

Escape to **THE GARDEN**

CREATE A PEACEFUL RETREAT, A SOCIABLE SPACE, OR A HARDWORKING HOME OFFICE AT THE END OF YOUR GARDEN PATH

PAINT WORKS

'When it comes to decorating any outdoor structure, preparation is key,' says Matthew Brown, technical consultant at Sandtex. 'They are generally built with rough-sawn timber so if previous coatings are flaking or greying, use a stiff nylon brush to remove loose, brittle or fibrous materials from the surface. Don't use a wire brush as it might damage the surface.' Look for paint products suitable for wood and metal, and apply two or three coats depending on the coverage you want.



Sandtex's ten year exterior satin in Pure Brilliant White, from £17 for 750ml, brightens up this elegant garden room



• Contemporary 12x8ft summerhouse with side shed, from £1,450, Waltons. Interior styled by Jeska Hearne at Lobster & Swan



For a similar bespoke garden room with bifold doors, try Eden Garden Rooms

BALANCE THE BUDGET

Costs of garden rooms can vary hugely due to the variety of materials used and the features included. Many brands offer construction and painting services, although this generally requires an additional fee. 'There's a cost to laying a good-quality foundation, but with some reasonable skills you can keep the price of this low by doing it yourself,' says Anna Sippel, marketing manager, Waltons. 'You will need to pay a qualified electrician if you want electrics in there, but again, digging the power cable trench to their specification in advance will keep the price down.'

ROOM WITH A VIEW

By choosing bifold doors for a garden room you can help open up the space and create a strong connection to the garden. The doors allow for more light to flood in and ensure a sense of space as they can be folded neatly out of the way. Most bifold door frames come in a powder-coated aluminium, but you can also source them in a choice of RAL colours. This can be beneficial if you want to blend the garden room into its surroundings, or if you would prefer to match the exterior with the main house.



Shepherd's hut, by interior designer Katharine Pooley

RUSTIC MOOD

An additional space in the garden, such as a shepherd's hut, can serve as a private retreat for house guests and should be designed with a purpose in mind. 'Work with the surrounding garden to curate the room - perhaps complement the greenery with traditional materials to create a charming, rustic space,' suggests Katharine Pooley, interior designer. 'Be sure to invest in electricity and insulation, so it can be used all year round. But most of all, be sure to have fun with the space.'



For a similar bespoke pool house design, try Westbury Garden Rooms



This Scandi-style garden room, designed by Norwegian Log, starts from £15,255

POOL PARTY

Both swimming pools and adjoining pool houses must adhere to building regulations. In general, while most structures can be built under permitted development, additions such as verandas, balconies or raised platforms will require planning permission. And when it comes to the land attached to listed buildings, any outbuilding also requires prior approval from your local planning authority. Once you get the go ahead, you can start planning the pool house interior, with towel storage, a sink, drinks fridge and non-slip flooring.

BUILT TO LAST

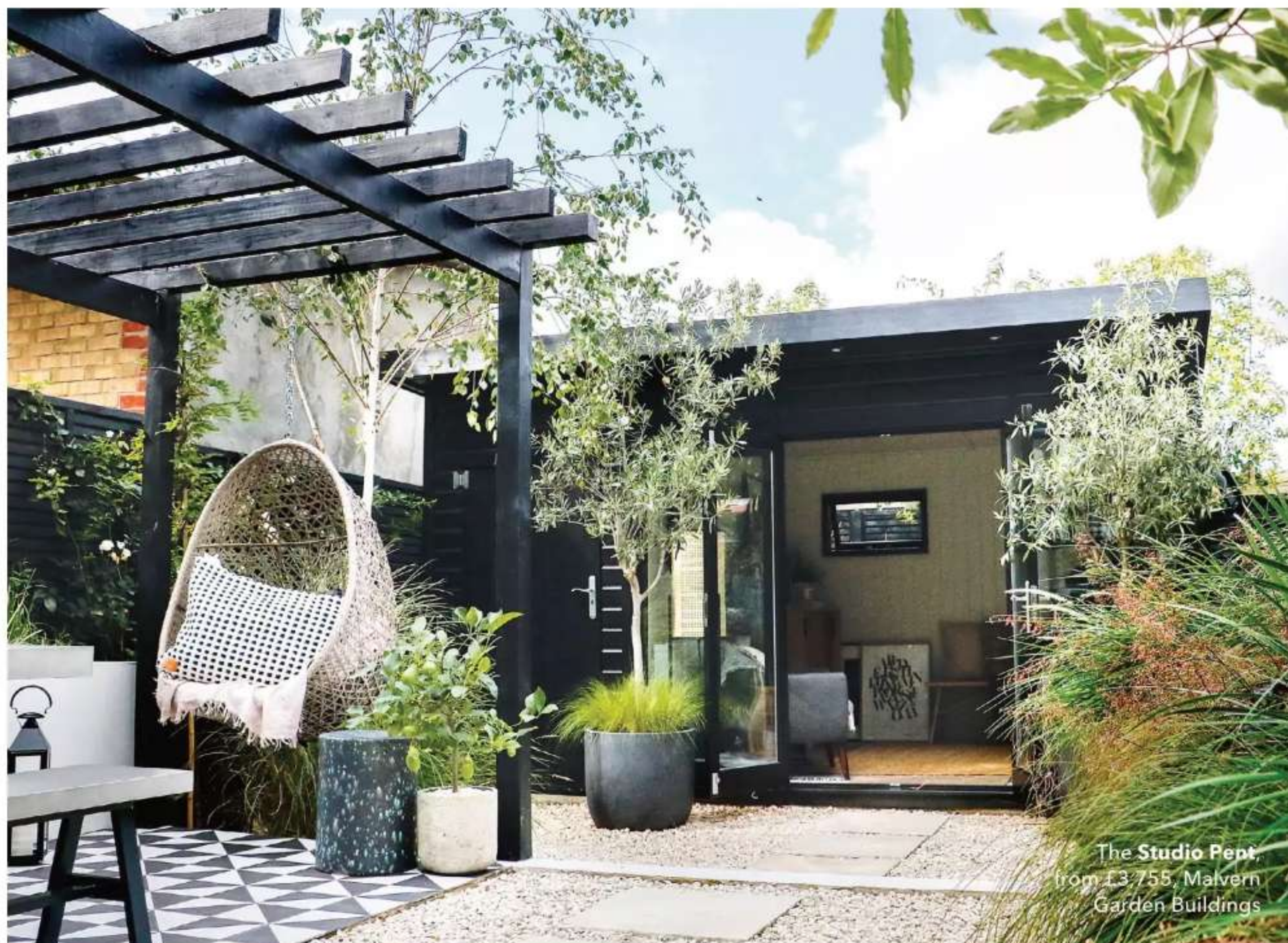
To elevate your garden room from humble potting shed into liveable space, top-quality materials are needed. 'If designed and built correctly, you should have a building that adds value to your home, and can be used by all the family,' says Nick Forrester, director at Norwegian Log. Solid wood, for example, helps keep the room warm in winter and cool in summer, while good-quality double glazing increases insulation. 'Check what the building is constructed from, if it requires insulation and if it needs to be regularly maintained.'

HAPPY PLACE

A garden room can be a sweet escape and a prime space for you and your family to enjoy pastimes without encroaching on others in the main house. Fill the space with inspiration for your hobby: art supplies, a bookcase of favourite reads or even create your very own music studio. Think of the practicalities during the build stage of your new garden room – good light and ventilation is needed for any budding painters, whereas decent sound proofing is wise for aspiring musicians.

For a similar cedar-clad garden studio room, try Garden Office Buildings





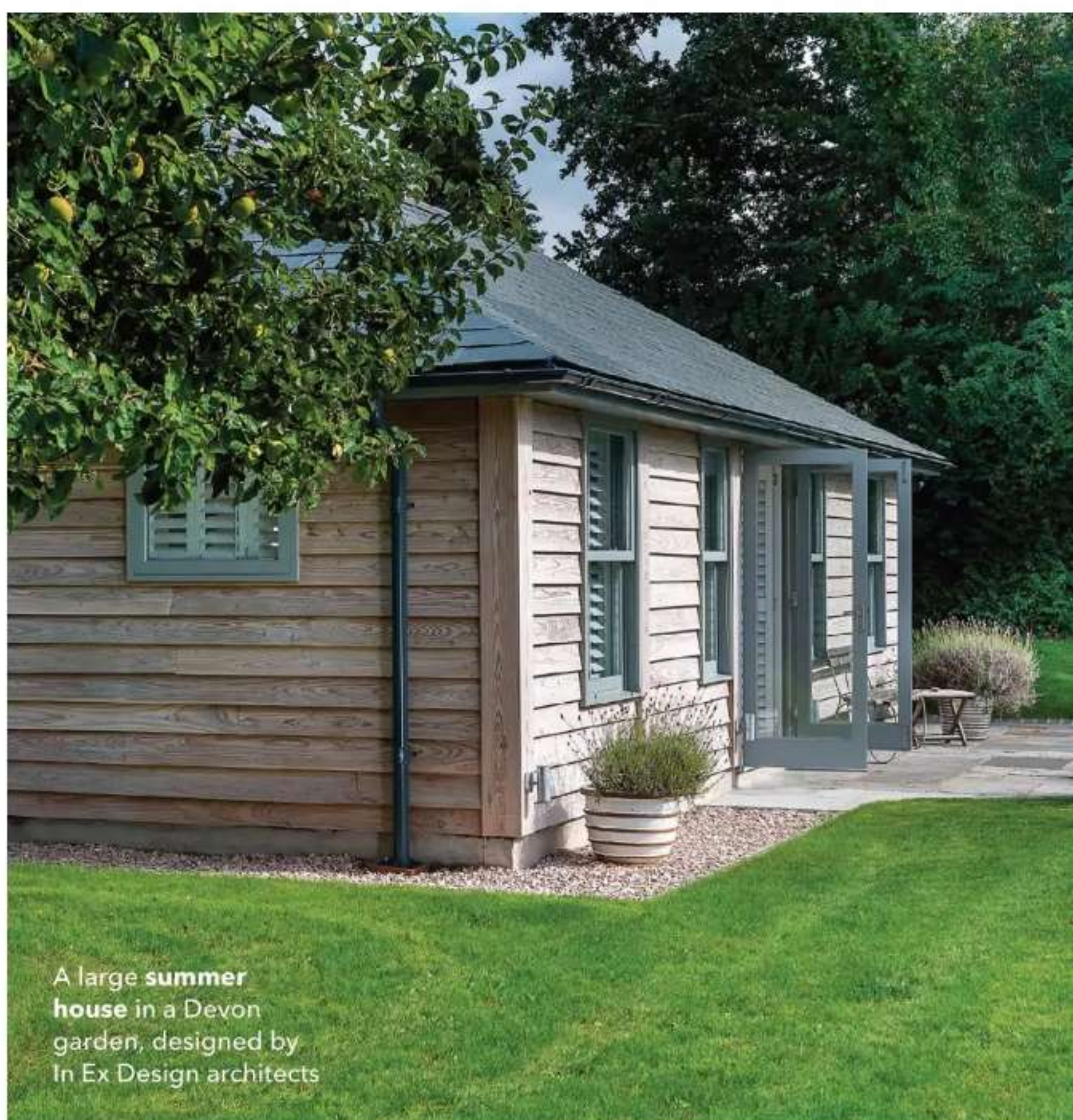
The Studio Pent,
from £3,755, Malvern
Garden Buildings

BOX OFFICE

With many more of us now working from home, having a dedicated office space away from the house can be a worthwhile investment. Not only does a garden room move you away from all the distractions in the home, but you can close the door and leave it behind at the end of the day. 'A garden building also adds value to your property,' says Jason Preece, general manager, Malvern Garden Buildings. 'Estate agents are now including this additional square footage when estimating the sale price of your property.'

COUNTRY STYLE

'Summer houses are hugely practical - they offer additional space for a multitude of purposes,' says Julie-Ann Clements, founding director of In Ex Design. 'The design of these buildings is limited only by your own imagination, so that's why it's important to get a good architect involved. If you really want to enhance your lifestyle then it's vital to consider what you want and need, as well as your budget,' she adds. For a successful project, look for architects local to you, who specialise in country properties.



A large summer
house in a Devon
garden, designed by
In Ex Design architects



This floating glass reading room, complete with a log burner, overlooks this peaceful pond in Haslemere, Surrey

BY THE FIRE

A well-built garden room should work all year round. As well as considering good insulation, you may want to think about ways to heat the space so you can spend more time there - we love how an authentic log burner has been installed inside this contemporary glass cabin, creating a cosy spot to enjoy uninterrupted views of the surroundings. Don't forget about appropriate lighting around your garden room, too - a minimum rating of IP44 or higher is suitable for outdoor wall lights.

BACK TO NATURE

Think about a modern take on the traditional shepherd's hut, but remember that any new structure in the garden needs to adhere to building regulations. Under permitted development, outbuildings must be single storey, with a maximum eaves height of 2.5m if within two metres of a boundary. Visit Planning Portal (planningportal.co.uk) for more information. Also, protected land, such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is subject to stricter limitations. Check with your local planning authority before proceeding.



This black timber-clad rolling cabin, from £15,995, is by Houtt