

SCOTTISH GARDEN DESIGN COMPETITION 2027

SMALL SPACE GARDENS APPLICATION PACK



INTRODUCTION

Our Garden Design Competition is returning to Scone Palace Garden Fair on the 28th, 29th and 30th May 2027. The competition aims to showcase Scotland's horticultural talent, while inspiring visitors with take-home ideas for creating gardens, even in the smallest of spaces.

The competition is **open to anyone** with a love of gardening; from weekend hobbyist to professional gardener, modern social media star to old-school allotmenteer, charities and garden societies, garden designers showcasing their talent, or horticultural students at the start of their career.

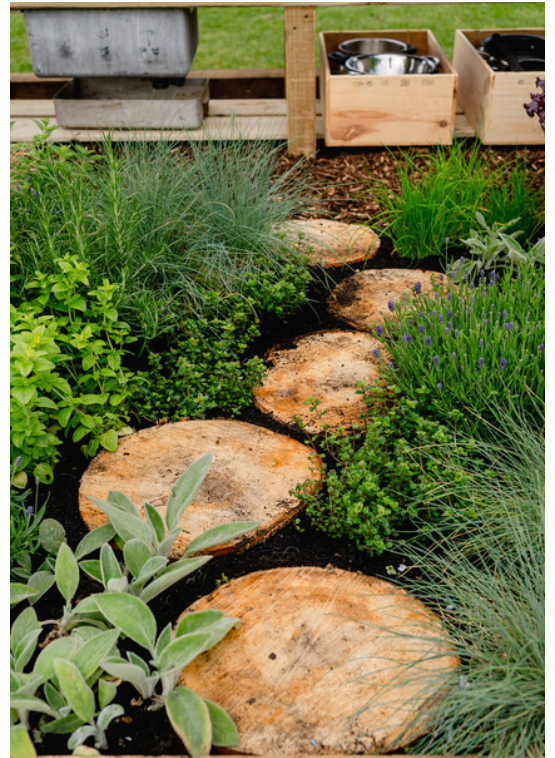


GARDEN DESIGN

The theme of the 2027 Scottish Garden Design Competition is **'Joy'**, which we invite you to interpret through your own creative garden design.

Designers will have the opportunity to showcase their work to a large audience at the Fair with this year's event extended from two to three days, we anticipate an even greater attendance, providing a fantastic opportunity to connect with new followers and customers.

A £300 grant will be provided towards build cost, with designers also encouraged to explore their own sponsorship opportunities. Advice and support will be available throughout the competition to help guide you along the way.



Thinking of taking part?

Join us for a relaxed information evening to learn more about the competition, hear advice from our judges and get some inspiration for your garden.

Wednesday 28th October
7-8pm



PLOT SIZE

The size of the plot open for design will be 2.4m by 2.4m, or 1.2m by 4.8m (inner dimensions of 2.3m x 2.3m and 4.7m x 1.1m), to make it affordable and manageable to as many entrants as possible.

Small-scale garden designs of this size may be seen as more relatable and achievable to the vast majority of attendees at the Scone Palace Garden Fair.

Designers should note all gardens will be able to be viewed from three sides, and should take this into account when creating their design.

On display with each design will be an A3 sized plaque containing the story of the design and information on the designer. This may also include business or sponsorship details.



HOW TO ENTER

Potential designers will be asked to submit one A3 page, a short written story on the ideas behind the design, no more than 500 words, a sketch of how the applicant wishes their planting scheme to look, a list giving **preliminary** planting plans, and a rough cost estimate. Sustainability is very important to Scone Palace so we would also like to know how your garden will be reused or relocated after the fair.

Please include your full name, location, and garden name on your entry.

The closing date for entries is **Friday 8th January 2027 at noon** when a panel of judges will choose the successful garden design that will go on to be created for the show at this year's Scone Palace Garden Fair. Successful designers will be notified the following week.



JUDGING & AWARDS

On the morning of Friday 28th May, the judging panel shall access each design. Each garden shall be awarded a “Scone Palace Garden Fair Medal” of either Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver or Bronze.

Designers will not be permitted in the area when judging is taking place. Afterwards, they may receive feedback on their garden and the medal they were awarded.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The judges will assess the gardens on the following criteria. Not all criteria will apply to each design:

CRITERION 1 - REALISATION OF THE COMPETITION THEME OF ‘JOY’

Excellent (4 points)	The garden clearly and obviously realises the theme in multiple ways
Very Good (3 points)	The garden recognises the theme without further explanation
Good (2 points)	The theme can be understood but may need further explanation
Fair (1 point)	The theme may be part recognised but elements missed
Poor (0 points)	It's not clear or obvious how the theme appears in the garden



JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERION 2 - WOW! FACTOR

Excellent (4 points)	An eye-catching garden with creativity and imagination at a high level
Very Good (3 points)	An exciting garden made with care and thought
Good (2 points)	An original garden but lacks features or finer detail
Fair (1 point)	The garden fails to demand attention lacking in creativity
Poor (0 points)	Fails to make that positive impact to the audience

CRITERION 3 - LAYOUT: THE 2D ELEMENT OF YOUR DESIGN

Excellent (4 points)	Demonstrates advanced skills from the designer in scale, proportion, comfort and design
Very Good (3 points)	Visually shows a balanced garden and good level of designer skills and knowledge
Good (2 points)	Some aspects may compete with each other making the garden difficult to understand
Fair (1 point)	Elements make the garden seem confusing or lack unity
Poor (0 points)	A poor understanding of garden design has been demonstrated



JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERION 4 - STRUCTURE: THE 3D ELEMENT OF YOUR DESIGN

Excellent (4 points)	Demonstrates advanced skills from the designer in scale, proportion, comfort and design
Very Good (3 points)	Visually shows a balanced garden and good level of designer skills and knowledge
Good (2 points)	Some aspects may compete with each other making the garden difficult to understand
Fair (1 point)	Elements make the garden seem confusing or lack unity
Poor (0 points)	A poor understanding of garden design has been demonstrated

CRITERION 5 - QUALITY OF ARTEFACTS AND HARD LANDSCAPING

Excellent (4 points)	High levels of craftsmanship demonstrated with no faults that would take away from the final finish of the garden
Very Good (3 points)	Very good construction skills shown but with two minor faults noted that reflect in the final finish of the garden
Good (2 points)	A good quality of build with three or more minor faults that reflect the final finish of the garden
Fair (1 point)	Inconsistent build quality featuring minor and notable faults that affect the final appearance of the garden
Poor (0 points)	Substandard build quality that would affect the function of the garden



JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERION 6 - PLANTING DESIGN

Excellent (4 points)	An inspiring use of plants and design with a good use of plant textures and colours
Very Good (3 points)	A largely excellent planting design with a few minor areas where improvements could be made
Good (2 points)	A good planting design with three or more minor issues that take away from the final enjoyment of the garden
Fair (1 point)	A satisfactory use of plants but with noticeable issues that affect the final enjoyment of the garden
Poor (0 points)	Overall a weak use of plants with noticeable errors in the design

CRITERION 7 - PLANTING ASSOCIATIONS

Excellent (4 points)	An excellent example of plants that would live and survive with each other
Very Good (3 points)	Very good planting associations but with two minor inaccuracies in plant selections
Good (2 points)	Good selection of plants but with three or more inaccuracies
Fair (1 point)	Weak planting associations that horticulturally would not work together with each other
Poor (0 points)	A poor planting scheme using plants that would not live or survive with each other



JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERION 8 - PLANT QUALITY, HEALTH, AND DENSITY

Excellent (4 points)	Excellent plant quality of good health, planted at the appropriate spacing
Very Good (3 points)	Although featuring two noticeable errors this is largely a very good quality of plants and health, planted at the appropriate spacing
Good (2 points)	Good plant quality but undersized or with some imperfections. Planting density slightly inappropriate (four issues)
Fair (1 point)	Undersized and/ or unhealthy plants. Planting density inappropriate.
Poor (0 points)	Poor plants showing obvious damage, diseases, or evidence of neglect. Planting density inappropriate



WHY TAKE PART

Hear from previous competitors about their experience of bringing their garden designs to life at Scone Palace Garden Fair.



‘The Small Space Garden Design Competition is outstanding. The Scone Palace team, finalists, and judges are all incredibly friendly, supportive and generous in providing feedback and inspiration. The real highlight is bringing your design to life within the grounds of Scone Palace and sharing it with all garden lovers who visit. Rewarding, inspiring and uplifting.’

THE THURSDAYS GARDENING CLUB

WHY TAKE PART

I have taken part in the Scottish Garden Design Competition for three years, creating my own gardens in 2024 and 2025 and helping a friend in 2026. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience. There is something magical about seeing an idea become a reality, and I have loved sharing my designs with visitors and hearing how they have inspired others.

It is creative, exciting and great fun though sometimes exhausting! If you love gardening and have an idea you'd like to bring to life, I would definitely encourage you to give it a go.

OLGA RUNCIE



I entered the inaugural Garden Design Competition in 2022 with my Urban Sensory Retreat garden.

As my first ever show garden, winning was an incredible surprise. The support and encouragement from the Scone Palace team gave me the confidence to take the next steps in my horticultural career. Since then, I have designed gardens for private clients, contributed to podcasts and TV, joined the Caley Council, and become Head Gardener at Floors Castle Walled Gardens. Winning at Scone genuinely changed my life, and I would encourage anyone with an idea to enter - if I can win, you can too!

KATE MCCLOREY



POINTS TO NOTE

1. Successful designers will be given access to the event site on Wednesday 26th May to start the design build from 8am till 8pm.
2. Any deliveries made directly to the site must be signed for by the exhibitor.
3. Scone Palace asks all exhibitors and designers to ensure that all plant materials have been grown and sourced responsibly and arrive with a clean bill of health for biosecurity. If required, plants may be removed at the discretion of Scone Estates.
4. The 2.4m x 2.4m, or 1.2m x 4.8m, wooden frame will be in place on arrival at 200mm in depth (inner dimensions of 2.3m x 2.3m and 4.7m x 1.1m). Height can be increased in the design proposal, any such works carried out by yourself and your team.
5. A layer of hessian will be laid to protect the grass. Ground excavation will not be possible without advanced permission.
6. No plants may be sold from the garden during the show, but plants may be sold from 4pm on Sunday 30th May.
7. The build must be fully cleared by Monday 1st June.
8. Scone Palace will provide access to water, however we are unable to provide access to electricity for your final garden or during it's build.
9. If you are needing accomodation during the even let us know and we can make local recommendations.

SUBMISSION

Designs should be submitted by 12 noon on Friday 8th January by email to sconeplacegardenfair@scone-palace.co.uk.

Successful designers will be notified during the week beginning Monday 11th January.



Good Luck! We look forward to welcoming you and your creativity at the 2027 Scone Palace Garden Fair.

