

Up the garden wall

Do good by the planet, cheer the spirits and bring a range of healthy herbs close to the kitchen with a pretty vertical garden.



We used Resene Pitch Black wood stain for the wooden pallet, Resene Fuel Yellow, Resene Quarter Stack, Resene Rapture and Resene Aquarius for the bases of the pots and Resene Goldmine metallic for the rims.

I have lots of space for gardening on the farm, but even I can't have every herb and salad plant exactly where I want it – close at hand when cooking.

Sometimes it's good to look at vertical spaces to raise the plants you often use. Dashing out to the big veg beds for a handful of thyme or a few leaves of sage can put me off using herbs if I don't already have a jar on the bench. When the plants are nearer to the kitchen door, I add them to many more dishes. And when I'm desperately busy and the boys are enjoying one of their favourite dishes of pasta and cheese, a handful of finely chopped parsley reassures me their nutrition is taken care of. I add herbs to everything and anything – such as lavender to desserts and shortbread. Many herbs have an extra kick in our Central Otago climate, which makes me think they're especially good for my soul and body.

The kids love to see things at their eye level, too, so I'm thinking of giving them their own row at their line of sight. I wonder what they'll choose to grow?

I won't forget to feed my other wonderful garden assistants – the bees – either. A few plants will always be left to go to flower and seed just to keep them happily nourished.

Vertical gardens made from pallets do double-duty in preventing wood waste as most disused pallets are destined for landfill or to go up the chimney as smoke. Pallets are made from untreated timber and old ones are generally freely available, which is also good for the wallet.

I used 10 terracotta pots, which cost just a few dollars each. After sealing them inside and out with Resene Aquapel & Terracotta Sealer, I painted the bases in their different Resene hues, giving them plenty of time to dry before painting the rims in Resene Goldmine metallic. Once completely dry, I added a coat of Resene Clearcoat UVS to help protect them from the elements, before fixing them to the wall with stainless-steel hose clamps.

The magic in this project is, of course, the paint. Choose whatever colours make you happy! The background pallet colour is Resene Waterborne Woodsman Pitch Black wood stain, and I applied this thoroughly to help preserve the untreated timber.

You can attach the pots wherever you like in whatever number and order, but I thought three on the top, four in the middle and three below looked cool.

Thyme grows wild in our area, but it is more convenient to have a tidy supply nearby, so that's a must for me. Warding off winter ailments is one of the prime attributes of thyme, so it'll be snipped regularly for lemon, thyme and honey hot toddies in the coming weeks. Sage is a boost to the immune system, so its leaves will be fried and crumbled over many dishes. Parsley is the all-rounder go-to for eggs, anything with cheese, and is there a soup that doesn't taste better without it? A few flowers for my mates, the wandering bees, and to make me smile at their sunny faces, and I'm happy.

