



# Green

By Anne McKeon

# Fingers



Cover buildings with climbers such as Pyracantha Orange Glow

Have you ever found that the words of certain songs seem to embed themselves in your mind once you've heard them on the radio or on the television? You, like me, have probably found yourself humming or singing those words at the most inopportune times. Such has been my experience of late and so when searching for a subject for my contribution to this issue of the magazine I did not have to look very far. I want to tell you this month about how as the song suggests, you can *accentuate the positive* and *eliminate the negative* features in your garden.

There are many structures within the environs of our garden that annoy us and call out to be hidden. The first such structure is the *garden wall*.

Block walls in particular can offend our eyes. The most obvious way of covering a grey block wall is to train climbing plants against it. Climbing plants worth considering would be *Lonicera Halliana*, *Clematis montana* *Tetrapetala*, *Rosa Sanders White* and so on. Though this method does in effect work it can also be quite boring. Climbers just convert a grey wall to a green wall. For many gardeners, dressing the wall with climbers is more than sufficient but if you want to be a little more adventurous consider cladding the walls with timber slats or with bamboo fencing or similar.



Soft foliage such as Montbretia takes the cold look off fencing

Shrubs could be planted in front of walls and fences in order to take the 'flat look' from these surfaces. Walls could be painted in colours that would compliment the colours in your kitchen or conservatory. By this I mean that the wall colouring in the conservatory could be carried outdoors to the walls by the patio or around the perimeter of the garden. Painted shelving could be fixed to the wall and small planted pots placed on the shelves in order to create a outdoor 'bookcase' effect. Planted boxes and baskets could be fixed to the wall using brackets. If you really want to be different you could mount a mirror on the wall. Plants reflecting in the mirror will add depth to the wall.

Besides walls there are many other structures that need to be camouflaged. Avoid the traditional method of hiding the septic tank by growing *Cotoneaster*



Planted containers and borders add character to buildings

*horizontalis* ground cover plants around it. This is such an obvious ploy, almost like a public announcement. Consider a rockery over the tank or possibly a raised bed or a kidney shaped shrubbery. Avoid rectangular shaped beds as these only accentuate the negative, the exact opposite to what is required. Believe it or not, even your septic tank has its good points. Always concentrate on the positive aspects of your garden.



Close a bad gap in a hedgerow by using an old doorway suddenly the scene is transformed



A climbing rose on an obelisk can add something to an otherwise boring grass path

Hide *washing line poles* and similar such uprights by using climbers supported on wires or on trellising. Also consider constructing obelisks around these poles. Obelisks can take the form of wooden or metal structures resembling a pyramid in shape. Train climbers onto these.

Dead trees can be regarded as eyesores in the garden however rather than removing dead trees consider maintaining the tree skeletons as supports for climbing plants. A dead tree can look very 'classy' if draped in a blanket of honeysuckles and rambling roses.

Though we live in a countryside strewn with rocks many people do not appreciate such natural decor. They may enjoy the rocky countryside but they do not value it within the confines of their own garden. Those who love rocks will highlight the outcrops in their garden, plant strategically in order to draw attention to these features will create rockeries, form stonewalls and so on. In short they will enhance and *accentuate the positive* features. Those who are not lucky enough to own rocks of their own may import them into their site in order to add character to it. On the other-hand gardeners that do not like the rugged look will plant to hide such features and will remove the offending rocks where possible. There is no right and wrong when it comes to such matters. Design is a matter of taste and 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'.



Pyracantha Orange Glow adds a class & colour to a concrete wall

I hope that I have been of some assistance to you this month in finding imaginative ways to deal with walls etc in your garden. I also hope that I can now forget the words of that song mentioned at the head of this article and concentrate instead on my gardening.

Happy Gardening!  
Anne.

## Planting Climbing Plants

When planting climbers it is important to plant them at an angle with the roots away from the base of the wall. Roots that come into contact with concrete foundations or with the base of walls tend to dry out much quicker than those planted at an angle.

Many climbers will require the support of trellises or horizontal wires. Self-clinging climbers should be taped to the wall initially until they cling of their own accord.

Feed climbing plants in April and August with a general Tree and Shrub fertiliser.

In times of drought be vigilant with regard to watering.

## Climbing Outdoor Plants

**Parthenocissus Veitchii** - self clinging with leaves turning bright red in Autumn. Can grow to 20m/66ft.

**Hedera 'Gold Heart'** - evergreen Ivy with a yellow centre. Very useful for adding colour during the winter months to dark walls. Also used as a ground cover.

**Hydrangea Petiolaris** - self clinging climber ideal for a North facing wall. Large white flower heads appear in June.

**Jasminum Officinale** - the common white Jasmine. Ideal for climbing onto a tree or over a pergola. Has white scented flowers between July and September. Likes a warm sunny site.

**Lonicera 'Halliana'** - fast growing Evergreen Honeysuckle climber with perfumed yellow flowers in summer. Needs some support.

**Lonicera 'Belgica'** - an early flowering variety of Honeysuckle, flowering from May to October. Deciduous. Grows to about 15ft.

**Clematis Montana Tetarose** - deep pink flowers which flower early in the season. Needs support. Deciduous.

**Clematis The President** - Purple flowers appearing in early summer. Needs support. Deciduous.

**Rosa Albertine** - Good for rambling up old trees and walls. Pale pink flowers. Heavily scented but blooms are destroyed by heavy rains.

**Rosa Zepherine Drouhin** - Thornless climber/tall bush. Carmine pink flowers. Very fragrant.



A simple touch such as a pot strategically placed can lighten up a dull area

## Garden Checklist

- ✓ Deadhead summer bedding plants to extend flowering time.
- ✓ Continue sowing peas and beans.
- ✓ Protect fruits from birds by covering bushes with nets.
- ✓ Remove side shoots from tomato plants.
- ✓ Stake border perennials where necessary.
- ✓ Spray roses at 2 week intervals against blackspot and greenfly. Alternate spray types.
- ✓ Prune those shrubs and climbers that have completed flowering for this year. eg. brooms, spiraea etc.
- ✓ Avoid trimming your lawns too short.

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Buaile Beag, Bearnna, Galway operates a Garden Design & Advisory Service. Anne presents a gardening spot on Galway Bay FM radio each Thursday morning at 11.40am approx. and writes gardening articles for various publications. To date Anne has also written two gardening books, one for adult beginner gardeners (*Don't Forget Your Shovel*) and one for children (*Green Acres - Hobby Gardening For Children*).

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Rosa Sanders White adds something positive to an otherwise negative situation