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# SPACE ACE GARDENS

The Winners

in association with Volkswagen Golf Plus



MAYOR OF LONDON

**CANADA**  
The land where dreams are realised

Last May we asked you to take up the Clever Use of Space Garden Challenge, and more than 500 of you responded magnificently. Here we find out what our panel of expert judges were looking for, and take a look at the three winning designs

**Most Innovative**

Paul Titcombe, 42, impressed the judges so much with his brilliant idea for a solar-panel parasol, bold planting scheme, year-round colour and contemporary-style seating that they awarded him the Best in Show prize, too.

**Paul Titcombe**



**Best Edible**

Shula Roscoe, 46, is passionate about growing vegetables and feels that gardening is an expression of art. It's no surprise, then, that her colourful, romantic Moroccan courtyard-style vegetable garden swept the judges off their feet.

**Shula Roscoe**



**Best Vertical**

Nina Platt, 37, was reaching for the stars with her split-level sun deck and garden grotto underneath. The judges loved the way she achieved a garden on two levels but kept them light and airy with clever use of steel mesh and restrained planting.

**Nina Platt**



IT IS not easy to design a garden in the footprint of the Volkswagen Golf Plus – just 420cm by 176cm – yet more than 500 of you managed to do so quite brilliantly.

Now the winners have been selected for the three categories – Best Vertical, Most Innovative and Best Edible – and the overall Best-in-Show design will be on display at next year's BBC Gardeners' World Live show.

The brief was to design gardens which would fit into the 2m x 4m Golf Plus footprint and reflect its clever use of storage space and flexible seat arrangements.

And choosing the winners proved just as much of a challenge for the four judges.

"I was really very impressed by the amount of effort people had put into their designs,"

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said Claudine Beaumont, The Daily Telegraph's deputy gardening editor. "Nobody had just scribbled it down on a bit of paper. It was evident a lot of thought and creativity had gone into them.

"Some people had drawn very impressive scale models on elevated drawing paper and others had even made 3-D models.

"We asked people to include mood boards as well and you could really see the train of thought they had gone through to get to their final design."

Louise Jackson, RHS show manager for BBC Gardeners' World Live show, added: "There were some absolutely fantastic entries. The presentation skills were amazing, the inventiveness was really good, but the overall winners were the ones who had really thought about the size of the garden.

"They had really put their heads around the space that was involved."

"To put together a plan takes an awful lot of thinking time as well as putting it on paper. I was really humbled by the thought that people would spend that amount of time to get their design into a show.

"I would really like some of them to be scaled up into larger designs, and many would merit a place in the show in their own right."

Thinking the design through was the key to success, according to David Hurrion, of BBC Gardeners' World magazine: "If people had paced out the area in their garden, they might have better understood the size of space they were dealing with," he said.

"One person did send us photographs of how he had mocked up the space in his garden using canes and string. Others submitted notes on what they had done and how they had gone about it. There were a lot of mood boards - images from the internet or cut out of magazines. Some sent textural boards with little bits of slate stuck to card etc, so you got an idea of colours.

"The brief only asked them to provide the plan to a certain dimension.

"We didn't want to be swayed by a professional approach, but the people who had spent the time on producing a style sheet and background sheet - or had drawn up a detailed and well-thought out plan - had the best ideas because they had processed their ideas.

"Some people hadn't thought it through. Their designs were too cluttered, had too many elements or didn't have a strong theme.

"It holds true more in a small area that the design has to have a strong theme with integrity or it doesn't hold together as a design."

Claudine Beaumont added: "A lot of people had tried to put too much into it, such as cascading water features then a separate area to do other things, without any appreciation of how you would navigate around this space. Their ideas were good but not in such a small space.

"But we were so impressed with the standard of entries. I think a lot of them would have worked perfectly well."

The competition has been so successful that Catherine Woolfe, marketing communications manager for Volkswagen and also one of the judges, said the company may run something similar next year. "It was a bit of a shot-in-the-dark for us in terms of capturing the public's imagination, but it really did and I was overwhelmed by the amount of thought people put into it.

"The fact that we had so many entries was quite overwhelming, because it really tapped a nerve of interest among people.

"I assumed people would just do a little design, but there had obviously been an incredible amount of thought put in.

"I was worried it would be all garden designers, and there was an element of that, but there was an equal number of enthusiastic amateurs who got carried away with the whole idea.

"Regardless of how good or bad the designs were, people had really, really tried and you wanted to have a special prize for most thought or effort put into a design. It shows the amount of enthusiasm there is for gardening."

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