re-arrange the gravel around the roots. Deepening the layer of gravel will also discourage weeds. Mediterranean plants like cistus, santolina and herbs like thyme thrive in well-drained soil, even of poor quality.



WORDS: LYNNE MAXWELL PHOTOS: GAP PHOTOS



*Daphne 'Eternal Fragrance' blooms in spring and on and off through summer*

**Q** WHAT SCENTED PLANTS could I use to line a path? Colourful, too, please!  
*Carol Bywater, Tonbridge*

Daphnes are the queens of fragrance, with their intense citrusy aroma. As long as you don't let them dry out in summer, nor get soggy in winter they will look after themselves. They are also robust enough to withstand life at the edge of a busy walkway. Try tolerant *Daphne tangutica*, which flowers from April, sometimes until November. Or, for late winter colour, *Daphne mezereum*, whose pink flowers are followed by red fruit. Mix a few varieties to ensure scent and colour all year round.

Or, for instant edging, line your path with plants in pots, perhaps alternating colours for extra interest. Give patio rose 'Flower Power' a go, or Cheddar Pink, with hot pink flowers, grey leaves and wafts of clove.

**Q** SNAILS AND SLUGS are getting to my pots of salad leaves before I do. Can I stop this without killing them?  
*Frances Laxton, Epping*

First, put your container in a sunny place. Snails and slugs prefer moist damp conditions. You could also plant aromatic herbs, like rosemary and sage, in with the salad leaves as they dislike the strong smell. Or buy copper tape and wrap it around the pot. Copper reacts with their slime, causing an 'electric shock' to halt them in their tracks, Flexi copper tape **£8.99** [www.dobies.co.uk](http://www.dobies.co.uk)



## EASY IDEAS



**CAN A CLIMBING ROSE** be grown in a container?

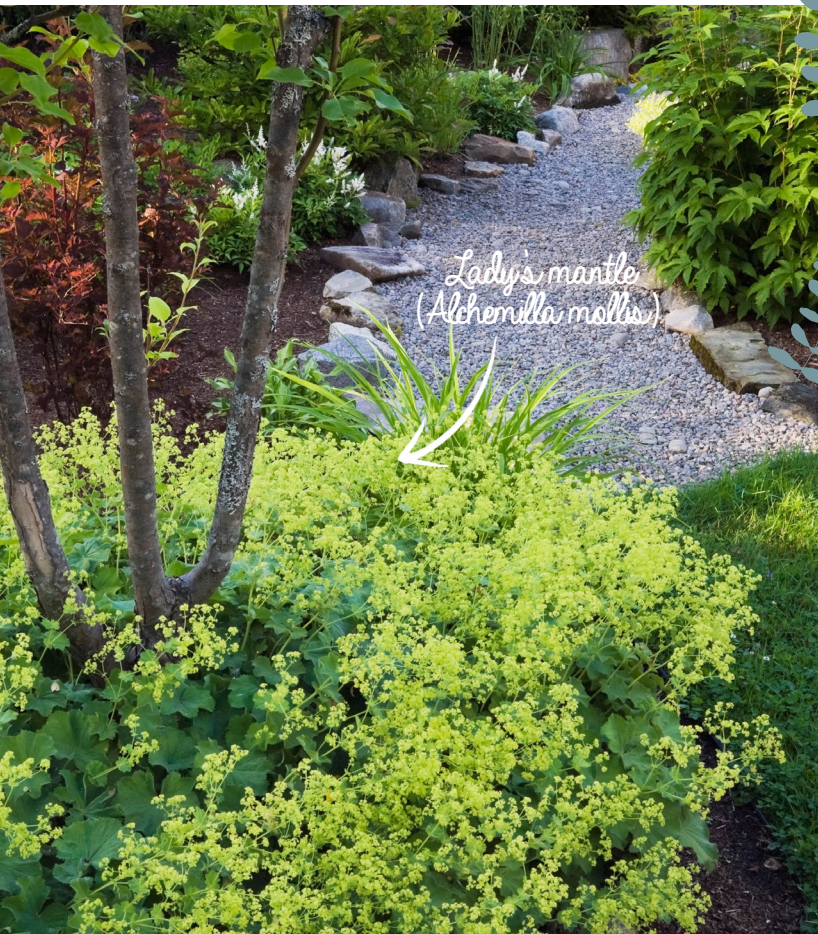
*Lily Roberts, Grantham*

Yes, as long as the pot is large enough. A deep and wide (45-60cm/18-24in) container will allow the root system to develop enough to support the rose as it climbs. You will also need to provide some kind of trellis or

structure within the pot for your rose to grow up.

Use John Innes no. 3 compost, a nutrient-rich mix which suits mature shrubs or plants in outdoor pots.

If your rose grows too eagerly, consider planting it out in the garden, along with a support to climb. It will be better able to look after itself, freeing you to sit back and simply enjoy it.



Lady's mantle  
(*Alchemilla mollis*)



**ONE SIDE OF MY GARDEN IS SHADY** from my neighbour's overhanging branches.

**What can I grow there?**

*Ben Atkin, Liverpool*

Tree canopies create shade and dry conditions, the opposite of what most plants need to survive – light, moisture and nutrients. But there are a few prepared to persevere. Ivy-leaved cyclamen will pop up in autumn, with pastel pinky-white flowers. Stinking iris may not sound attractive but will return year after year, with purplish flowers in summer, followed by orange fruits in autumn. A real winner is Lady's mantle with frothy lime green flowers which are excellent in flower arrangements. It will also self-seed so will pay you back with interest in the form of new plants!



Simple planting areas break up the timber decking, creating a sense of width.

## ASK THE DESIGNER

**OUR GARDEN IS LONG AND VERY NARROW.**

How can we make it more usable without losing all the plants? *Harriet Lawson, Sutton*



*This untidy overgrown space became a usable area to enjoy*



**EMMA LYNE**  
The London  
Gardener

"I was asked to design a garden that was very long and unusually narrow, just like yours, Harriet. It measured only 20m long x 2.7m wide!

"It was very overgrown and both sides seemed to meet in the middle. The client and I decided that the best idea was to deck it with ridged hardwood timber, with a weed-suppressing membrane underneath.

"We left cut-outs for planting which make you walk from one side of the garden to the other, so making it more interesting and seem wider.

"Some strong vertical structure came from tall thin Italian Cypress with lush planting beneath, that will grow and fill the mini borders and soften the hard edges.

Slatted fence tops create privacy and let light through, to reduce the tunnel effect. My client was delighted!"

*Harriet's question was answered by Emma Lyne who runs a design and soft landscaping business in south-west London. [www.thelondongardener.co.uk](http://www.thelondongardener.co.uk)*

**CONTACT** [www.moderngardensmagazine.co.uk](http://www.moderngardensmagazine.co.uk)

*Want some design inspiration or got a garden question you'd like answered? Get in touch, including a picture if you have one, by email at [moderngardens@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:moderngardens@bauermedia.co.uk)*