



## Julia Wylie

Julia is a self-employed gardener who loves the physical and organic process of creating and developing gardens through the seasons and years

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

**Earliest garden memory** Popping busy lizzie seedpods in my gran's garden and pretending that the pink fuchsia flowers were ballerinas.

**First plant love** A Venus flytrap was the first plant I ever bought. I grew up on a dairy farm in South Africa so the plant was very well fed.

**Who has inspired your career?** Nature. Seeing plants growing in really wild, arid places such as Morocco, Mexico and South Africa, or tea-tree (*Melaleuca irbyana*) in swamps of Queensland, Australia.

**Horticultural hero** Masanobu Fukuoka from Japan. He was a natural farmer, philosopher and author who proved that you could increase your yields as well as wildlife without ploughing (digging) or chemicals.

**Favourite influential landscape** Derek Jarman's garden at Dungeness. It sits seamlessly within its desolate surroundings with a sense of humour.

**Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener** Make time for tea – to sit, to look and appreciate. Weed selectively and encourage self-seeders. Mulch and look after your best friend – your soil.

**Dream plant destination** Namaqualand (in southern Africa) in spring.

**Who would you most like to have tea with in the garden?** Grayson Perry. I would love to ask him if he thinks gardens are art or craft.

**Favourite planting style** High-density, meadowesque fusions. I love layers of plants that require similar habitats and naturalistic tapestries that welcome wildlife.

**Least favourite plant group** I struggle with plants put in the wrong place or beside unsuitable companions. Phormiums on roundabouts where meadow or mixed native hedging plants would be much more in keeping with what was here before tarmac.

**Biggest challenge facing gardeners today** Convincing the public and politicians that gardening is great.

**What principles have guided your attitude to gardening** Seeing gardening as a process rather than something to finish.

**Favourite gardening blogs – or books** All of James Alexander-Sinclair's blogs, for his ability to make the everyday observation amusing. He reminds me not to take horticulture, or life, too seriously.

**Most embarrassing moment in gardening** Trying to climb out of the Chelsea showground during the build up, because I was too lazy to walk to the only gate still open. I almost became impaled on top of the spiky railings while rush-hour commuters looked on in horror.

**Website** [juliawylie.com](http://juliawylie.com)