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raise THE roof

Embrace a rooftop garden where fabulous plants, pots and furniture come together to create a perfect whole...

An airy outdoor room, bordered by greenery and crowned by the sky, this rooftop garden creates a unique environment. Designed carefully, it can offer all the zones essential in a family space – to lounge, eat, cook and play. It's small-space gardening at its best, and all the ideas can be applied to sun-bathed balconies, courtyards, decks and patios too. So if you love living outdoors, be inspired by this contemporary space.

About the garden

Filled with interesting plants and textures, and furnished in sleek modern style, this rooftop garden feels private and inviting. By dividing the space into functional areas, it offers a complete living zone outdoors, with dining, lounging and cooking areas, and both covered and open aspects.

Before its makeover, this was a blank space, dominated by hard materials – render, tiles, glass and aluminium. By introducing a comfortable outdoor sofa and armchairs plus natural-textured pots and log stools, the look was instantly softened. Painting the low walls in dark charcoal made them recede and eliminated glare.

The plant selection is extensive and retains interest all year round with foliage colours and textures (see *Plants you'll love*, page 44). All these species are extra-hardy to cope with the harsh conditions of sun and wind that prevail up here.

1. Use comfy weatherproof lounges and a coffee table to tie together an open-air space. The low plantings behind the walls frame the scene, while the almost-invisible glass safety fence preserves the wonderful views.

2. A white cylinder pot filled with a mix of succulents is anchored by velvety mounds of zoysia grass. This low-maintenance scheme suits any sun-drenched spot.

Plants you'll love

Shrubs and foliage

- *Raphiolepis* 'Oriental Pearl'
- *Loropetalum chinense*
- *Viburnum odoratissimum*
- *Phormium tenax*
- *Furcraea foetida*
- *Alcantarea imperialis*
- *Philodendron* 'Xanadu'

Succulents

- *Agave attenuata*
- *Crassula* 'Bluebird'
- *Yucca elephantipes*
- *Crassula ovata*
- *Sansevieria* 'Congo'
- *Senecio serpens*

Pots

- *Crassula* 'Bluebird'
- *Kalanchoe* 'Copper Spoons'
- *Sedum* 'Green Mound'

3. Put your outdoor cooking zone under cover so you can use it throughout the year. Here, it has been set into a concrete cabinet which also incorporates a fridge. The louvred screen behind is remote-controlled.



Diverse materials and plants take a rooftop sky high!

Ideas for you

- Choose tough plant species that can cope with heat, sun and wind. Shade-tolerant plants will be needed too, for the areas under rooflines and awnings.
- Avoid choosing tall plants, as these are especially susceptible to wind. Keep plantings dense and low.
- Rooftop gardens need lots of softening, so be generous with plantings of greenery and introduce soft-upholstered sofas, chairs and cushions.
- Cluster pots and urns in the corners of the space to round off the hard angles.
- Include outdoor lighting for night time use and consider an outdoor heater for winter.

4. Textured pots are a great way to soften tiled or paved areas like this space. Cluster them in corners to help blur the geometric lines – this pot is planted with *Crassula* 'Bluebird'.

5. When turning an outdoor space into a suite of living areas, always position the dining area as close as possible to the house, and ensure there is some form of overhead cover. In this garden it sits beneath

the roofline and beside the barbecue. A timber table brings warmth and pattern to the scene, while beyond it, a magnificent specimen of *Dracaena draco* creates a focal point at the end of the garden.

6. Completely private but with a view of the world, a rooftop garden offers a special kind of space. Note the inviting armchairs, rustic log stools and soft uplighting.



How good is this glass fence! Check page 52 for safety notes

Photography: Natalie Flurifalvey