



This area of garden, with its bold purple and yellow planting that contrasts with the terracotta of the brick farm buildings, is the view from the main bedroom.



Large drifts of *Verbena bonariensis*, lyme grass, rudbeckias and Japanese anemone are planted like a vast unruly parterre around the water feature.

# Raising heartbeats

Energetic planting and blasts of colour bring unruly life to James Alexander-Sinclair's modern garden, created in an old farmyard in the Northamptonshire countryside

FEATURE JANE NEWDICK PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW LAWSON



## Meet the owners

James Alexander-Sinclair (left), his wife Celestria and their three children, who have lived at Blackpitts Farm for 11 years

## The garden

**Location** Towcester, Northamptonshire

**Type of house** Newly built red brick barn-style home

**Type of garden** Informal lawn and mown grass paths edged with deep mixed borders replaced a concrete farmyard

**Special features** A dramatic autumn display of golden yellow rudbeckias

James Alexander-Sinclair's garden at Blackpitts Farm is full of bold ideas. 'If a garden doesn't excite you, it's not doing what it is supposed to do,' he claims.

Here in his own space, he has set about putting this theory into practice – no haven of tranquillity or oasis of calm for him. 'A garden should be life-enhancing rather than calming. Every time you step outside, your heart rate should rise slightly. You should go out there to be thrilled and excited – it shouldn't send you to sleep.'

You may have seen James last summer, putting over such views in the various TV programmes he appeared on, including Channel 4's *The Great Garden Challenge*. Always



