



TOLEDO GARDEN

Designer: Fernando Martos

Location: Talavera de la Reina, Spain



This Spanish retreat sits in a quintessentially dry landscape, north-east of the city of Toledo, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Toledo municipality has an exceptionally harsh climate, with high summer temperatures and low annual rainfall.

The property consists of a group of low-rise houses (originally livestock stables) and a traditional farmhouse. Locally sourced granite boulders give character and connect the garden to its rural location.

To the east, large windows and doors look out onto a garden bordered by a low dry stone wall, recalling its

ancient agrarian heritage. In the distance, gentle hills are covered with evergreen oak trees – *Quercus ilex* and *Q. suber*.

Native and non-native planting design by Fernando Martos, assisted by Carlos Rodríguez Molina, is characterised by an array of herbaceous species, selected for their exciting textures as well as their ability to survive sporadic irrigation.

The only tree is *Acacia monspessulana*, a drought- and heat-resistant native species with semi-evergreen foliage. Prostrate rosemary is used for cohesion,

grouped amongst the planting. The herbaceous layer consists of a matrix of *Sesleria 'Greenlee'*, a low-growing evergreen grass of unknown parentage that acts as a filler plant. *Stachys byzantina*, with its distinctive creeping silver foliage, sits at the edges together with *Euphorbia seguieriana* and groups of mat-forming *Achillea tomentosa*. Vertical structural species are used in the middle of beds, such as *Salvia pratensis*, *S. officinalis*, *Phlox viscosa*, *Acillaea umbellata* and *Silene gigas* – this tall native grass is particularly evocative catching rays of light at sunrise and sunset.

