# HOMES &GARDENS



# **DESIGNER**SECRETS

Tim Rees reveals the inspiration behind this Provençal garden's deceptively simple scheme



### DESIGNER PROFILE

**TIM REES** graduated from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1982

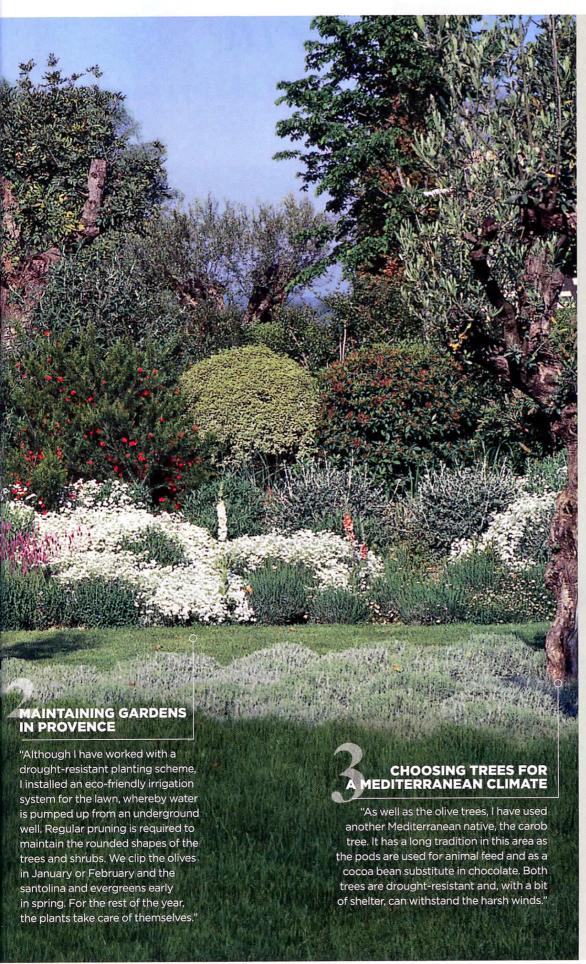
and formed a design partnership with Brita von Schoenaich in the 1990s. Together they developed their own naturalistic style of planting design. In 2003, Tim started his own practice, Trees Associates. He has received international acclaim for his modern country gardens and restoration work, as well as for his bolder, more contemporary urban designs. In addition to designing landscapes and gardens across the UK, he has worked in France, Corfu, Italy and America. **THE BRIEF** The clients wanted their garden at the foot of the Alpilles in Provence to be divided into themed rooms. The olive garden (shown) was created close to the house as a shield against the mistral.

"When I first visited the garden, it had just a partial allée of plane trees, a few cypresses and the remnants of plastic greenhouses set around an old farmhouse. The rest of the plot was made up of open fields with no wind protection from the damaging mistral, so my first job was to provide a shelter-belt. We enclosed the main part of the garden with a wall and in one area created this olive garden.

"Provençal gardens demand a structural palette and I was inspired by Nicole de Vésian's use of clipped, rounded shrubs and topiary in her iconic garden. The design works well here, creating a thoroughly relaxing landscape; to my mind, perennials send a subliminal message of staking and hard work. I used two types of santolina punctuated by eight olive trees that form a square pattern – you can see just two of them here. The only other colours are the red of the dwarf pomegranate – a highlight among the silvery cerastium and a useful spreading plant that knits the other shrubs together beautifully – and a few spires of lavender."



## H&G GARDEN DETAILS



#### FACT FILE

#### **KEY PLANTS**

- Cerastium tomentosum (snow-in-summer).
- Ceratonia siliqua (carob).
- Erigeron karvinskianus.
- Lavandula stoechas (French lavender).
- Olea europaea (common olive).
- Perovskia atriplicifolia
- (Russian sage).
   Pittosporum tenuifolium
- 'Variegatum'.
   Punica granatum
- (pomegranate).
- Rosmarinus officinalis (rosemary).
- Santolina
- chamaecyparissus (syn. S. incana), S. rosmarinifolia subsp. rosmarinifloria (syn. S. virens).
- · Stipa tenuissima.
- Teucrium fruticans (tree germander).

#### WHERE TO BUY Perryhill Nurseries.

01892 770377, perryhillnurseries.co.uk. Supplies a variety of sun-loving shrubs suitable for Mediterraneanstyle gardens.

#### Merandal,

0033 4 90 49 16 10, pepiniere-merandal.com. Supplier of a wide range of sun-loving shrubs. Based in St Etienne du Grès, Provence.

#### Pépinière Filippi,

0033 4 67 43 88 69, jardin-sec.com. Nursery with mail order, specialising in drought-tolerant plants. Based near Montpellier.

#### LANDSCAPE MATERIALS

The landscaping here is primarily soft green lawn made up of drought-tolerant grasses. A protective wall behind the planting was made from breeze blocks with a simple concrete render.

#### WHERE TO BUY Castorama,

0033 8 10 10 41 04, castorama.fr. The French arm of B&Q, offering a good range of building materials.

# CONTACT DETAILS Trees Associates,

020 8965 7085, treesassociates.com. ■