

# Learn how gardens have healing powers

Designer Elaine Jarvis will this month plant her 'healing' garden at France's leading international garden festival

LANDSCAPE designer Elaine Jarvis believes gardens can be healing areas - and she is taking her ideas to France's most prestigious garden festival.

Her section at the Festival International des Jardins at Chaumont-sur-Loire, which opens at the end of this month and runs until October, will showcase the soothing effects of gardens - and was chosen as it fits in with the festival's theme: *Body and Soul Jardins corps et âme*.

Paris-based Ms Jarvis works on commissions, from individual homeowners to local groups and organisations and specialises in vertical gardens or "biowalls" and "healing gardens" which can be fitted in varying sized areas.

She is passionate about "healing gardens" and says: "Smell is one of our most powerful senses and the perfumes and scents of a garden can have a powerful therapeutic effect."

The Chaumont garden owes much of its design to Ms Jarvis' work with "nomadic" gardens which she plants to brighten up sites that are awaiting development.

When work begins, the gardens can be dismantled and then reinstalled elsewhere.

Her designs mean they can be built up quickly to change



**NO HARD LABOUR:** Elaine Jarvis wants people to enjoy the garden for its simple sensory pleasures, not for continual work digging and planting

the atmosphere of a neglected site. Her festival garden will show what can be done as it is built in sections. It is also special at the festival as it is the only one that will be recycled.

"The other designs will all be discarded after the festival," said Ms Jarvis who added that her garden had been commissioned by the Vésinet Hospital in Paris and will be rebuilt there after October.

She has worked with the hospital authorities and local interest groups for three months on the design of their garden and has adapted that design for the Chaumont site.

Her plan is a step back hundreds of years to when gardens were created in monasteries with little well-chosen squares with herbs and other scented culinary plants.

Many of these gardens were in raised beds and Ms Jarvis said: "One thing I try to do with my work is to make sure the garden is sustainable and that it is eco-friendly and, preferably, low-maintenance.

"That is why raised beds are so good. They make for easier cultivation as people get older and want to enjoy the simple pleasures of the garden, not the work of continual upkeep.

"The festival is the perfect place to see what can be done in a small area as all the gardens are quite small - I have just 180m<sup>2</sup> - and this year with the emphasis on Body and Soul there is plenty of stimulus for the senses.

"I try to get my gardens to appeal to the senses and I think of them as sensorial gardens which can be stimulating as well as soothing."

Her work is backed by the company Le Carré des Simples and she uses squares and colours in the design: a *Carré Médicinal* in green, a *Carré Couleur* in blue and indigo, a magical *Carré Sortilèges* in black and white and *Carré Beauté* in pink.

One section, the *Maison de la Tisane* with tea tasting, is being sited elsewhere in the festival grounds.





**ENJOY YOUR SENSES:** The smell of lavender and lush setting are designed to relax people in the garde

