

Exotic Plant Ideas

Tall plants for height, structure and in some cases, impressive canopies.

Acacias	Paulownia
Arundodonax	Pseudopanax laetus
Bamboos	Tree ferns
Bananas	Yucca elephantipes
Cordylines	
Eucalyptus	
Griselinia	
Palms	

Medium plants to provide mid-height interest

Acers	Lophomyrtus
Aucuba	Mahonia
Beschorneria	Melianthus
Cannas	Phormiums
Coprosma	Pseudopanax
Cyperus	Restios
Fatshedera	Schefflera
Fatsia	Tetrapanax
Gunnera	Yuccas
Hedychiums	

Low growing and ground cover plants

Acanthus	Persicaria
Arums	Rubus
Aspidistra	Scleranthus
Astelias	Vinca
Begonias (Hardy)	
Bergenias	
Ferns	
Hostas	
Ivies	

Further Information

Please note that this information is only intended as a guide – put together from our knowledge and experience.

It should be noted, that on occasion, a plant can thrive in one situation but struggle under almost identical conditions. Like us, plants are living individuals – all different and unique. They should therefore be treated as such.

One of the best bits of advice we can give you however, is to have a look at your neighbour's garden and see what they are growing. Armed with this information and the ideas included here, you should be able to create a great exotic garden!

For more information get in touch with us, and we'll do our best to help and advise you.



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Background

Despite the last few cold winters clearly exposing those exotics that are more fragile and vulnerable to the elements, it is still possible to create an exotic, sub-tropical inspired garden with the hardiest of exotic plants, able to withstand such testing conditions.

A sub-tropical look tends to emphasise shape and form in the garden using luxuriant foliage rather than flowers.

Any reasonably sheltered space can be utilised, whether in full sun or deep shade – once established, an exotic space can be fairly low maintenance, with pruning one of its only requirements.

Soil and Feeding

Good soil preparation will set you off on the right foot with an exotic garden. We advise incorporating plenty of organic matter into the soil to help with moisture retention, and then feeding with a good quality fertiliser like Trevena Cross General Fertiliser, which contains all the necessary nutrients and trace elements the plants will need.

Mulching well with bark or compost will also help conserve water in the soil, and prevent drying out during hot periods, as well as helping with weed control/management.

Building an Exotic Garden

A sub-tropical / exotic garden tends to be created through the formation of layers in the garden, using mainly evergreens.

The tallest plants like Eucalyptus, Acacias, Palms (like *Trachycarpus fortunei*) and Bamboos form a great canopy, with plants such as Fatsias, Coprosma, Melianthus and Pseudopanax filling a middle height, and Hostas, Ferns, Astelias, Ivy and other low growing plants providing the ground cover. These latter plants are particularly useful in the shadiest areas.

Interspersed throughout this wonderful foliage, Cannas and other flowering plants can provide some welcome splashes of colour. The ideas are endless. Plants such as Gunnera can look great when planted at the base of bamboo clumps. It is also possible to achieve really nice colour combinations with variegated plants and more colourful foliage of the Phormiums or red Cordylines.

A pond or water feature incorporated into an exotic garden can also add a new dimension, whilst attracting plenty of wildlife into the garden.

Adapting to a Changing Climate

Don't under-estimate the hardiness of some of these aforementioned plants.

Over the past few years we have cut from our mix, the more delicate, vulnerable exotics that we believe are unable to withstand the expected temperatures of our coldest winters in the UK.

We understand you want a garden that will recover well from a winter beating, and with some of our most hardiest plants like *Trachycarpus fortunei*, bamboos, some of our *Pseudopanax* etc, it is still possible to create a really 'hardy exotic' garden.

