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Gardening club



with DAVID DOMONEY

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Your countdown to Christmas flowers

» How do I can get amaryllis bulbs to flower in time for Christmas? **Sheryl, via email DAVID:** Plant at the end of September or early October in a pot just big enough to contain their roots. Leave the top third of the bulb uncovered and water thoroughly. Mimic winter by putting in a dark spot for two weeks. When a shoot emerges, create an artificial spring by bringing into a bright, warm place. In six to eight weeks, it should flower.



Perfect home for the mother in law

» I love the new trend for terrariums and want to make my own. Which plants work well? **Marilyn W, London DAVID:** Mind your own business, mother-in-law's tongue, spiderwort and widow's thrill are unfussy and perfect for planting together. They love bright, indirect light and well-drained soil. Do not overwater as terrariums don't have drainage holes and none of these plants enjoy having soggy roots.

TIP of the week

Use leftover boiling water from your cuppa to zap weeds growing in cracks on the patio. This is especially effective for young weeds, since boiling water will also get down to the roots and kill them.

GET IN TOUCH

For loads more hints and tips on gardening visit daviddomoney.com or follow me on Facebook at @DavidDomoneyTV or on Twitter @daviddomoney



Top marks to these inspiring schools, whose gardens won our fab Cultivation Street competition

Parents can rest easy. I've found a magic potion that can boost a child's self-esteem, brain power, concentration levels and physical and mental health. There really is such a thing. Only it's not a magic potion – it's gardening. Recognising its value, schools are kick-starting gardening projects to teach children how to propagate plants, support wildlife, grow their own food and compost waste.

Every year, my Cultivation Street competition seeks to reward those having the biggest impact. This year, the three winners and four runners up are sharing £5,200 and 700 Calliope geraniums from our main sponsor. **FIRST PLACE: Hammersmith Academy, West London** Starting off with a single greenhouse and handful of raised beds in 2015, the team at Hammersmith have changed the face of their garden and increased engagement from 30 to 500 students. It features an orchard planted by the children, large growing areas for produce and pollinator-friendly flowers. It even has a brood of chickens looked after by students.

Recycled materials have been turned into planters, while bug hotels and container ponds attract wildlife.

Patrick Kirwan, who heads up the project, said: "Our students run our school garden – this is their project. The garden is a conduit for teaching them about nature, promoting mental health and fostering community."

JUDGES' VERDICT Hammersmith Academy is a multicultural secondary that has transformed a neglected area into a productive garden.

Everything is tended by the pupils, many of whom are from deprived backgrounds and unable to garden at home. We loved how much the older students had ownership of the garden.

On learning they had won £2,500 and 100 Calliope® geraniums, teacher Harriet Silcocks said: "We are so delighted. It means we can extend the garden and get more students involved, boosting mental health and well-being. I'm absolutely thrilled."

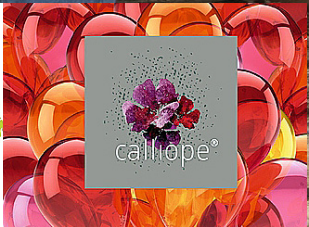
SECOND PLACE: Damers First School, Dorchester, Dorset

This thriving garden was created in one year. The result of a cross-section



WINNERS

ACE OF SPADES Team at Hammersmith Academy celebrate their success



Here are some tips from our winners on running a school garden.

1. Start small. A few pots or small plot is all you need to get started and will ensure you're not overwhelmed.
2. Give the kids ownership. Let them make decisions about design and planting schemes and task them with maintaining their own patch.
3. Ask for donations of spare tools, pots, plants and compost to support your garden for free.
4. Ask parents, community members and businesses for help by having a weekend gardening morning or a volunteering day.
5. Make your own compost out of

children get out gardening in all weathers and get benefits year-round. The school composts all its food waste so the garden is eco-friendly. They won £1,500 and 100 Calliope® geraniums.

THIRD PLACE: Green Lane Primary School and Nursery, South London

This beautiful garden was created by staff, students, parents and local construction workers. It features a wildlife pond, allot-

10 ways to help children grow

1. all the food waste from the school kitchen. It's free, eco-friendly and marvellous for the plants!
2. Use it to support core learning – have kids work out what percentage of seeds germinated as hands-on maths or track the lifecycles of frogs in a pond for science.
3. Designate a passionate individual to be the driving force to

engage staff and children and ensure it keeps moving ahead.

8. Choose plants for maximum impact. Grow tactile plants such as furry lamb's ear, tasty ones like chocolate mint plant or strawberries, and easy, heavy-fruiting ones, like courgettes and raspberries, to get children enthusiastic.
9. Take photos of your journey. Kids can look back on last year and see what a difference they've made.
10. Join programmes aimed at supporting school gardening projects, such as Cultivation Street. The practical advice will help your garden on your journey.

ment, polytunnels, chicken coop and woodland area for forest school sessions. The garden is used creatively to support work in core subjects and children are eating a greater range of vegetables because they've been involved in the growing process.

Teacher Alison Reed said: "We have plans to enhance the area to enable more children to benefit.

"Our prize money will help us to

turn the designs we have drawn up into a reality."

JUDGES' VERDICT We were delighted to see a school garden whose reach extends outside of school hours. Open during the six-week summer holiday, we thought it showed real dedication. Worthy winners of £1,000 and 100 Calliope® geraniums.

The four runners up, who will each receive £500 and 100 Calliope® geraniums, are:

Goldthorpe Primary School, Rotherham, Yorkshire, whose practice of offering a garden-grown snack to kids at break time wowed the judges.

The Clare School, Norwich, Norfolk, who went out of their way to get disabled students gardening.

Northgate High School, Dereham, Norfolk, with its garden devoted to raising awareness of dementia.

Chaucer Junior School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, whose moveable pot plants make the garden design flexible.

■ Next week, we will announce the overall winner from our community gardens regional categories.

OFFER of the week

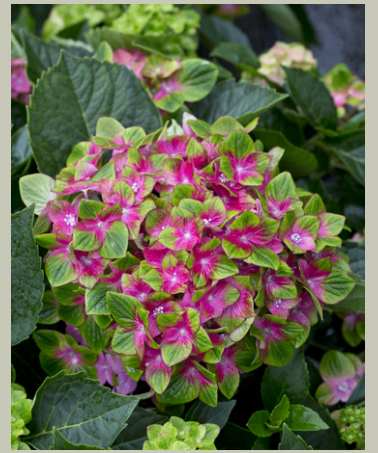
Stunning Hydrangea Rock Chick is a premium hardy patio plant that is guaranteed to add glamour to any sized garden.

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GADGET



» The Store-it-Out Max unit is the perfect protection against autumn rain, damp and snow.

It is ideal for storing tools, summer pots and other garden equipment away from all the bad weather that is to come.

Alternately, it will fit two 240 litre wheelie bins inside and stop them being an eyesore or attracting unwanted wildlife.

It is totally durable and weather proof, low maintenance and easy to put together. I found a unit for £119.99 at argos.co.uk