

# Irish Independent

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## Leo Varadkar's new 5-point plan

## Your great outdoors



Having nine awards from Bloom in the Park as well as being a judge on RTÉ's Super Garden, acclaimed garden designer Tim Austen is an authority on what really makes your green space special. He has some advice for anyone looking to spruce up their lawn

According to Tim in the same way that you'd get an architect to design your extension, if you're thinking of doing up your garden it's

always a good idea to get some consultancy and advice. "This could simply mean getting a professional out for an hour to look around

the garden to see if there are any issues and offer advice."

### Different spaces

Every homeowner has different garden needs. One person's sanctuary is another person's practical nightmare! Tim suggests assessing your needs and planning out exactly what you want from your garden.

"Family gardens, for example, have to be functional as well as interesting. For families with smaller children in particular the garden needs to be safe as well as usable. Many people want a hard landscape area for family barbecues as well as lawn space for the kids to roll around in!"

For smaller garden spaces Tim says homeowners should keep it simple.

"To maximise smaller garden spaces try to have a clean design. People with smaller gardens still want the same things, a place to sit, some plants and also space to move around. So avoiding clutter is a good way to deal with that.

"The finishes and the materials used should be



very carefully thought out in a small garden. They should tie in with the house because usually a smaller garden is very visible from your kitchen, so it's like a little picture that's always on show!"

### Your garden vs. Irish weather

A garden on the Emerald Isle has to constantly contend with the unpredictability of our climate.

"There was a lot of wooden decking put down over the last few years in Irish gardens, which really isn't suitable for our weather. I've seen countless decks where the wood has totally rotted away. However, there are new ways to kit out your garden. Composite decking is a recycled wood and plastic product. It's a little bit more costly than timber decking, but it's durable so you spend very little on maintenance.

"Shelter is also very important in the Irish garden. Generally, there isn't a day in Ireland when there isn't a bit of wind, so fencing, walls, plants or a durable canopy are a must to keep you sheltered."

For more advice, information and tips on garden design from Tim Austen visit [timaustengardensdesigns.com](http://timaustengardensdesigns.com)

