

## **Gardeners Need Holidays**

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I encourage gardeners to get away. OK there's the rest and recreation side to this but more pertinently they need to get out to see what's going on in other gardens. To see what other people are growing, to see how someone else copes with problem areas like theirs, to be inspired by an installation and, I suppose to see new plants. Maybe there's a positive negative side to this too. Some gardens can make me feel smug because they have more weeds than I have, have planting that's so busy it makes me dizzy and want to fall over and pass out.

Being immersed in your own garden makes analysis difficult. Bear in mind that analysis could be inappropriate if your garden is a hobby and not an art-form. But, if you aim for the perfect picture, come back from your trip, ignore your weeds and: Stop! Sit! and Look! Think about how to make your garden more stimulating, more relaxing or more shocking.

When? Many gardeners use the winter to get away. Then little's growing, the lawn doesn't need mowing, pots can be left unwatered and there's no fruit or veg waiting to be harvested. Winter holidays are often taken in warmer places than Britain but there's no equivalence with our gardening conditions. If the winter holiday is domestic there's little to look at when garden visiting except the bare bones of garden design. So, my advice is to wangle two nights away in peak gardening season and visit gardens in say, Lincolnshire, Lancashire or Leicestershire. The tomatoes will not suffer much and maybe a teenager can be bribed to water them. Maybe I would not trust someone else to care for trays of young seedlings whilst I'm away but it's easy to schedule a trip round that.