# Monty Don’s dog-friendly garden at Chelsea sparks new trend in pet-proof landscaping



As the Chelsea Flower Show draws to a conclusion, the horticultural community collectively exhales, reflecting on an event that has become synonymous with gardening's most anticipated calendar moment. Designers, contractors, nurseries, and enthusiasts have spent days navigating not only the physical setups but also the intricate social interactions that define this annual gathering. The excitement and fervour surrounding Chelsea set the tone for gardening trends that will resonate in our own backyards for seasons to come.

This year's show, however, has taken an innovative turn with Monty Don, famed for his role in BBC's gardening broadcasts, spearheading the RHS and BBC Radio 2 Dog Garden. This concept, while marketed as the first dog-friendly garden at Chelsea, actually follows in the footsteps of a similar garden designed by Jo Thompson back in 2012. The emphasis this year, however, shifts to the practicality and beauty of gardens designed with our canine companions in mind—an aspect traditionally overlooked within landscaping.

In crafting his dog-friendly garden, Don collaborated closely with a team led by designer Jamie Butterworth. Together, they showcased a robust lawn that includes hardy plants like dandelions, clover, and daisies, all carefully transported from the RHS Garden Wisley. A diverse array of plants not only appeals aesthetically but also withstands the wear and tear of pet ownership. Notably, clover remains vibrantly green during droughts and tolerates the effects of dog urine better than conventional grasses, suggesting that a transition towards utilising such flora could be beneficial for pet owners. For those inclined to revamp their gardens, this is an opportune moment to introduce clover by preparing bare patches and seeding them accordingly.

Moreover, the garden serves as a reminder of the need to avoid toxic plants in pet-friendly designs. With azaleas, autumn crocus, and lilies among the toxic varieties to steer clear of, the focus is increasingly on clump-forming plants that can withstand a bit of rough treatment. Rosemary, with its resilience, alongside roses and hardy geraniums are excellent choices for pet owners looking to create a harmonious outdoor sanctuary.

Adding an engaging twist, Monty Don's golden retriever, Ned, notably contributed to the garden's design by weaving through pathways, ensuring a genuine canine experience was at the heart of the layout. This integration of a pet's perspective highlights a burgeoning trend in garden design that fosters the relationship between pets and their environments. With pathways adorned with names of dogs owned by BBC Radio 2 presenters and RHS ambassadors, the garden encapsulates the bond we share with our furry friends.

Furthermore, there’s a palpable shift towards the “shaggy lawn” concept, which embraces a low-maintenance, biodiverse approach to gardening. This trend favours a more naturalistic and forgiving look, allowing gardens to thrive with fewer interventions. The Dog Garden embodies this ethos, providing a setting that supports both the needs of playful pets and biodiversity alike. Emphasising natural resilience, the garden forgoes the pristine perfection often associated with Chelsea show gardens; instead, it introduces worn, well-loved patches that encourage not just aesthetic enjoyment but a genuine appreciation of nature's imperfections.

As visitors and participants reflect on the Chelsea Flower Show, it becomes clear that the inclusion of pet-friendly elements in gardening has struck a chord. This thoughtful approach not only caters to the needs of our pets but also reinvigorates our conception of what a beautiful garden can be—an environment where humans and their four-legged companions can coexist harmoniously, enriching each other’s lives.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/22/monty-dons-dog-friendly-garden-gets-tails-wagging-at-the-chelsea-flower-show)
2. Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/22/monty-dons-dog-friendly-garden-gets-tails-wagging-at-the-chelsea-flower-show)
3. Paragraph 3: [[3]](https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/news/2025/montys-dog-designs-garden), [[4]](https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/gardens/2025/rhs-radio-2-dog-garden)
4. Paragraph 4: [[5]](https://www.countrylife.co.uk/gardens/chelsea-flower-show-2025-the-first-garden-designed-by-a-dog), [[6]](https://www.gardensillustrated.com/chelsea/monty-don-dog-garden-guide)
5. Paragraph 5: [[7]](https://www.idealhome.co.uk/garden/garden-advice/monty-don-shaggy-lawn-trend)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/22/monty-dons-dog-friendly-garden-gets-tails-wagging-at-the-chelsea-flower-show> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/22/monty-dons-dog-friendly-garden-gets-tails-wagging-at-the-chelsea-flower-show> - Monty Don's dog-friendly garden at the Chelsea Flower Show introduces a 'robust lawn' designed for canine companions, featuring diverse plants like dandelions, clover, and daisies. This garden emphasizes the importance of creating spaces that are both beautiful and practical for pets, highlighting the growing trend of pet-friendly gardening.
3. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/news/2025/montys-dog-designs-garden> - For the first time in history, a dog has been involved in designing a garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Monty Don's golden retriever, Ned, played a key role in creating pathways within the RHS and BBC Radio 2 Dog Garden, ensuring that dogs are integral to the design and highlighting the symbiotic relationship between dogs and gardens.
4. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/gardens/2025/rhs-radio-2-dog-garden> - The RHS and BBC Radio 2 Dog Garden, designed by Monty Don, features a central lawn for canine activities, a large tree providing shade, and paths inscribed with the names of dogs belonging to BBC Radio 2 presenters and RHS ambassadors. The garden also includes a sectioned-off area for humans to enjoy a tapestry of plants, raising awareness of certain plants that are toxic to dogs and other pets.
5. <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/gardens/chelsea-flower-show-2025-the-first-garden-designed-by-a-dog> - Monty Don and his golden retriever, Ned, have designed a garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show—a doggy first for the event. Plantsman Jamie Butterworth, who is creating the RHS and Radio 2 Dog Garden with Don, laid it all out at his nursery, Form Plants in Surrey, then invited Ned to run through all the pots and plants to create pathways to make it 'as authentic as possible'.
6. <https://www.gardensillustrated.com/chelsea/monty-don-dog-garden-guide> - A deep border interwoven with subtly hidden meandering trails, uses grasses and flowers more resilient to wagging tails. Two intersecting narrow brick paths allow for more direct bounding to a central lawn—emphatically not pristine but weedy and worn in places—featuring an old apple tree. The quintessential Chelsea show garden structure is transformed into a doghouse complete with comfy, worn sofa.
7. <https://www.idealhome.co.uk/garden/garden-advice/monty-don-shaggy-lawn-trend> - Monty Don is championing the emerging 'shaggy lawn' trend, a low-maintenance, environmentally friendly approach to gardening set to feature prominently at the 2025 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Unlike manicured lawns, shaggy lawns embrace a more natural, imperfect appearance filled with resilient plants like daisies, clover, and dandelions. Don's Dog Garden, designed alongside Jamie Butterworth, reflects this ethos by offering a space that's both functional and supportive of biodiversity.