



Conversations With... *Wojciech Perz*

Green Point Garden Design

Wojciech Perz from Bristol based Green Point Garden Design talks to us about his journey into garden design, his love of creating gardens as an extension of his client's homes and blending nature with man-made structural forms.

What factors would influence your decision to include sculptural forms as part of a design?

The choice to incorporate sculptural elements into a garden is influenced by various factors, such as the client's personality, the property's style, the surrounding environment, and the intended use of the area. I believe that sculptures should not merely be added to occupy space; they must serve a purpose and enhance the overall design.

I also take into account the garden's scale and proportions. Sometimes, a sculptural piece can serve as a striking focal point, direct views throughout the area, or provide visual interest during the winter months when plants are less vibrant. In other gardens, the plants themselves can offer sculptural qualities through thoughtfully chosen trees, shrubs or topiary.

In the end, my main goal is to design a harmonious and functional garden. If a sculptural form adds to the design and aligns with the client's preferences, I will gladly include it. However, it should always feel like a natural part of the layout and planting, rather than something that was added later.

"I vividly recall observing those flowers bloom and how the small corner transformed the whole garden's atmosphere"



What inspired you to pursue garden design as a career?

Wow, that's a long story! My journey into garden design began during my childhood. Growing up in a small village in western Poland, I noticed that nearly every household had a garden. Back then, particularly under the communist regime, gardens primarily served practical purposes, mainly for cultivating edible crops. From a young age, I've participated (or been forced) into gardening by assisting my family in growing vegetables and fruits, which were essential to our daily lives.

Yet, there was one small aspect that had a much greater impact on me. My mother always maintained a special corner in the garden dedicated to sowing and nurturing ornamental plants. I vividly recall observing those flowers bloom and how the small corner transformed the whole garden's atmosphere. That was likely the first time I realised that a garden could be more than just productive - it could also be a space of beauty, emotion and joy.

Following the fall of communism in 1989, gardens in Poland began to evolve. With more food becoming accessible in stores, many people shifted away from strictly productive gardens, incorporating lawns and ornamental plants instead. Gardens transformed into areas where individuals could sit, unwind, and enjoy the outdoors, rather than just spaces for food cultivation.

This transformation, combined with my early experiences in my family's garden, motivated me to pursue a career in horticulture and garden design. I studied at a technical college that focused on plant production and later advanced my education at the University of Life Sciences in Poznań, Poland, where I earned my Master's degree in horticulture. Looking back, it's amusing to think that my design journey began during communism, sparked by a tiny seed, seeded by my mother—and that seed has continued to flourish

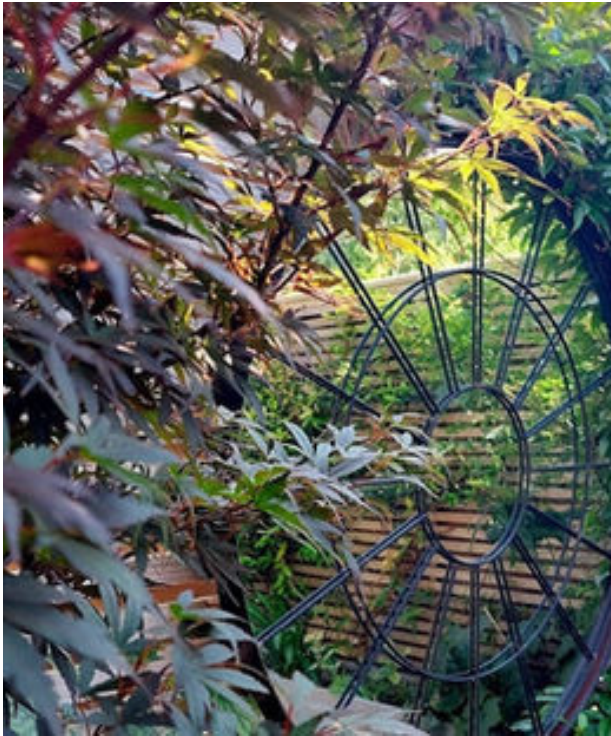


What is your philosophy regarding gardens/outdoor spaces being an extension of a home?

I truly believe that a garden ought to be a natural extension of the home. The flow between indoor and outdoor areas should be smooth, fostering a sense of continuity instead of division. In my garden designs, I always take into account how my clients live and interact with their home. The garden should enhance their lifestyle, whether it's by providing areas for entertaining, unwinding, dining, gardening, or allowing children to play. The design, materials, colors, and plant selections should harmonise with the house's character while creating welcoming outdoor "rooms" that invite people to enjoy the outdoors more. A thoughtfully designed garden not only beautifies a property but also increases the living space. It should feel like an additional room in the home—one that evolves with the seasons, connects individuals with nature, and enhances their overall quality of life.

“A thoughtfully designed garden not only beautifies a property but also increases the living space”





How do you balance structure, planting and focal points within a design?

I think a thriving garden is the result of harmonising structure, planting, and focal points so that they complement each other instead of clashing.

I always start with the layout, as it lays the groundwork and sets the stage for the entire garden. A well-thought-out layout guarantees that the area is functional, easy to navigate, and pleasant to experience. After establishing the structure, I focus on the planting to soften the hardscapes, introduce seasonal variety, promote biodiversity and enhance the ambiance.

Next, I carefully incorporate focal points to direct the viewer's gaze and provide the garden with a sense of purpose and flow. These could be a standout tree, a piece of art, a water feature, or even a beautifully framed view. I find that focal points are most impactful when they feel organically integrated into the overall design rather than overpowering the space.

In the end, my aim is to design gardens where the structure offers organisation, the planting infuses life and dynamism, and the focal points contribute personality, creating a space that is both stunning and functional for my clients.

"I find that focal points are most impactful when they feel organically integrated into the overall design rather than overpowering the space"



Are there any gardens, landscapes or places that have influenced the way you think about creating atmosphere in outdoor spaces?

Yes, I have been inspired by many landscapes and places, especially the European countryside. I think there is something very special about the way nature and human-made elements exist together. Even a neglected bench that has gradually been taken over by plants can create a memorable scene. Those are often the places we remember because they feel so natural, authentic and full of character.

I also find beauty in simple details, such as an old, bent tree growing beside a pond. It may not be perfect, but it tells a story and reminds us that nature doesn't need to be symmetrical or highly controlled to be beautiful. These natural elements have influenced the way I think about creating atmosphere in gardens.

Another important influence has been Dutch gardens. Many of them are relatively small, yet they demonstrate that size is never a limitation to good design. They have opened my eyes to what is possible in outdoor spaces, showing how thoughtful layouts, clever use of planting, and strong design principles can transform even the smallest garden into a beautiful and functional place.

Rather than copying a particular garden, I take inspiration from these experiences and use them to create outdoor spaces that feel natural, welcoming, and personal to each client.

"I think there is something very special about the way nature and human-made elements exist together."



What do you think makes a garden memorable?

I think a garden that leaves a lasting impression is one that fosters an emotional bond with its users. While stunning plants and top-notch materials play a role, what truly sticks in people's minds is the feeling the garden evokes.

In my view, a garden that stands out has a distinct sense of place and mirrors the character and lifestyle of its owners. It features a well-defined layout, intentional planting, and thoughtfully placed focal points, while also providing moments of surprise and exploration. This might include a beautifully framed vista, a unique tree, the soothing sound of water, vibrant seasonal colors, or the way light shifts throughout the day.

Moreover, a memorable garden is designed to be practical and inviting. When a space is functional and encourages people to enjoy the outdoors, it transforms into a part of their daily lives rather than merely a visual attraction.

In the end, I believe the most remarkable gardens blend excellent design, nature, and personal significance. They evolve with the changing seasons and grow more beautiful and meaningful as the years go by.

*“In my view, a garden that stands out has a distinct sense of place
and mirrors the character and lifestyle of its owners”*



How do you hope people feel when they spend time in one of your gardens?

I hope people feel relaxed, comfortable, and connected to nature when they spend time in one of my gardens. For me, a garden should be more than just a beautiful space - it should be somewhere people want to spend time, whether that's enjoying a quiet morning coffee, entertaining family and friends, or simply taking a moment to slow down.

I also hope they feel that the garden belongs to them. Every design is created around the client's lifestyle and personality, so it should feel personal rather than something that has been copied from a magazine.

In my view, a garden that stands out has a distinct sense of place and mirrors the character and lifestyle of its owners. I love spaces where planting softens the hard landscaping and where nature is allowed to express itself. Just like the places that inspire me in the countryside, I want my gardens to feel as though they have always belonged there.

Ultimately, I hope that every time my clients step into their garden, they feel a sense of happiness, peace, and pride. If they choose to spend more time outdoors because of the space I've created, then I know I've achieved my goal.

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