

JUNGLE GARDENS

How to get the look and the top 15
jungle-style plants



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Photo by Mona Eendra

INTRODUCTION

A jungle garden is the ultimate for the gardener that loves to be surrounded by lush vegetation. They are perfect for a town garden where the built-up town will create micro-climates that allow the more exotic plants to thrive. Jungle gardens are an excellent way of maximising space as they are planted thickly and arranged in layers of differing plants.

Large foliage, bewitching leaf shapes and colours and looking exotic flowers are the hallmarks of the jungle garden; the flowers are a bonus as the lush foliage is centre stage. The plants that occupy this garden style have large characters and are boisterous by nature. Larger plants exist alongside underplanted drifts of smaller plants, whilst climbers should be allowed to ramble with freedom, as they do in rainforests, wandering their way through the canopy of larger specimen plants. Water and humidity play a fundamental role amongst foliage; creating a pond with a pumped water system will go a long way to contributing to the feeling of moisture. A decent hosepipe to spray down the plants on warm days will also add to that jungle feeling.



HOW TO CREATE A JUNGLE GARDEN

Jungle gardens are all about plants, and two-thirds of the garden should be given to planting space. However, do not worry if the area is short; a jungle garden can be created anywhere, even in a large container. A little taste of the exotic is easily obtainable for the gardener who loves this style of planting.

Mark out the paths that will guide you through the foliage of your jungle plants create places for climbers to ramble, and arches can be placed to straddle pathways creating links between your planting groups. You can also line your pathways with wood to create rustic edges, a golden rule with jungle gardens is not to make it formal in any way; it is a nature 'rules' garden.

Seating should be set deeply into the planting borders to get the full jungle effect, placing them before the plants are added. How about making sure you get the full jungle effect by making provisions for wildlife and erecting birdboxes around the garden, cited at 2 meters in height? Their songs will sound amazing in the jungle. Bat boxes are another good idea and should be placed facing north how about cutting a section of the base of a fence out to create a wildlife corridor this may mean you get visitors such as hedgehogs. A pond and running water are a must and can easily be created with a butyl liner and basic pump.

Plenty of Organic matter will be fundamental to the jungle garden and plenty should be dug in before planting; a workable compost bin can make sure you can keep adding organic matter to the soil. Regular feeds of organic fertiliser throughout the growing season will get your jungle garden going.

Just a last thought: the jungle garden is a perfect set-up for a little outdoor cocktail bar.

TOP 15 PLANTS FOR JUNGLE GARDENS



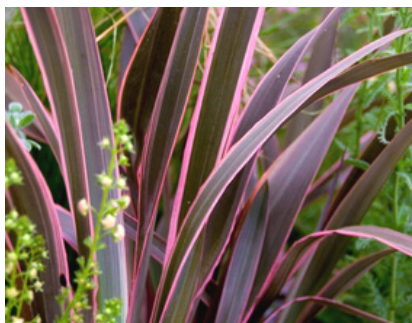
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Musa Basjoo

Is there anything more tropical than the mighty banana, this one is from China, so tougher than tropical varieties with its roots able to take the cold weather better. Musa basjoo produces huge paddle-like bright green leaves. Over winter the stem will die off but be replaced by a fresh new shoot. Likes a good sunny spot but will take partial shade and moist, fertile soil. The plant can get up to 4 metres in height and 2 metres in width.



2



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Phormium 'Pink Stripe'

Phormiums or New Zealand flax have become very popular recently, proving popular with garden designers. There have many new varieties and Phormium 'Pink Stripe' really stands out with its spikey pink swords rising straight from the ground forming large clumps in good conditions. The leaves are thick, coarse and evergreen by nature thus making this plant an all-around attraction, particularly against the grey winter skies. Grows up to a meter in height and width.



3



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Agapanthus Charlotte

Agapanthus Charlotte is an excellent compact variety of Nile Lily. Charlotte produces an abundance of vivid blue flower heads which last into late Autumn. Charlotte works perfectly well in the ground or containers and is the perfect choice for any size garden.



4



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Fatsia Japonica 'Spiders Web'

A temperate plant that looks just as home in a jungle setting. Its large palmate leaves are architectural by nature and will add great contrast to other foliage shapes which makes it perfect for a Jungle border. This Gardening Express Variety has a nice twist as it has evergreen spiders web variegated leaf of white and green. It's quite a large shrub reaching a height and width of 2.5 meters.



5



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Fatsia Japonica

Fatsia japonica is a stunning architectural and tropical-looking plant that transforms your garden into a tropical paradise. An evergreen perennial with white flowers followed by black fruits, this plant reaches over 3.5 meters and it will tolerate most soil types. Fatsia japonica will happily grow in sunny or partially shady aspects, it is tough as old boots and requires minimal maintenance.

TOP 15 PLANTS FOR SMALL GARDENS

Don't let having a small garden stop you from creating something special. Browse our list of the best plants for small gardens; spend some time planning out how to get the best results from your garden.



6



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Passiflora Caerulea

Few plants produce such exotic flowers as the Passion flower. Its climbing nature allowing it to scramble through and over fences, trellis and other plants, is aided by its tendrils. Passiflora caerulea produces light purple, lilac flowers whose petals become more reflexed as they age from late summer until autumn. They stand out beautifully against its dark leathery evergreen leaves.



7



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Rodgersia Aesculifolia

As we build up our tiers of planting in a jungle border it's good to have really attractive groundcover plant to sit on the borders edge. This Gardening Express Rodgersia is perfect for that job. These Rhizome spreading herbaceous plants have striking Chestnut shaped leaves can get up to 25cm in diameter and can consist of up to 8 or 9 leaflets. It produces sprays of creamy white flowers in summer that are born on stems up to 60 cm long.



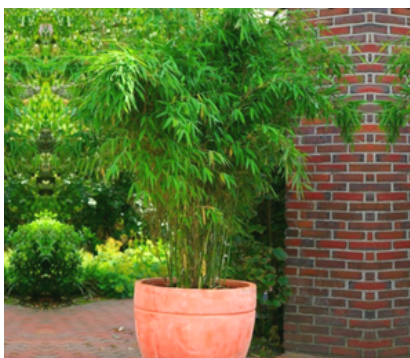
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Cordyline Australis Verde

Originating From the Southern hemisphere this plant comes with a great exotic appearance and has become very popular in recent years. The plant spiky crowns with long lanceolate leaves form multiple crowns and balance on the end of long slender stem as the plants mature. When in its full aplomb it can reach height of 3 to 4 meters making for a truly striking specimen. If that is not enough then this Gardening Express plant will produce sprays of fragrant cream flowers in summer followed by berries in autumn.



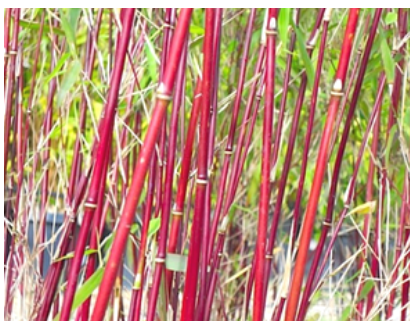
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Fargesia Murielae Rufa

Nothing says exotic like Bamboo, a plant that fits into so many situations and will make a great addition to a jungle garden. This evergreen clump forming Bamboo has young upright stems that gently arch when mature. Fargesia rufa can grow up to 3m in height, producing bright green canes which add a real touch of the exotic to any garden.



10



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Fargesia 'Asian Wonder'

The good thing about Bamboos is there is such a range to choose from, meaning the gardener can plant to their taste. Young canes start off orange-red, maturing to crimson-plum and finally olive green. They are very graceful plants with fine lanceolate leaves that rattle in the wind and form a gentle weeping habit. It is a clump-forming evergreen, which is compact, just reaching 2 to 3 meters in height so is perfect for a smaller sized garden.

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Nandina Domestica 'Lemon-Lime'

The Nandina genus is normally known for its dark green to crimson, red foliage but this little beauty comes in a completely different form. The new foliage emerges yellow-green in the spring but, over time, will turn to richer lime green. The leaves on the outside of the plant and in the light will keep this amazing colour, but the foliage underneath and in the shade will be darker. These different colours produce a beautiful effect and a great contribution to a jungle garden.



12



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Phormium Tenax Variegatum

Phormium tenax variegatum is a clump-forming evergreen perennial with erect green and cream-striped sword-shaped leaves. Reaching roughly just under two metres in height and width this is a plant with real architectural impact. When planted in full sun, this plant often shows flashes of pale pink adding yet another layer of impact.



13



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Viburnum Davidii

If you are looking for a tough plant which is happy in the shade and offers great foliage and late-season flowering then look no further. Viburnum davidii provides excellent ground cover under harsh conditions and is more than happy to act as a foil to more showy plants. For a jungle-style garden Viburnum davidii more than earns its place, filling in all the awkward spaces.



14



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Paulownia Tomentosa

You will need a bit of space for this small to medium-sized deciduous tree, but the aptly named Foxglove tree gives an exotic feel to an exotic jungle setting. The Empress or Foxglove tree has striking large ovate leaves reaching up to 25cm in length. Before they fully break bud, tall spikes of lilac-purple flowers are born all over the tree crown making for a breath-taking sight with the bonus of being fragrant.



15



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Choisya Ternata

The Mexican Orange Bloom has long been a favourite of the British garden and its parks. It is one of those plants that never lets you down, and once it is established, it will grow away for many years with the minimum fuss. It has glossy palmate evergreen leaves, which give an exotic impression despite its hardiness to the UK's climate. In early summer, white heavenly-scented star-shaped flowers form clumps among the foliage. Repeat flowering can sometimes occur later in the summer and sometimes in winter.



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