

**CALA MASTELLA**

Ibiza, Spain, 2020



Perched on the top of a cliff on the east coast of the popular Mediterranean island of Ibiza is a 1970s house built from local stone and wood with terraces full of pines and red-berried mastic trees, all enjoying stunning views of the sea. Following modernization by interior design and architecture studio Amaro Sánchez de Moya, the challenge for Madrid-based landscape designer Alfonso Pérez-Ventana was to create a garden that was sustainable while complementing the vibe of the house. His solution was a series of 'garden rooms', from the alfresco pine-

shaded dining area overlooking the cove to the moss-ringed flagstones that lead to the pool and the seating areas of white-painted concrete. Pérez-Ventana's choice of plants is determined by the texture they bring to the various areas, and by their ability to withstand wind, sand and salt. Myrtle, roses and bougainvillea provide colour, while other non-native but long-established species, such as date palm, agaves and cacti, provide variation with their angular shapes and height. The spiky agaves contrast with feathery ornamental grasses, while

succulents fill the raised beds around the seating area. Foliage in different shades of green dominates in the small beds that are cut out of the rocky ground, and terracotta pots dotted around the garden are filled with more agave. In a nod to the water-filled 'paradise gardens' of the Muslims who ruled southern Spain from 711 until 1492 CE, there is a water trough, an outdoor shower and a bath.

**PRAIRIE GARDEN**

De Wilp, Groningen, The Netherlands, 2009



In the flat agricultural landscape of the northern Netherlands, a colourful and diverse prairie garden comes as a surprise, and indeed almost a relief. Lianne Pot's bold 0.3-hectare (¾-acre) garden blends North American prairie species with plants of European origin that have similar cultural needs. Inspired by her visits to Hermannshof in Germany (see p.258) and a family trip across the American prairie, Pot – a social worker-turned-garden designer and nurserywoman – sought to translate the prairie concept into something that could ornament Dutch domestic spaces. The result

is truly immersive; visitors walk along winding paths through a blend of perennials and grasses, but can also get an overview from a mound (a welcome feature that is all too rare in the 'real' American experience). The pragmatism of Pot's own garden sets it apart, as does its openness, with sight lines into the surrounding landscape. Her experience and expertise are available to nursery customers in the form of plant combination modules – based on theme, height or colour – designed for easy adoption as a long-lasting, low-maintenance planting system. Prairies tend

to be dominated by late-flowering perennials, which mature to seedheads and thereby provide plenty of winter interest, and these can be spectacular in the hoar frosts that are frequent in the area. However, there is plenty to see earlier in the year, too, notably pasqueflowers (*Pulsatilla vulgaris*) for spring interest and camassias for early summer, showing how ornamental prairies can perform almost all year round.