

Q&A

with Tanya Visser

FROM THE GARDENER

1 HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN DOING THE SHOW 'THE GARDENER'?

The Home Channel was running a gardening series that was particularly boring – eventually I phoned the Channel's executive producer and told her I was tired of watching such a terrible gardening programme. I suggested that the Channel could surely source better material and she turned the tables on me, suggesting that I come for a screen test and if I passed muster she would make a plan. I did, and she did, and we've just finished filming the fifth series.

2 WHAT IS THE CONCEPT OF THE SHOW 'THE GARDENER' AND WHAT CAN IT OFFER THE VIEWER?

It's practical, realistic and enjoyable and aims to educate and entertain, particularly beginner gardeners, and to show how enjoyable and satisfying it can be to be a gardener.

3 HOW DO YOU KEEP THE SHOW FRESH AND INTERESTING?

There's always something new and interesting happening in a garden, and in the gardening world, so it's not difficult to come up with different ideas.

4 WHAT ARE IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN PLANNING A NEW GARDEN?

Remember to draw your inspiration from the two best sources available: The Gardener magazine and The Gardener TV Show... You are sure not to set a foot wrong and you'll end up with a HOT garden!

5 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO USE INDIGENOUS PLANTS IN A GARDEN?

Plants that have their origins in our country and even better, plants that have their origins in the area in which you garden (called endemic), are adapted to the prevailing conditions and have a part to play in the biodiversity of the area. They provide food and shelter for insects, birds



and small creatures and are in turn controlled by those creatures so that they don't become invasive. Generally they tend to require less water than plants that originated in wetter countries. Of course, having said all that, I'm not a rabid purist... there's always place in a garden for some exotics too.

6 HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES HAD AN IMPACT ON THE WAY PEOPLE ARE PLANNING THEIR GARDENS?

Yes, definitely, people are being more careful with water, they are avoiding plants that are classed as invasive and they are including far more indigenous plants in their designs.

7 DESCRIBE YOUR PERFECT GARDEN.

That's easy! Dairmuid Gavin crossed with Alan Titchmarsh, in my back yard. Oh, sorry, that's my perfect gardener! The perfect garden would be whatever that gardener comes up with in my yard.



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