

WALL FLOWERS

Vertical gardens and verdant walls are inspired ways to green an urban enclave

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Greenery can be cleverly used to enhance a feature. Here, an entranceway is framed with a spectacular bougainvillea, accentuating the doorway and enticing and welcoming visitors. Greening walls is really about knowing which surfaces to leave blank and which to celebrate with greenery.



A system of shelves or bars provide an opportunity to place or hang potted plants.

While high-tech vertical greening can be costly and difficult to create, there are several ways to achieve this effect more simply. A gabion steel structure can work as a cradle for planted terracotta pots; the structure and the pots are both features in themselves.



Plant wall made by Patrick Blanc, Quai Branly Museum, Paris

In any urban setting, spaces are defined by walls. As cities densify, we have less horizontal space. Yet, by gardening vertically, walls offer endless opportunities to green confined spaces. In some instances, it is appropriate to leave walls untouched, as features in themselves – think of the architecture of Louis Baragan or Tadao Ando, where surfaces are kept blank so that they show the passage of time via the shadows on them.

Very often, though, an ordinary wall is not a beautiful thing and you may want to disguise it. What better way than covering it in greenery? In doing so, a wall will blend into its surroundings and seem to disappear. Greenery also softens angular corners and can ground an otherwise imposing facade. Sophisticated vertical gardens, like those synonymous with Patrick Blanc, have developed in response to a desire to accentuate walls and envelop buildings with foliage.

Green walls can be achieved quite simply by training a creeper onto a facade. *Trachelospermum* (star jasmine) is a favourite – it is evergreen, so its glossy leaves offer consistent coverage throughout the year. It will require cables to train it, however, while *Ficus pumila* (Tickey creeper) or *Parthenocissus tricuspidata* (Boston ivy) attach themselves with suckers to a wall.



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