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GARDENS

ILLUSTRATED

FEBRUARY 2014



1000

MUST-HAVE PLANTS

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DAN PEARSON**

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editor's letter

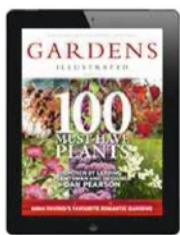


What makes a garden beautiful enough to make it on to the pages of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED? I'm often asked this question, but struggle to come up with a straightforward answer. The gardens we are most drawn to are invariably made by talented individuals who combine an artistic sensibility with an in-depth knowledge of plants. Understanding what plants work in a particular situation is important, but knowing the very

best plant of its kind for that situation is what separates the great from the good. This month, designer Dan Pearson reveals his favourite 100 plants. Dan has been a keen gardener since he was a child and I know that having grown and studied thousands of plants, narrowing down his selection wasn't an easy undertaking for him, especially as the list covers annuals, bulbs, perennials, shrubs and trees. It makes fascinating reading and I hope you're as inspired as I am for the growing year ahead.

Fashions for plants and gardening styles change slowly, but every now and again a new innovation has a dramatic impact. Vita Sackville-West's White Garden at Sissinghurst, which she began in the 1950s, proved to be hugely influential and this month we begin a two-part series looking at the key elements and plants that make it work so well. Finally, to celebrate Valentine's Day, garden writer Anna Pavord recommends her favourite romantic gardens around the world. I hope you enjoy the issue.

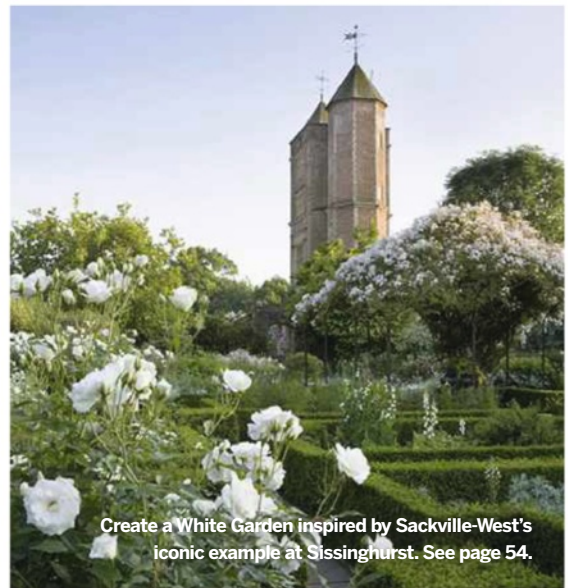
Juliet



GARDENS ILLUSTRATED is available as a digital edition – search 'Gardens Illustrated' on the App Store, Google Play or Zinio.com



Renowned designer and plantsman Dan Pearson recommends 100 top plants for gardens. See page 33.



Create a White Garden inspired by Sackville-West's iconic example at Sissinghurst. See page 54.

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Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.



DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

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JONATHAN BUCKLEY; ANDREA JONES; ANNAICK GUITTENY; JASONINGRAM

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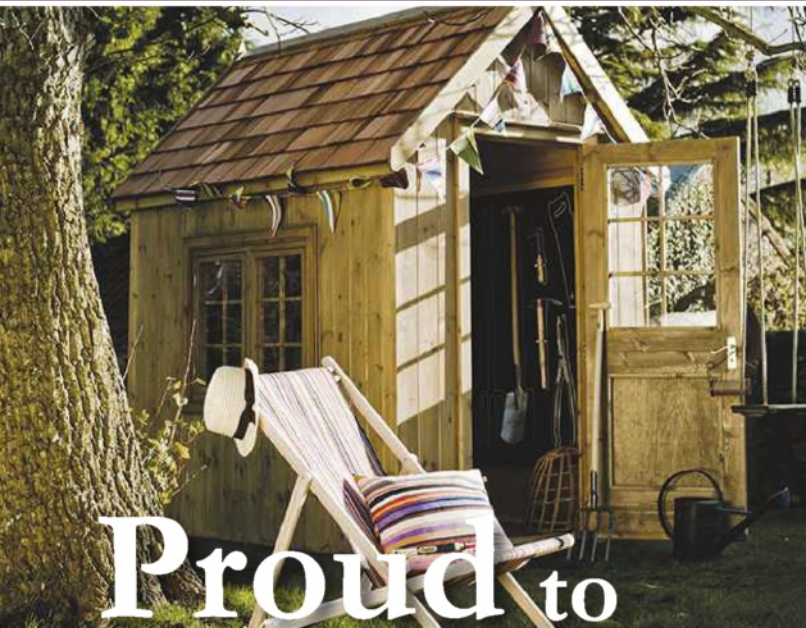
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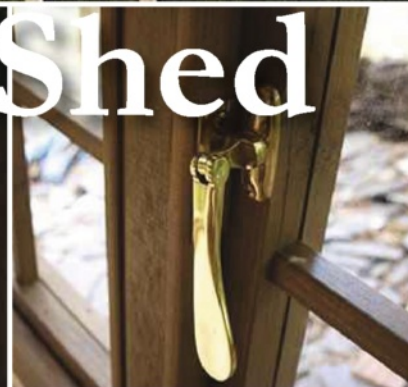
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contributors



SIR PAUL SMITH

DAN PEARSON

Dan started designing gardens as a teenager and is now an internationally respected landscape designer. His London-based practice works on private and public commissions all over the world. On page 33 he chooses his 100 must-have plants.

"Nothing gives me more pleasure than a well-chosen, well-placed plant. I'm just glad I'm not limited to only 100 on a regular basis."



ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

Annaïck took up photography in her late teens, and an interest in still life drew her to specialising in flowers. She lives in southeast London but travelled back to her native France to shoot La Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan on page 46. Back in the UK she also shot our hosta profile on page 64.

"With their texture and shape, hostas were the perfect subject to get some very graphic images, which I love shooting."



JACKY HOBBS

Jacky is a freelance garden stylist and writer with a particular affection for snowdrops. In her feature on page 60, she meets Dr Ronald Mackenzie who shares insights on both his exciting snowdrop collection, and his extensively practised method of twin-scaling.

"Dr Mackenzie's snowdrop garden is filled with as many people as it is plants – in name and spirit – if not in person."



ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

RORY DU SOIR

Rory is head gardener at Stud House in Surrey. He's been gardening professionally for 15 years and learned his trade at Great Dixter, under Christopher Lloyd and Fergus Garrett, and Chilcombe House in Dorset. On page 54 he and Mat Reese look at structure in a White Garden.

"A careful choice of structural plants is the foundation for any good planting; nowhere more so than in a White Garden."

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Find out more about Dan Pearson's work at the Millennium Forest on the island of Hokkaido, Japan.



Dan Pearson



Fergus Garrett



Anna Pavord

Gardens Illustrated talk chaired by Anna Pavord

With Dan Pearson and Fergus Garrett

Join us for this year's inspirational GARDENS ILLUSTRATED talk at the Royal Geographical Society in London, Tuesday 20 May, 2014

We are delighted to once again host the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED talk at the Royal Geographical Society in London. This year's speakers are Dan Pearson and Fergus Garrett. Dan designed his first garden at the age of 17 and has gone on to earn a reputation as one of today's finest garden and landscape designers. Fergus has worked as head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex for over 20 years. The gardens, developed by the late, great plantsman and garden writer Christopher Lloyd, are renowned for their beauty and originality. Since Christopher's death in 2006, Fergus has continued and developed his legacy of horticultural excellence.

Anna Pavord, gardening correspondent for *The Independent* and author of

Fergus Garrett's method of succession planting ensures year-round colour at Great Dixter.



numerous books, will lead Dan and Fergus's conversation. We will discover more about the work of these two gardening greats, gain an understanding of their approach to gardening, their passions, and projects past and future. Waterstones bookshop will also be selling titles at the event by the guest speakers.

Book now for Standard or Premium tickets. Premium tickets include allocated seating at the front section of the lecture theatre and a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne on arrival. Early booking advised as numbers are limited – particularly for Premium tickets.



GARDENS ILLUSTRATED reserves the right to replace any of the speakers with other speakers of equal stature in the unlikely event that any of them are unable to attend. Tickets must be booked in advance. Please let us know when booking of any special access requirements. Tickets are non-refundable. Driving to the lecture is not advised. Nearest London Underground station is South Kensington. Cash bar. * Please have your subscriber number to hand when you call. This can be found on your magazine wrapping.

Talk details

- **Date** Tuesday 20 May, 2014
- **Venue** Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, South Kensington, London SW7 2AR

Programme

- **6pm** Doors open (cash bar available)
- **6.45pm** Priority seating for Premium Ticket holders (allocated seating)
- **7pm** Lecture begins
- **8.30pm** Q&A session concludes
- **9pm** Doors close

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Dig in

News, gardening talent, plantsman's favourites, modern peasant, shopping

NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON



Valerie Finnis's photograph of Lady Birley, looking suitably stylish in her garden at Charleston Manor, features in the *Fashions & Gardens* exhibition at the Garden Museum.

EXHIBITION

All dressed up

Fashion and gardening are both big business, so it's surprising to learn that the Garden Museum's new exhibition is the first to explore the relationship between these influential aspects of life. From the age of Queen Elizabeth I, when botanically accurate depictions of plants were embroidered on to fabrics, through to the catwalks of

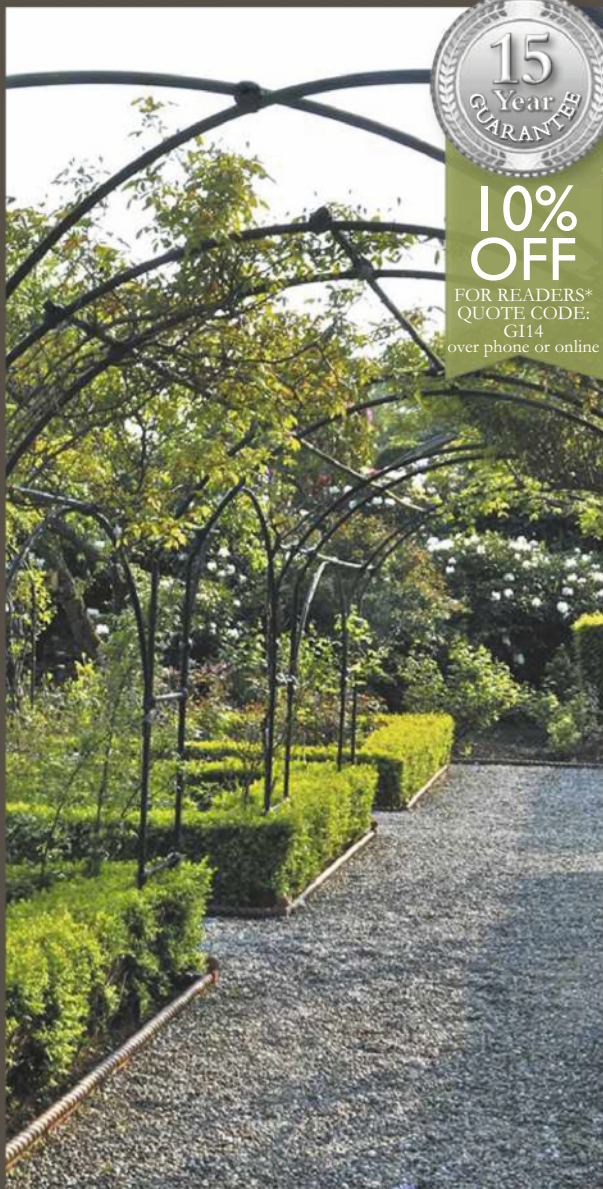
today, big name designers continue to cite plants as inspiration for clothing and patterns. The exhibition also looks at how people dress to garden or to visit gardens, and how an enthusiasm for outdoor life in general has influenced what we wear. 7 February – 27 April, Garden Museum, London SE1 7LB, 020 7401 8865, gardenmuseum.org.uk

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An impression of the swathe of poppies in full bloom planned as part of Heligan's WWI commemorations.

COMMEMORATIONS

Poppy remembrance days

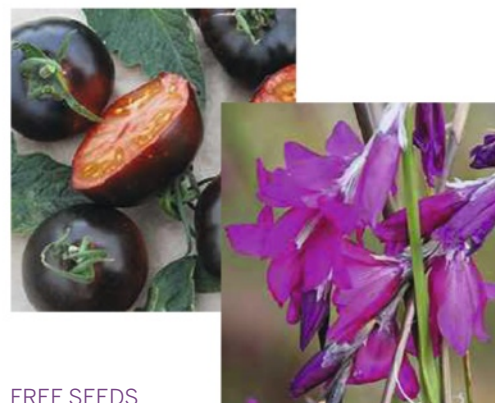
The history of the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall is closely linked to the First World War; at the time, out of the 22 gardeners employed by the estate 16 died in the conflict. The gardens plan to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the war with a series of events this year, including returning the gardens to their 1914 appearance, and the gardens are seeking help from anyone with veteran agricultural and horticultural equipment and from traditional craftsmen. A swathe of poppies is also planned and the ground has been ploughed and harrowed using a team of traditional heavy horses with the seeds due to be sown this spring. You can track the progress of the project on the gardens' website. To help complete the project Heligan is inviting contributions of £2. Find out more at heligan.com plus details of other commemorative events taking place at the gardens.



TO GROW

Small garden tree

Cornus Venus (= 'KN 30-8') has been developed by plant breeders in the USA over the past 20 years and is now available to UK gardeners. The new dogwood is a cross between *Cornus nuttallii* and *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*, giving good drought tolerance and a high disease resistance. But its most striking feature is its large, creamy white bracts up to 15cm across from mid to late May, with rich, dark-green leaves in summer turning red and orange in autumn. Available from Bluebell Nursery, Crocus and Junkers. Check *RHS Plant Finder* for full details or apps.rhs.org.uk/rhsplantfinder



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PLUS - you can gain a 20% discount on any order made from the more than 3,000 seed types listed on the website. Go to plant-world-seeds.com and make your selection. Include the discount code 'SAVE20GILL' when prompted. Offer valid until 31 March 2014.

Get grubby gardening hands clean with these botanically inspired hand washes. Choose English Mint Leaf, Lime and Lemon Peel or Tomato Leaf; all made in the UK using plant extracts. £16 for 250ml from Pure Light Botanics purelightbotanics.com

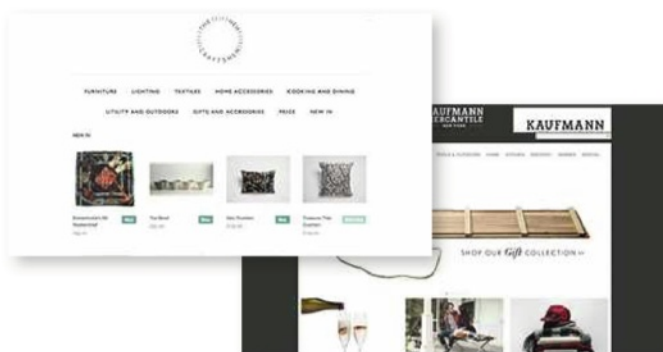




GARDENS TO VISIT

Your guide to gardens

The new edition of the National Garden Scheme's *Yellow Book* is available now with more than 3,800 gardens listed including 600 that are new for 2014, all open for charity. Order a copy now for £7 (rrp £9.99) inc UK p&p from ngs.org.uk using the code 'GIYB14'. Offer valid until end of July 2014. Also out now is Scotland's Gardens guide listing 600 gardens also open for charity north of the border. £5.50. Order from scotlandgardens.org



ONLINE

Interesting online retailers

Savvy New York retailer Kaufmann Mercantile, with its range of home and garden products sourced for their durability, functionality and aesthetics, is now available in UK. kaufmann-mercantile.com. Also take a look at the New Craftsmen, where you'll find products from the likes of garden designer Arne Maynard and trug-maker Robin Tuppen. thenewcraftsmen.myshopify.com



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Diary

• Here's a selection of snowdrop events for February:

Batsford Arboretum, Gloucestershire

22 February – 2 March, 01386 701441, batsarb.co.uk

Chelsea Physic Garden, London

8-16 February, 020 7352 5646, chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire

15 -2 February, 01476 530063, eastonwalledgardens.co.uk

Forde Abbey, Somerset

Sat-Sun throughout Feb, 01460 220231, fordeabbey.co.uk

Hodsock Priory, Nottinghamshire

1 February – 2 March, 01909 591 204, hodsockpriory.com

Kelmarsh Hall, Northamptonshire

23 February, 01604 686543, kelmarsh.com

Myddleton House, Middlesex

Snowdrop sale day 25 Jan, tours throughout February, 08456 770 600, visitleevalley.org.uk

The Place for Plants, Suffolk

13 February Snowdrop Walk, 01206 299224, placeforplants.co.uk

Other garden happenings

• **Seedy Sunday**

Annual seed swapping event with speakers. 2 February, 10.30am-4pm, £3. Brighton Corn Exchange, East Sussex. seedysunday.org

• **Orchids: a plant hunter's paradise**

Retrace the footsteps of the intrepid Victorian plant hunters to explore a hidden world of orchids and tropical plants. 8 February – 9 March, Princess of Wales Conservatory, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Normal entry fees apply. Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org

• **Understanding and practising no-dig gardening**

No-dig advocate Charles Dowding reveals the benefits of his experience. 7 & 8 February (two separate courses), £106. West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 0844 499 4408, westdean.org.uk/college

• **Listed Property Show**

Advice and practical information for those who own a listed building. 15-16 February, free entry once registered. Olympia, London W14 8UX. Tel 01795 844939 listedpropertyshow.com

• **Spring Flower Fortnight**

Enjoy drifts of *Anemone blanda*, *Chionodoxa*, dwarf iris and daffodils, hellebores and fragrant *Daphne*. 11-24 February, 10am-4pm. Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813 200, barnsdalegardens.co.uk



Displays of orchids at the Kew orchid spectacular.

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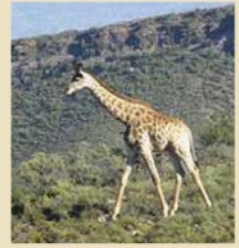
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Jardin des Tuileries, Paris

GARDENS AT THE HEART OF



TOUR LEADER JULIET ROBERTS

As editor of *GARDENS ILLUSTRATED* Juliet has an understanding of the finest international gardens – both historic and the work of

contemporary designers. In Paris she's keen to explore the gardens that made the city great and introduce you to some of Europe's top plantspeople at Courson.



TOUR LEADER JOHN HOYLAND

Having owned nurseries both in the UK and France, John has an expert knowledge and appreciation of gardens and planting. He is a regular writer

for national magazines and newspapers including *GARDENS ILLUSTRATED*, and is garden adviser to Glyndebourne in Sussex.

Join our tour hosted by editor Juliet Roberts and plantsman John Hoyland to the gardens of Paris and Île de France, plus a visit to *Journées des Plantes*, Courson, **13-17 October**

On our French excursion we will capture the charm of gardens and parks within the heart of this fine historic European capital. We'll also take in the sweeping landscapes, exuberant potagers and formal masterpieces that surround châteaux in the rural environs of Paris, known as the Île de France – all of which will look wonderful in the early autumn sun. Our tour also includes a visit to the highlight of the French gardening calendar: Courson's plant fair *Journées des Plantes* held in the grounds of the 17th-century château.

We start in Paris with a visit to the elegant Jardin du Luxembourg with its fountains and parterres before moving on to the private garden of Judith Pillsbury (the current owner of La Louve the famous Provence garden of the late Nicole de Vésian). Our visit continues with a walking tour through the streets and squares of Paris, along the way visiting the historic Jardin des Tuileries, which now showcases work by some of France's leading garden designers.

Moving out of the city we will visit the private garden Bois du Fay, home of



EXCLUSIVE
READER
HOLIDAY

Vaux le Vicomte



Jardin du Luxembourg

FRANCE

American-born landscape architect Mark Rudkin, and the Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard with its remarkable potager. There's also the tree-lined canals of the Château de Courances and the magnificent Vaux le Vicomte, where you will be met by the owner to learn more about this grand, historic landscape designed by Le Nôtre.

The final day is spent at the *Journées des Plantes*, Courson. This annual autumn plant fair is renowned for its stylish appeal and tempting plants from some of the best nurseries in France and around Europe.

The tour is based at the four-star **Hôtel du Panthéon** in Paris and **Hôtel les Pléiades** in Barbizon in the scenic forest of Fontainebleau – once the retreat of artists, now a peaceful base for this special garden tour.

BOOKING DETAILS

The price per person sharing is **£2,498 (single supplement £380 levied by the hotels)**

The price includes all meals and accommodation at Hôtel du Panthéon, Paris and Hôtel Les Pléiades, Barbizon and return Eurostar service from London to Paris.

Please note: This tour involves a lot of walking, often on uneven ground.

To book or for more information please contact

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Journées des Plantes at Courson

This tour has been arranged exclusively for readers of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED by Boxwood Tours, Quality Garden Holidays, a specialist garden-tour company set up in 1990 and directed by Sue and Brian Macdonald, Kew-trained, professional gardeners.

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TUSCANY

Visits to: Poggio Torselli, Villa Geggiano, Villa Grabau, Villa Oliva, Parco di Villa Reale 2014: 9 May, 1 June, 11 July, 21 Sept

LAKES COMO AND MAGGIORE

Visits to: Villa Babbianello, Villa Carlotta, Villa Monastero, Isola Bella, Isola Madre 2014: 13 May, 3 June, 1 July, 16 Sept

AMALFI COAST, CAPRI AND ISCHIA

Visits to: La Mortella, Caserta, Villa Rufolo 2014: 1 May, 15 May, 5 June, 18 Sept

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Julia Wylie

Julia is a self-employed gardener who loves the physical and organic process of creating and developing gardens through the seasons and years

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memory Popping busy lizzie seedpods in my gran's garden and pretending that the pink fuchsia flowers were ballerinas.

First plant love A Venus flytrap was the first plant I ever bought. I grew up on a dairy farm in South Africa so the plant was very well fed.

Who has inspired your career? Nature. Seeing plants growing in really wild, arid places such as Morocco, Mexico and South Africa, or tea-tree (*Melaleuca irbyana*) in swamps of Queensland, Australia.

Horticultural hero Masanobu Fukuoka from Japan. He was a natural farmer, philosopher and author who proved that you could increase your yields as well as wildlife without ploughing (digging) or chemicals.

Favourite influential landscape Derek Jarman's garden at Dungeness. It sits seamlessly within its desolate surroundings with a sense of humour.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener Make time for tea – to sit, to look and appreciate. Weed selectively and encourage self-seeders. Mulch and look after your best friend – your soil.

Dream plant destination Namaqualand (in southern Africa) in spring.

Who would you most like to have tea with in the garden? Grayson Perry. I would love to ask him if he thinks gardens are art or craft.

Favourite planting style High-density, meadowesque fusions. I love layers of plants that require similar habitats and naturalistic tapestries that welcome wildlife.

Least favourite plant group I struggle with plants put in the wrong place or beside unsuitable companions. Phormiums on roundabouts where meadow or mixed native hedging plants would be much more in keeping with what was here before tarmac.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Convincing the public and politicians that gardening is great.

What principles have guided your attitude to gardening Seeing gardening as a process rather than something to finish.

Favourite gardening blogs – or books All of James Alexander-Sinclair's blogs, for his ability to make the everyday observation amusing. He reminds me not to take horticulture, or life, too seriously.

Most embarrassing moment in gardening Trying to climb out of the Chelsea showground during the build up, because I was too lazy to walk to the only gate still open. I almost became impaled on top of the spiky railings while rush-hour commuters looked on in horror.

Website juliawylie.com



Corydalis temulifolia
'Chocolate stars'

Wonderful crinkle-edged, rust-coloured foliage in winter becomes almost orange in March. By April, lavender flowers deck the now bronze leaves. The whole plant gradually fades to olive green by June and sits unobtrusively in the garden until November when the first hard frost knocks back the green leaves and reveals the new rusty leaves emerging from below. It is a sight for sore eyes in February. Unlike most corydalis, this one has never seeded itself in my garden, unfortunately.

Height/spread 30cm x 30cm in winter (60cm x 60cm in summer).

Origins China.

Conditions Sun or shade (I have one against a north-facing wall and one on a south-facing slope).

Any good garden soil, probably not too dry.

Hardiness rating RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Season Winter – spring.



February plants

In the first of her new series, Derry Watkins chooses some of her favourite plants that are at their best in winter

WORDS DERRY WATKINS PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Derry Watkins is the owner of Special Plants Nursery near Bath



Helleborus x ericsmithii 'Bob's Best'

Helleborus ericsmithii 'Bob's Best' is a cross between *H. argutifolius* for its hardiness, *H. lividus* for its leaves and *H. niger* for its flowers. Unlike orientalis hybrids, it does not like rich woodland conditions. It revels in sun and drainage. It has fabulous outward-facing flowers held well above the leaves. They age from creamy white to pink to almost red; because each flower lasts so long all the colours may be visible at once. The evergreen leaves don't need to be cut to the ground – just remove tatty ones. AGM*.

Height 35cm.

Origins Hybrid.

Conditions Full sun or very light shade, good soil, good drainage.

Hardiness rating RHS H4-5, USDA 5a-9b†.

Season Winter – spring.

Sarcococca confusa

One of the joys of winter is coming out of the front door to be knocked sideways by the smell of *Sarcococca* – or sweet box – in full flower. Despite sometimes being called Christmas box, it rarely flowers at Christmas for me; the first flowers usually open on New Year's Day. The little white flowers nestle among the leaves together with shiny, black berries. The plant is slow to get started, but eventually it forms quite a big evergreen mound. Sweet box thrives in shade, where the shiny, deep-green leaves seem to reflect the light. AGM.

Height/spread 2m x 2m.

Origins China.

Conditions Shade, even if it's dry shade, in any soil.

Hardiness rating RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

Season Winter.



Chionochloa rubra

My favourite grass every month of the year, but I notice it more in February because the rest of the world looks so dreary. The fine, bronze leaves fountain up and out, sweeping the ground gracefully around the outer edge (don't plant it too near a path as you can trip yourself up). It shimmers as it moves, catching the light, especially the low rays of the winter sun. AGM.

Height/spread 1m x 1m.

Origins New Zealand (called red tussock grass there, a bit of a misnomer, although plants from seed do vary in colour).

Conditions Full sun and good drainage, in any good garden soil.

Hardiness rating RHS H7, USDA 8a. Has thrived in my Cotswold garden for more than 12 years, including through -15°C.

Season All year round.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society †Hardiness ratings given where available



Trachelospermum asiaticum

Asiatic jasmine is an evergreen climber suitable for a south- or west-facing wall. The neat, shiny leaves are attractive all year round, but as winter draws in and the nights get colder, occasional leaves turn bright red just in time for Christmas. *T. asiaticum* has small but fragrant cream-coloured, pinwheel flowers that appear in summer. The plant takes two or three years to settle down and then suddenly it starts to grow. This climber wants to cover my house, but fortunately it can be clipped hard. AGM.

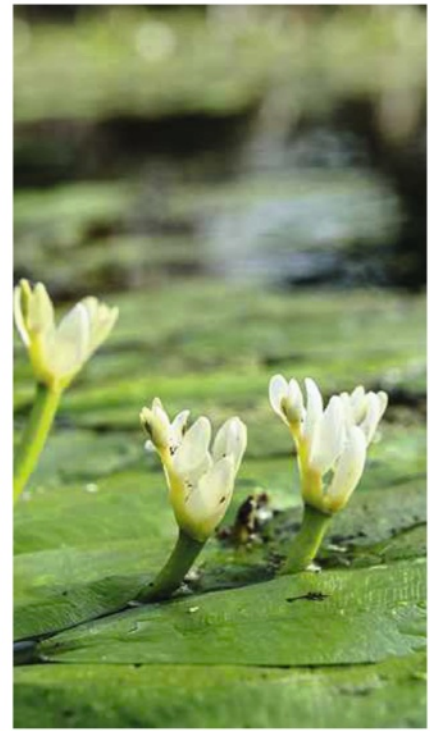
Height/spread 4-8m x 4-8m.

Origins Japan and Korea.

Conditions Sunny south- or west-facing wall, any well-drained soil.

Hardiness rating RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season Summer – winter.



Aponogeton distachyos

The enchanting white flowers of this water hawthorn, with a delicate almond scent, poke out above simple leaves that float flat on the surface of our pond. In South Africa, where it comes from, it is grown as a crop in flooded fields. The flowers are sold by the bagful and used to make 'water-bloometje stew'. When I came back from South Africa in 1996 my husband had planted water hawthorn in our new pond. I thought the plants would never survive the winter but they are still there, in flower most of the year.

Height/spread 10cm x 1m.

Origins South Africa.

Conditions Likes 30-45cm of water, full sun or light shade.

Hardiness rating RHS H3-4, USDA 6a-10b, (less hardy in shallow water).

Season All year round.

Parrotia persica

I planted a *Parrotia persica*, or Persian ironwood, by my front steps intending to walk under its down-sweeping branches one day. I'm already in love with its sinuous limbs of lustrous grey bark, its leaves, which turn butter yellow for me – but can turn red, orange and purple on acid soils – and above all its little, ruby-red flowers, which I never noticed until I had to walk close by it every day. They look like tiny witch hazel flowers and, when covered in snow, remind me of drops of blood.

Height/spread 4-8m x 4-8m.

Origins Iran.

Conditions Tough and obliging. Tolerant of almost any conditions, sun or light shade, acid or alkaline, exposed or sheltered.

Hardiness rating RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season Autumn – winter.

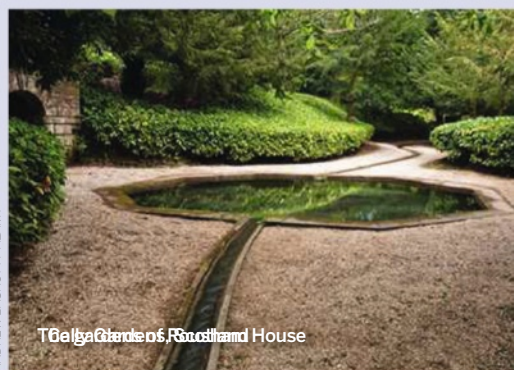


Places to visit

Derry shares some of her favourite places to see plants at their best.

Rousham is perhaps every garden designer's favourite garden. Go in February when the bones are all you see and the light is soft. Beauty can come from just leaves, water and stone. Who needs flowers? Garden open daily. Rousham House & Garden, Steeple Aston, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX25 4QU. Tel 01869 347110, rousham.org.

Ashwoods Nursery is an exquisitely kept nursery



ANDREW BASKOTT / ALAMY

The Gardens of Rousham House

near Birmingham. Go in February to find the best hellebores and hepaticas; hundreds will be in bloom and you can choose the exact flower you want. While you are there get some *Anemone pavoninas* as well; they won't be in flower yet but every one is beautiful. Nursery open daily except 25-26 December. Lower Lane, Ashwood, Kingswinford,

Daphne bholua
'Jacqueline Postill'

A slightly rangy, semi-evergreen shrub that's incredibly fragrant and very early to bloom, it fades into the background until February when your nose sends you scurrying to find fat little clusters of perfect pink and white flowers, nestling demurely at the base of the leaves, spilling over with voluptuous scent. Try to find a sheltered site so the fragrance is not blown away. Known as the Nepalese paper plant, the bark makes extremely fine lightweight, but tough, paper traditionally used for Buddhist sacred texts.

Height/spread 2.5m x 1.5m.

Origins Nepal.

Conditions Full sun or light shade, good soil, good drainage but not dry.

Hardiness rating RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season Late winter.



Ulmus x hollandica
'Jacqueline Hillier'

A dwarf elm tree which is said not to be susceptible to Dutch elm disease because the beetles fly at a height of about 4.5m and it never gets that tall. I hope that is so, because this tree is wonderful in the garden. It grows like a bonsai, each of its twisted branches ending in sprays of neatly fish-boned twigs, best seen against a winter sky. The small, neat, serrated leaves form a dense shrub but it responds well to being opened out by careful pruning to reveal its miniature tree-like structure.

Height/spread 3m x 3m.

Origins Hybrid between *U. glabra* and *U. minor*.

Conditions Full sun or light shade.

Hardiness rating RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Season All year round.



Arum italicum 'Marmoratum'

This arum's big, arrow-shaped, glossy leaves, heavily veined with white, emerge in October. They edge our curving path, lighting the way through the woods all winter, impervious to snow and ice. In spring a few rather floppy pale green spathe appear, then the whole plant dies back and disappears in May. In autumn the beautiful leaves return, sometimes with a bonus of fat stalks of bright-red berries. They tend to berry best in sun, but have bigger leaves in shade. All parts of the plant are poisonous. AGM.

Height/spread 50cm x 50cm.

Origins Europe.

Conditions Sun or shade, any good soil, not too dry, very deep rooted, may self sow.

Hardiness rating RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

Season Autumn – spring.

West Midlands DY6 0AE.
Tel 01384 401996,
ashwoodnurseries.com.

For massed displays of snowdrops visit **Colesbourne Park** and **Painswick Rococo Gardens**. At Colesbourne you can see large groups of named snowdrops and there are open days each February and March. Colesbourne, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 9NP. Tel 01242 870567, colesbournegardens.org.uk.

Painswick has one of the largest naturalistic plantings of snowdrops in the country. Open 10 January to end of October. Painswick, Gloucestershire GL6 6TH. Tel 01452 813204, roccogarden.org.uk.

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a great place to visit at any time of the year, but in February when the weather is bad you can spend the day in the



CHRIS J DIXON

The National Botanic Garden of Wales

giant Mediterranean greenhouse and imagine you are in the South of France. It is organised geographically so you can see South African or Californian plants in the context of other plants that they grow with. Open daily except 24-25 December. National Botanic Garden of Wales, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire SA32 8HN. Tel 01558 668768, gardenofwales.org.uk.



Music & Wine of the East

A passage through time from the Danube Delta to Budapest aboard the MS Diamond
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Join us aboard the delightful MS Diamond on what promises to be a splendid journey from the Danube Delta to Budapest. This is a river cruise of many hundreds of miles as the mighty river travels through Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Hungary. From the delta lands of the Danube to the plains of Hungary, we will visit the great cities of Bucharest, Belgrade and Budapest as well as riverside villages and towns along the Danube, as the great river makes its way from the Black Sea. During our journey we will enjoy informative talks by our guest speaker, as well as music performances by Romanian violinist Sherban Lupu in the intimate setting of the lounge. There will also be some fascinating local dance and music performances ashore.



MS Diamond

We are delighted to have chartered the 170-passenger MS Diamond which provides excellent hotel-style cabins, welcoming public rooms and first class cuisine. All staterooms and suites feature en-suite facilities with shower and toilet, delightful furnishings, individual climate control and comfortable bedding. There is also a flat screen television with a choice of movies, a telephone, mini bar, safe, hairdryer as well as ample storage space. In addition the majority of cabins feature a French Balcony. The vessel features a spacious lounge and bar affording excellent views and a front observation deck. The elegant restaurant serves meals in a single sitting and other public areas include a spacious sun deck with comfortable deck furniture, a fitness centre, hair salon and internet stations. Our experienced team of field staff, interesting on board lectures, and the added inclusion of drinks with dinner, as well as all gratuities makes for all-round ease and enjoyment.



The Itinerary in brief

Day 1 - London or Manchester to Bucharest. Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to Cernavoda and embark the MS Diamond.

Day 2 - Danube Delta. The vast Danube Delta is one of the most important wetlands left in Europe. From the port of Tulcea, join a boat trip to explore the delta. After dinner recital by Sherban Lupu.

Day 3 - Bucharest. Arrive this morning in the port of Oltenita for a drive to Bucharest for a guided city tour and lunch in a typical Romanian restaurant. After dinner this evening we will be entertained by a lively Bulgarian Folk troupe.

Day 4 - Rousse. After breakfast join a city tour of Rousse, birthplace of Nobel Prize winner for literature, Elias Canetti. This afternoon is at leisure, with its stunning architecture, great museums, charming restaurants and shops, there is much to explore here. After dinner performance by Sherban Lupu.

Day 5 - Veliko Tarnovo. From the port of Rousse, depart by coach for a full-day tour to Veliko Tarnovo, the 'City of the Tsars'.

Day 6 - Belogradchik. Today we will drive to Belogradchik which is located close to the Serbian border. The Belogradchik Rocks are a famous Bulgarian beauty spot. The excursion will end with a visit to Vidin

for a performance of classical music by a string quartet from the Vidin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Day 7 - Cruising through the Iron Gates. Today the scenery becomes truly spectacular as you cruise through the Iron Gates, a narrow Danube gorge between the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains.

Day 8 - Belgrade. Arrive in Belgrade and join a tour of the city's main attractions. The tour will end with an excellent dance display from a local Folklore troupe.

Day 9 - Novi Sad. Today we will arrive in Novi Sad. The city is rich in historic buildings and our exploration of Greater Novi Sad includes a wine tasting in nearby Sremski Karlovci; where we sample some excellent wines.

Day 10 - Pecs & Villany. Depart after breakfast for a full day scenic tour of Pecs and Villany. The visit will feature the

sites associated with the city's Roman Ottoman Hapsburg past, as well as a short organ recital in the splendid Pecs Cathedral. Continue on to the town of Villany one of Hungary's top wine regions, known for its reds and rosés.

Day 11 - Kalocsa. Today we are in charming Kalocsa where our tour includes the town and a spectacular display of Hungarian horsemanship.

Day 12 - Budapest. This morning we will explore Hungary's elegant capital. The excursion will include the old quarter and the Fisherman's Bastion. Join an afternoon tour of the beautiful State Opera House, followed by a concert by Hungarian pianist, Agnes Kovacs.

Day 13 - Budapest to London or Manchester. Disembark after breakfast and return to London or Manchester by scheduled flight.

Prices and Inclusions

Special offer prices per person based on double occupancy start from £2520 for a category E twin cabin. Cabins for sole use from £3980.

Price Includes: Economy class scheduled air travel, 12/13 nights aboard the MS Diamond on full board, house wine, beer and soft drinks with dinner, shore excursions, music events/wine tastings as described, guest speaker, services of a cruise director, tour manager, transfers, port taxes, airport taxes, gratuities to crew and whilst on shore excursions. * The 15th October departure is 13 nights with an extra day in Budapest. Itinerary available on request.

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The scented garden

It may be cold and wet outside, but food writer and gardener Jojo Tulloh is dreaming of her herb garden in high summer

WORDS JOJO TULLOH
ILLUSTRATION SARAH YOUNG

A herb garden in high summer is a hard thing to conjure in February. Close your eyes and try. Can you hear the bees droning soporifically between each tiny flower? Reach down and pick some leaves, crush them and inhale. Powerful memories come rushing back. Now open your eyes. It is cold and very likely wet outside and it's hard to imagine anything as small as a bee surviving the winter.

Planning your herb garden can be daunting. Which are the essential plants? What will you use those herbs for? Most gardeners who like to cook probably already have sage, rosemary and bay in their garden. It seems unjust that the leaves you use most sparingly (on account of their overpowering strength) should be just the ones that grow most easily. Add thyme, mint, marjoram, chives and parsley and we have the usual suspects rounded up. Plant lovage, chervil, dill, summer and winter savory, and you are well provided for.

It helps to know the categories that most culinary herbs (with some exceptions) fall into. Marjoram, basil, rosemary, lavender, sage, mint, thyme and savoury are all in the *Labiatae* family; these plants have leaves impregnated with volatile oils, which when crushed or pounded release their scent. The fragrant oils of the *Umbelliferae* family plants are present in the fruit (seed) of dill, anise, caraway, coriander and cumin; chervil, parsley, fennel and lovage also fall into ▷

“My favourite way to eat herbs is in salad. I usually roll up some soft leaved herbs and salad greens in a little cigar, which I nibble while wandering round my plot”

▷ this category but in their case it is the fragrant leaves that are used. A little botanical knowledge helps us better understand why we must chop, pound, tear, bruise or crush these leaves and seeds.

Many cooks add a bay leaf to a stock pot or chop parsley, chives, mint, basil, tarragon, chervil and summer savoury for an omelette aux fines herbes. Try some of the ideas below to widen the repertoire. My favourite way to eat herbs is in a salad. I usually roll up some soft leaved herbs and salad greens in a little cigar, which I nibble while wandering round my vegetable plot – that way I can decide on the most felicitous combination.

Simple but tasty ideas for cooking with herbs

Bay (*Laurus nobilis*)

Add a bay leaf and a strip of lemon peel to quick, tinned tomato sauces or roast meatballs with thin slices of lemon, bay leaves and white wine.

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

Fry a sage leaf in olive oil and crack an egg on top – your morning egg on toast will be forever improved.

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)

Chopped fresh leaves and fresh chillies make a fine masala omelette or add a bunch full of finely chopped leaves to a *masoor dal* (red lentil dahl) two minutes before serving.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*)

Bees make excellent honey from these tiny, dark-purple flowers, which look pretty in a border with catmint, rosemary and lavender. The blooms add a hot note to salad.

Sorrel (*Rumex scutatus*)

Cut into thin ribbons the acidity of raw sorrel is less obtrusive. I like it best on top of a puy lentil salad and home-made pizzas with Taleggio and rocket.

Summer savory (*Satureja hortensis*)

The small, aromatic green leaves can be chopped finely and added to tomato sauces and salads.

Mint (*Mentha spicata*)

Fresh mint is indispensable, in homemade lemonade, in boiling water for tea, in a salad of broad beans, pea and asparagus or in Vietnamese rice paper rolls with seared beef.

Basil

I love the tiny leaved bush basil (*Ocimum minimum*), the plant's spherical shape and powerful scent make it perfect for window boxes. Lemon basil (*Ocimum x africanum*) is useful in fish and poultry dishes, or try a leaf in a glass of Prosecco.

Lemon verbena (*Aloysia citrodora*)

The papery, lance-shaped leaves are rich in essential oils, I drink the fresh leaves as a tisane almost every day but you can also use them to flavour jellies and sorbets.

Chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*)

With its aniseed flavour, chopped chervil is delicious in a salad of grated beetroot and crème fraîche or chopped and stirred through a root veg soup.

Rocket (*Eruca sativa*)

The delicate white flowers of rocket with their filigree tracings are an essential part of my salads. On my allotment they flower into late autumn.



Natural beekeeping

The beauty and diversity of our gardens is dependent on a wide range of pollinators. You cannot grow flowers and vegetables and not also consider the bees (honey and bumble). Two summers ago I became a beekeeper myself. I keep my bees in a hive invented in the 1920s by a French priest who wanted to make beekeeping affordable to all.

The Abbé Émile Warré (1867–1951) looked around and saw that the local peasants could not afford the start-up cost of the new industrial hives (as opposed to straw skeps) then being produced. The **Warré hive** (also known as *la ruche populaire* or the people's hive) he designed in response, is simple, cheap to make, bee friendly and supplies a surplus of honey. Most importantly the Warré is a natural beehive. Natural or sustainable beekeepers try to keep bees with a minimum of interference, working with the bee's natural physiology to build up strength and resistance to disease. They try not to treat the bees with chemicals or feed them sugar. You will still get honey but also strong, healthy colonies of bees. This way of keeping bees doesn't take up too much time and is ideally suited for nature-loving gardeners. The website warre.biobees.com has more information on natural beekeeping.

Even if you don't decide to keep bees you can help by not using chemicals in your garden. New studies have shown the disastrous effect neonicotinoids have on all types of bees and pollinating insects. Always be aware of what you are planting: have the seeds, bulbs, or compost been treated with systemic pesticides? If in doubt ask the producer.

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Hearts and flowers

Treat your loved one (or yourself) with a range of stylish gifts and garden accessories this Valentine's Day

PHOTOGRAPHS SEAN MALYON STYLING NIKI GOSS



1 Evoke a sense of nostalgia with this vintage-style school milk **tray**, equally great for breakfast in bed or for carrying plants and seedlings in the garden, £14.95 (42cm length x 26cm width x 7cm height); a set of six miniature milk **bottles** in a carrier make great vases for single stems or small posies, £9.95, both from Dotcomgiftshop 020 8746 2473, dotcomgiftshop.com. Bird box, stylist's own. Striped twine, see 4 opposite.



2 Hard-working gardeners need to make time for a break, keep supplies in this emergency **food tin** £12.99 (set includes matching mug, not shown) from Argos 0845 640 2020, argos.co.uk. Pillar-box red enamel **teapot** £19.99 and matching **mugs** £7.99 each, all from Falcon Enamelware, falconenamelware.com. Felco Professional No.2 **secateurs** are hard-wearing and great for pruning roses, £49.95 from Harrod Horticultural 0845 402 5300, harrodhorticultural.com.



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3 Keep an eye on things heating up in the garden or greenhouse with this painted, wooden, wall-mountable **thermometer** £8.99 from Gardens2you 01933 624084, gardens2you.co.uk. **Long matches** are great to have on hand for lighting bonfires, this pack of 50 27cm-long matches by Pluto Produkter comes in a decorative tube and is £4.50 from Northlight Homestore 01235 848192, northlighthomestore.com

4 Briers 'Deluxe' gardening **gloves** with hide palm and adjustable cuff, £9.55 from Mail Order Trees 0800 066 5972, mailordertrees.co.uk. Small flower **snips** £5.95 from Sarah Raven 0845 092 0283, sarahraven.com. Sophie Conran collection of five, coloured striped **twine** spools (red, grey, pink, orange and blue), £8.95 from Burgon & Ball 0114 233 8262, burgonandball.com

5 This heart-shaped hanging **bird feeder** can also be used as a candle-holder, £11.95 from Sarah Raven (see 4).

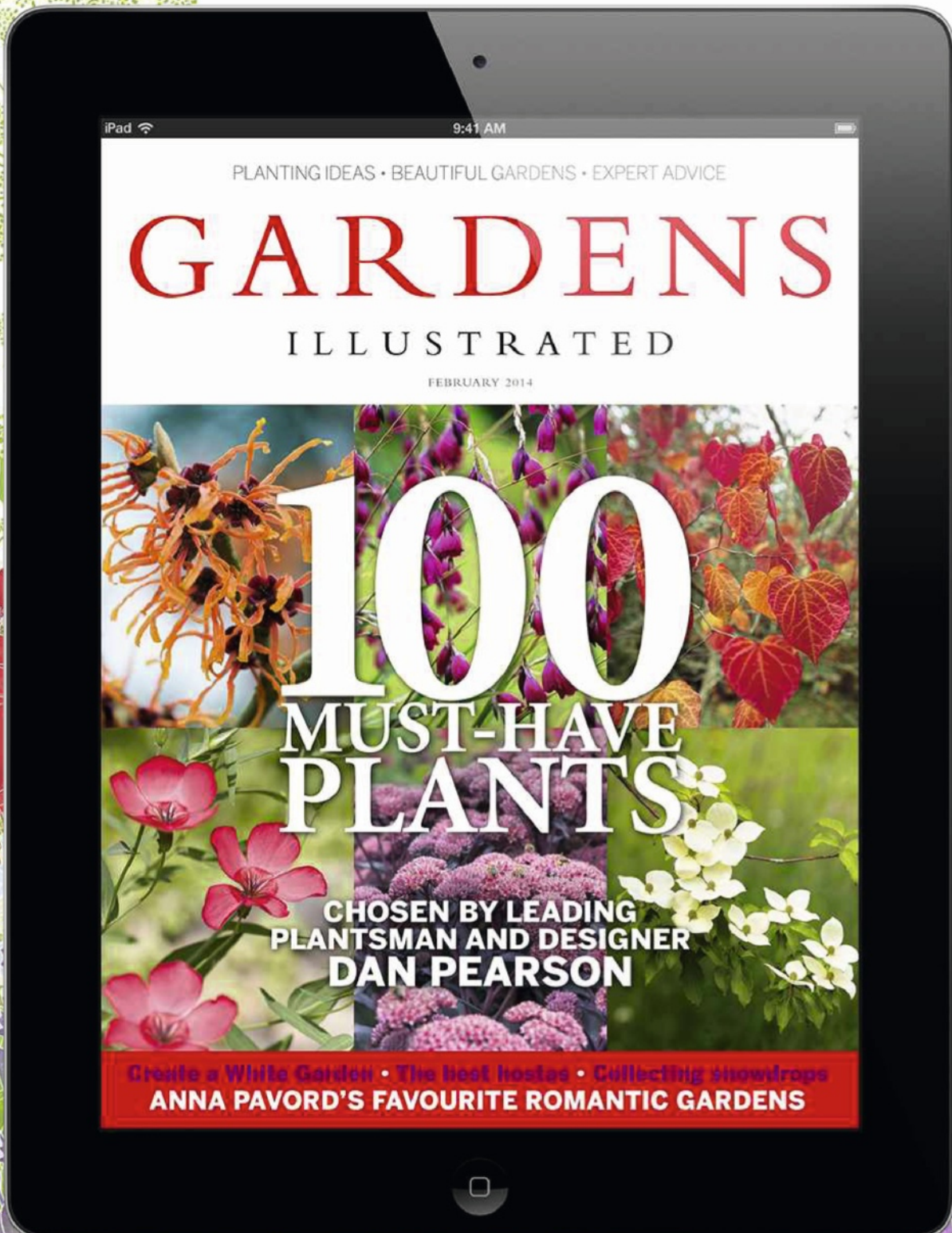
6 Keep your feet dry in a pair of Mocklite tall **boots**, shown here in 'Genoa Garnet'. They feature a waterproof sole with tan leather upper and moccasin-style frills, £80 from Mocks, mocksonline.com. Miniature milk bottle **vase** see 1, opposite.

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Garden Friends : Kingfisher, Hare, Cats, Chickens, etc



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DAN PEARSON'S 100 MUST-HAVE PLANTS

One of the UK's leading plantsmen and designers reveals the star performers that will provide your garden with a year's worth of glorious colour, structure and scent

WORDS DAN PEARSON



Annuals

1 *AMMI MAJUS*

An upright annual with open umbels of lacy, white flowers that persist for many weeks. Perfect for weaving into gaps to lighten weightier companions. Sow in early spring for best results. **Height (H)** 50cm-1m. **Spread (S)** 50cm-1m. **Conditions (C)** All soil types; well drained. Full sun/part shade. **Hardiness rating (HR)** RHS H4†.

2 *ESCHSCHOLZIA CALIFORNICA*

The California poppy is an easy, light-giving annual with a satin finish to petals that energises the colour. Moves opportunistically around to give the garden a lived-in feel. Delightful in all its variants, whether mauve, creamy, rust or tangerine. Sow direct in April. **H** 45cm. **S** 10-50cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun. **HR** RHS H3.

3 *LINUM GRANDIFLORUM 'RUBRUM'*

The scarlet flax is never overwhelming and happy in company if sown early. Dark scarlet, with a darker eye and cerise reverse to shiny petals. Sow direct in spring or early autumn. Annual or biennial. **H** 40-50cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun.

4 *NICOTIANA SUAVEOLENS*

A light-footed nicotiana, with long necked, night-blooming flowers to scent the evening

garden. Delightful, easy and will overwinter for a couple of years in a sheltered corner. Flowers July – September. **H** 50cm. **S** 30cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** Half-hardy annual.

5 *NIGELLA PAPILLOSA 'AFRICAN BRIDE'*

Pale, lightly distributed flowers with a dark, dramatic headdress. Quiet but memorable, it looks lovely seeding among silvery perennials or in the herb garden. Half-hardy annual. Sow direct in March – April and in late August – September. **H** 45-60cm. **S** 30cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade.

6 *PAPAVER SOMNIFERUM 'SINGLE BLACK'*

This form, which I found as a teenager, has single, inky-purple flowers, darker than 'Lauren's Grape', and glaucous foliage. Flowers come alive with bees and dry well, leaving solitary seedheads. Hardy. Sow direct in late winter for best results. Flowers June. **H** 1m. **C** All soils; well drained but moist. Full sun.

7 *SILENE ARMERIA 'ELECTRA'*

Upright, grey-green foliage and neon-pink flowers for a month to six weeks. Easy to grow, often self seeding but for best results, sow direct in spring or early autumn. Biennial, hardy. **H** 30cm. **S** 15cm. **C** All soil types. Light, free-draining soil. Full sun/part shade.

Bulbs

8 *CROCUS TOMMASINIANUS*

Finely tapered buds, silvery violet on the outside, opening wide in sunshine to reveal a lilac interior and orange anthers. Self seeds freely in grass where happy. AGM*. **H** 10cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

9 *CYCLAMEN HEDERIFOLIUM*

F. ALBIFLORUM 'ALBUM'

The white form of this autumn-flowering cyclamen has silver-marbled foliage that arrives as flowers fade and lasts through winter and spring. Completely reliable in dappled shade. **H** 7.5cm. **C** All soil types. Part shade. **HR** RHS H5.

10 *ERYTHRONIUM DENS-CANIS*

Attractive brown-red foliage, dappled with grey-green markings. Violet flowers fling back their petals to reveal a downward push of anthers. Happiest in damp ground and short turf. AGM. **H** 7-10cm. **C** All soil types. Sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

11 *GALANTHUS 'MAGNET'*

Distinctive wide, nodding flowers, borne on slender, arching pedicels in late winter set this snowdrop apart. Elegant, noteworthy, reliable. AGM. **H** 7.5cm. **C** All soils; moisture retentive. Sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.



100 must-have garden plants

12 *GLADIOLUS* 'RUBY'

Deep ruby-red flowers, hooded and dusky and held tall in July and August. Reliably perennial if you find it a warm, free-draining position. **H** 1m. **C** All soil types. Sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5.

13 *LEUCOJUM AESTIVUM* 'GRAVETYE GIANT'

'Gravetye Giant' is an elegant yet robust selection of this tall, bulbous perennial. Large, nodding, green-tipped white bells are held on arching stems above narrow, strappy foliage. Delightful in long grass with pheasant's eye narcissus and apple blossom. **AGM**. **H** 90cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun. **HR** RHS H7.

14 *LILIUM* 'CLAUDE SHRIDE'

A remarkable selection of this delightfully easy lily. Whirled foliage and dark mahogany-red turkscaps, flecked with orange spots that intensify at a deep-gold throat. Rust-orange anthers and a zesty perfume. **H** 1.2-1.8m. **C** All soil types. Sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4.

15 *NARCISSUS* 'PIPIT'

A large-flowered jonquil that bears two or three heads to a stem. Fragrant, pale lemon-yellow flowers soon fade to creamy white at their centre. Sweetly fragrant. **H** 25cm. **C** All soil types. Sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

Bulbs are best planted the year after companion perennials are established, so that you can be confident of their position

16 *NERINE BOWDENII*

Summer-dormant bulbs send up naked stems and a flurry of wavy-edged flowers of bubble-gum pink. Wonderfully out of place in late autumn. The foliage, which appears after the flower, must have a baking, so plant alone at the base of a warm wall. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

17 *TULIPA SPRENGERI*

Reliably perennial, this late-flowering tulip with glossy green leaves naturalises in damp ground and dappled shade. Pointed green and buff buds splay out to reveal brilliant crimson interiors. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

Climbers

18 *AKEBIA LONGERACEMOSA*

Long racemes of maroon flowers in spring. Vigorous twining growth and semi-evergreen trifoliate foliage. Flowers best in sun but tolerant of a cool wall. **H** 8-12m. **S** 8m. **C** All soil types. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4.

19 *HEDERA PASTUCHOVII* 'ANN ALA'

'Ann Ala' has dark-green, undivided foliage in the shape of an elongated shield with prominent grey veining. Quietly noteworthy. Self-clinging and hardy. **AGM**. **H** 4m. **S** 3m. **C** Any soil type. Any position. **HR** RHS H5.

20 *JASMINUM OFFICINALE* 'DEVON CREAM'

With flowers the colour of clotted cream, this jasmine is softer in appearance than the white-flowered species. Keep a little 'hungry' once established to promote free flowering. Performs best on a hot wall. Delicate foliage, bronzed in spring for a moment. Deciduous. Frost hardy. **H** 5m. **C** Full sun.

21 *PARTHENOCISSUS HENRYANA*

A vigorous deciduous climber that never overwhelms. Plant on a cool wall to encourage the best colouring of the leaf. Dark, velvety green with a bronze cast and silver midrib. Small, dark-blue berries among deep-red foliage in autumn. **AGM**. **H** 8-12m. **C** All soil types; any wall aspect. **HR** RHS H5.

22 *ROSA* 'COOPERI'

A rambler, with single ivory flowers around a boss of dark stamens. Delicately fragrant, it blooms only once a year but for more than a month. Lustrous, apple-green foliage that is almost evergreen. Prefers a warm wall where it is vigorous and reliable. Hardy in southern England. **H** 4m. **C** A warm wall in the north. ▷



▷ **23 SCHIZOPHRAGMA INTEGRIFOLIUM**

A vigorous leafy climber, smothered with wide lacecap flowers, fringed with creamy bracts. Breathtaking. This large deciduous shrub uses aerial roots to climb. Flowers best with its head in sunshine and feet in cool soil. AGM. **H** 8-12m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5.

Ferns

24 ADIANTUM VENUSTUM

Hardy maidenhair fern with dark, wiry stems bearing delicate foliage. Almost evergreen in mild areas, browning to rust in late winter. AGM. **H** 25cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

25 ASPLENIUM SCOLOPENDRIUM

Reliable native with shiny foliage, adds a sense of stillness to a shady corner. Happy in alkaline conditions. AGM. **H** 40cm. **S** 50cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Easy, part shade. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

26 ATHYRIUM 'GHOST'

Cross between lady fern and Japanese painted fern, combining the best traits of both. Plants form strongly upright, arching clumps of triangular leaves, with a grey-green tone that lightens shady planting. AGM. **H** 60-90cm. **S** 30-45cm. **C** All soil types; moist soil. Part shade/full shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

Important for their ability to underpin the mood of a planting, grasses capture the invisible movement of the wind and instant naturalism

27 DRYOPTERIS WALLICHIANA

A tough, hardy fern with erect, lance-shaped fronds and dark stems. Can be deciduous, semi-evergreen or evergreen. The foliage is bright, yellowish green when emerging but darkens with age. Dramatic and structural, in time it can reach as much as a metre in height in favourable conditions. AGM. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

28 OSMUNDA REGALIS

A magnificent deciduous fern for moist conditions that over time forms a large mound of sculptural root. Unravelling croziers emerge covered in down and fill out to lush, fresh green fronds that spill out under their weight. It has a wonderful primeval quality and is spellbinding in spring. Rusty-brown, spore-bearing pinnae at the tips in late summer. AGM. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; moist soil. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-10b.

Grasses

29 BRIZA MEDIA

A perennial quaking grass with short clumps of deep-green leaves and upright stems of dancing flowers that form a haze of greenish purple. Late spring and early summer, flowers lightening as they age. **H** 30-60cm. **S** 25-30cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun/light shade. Drought tolerant. **HR** USDA 4a-8b.

30 HAKONECHLOA MACRA 'ALL GOLD'

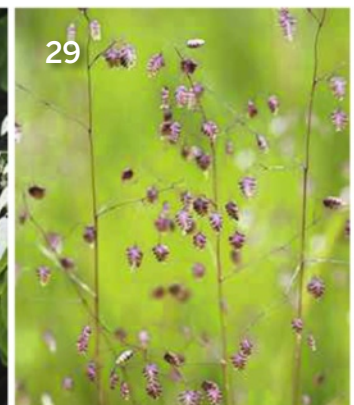
The pure-yellow form that can bring artificial sunshine to shady places. Dries to parchment-white in winter and is a good, well-behaved companion to other woodlanders. **H** 15-20cm. **S** 12-18cm. **C** All soil types. Part shade/sun.

31 MISCANTHUS SINENSIS 'MALEPARTUS'

Standing 2m tall when in flower with thunderous inflorescences that age to silver. Medium weight, strappy leaves and an upright character, standing well through winter. One of the best *Miscanthus*. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 1-1.5m. **C** All soil types. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4.

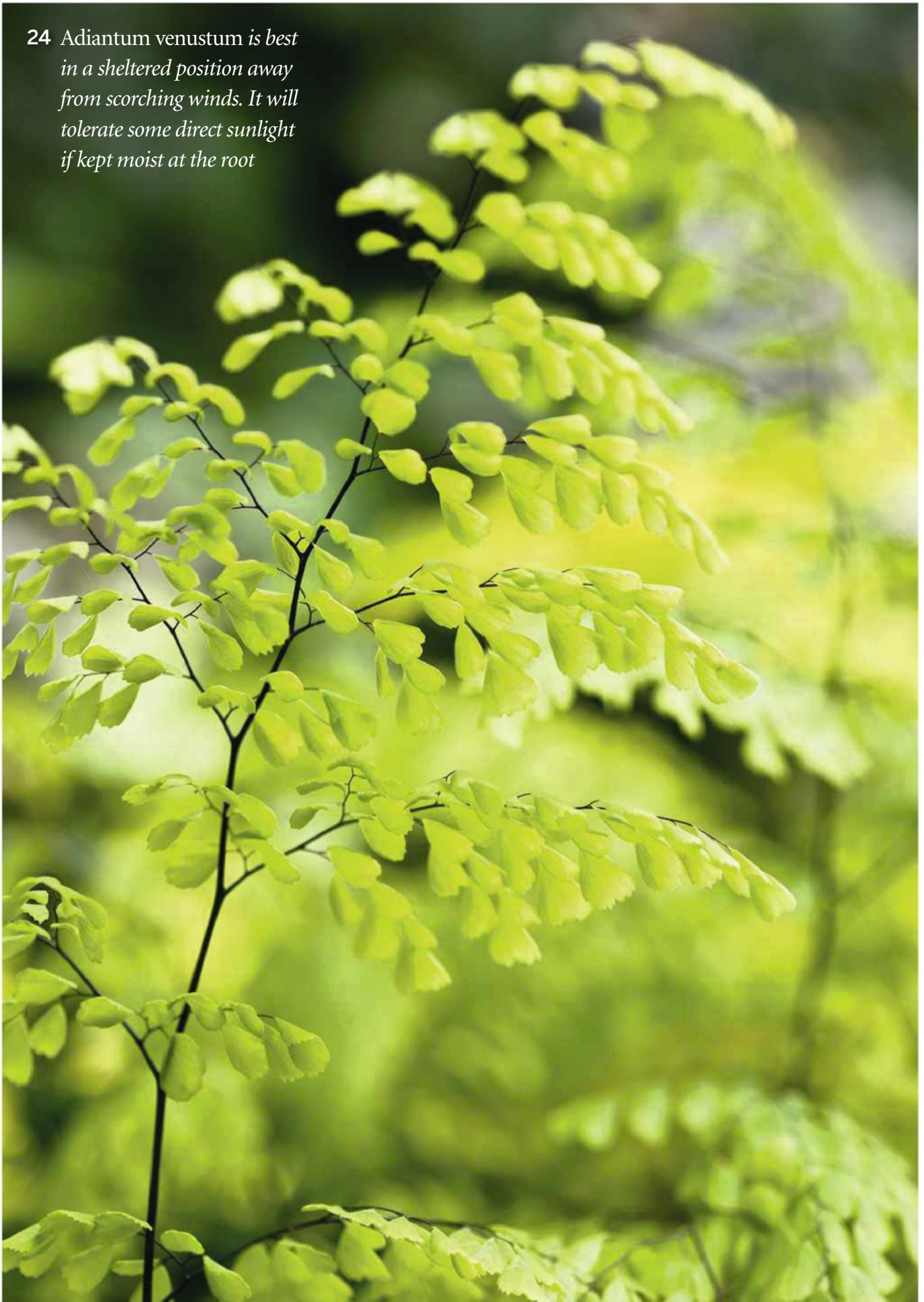
32 MOLINIA CAERULEA SUBSP. ARUNDINACEA 'TRANSPARENT'

A deciduous perennial grass with a low basal clump of foliage that over the summer rises up to form an arching veil of open flowering panicles. Best if it is given a little ▷



23 GAPP PHOTOS / DAVE BEVAN, 26 GAPP PHOTOS / MATT ANKER, 29 GAPP PHOTOS / RICHARD BLOOM, 30 HOLMES GARDEN PHOTOS / ALAMY, 31 GAPP PHOTOS / PAUL DEBOIS

24 *Adiantum venustum* is best in a sheltered position away from scorching winds. It will tolerate some direct sunlight if kept moist at the root



▷ space so that you can appreciate its 2m reach. **H** 1m. **S** 1-2m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. **HR** RHS H4.

33 PANICUM VIRGATUM 'SHENANDOAH'

Fine blue-green foliage that takes on tones of violet, purple, burgundy and wine-red as it matures. Airy panicles of tiny, purplish flowers form a mist above the colourful foliage of late summer. Forms a stiff, dense clump that persists through winter. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **S** All soil types; well drained but moist. Best results when grown 'hard' in full sun. **HR** RHS H4.

34 STIPA BARBATA

Long silken, silvery-green awns, which wave and shimmer in the slightest breeze, emerge from tidy clumps of thin grassy leaves. As they mature, the silken strands dry and curl into a pale feathery bundle before detaching. Must have air around its basal clump of foliage. **H** 40cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun. **HR** USDA 6a.

35 THAMNOCHORTUS INSIGNIS

A dramatic evergreen restio from South Africa with a mound of brown-green wands that readily catch the wind. Male and female plants; the females are weighted with rusty seedheads. Hardy to -30°C. **AGM**. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun.

Half-hardy perennials

36 DAHLIA MERCKII 'ALBA'

Light, airy growth with fine flowers suspended on wiry stems. The white form is a delight, with a pale-yellow disc of internal florets. Reliably perennial if given a little winter protection. Frost hardy-tender. **H** 1.2m. **S** 40cm. **C** Soil well drained but moist. Full sun.

37 PELARGONIUM TOMENTOSUM

Soft, velvet-textured foliage that it is almost impossible not to touch. Peppermint scent and tiny white flowers in early summer. Wide-reaching scrambling limbs and happiest in shade. Tender. **AGM**. **H** 40cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil. Full sun. **HR** RHS H1c, USDA 9b-11.

38 SALVIA DISCOLOR

Silvered foliage smelling of blackcurrants and deep indigo-blue flowers that register black among the foliage. Easy and happy out in the open in the summer. Tender. **H** 45cm. **S** 50cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5.

Perennials

39 ACANTHUS MOLLIS LATIFOLIUS GROUP 'RUE LEDAN'

An elegant, neatly growing acanthus with upright spikes of white flower and lush

architectural foliage. Dependable and semi-evergreen in a warm winter. Often stands well without staking, providing good winter structure. Very long lived. **H** 1.2m. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained soil. Full sun. **HR** USDA 6a-8a.

40 ACTAEA CORDIFOLIA

Bronzed spring foliage sends up tall stems of elongated creamy-white racemes in late summer. A graceful plant for the woodland garden and useful for late flower in shade. **H** 1.5-2m. **S** 60cm. **C** All soil types; moist but well drained. Part shade. **HR** USDA 4a-8b.

41 ANEMONE X HYBRIDA 'HONORINE JOBERT'

Graceful from the moment the foliage emerges in spring. Produces clean, white flowers on long stems. Semi-double but retains an air of wildness, flowering for weeks when much of the garden is beginning to look tired. **AGM**. **H** 1-1.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part sun. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

42 ANGELICA EDULIS

An striking, architectural plant with lush white umbels and slender stems that are tinted by a touch of blackcurrant. Does best in rich, moist conditions. Hardy and perennial if regularly divided. **H** 1.5-2m. **S** 1-1.5m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part sun. **HR** RHS H5.



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34 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY; 36 GAPP/PHOTOS / TOMMY TONINSBERG; 37 JASON INGRAM; 38 MARIANNE MAJERUS; 51 BENNET SMITH / MARIANNE MAJERUS, EDULIS NURSERY, BERKSHIRE / PAUL BARRY

43 ARALIA CORDATA

Spectacular from the moment it erupts in spring. Strong shoots rise up fast to arch out under the weight of foliage and late-flowering panicles of creamy flower, which are followed by inky berries. Large limbed, it helps add a mysterious mood in a shady corner. **H** 2m. **S** 12m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

44 BAPTISIA ALBA VAR. MACROPHYLLA

A tall baptisia with glaucous foliage and elongated spires of cream flower in May. Although late to emerge in spring, its elegant lines are well worth the wait. **H** 2m. **C** Acid and neutral soil; moist but light and well drained. Full sun. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-10b.

45 BRUNNERA MACROPHYLLA

'BETTY BOWRING'

Large, matt-green, heart-shaped leaves follow sprays of white forget-me-not flowers. Sparkling and light-filled in spring with a fine support of foliage for summer understory. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist but light soil and well drained. Cool conditions.

46 BUPLEURUM LONGIFOLIUM

'BRONZE BEAUTY'

An umbelliferous perennial with small yellow flowers surrounded by a ruff of greenish bracts that turn bronze with age. It has a long flowering period and although

Although they require the additional care of over-wintering, half-hardy perennials extend the flowering season in containers or bedded out

short-lived, will self-seed freely. **H** 90cm.

C Well-drained soil. Full sun.

47 CEPHALARIA DIPSACOIDES

Finer in all its parts than *C. gigantea*. Creamy pincushion-like flowers, which appear to float in mid air, are suspended on branching stems of upright airy growth produced from basal clumps of finely divided leaves. **H** 2m.

C All soil types; well drained. Full sun.

48 CERATOSTIGMA PLUMBAGINOIDES

Low growing and slowly creeping, the oval leaves turn red or purple in autumn. Produces welcome clusters of violet-blue flowers from late summer until frost. **AGM**.

H 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade.

HR RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

49 DIERAMA PULCHERRIMUM

'BLACKBIRD'

A basal clump of evergreen foliage supports arching wire-thin stems, weighted by bell-shaped blooms in July. 'Blackbird' is one of

the darkest cultivars. Keep foliage free from competition. Long lived when happy. **H** 1.5m. **S** 30cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun.

50 DIGITALIS FERRUGINEA

An unusual rusty foxglove that forms rosettes of dark-green, lance-shaped leaves out of which emerge elegant, perfectly vertical golden-brown spires of small tightly clustered tubular flowers. Seeds freely where competition is limited. A vigorous biennial or short-lived perennial. **AGM**.

H 1-1.5m. **S** 40cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Sun/part shade.

HR RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

51 DISPORUM LONGISTYLUM

'NIGHT HERON'

In spring, dark, black-purple stems rise from bare soil with a crook of dark chocolate-coloured foliage among which nestle clusters of pale, chartreuse-yellow flowers. Foliage matures to deep green as it fills out. Ink-blue fruit in autumn. **H** 1.2m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained but moist soil. Light shade.

52 EPIMEDIUM WUSHANENSE 'CARAMEL'

The long, jagged-edged leaves are chocolate and burgundy mottled when emerging in spring. Wide-reaching sprays of spidery, caramel-coloured flowers are held on delicate, wiry stems. It is unusual among



40 ARCO IMAGES GMBH / ALAMY, 45 TREVOR SIMS / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES, 46 MARIANNE MAJERUS, 49 GAP PHOTOS / MARCUS HÄRPER, 50 MARIANNE MAJERUS

▷ Asian *Epimediums* for preferring a warm position and tolerant of some sunshine if soil remains moist. **H** 75cm. **S** 75cm.

C All soil types; well drained but moist. Sun/part shade. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

53 ERIGERON KARVINSKIANUS

Flowers continuously all summer with delicate foliage barely visible beneath pale flowers that pinken as they age. Seeds about lightly in bright, dry places. **AGM**. **H** 15cm. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

54 ERYNGIUM AGAVIFOLIUM

A handsome, evergreen perennial that forms a basal rosette of sharply toothed, lime-green leaves. In late summer, chest-height branched stems produce green, thimble-like flower heads that darken to charcoal in autumn. **H** 1-1.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; moist but well drained. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5b-10b.

55 ERYNGIUM EBRACTEATUM

Rosettes of linear-to-lance-shaped foliage give rise to tall, wiry stems bearing myriad reddish-brown thimbles, that are easily confused with *Sanguisorba*. Airy, transparent and subtle. **H** 1.2-2m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

56 FERULA TINGITANA 'CEDRIC MORRIS'

Lacy foliage glistening in early spring

Select perennials primarily for their longevity. Short-lived perennials such as Gaura should always be in the minority, but never overlooked

sunshine makes a handsome mound for the early part of summer. May take several years to flower – the bolt of yellow-green umbels invariably killing the parent but producing plentiful and handsome seedheads. **H** 2.2m. **HR** RHS H4. **C** All soil types.

57 FOENICULUM VULGARE 'PURPUREUM'

With its smoky, aromatic foliage and lime-green umbels of flower, bronze fennel is hard to beat. A perfect companion, its flowers are loved by insects and its seed by birds and cooks alike. Capable of out-standing most other perennials as a winter skeleton. **H** 2m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Well-drained soil. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b.

58 GAURA LINDHEIMERI

A short-lived perennial with airy sprays of dancing white flowers, starry in appearance and adding lift for several months among more densely growing perennials. Self seeds when competition is limited. **AGM**. **H** 75cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Well-drained soil. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

59 GERANIUM 'TINY MONSTER'

Larger flowered than its parent and in a richer deep mauve, making it easy to use as a companion plant. Long flowering and easy, it forms low mounds of weed-suppressing foliage. **H** 40-60cm. **C** Well-drained soil. Full sun. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-7b.

60 GILLENIA TRIFOLIATA

A rhizomatous perennial with reddish stems and three-lobed textured foliage. Open sprays of starry, white flowers with contrasting red calyces. A brief but delightful flower, with good autumn foliage. **AGM**. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 10-50cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Part shade. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9a.

61 GLYCYRRHIZA YUNNANENSIS

A graceful liquorice with upright growth and finely divided, lime-green foliage. Small clusters of mauve flowers give way to sculptural autumnal seedheads. Subtle and noteworthy. **H** 1.5m. **S** 75cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Sun/shade.

62 HELLEBORUS X HYBRIDUS

ASHWOOD HYBRIDS

The stuff of late winter obsession. Very hard to choose a favourite but the yellows are luminous at the tail end of winter. Prefers good ground and cool conditions. **H** 45-90cm. **S** 60cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Part shade. **HR** RHS H7.



63 HEMEROCALLIS 'STAFFORD'

Still my favourite of the reds with rusty orange flowers of graceful form, reflexing to reveal yellowed throats. Long-lived and thoroughly reliable. AGM. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Part shade. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.

64 INULA MAGNIFICA 'SONNENSTRAHL'

A dominant clump of paddle-shaped foliage sends up tall stems of wide branching flowers. Light-absorbing dark cones and filamentous rays of gold petals. Holds seedheads well into winter. Good in long grass. AGM. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 1.2m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. **HR** RHS H7.

65 IRIS LAZICA

Evergreen winter-flowering iris for part shade. A sporadic but continuous succession of azure-blue flowers November – March. Better behaved than cousin *I. unguicularis* for its well-presented, dark-green foliage. AGM. **H** 15-25cm. **C** Well-drained but moist soil.

66 LATHYRUS VERNUS 'GRACILIS'

A fine-leaved form of this low-growing, spring-flowering pea. Reliable and early with dark purple flowers. Dies down soon after flowering, in late midsummer. Team with colchicum to cover for the gap. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade.

67 MOLOPOSPERMUM PELOPONNESIACUM

A striking plant of architectural value that erupts with widely branched, greeny white umbels in early summer. Fascinating plush of early, finely divided glossy foliage cut like lace. **H** 75cm. **S** 75cm. **C** Moisture-retentive, well-drained soil. Sun. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

68 PAEONIA LACTIFLORA 'WHITE WINGS'

Retains an air of wildness, with wide, single white flowers held high above foliage. The foliage is copper as it rises in spring and turns surprisingly fiery tones come autumn. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 1.5-2.5m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4.

69 PERSICARIA AMPLEXICAULIS 'ALBA'

Clean, late spires of finely spun verticals that flower until the frost. Thoroughly reliable with simple leaves that act as a summer foil to companions. **H** 1-1.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4.

70 PERSICARIA VIRGINIANA VAR. FILIFORMIS

Quietly striking foliage marked with a distinctive chocolate chevron. Miniature flowers on wiry spires form a coral mist late in the summer. Seeds around gently in shade if it likes you. **H** 70cm. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Shade/part shade. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

71 RUDBECKIA LACINIATA 'HERBSTSONNE'

A robust rudbeckia with lacinated foliage and a rangy habit that comes into its own in late summer. The many branched flower heads reach above head height, with luminous, golden-yellow petals flung back from dark cones. Brilliant as a cut flower. AGM. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

72 SALVIA NEMOROSA 'CARADONNA'

Inky stems topped by a vertical scoring of violet flowers from early to midsummer. Re-blooms a second time if cut by half after the first wave. A rich accent and dependably perennial. AGM. **H** 75cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Alkaline/sandy soils; well drained but moist. Full sun. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

73 SALVIA ULIGINOSA 'BALLON AZUL'

A shorter growing form of bog sage with fine, slightly sticky leaves and branched stems bearing short spikes of two-lipped, clear-blue flowers held clear on wiry stems. **H** 1-1.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Well-drained but moist soil. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4.

74 SANGUISORBA 'CANGSHAN CRANBERRY'

Introduced from China by plantsman Dan Hinkley, this late-flowering burnet produces myriad rich, burgundy-coloured



63 GAPP PHOTOS / TOMMY TONSBURG; 65 GAPP PHOTOS / CLIVE NICHOLS; 66 GAPP PHOTOS / TOMMY TONSBURG; 70 JASON INGRAM; 72 RACHEL WARNE

▷ cones split in their length by paler red anthers. Elegant, reaching stems over delicate foliage. **H** 1-1.5m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Sun/part shade.

75 SEDUM 'JOSÉ AUBERGINE'

Rich, reddish-brown foliage as luxurious in tonality as red cabbage. Strong and upright without flopping over at full height with small, domed-shaped heads full of ruby red flowers in late summer to autumn. **H** 50-60cm. **S** 35cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun. **HR** RHS H7.

76 SELINUM WALLICHIANUM

Provides lacy foliage during the first half of summer, then stems rise up in the second half to hold fine, flat-topped creamy umbels. Wonderfully sophisticated, it brings a reliable late injection of interest at a time when the garden is often ready for refreshment. **H** 1-1.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** All soil types. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 6b-10b.

77 THALICTRUM 'ELIN'

Captivating from the moment the purple-green foliage erupts in spring. All movement is upward, the foliage finally being left behind as wiry stems carry tiny clouds of purple-cream flowers skyward, which are then held aloft during mid to late summer. **H** 2.5m. **S** 50cm. **C** All soil types. Sun/part shade. **HR** USDA 3a-7b.

Choose shrubs that have more than one, or an unexpected, season of interest: spring blossom and autumn berries, autumn colour, winter blossom or scent

78 VERBENA MACDOUGALII 'LAVENDER SPIRES'

A welcome break from the ubiquitous *V. bonariensis*, this sterile hybrid has a wonderful airiness and is also long flowering. Sturdy flowering stems produce branching flower spikes with fine tapers colouring lavender-mauve. En masse it can add a distinctive purple-blue gauze among companions. Much loved by pollinating insects. **H** 1.2m. **S** 50cm. **C** All soil types. Full sun. **HR** RHS H4.

Shrubs

79 AESCULUS PARVIFLORA

A gently suckering, deciduous dome-shaped shrub with a fine framework of limbs. Summer flowering, it produces spectacular creamy white, tapering candle-like flowers late in the season. The unfurling of the coppery palmate foliage in spring is exquisite. Good autumn colour. **AGM**. **H** 2.5-4m. **S** 4-8m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Sun/part sun. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

80 CAMELLIA SASANQUA 'NARUMIGATA'

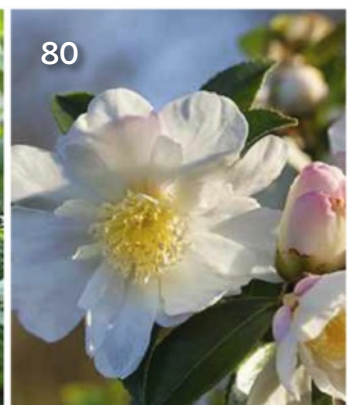
Evergreen tapering foliage, flowering in November. Single flowers of the palest pink, almost white, scattered lightly over a light-limbed shrub. Prefers warm position with some sunshine to ripen wood. **AGM**. **H** 1.5-2.5m (will reach ultimate height in 10-20 years). **S** 1.5-2.5m. **C** Acid or neutral soil; well drained but moist. **HR** RHS H4.

81 CHIMONANTHUS PRAECOX 'GRANDIFLORUS'

A deciduous shrub with a quiet summer presence. Pea-sized buds breaking deep in winter with curious flowers the colour and translucency of wax. Highly fragrant, one sprig can perfume a whole room. Prefers a warm position to ripen wood. **AGM**. **H** 2.5-4m (will reach ultimate height in 10-20 years). **S** 1.5-2.5m. **C** All soil types. Moist but well drained. Full sun. **HR** RHS H5.

82 EUONYMUS PLANIPES

Arguably the best spindle. A neat, slow growing shrub with dark-red fruit suspended on long pedicels. When the foliage colours pink the fruits rupture to reveal seeds the colour of orange peel. Deciduous. **H** 1.5-2.5m (time to ultimate height: 10-20 years). **S** 1.5-2.5m. **C** All soil types; moist but well drained. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4. ▷



75 GAPP PHOTOS / TOMMY TONISBERG. 79 JASON INGRAM. 80 MARIANNE MAJERUS. RHS GARDEN WISLEY. 81 CLIVE NICHOLS. 82 ANNAICK GUITTENY

77 Although requiring support in its first year, in subsequent years *Thalictrum* 'Elin' will easily reach 2.5m without support



▷ **83 HAMAMELIS X INTERMEDIA 'JELENA'**

A wide, deciduous shrub with bright-green foliage that colours buttery in autumn. Rust-orange flowers with a citrusy perfume appear early. Still one of the best witch hazels. Fully hardy. AGM. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Acid to neutral soil; moist but well drained. Full sun/part shade. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

84 HYDRANGEA ASPERA KAWAKAMII GROUP

Young foliage, coppery in spring, fills out to provide drama in summer and a fine backdrop to the wide lacecap flowers that appear in October. The skeletal forms of which hold on well to naked winter branches. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **C** Well-drained but moist soil. Cool position/part shade. **HR** RHS H3.

85 ILEX X KOEHNNEANA 'CHESTNUT LEAF'

Foliage that is more reminiscent of sweet chestnut than holly, paler green and always worthy of comment. Female and reliably fruiting if it has a mate. Useful in exposed positions. AGM. **H** 5m, but can be pruned to size. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun for the best fruit. **HR** RHS H6.

86 INDIGOFERA 'CLARET CASCADE'

Fine in all its parts, with ferny foliage and arching, open growth. 'Claret Cascade' was

To avoid the need for future pruning always choose a tree that will be appropriate in size when mature for the planting position

one of the stars of the Wisley trial with prolific, long-blooming racemes of flower not unlike a miniature wisteria. AGM. **H** 2-2.5m. **C** Well-drained soil. Full sun. Needs shelter.

87 LAURUS NOBILIS F. ANGUSTIFOLIA

A bay laurel with a fine appearance made lighter by the feathered edge to the foliage. Useful as a neutral, evergreen backdrop as well as for cooking. Flowers small, pale, greenish yellow, in dense clusters; fruit oval, glossy black when ripe. **H** 2.5-4m. **C** All soil types; well drained. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4.

88 MAGNOLIA WILSONII

My favourite summer-blooming magnolia. This deciduous shrub has large, pendulous, cup-shaped flowers, ivory white with a dark eye and heavily scented. Unusual among magnolias for its tolerance of lime but must have cool conditions and dappled shade. AGM. **S** 3-5m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H6.

89 PEROVSKIA ATRIPLICIFOLIA 'LITTLE SPIRE'

Shorter than 'Blue Spire' and less prone to flopping, this erect sub-shrub has white stems bearing deeply divided, aromatic greyish leaves. Small, violet-blue flowers in large panicles appear in late summer and autumn. Beloved by bees and butterflies. **H** 75cm-1.2m. **C** All soil types; well drained. Full sun. **HR** H5, USDA 5a-9b.

90 ROSA THE ALEXANDRA ROSE (= 'AUSDAY')

Soft, almost thornless growth and an open habit. Never more flower than bud, with a constant succession of single blooms that open to coppery pink then bleach delicately to blush pink. Repeat flowering and disease resistant. **H** 1.2m. **S** 2m. **HR** RHS H3.

91 SARCOCOCCA RUSCIFOLIA VAR. CHINENSIS 'DRAGON GATE'

Neat with fine foliage and graceful habit. An essential evergreen with cream-coloured, highly perfumed flowers in deep midwinter. Dark-red berries; happy to be clipped like box after flowering. **H** 1m. **S** 1m. **C** All soil types. Part shade. **HR** RHS H5.

92 SALIX PURPUREA 'NANCY SAUNDERS'

Delicate blue-grey foliage emerges from slender maroon stems, which flex nicely in the wind. In March, the branches are adorned



83 MBP-ONE / ALAMY; 84 GAPPHOTOS / JASON SWALLEY; 88 GAP PHOTOS / JONATHAN BUCKLEY; 89 GAP PHOTOS / ROB WHITWORTH; 91 SHARON PEARSON / ALAMY

with miniature silver-grey catkins, which are a magnet for the first bees. Best kept to a modest size by stooling third of the growth annually. **H** 4m (2.5m with annual maintenance). **C** Wet resistant but tolerant of dry ground. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

Trees and shrubs

93 *CERCIDIPHYLLUM JAPONICUM*

An spectacular deciduous tree, multi-stemmed by nature and of refined appearance. The copper-toned foliage of spring changes to yellow, honey-orange and pink in autumn and smells strongly of burning sugar or candy floss. **AGM**. **H** 12m-plus. **S** 8m-plus. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

94 *CERCIS CANADENSIS* 'FOREST PANSY'

Over time 'Forest Pansy' will form a large deciduous shrub or small tree with delicate growth doming in summer. Branches are spangled with tiny, pea-like flowers ahead of foliage that opens ruby red and darkens to plum. **AGM**. **H** 2-5m. **C** All soil types; well drained. Full sun or part shade but plant so the sun can backlight foliage. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

95 *CORNUS* 'NORMAN HADDEN'

A semi-evergreen shrub or small tree, this is a charming cross between *C. kousa* and

C. capitata. In June its branches are weighed down by flat, four-pointed, creamy bracts. Strawberry-like fruit in autumn. **AGM**. **H** 4-6m. **S** 4-8m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade.type. **HR** RHS H5.

96 *CRATAEGUS MONOGYNA*

Although a common native, the hawthorn is worthy of a place in the garden. Called May blossom for its smother of creamy flowers in the fifth month. Beloved by birds for its mass of dark-red fruit in autumn. **H** 4-8m. **S** 4-8m. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 4a-7b.

97 *LIQUIDAMBAR ACALYCINA*

Smaller growing than its cousin *L. styraciflua*. Neat maple-like foliage colouring ruby red and amber over several weeks in autumn. **H** 12m-plus. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H4.

98 *MALUS HUPEHENSIS*

Perhaps the best of the crab apples with a weight of immaculate white flower on an upright tree that broadens with age. Showy but never overwhelming. Small, cherry-red fruits ripen early and last well into November before being stripped by birds. **AGM**. **H** 4-12m. **S** 4-12m. **C** Any soil type but must be well drained. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

99 *SORBUS TORMINALIS*

An English tree now rare but worthy of a place in the garden. Maple-like foliage that colours red in autumn with fruits the size of marbles that when 'bletted' by frost are mildly alcoholic and were used for currency in medieval times. **H** 12m-plus. **S** 8m-plus. **C** All soil types; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

100 *STEWARTIA MONADELPHA*

A small, deciduous tree with attractive, copper-coloured, flaking bark and small, lightly distributed leaves turning orange and red in autumn. Cupped, five-petaled, white flowers to 6cm in early summer. **H** 12m-plus. **C** Acid soil; well drained but moist. Full sun/part shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b. □

Reader offer

To buy a selection of Dan's must-have plants at a 10 per cent discount from the Beth Chatto Nursery, please **turn to page 99**.

Gardens Illustrated lecture

Dan Pearson, along with plantsman Fergus Garrett, will be talking to Anna Pavord at this year's GARDENS ILLUSTRATED lecture, at the Royal Geographical Society on Tuesday 20 May 2014. For details, please **turn to page 8**. To find out more about Dan's planting and design work visit danpearsonstudio.com



92 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / THE GARDEN COLLECTION; 94 GAPP PHOTOS / RACHEL WARNE; 95 GAPP PHOTOS / CHRISTINA BOLLEN; 96 GAPP PHOTOS / DAVE BEVAN; 98 GAPP PHOTOS / CHRISTINA BOLLEN

In brief

Name La Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan.

What An elegant contemporary garden inspired by medieval monastery gardens.

Where The French province of Berry, around 200 miles south of Paris.

Size 7.5 acres of formal garden with a further 37 acres of managed land surrounding it.

Soil Very heavy clay.

Climate Extreme temperatures typically 35-40°C in the summer and -20°C in winter. Average rainfall 45cm per annum.

Points of interest Atmospheric and elegant garden with extensive and inventive structural planting, trained fruit trees, potager and rose garden.

T

f I have a small talent it is that I can understand the potential of a site," says architect Patrice Taravella, who in 1991 saw the potential in an old ruined monastery. La Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan also came with several acres of land, part of which Patrice, using characteristic ingenuity, has developed into an inspiring garden.

His approach is founded on the principle that creating something beautiful should not be the aim, "but if something is useful and well made it will be beautiful". The garden he has created, 'loosely inspired' by medieval gardens with fruit trees trained on wooden structures, is an ordered, rather magical, world where everything is either edible (as well as being Patrice's home, La Prieuré is for part of the year a restaurant and Relais & Châteaux hotel) or has symbolic value.

At the centre of the three principal buildings is a cloister made of immaculately pruned arches of hornbeam. It feels entirely square but in fact the eye is cheated as the arches have been cleverly set at an angle to compensate for the irregular outline shape. There are two large beds, boldly planted with wheat and broad beans in the spring, followed by cabbages and leeks in July. Chenin blanc vines, trained on elegant hand-built structures, provide a rhythmic heartbeat to the space. At the centre is a handsome stone 'fountain of life', around which are four

Continued on page 52 ▷



Divine inspiration

Inspired by medieval gardens, Patrice Taravella has used his architectural sensibility to create a contemporary delight in the grounds of an old monastery

WORDS NON MORRIS PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY



Hornbeam hedges, pruned to resemble the original priory's cloisters, surround a small vineyard close to the priory buildings.

Five of the best garden structures

At La Prieuré hedges are always the starting point for each garden area. Most are hornbeam – tough enough for both the heavy clay and the extreme temperatures – but there is beech too for contrasting blocks and domes. “The charm of beech is that it comes into leaf and loses its leaves a month later than hornbeam,” says Patrice. Panels of yew provide a lush, velvety backdrop.

1 Long, controlled vistas

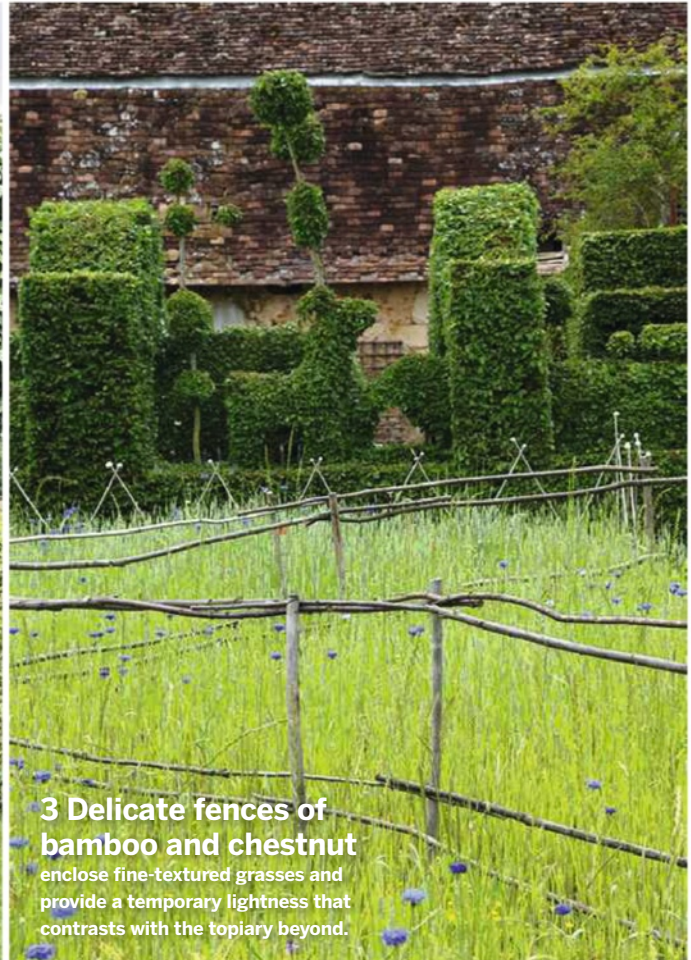
are gently interrupted by soft mounds of *Rosa* ‘Madame Alfred Carrière’ trained over crinoline-shaped wooden frameworks and upright trellised panels.





2 Low hornbeam hedges

guide the eye to a stilted beech hedge and an elegant chestnut gate panel – and beyond to an inviting glimpse of the adjoining meadow.



3 Delicate fences of bamboo and chestnut

enclose fine-textured grasses and provide a temporary lightness that contrasts with the topiary beyond.



4 A pear tree orchard

has been planted in a concentric pattern to echo the nearby maze garden. Its circular border is filled with highly scented *Lavandula x intermedia* 'Grosso'.



5 Windows in hedges

offer a glimpse of the adjoining area. Prunice leaves enough space between each hornbeam plant so that he needs only to remove smaller branches not key limbs.

Facing page this 180-year-old pear tree – lost in a storm in October 2013– was a key focal point of Patrice’s original design for the garden. The willow bench that surrounds it is one of several created by head gardener Gilles Guillot.

This page The heart shape around the window – made by training ivy within a framework of coppiced chestnut – is in honour of Robert d’Arbrissel who founded the priory. After his death his heart was kept as a relic at Orsan, turning it into a place of pilgrimage.





9 of Patrice's handcrafted features



Encircling the stone fountain are four seating arbours, each made from a quince trained around a coppiced hazel frame.

At the centre of the cloister is a handsome stone 'fountain of life' around which are four quince arbours created with coppiced chestnut supports

▷ quince arbours created with coppiced chestnut supports and woven willow seats underneath. The arbours have a spiky exuberance and energy, which is a brilliant contrast to the tightly groomed hornbeam.

Beyond the cloister is a new rose garden. "The roses in the old garden were exhausted after 20 years of constant pruning and being trained horizontally," says Patrice. Now elaborate towers of coppiced chestnut – constructed by the brilliantly intuitive head gardener, Gilles Guillot – have a fairy-tale feel even before the roses have started flowering. Patrice's favourite rose is 'Ghislaine de Féligonde' – trained on either side of the enormous grey-blue entrance gates – he loves the colour change "from pink to yellow and fading to white" and wonderful musky scent.

The rose-garden terrace is beautifully crafted from railway sleepers, which are used extensively in the garden. The choice of sleepers for hard landscaping was another chance happening. "Someone just turned up with a whole lorry full and asked if we wanted them," says Patrice. It was the perfect material: durable, simple and in true Orsan style, put to use with constantly evolving inventiveness.

The other main areas of the garden are the potager – with its exquisite structures to support the abundant supply of vegetables, salad and herbs – immaculately hedged

orchards of apple and pear and the famous maze of espaliered fruit trees with a paradise apple tree (*Malus pumila*), trained into a flat-topped arbour, at its centre.

The training of fruit trees at Orsan is humbling in its perfection. Patrice shows me a little fleet of pyramid-trained pears: "A tree can look like this in two years – it will be decorative but it will have no fruit." Even after seven years these trees are only now bearing plentiful fruit towards their base. Opposite the pears is a curved run of espaliered plums. "Plums are difficult to train," explains Patrice, "but the result in spring, when there is a sheet of blossom... is magical."

Sadly a 180-year-old pear tree – the focal point of Patrice's original design – fell in heavy winds in October 2013. No doubt Patrice will find a thoughtful solution to fill the gap, which like everything else in this enchanting garden will be useful, ingenious and inevitably beautiful. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address La Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan
18170 Maisonnais, France.

Tel +33 2 48 56 27 50.

Website prieuredorsan.com

Open Garden open, 10am-7pm, April – September. Hotel open April – October.

1 The elaborate quince tree arbours, inspired by a trip Patrice made to Nigeria, are made from a single quince with branches trained over a coppiced chestnut structure and a woven willow seat beneath.

2 Railway sleepers have been used throughout the garden for paths, fences and raised beds. Here in the fragrant potager they are mixed with structures made from bamboo and chestnut and secured with ties of willow and wild clematis.

3 Plant labels are fashioned from rectangles of slate with a hole for wire or a nail. Patrice writes the names in permanent gold marker pen – "the kind you use for a Christmas card," he says.

4 Nesting boxes made from trunks of fallen trees have been placed throughout the garden.

5 Willow seats around trees and in the tree-covered arbours, provide several favourite places for Patrice to sit and enjoy his garden. Every October head gardener Gilles Guillot runs courses in weaving willow structures at La Prieuré.

6 Abandoned snail shells are used to provide attractive protective tops to bamboo canes.

7 Elegant, rounded screens provide the framework for training blackberries. This year's fruiting canes are trained on to the screen, the new young canes will grow freely upright and be trained on to the panel the following year.

8 All the hinges, topiary frames and handles in the garden are made by a local blacksmith and made mostly from recycled metal found on the site.

9 Pears are grown in bottles to make pear-flavoured grappa the following winter. The structure around the bottle is filled with straw to protect the fruit from the sun when temperatures rise.



A lush garden scene featuring a trellis structure with climbing plants. The foreground is dominated by tall, thin, white grasses. In the background, there are dense green bushes and trees, with large white flowers visible on the right side. The overall atmosphere is serene and well-maintained.

On the white track

In the first of a two-part series on creating a Sissinghurst-style White Garden, we look at the importance of form and structure in a quiet colour palette

WORDS RORY DUSOIR AND MATTHEW REESE
OPENING IMAGE JONATHAN BUCKLEY



The White Garden at Sissinghurst remains the template for all others. Here tall, slender spires of *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Album', crisp, white flowers of *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' and wispy stems of *Stipa barbata* are balanced by hedges of green box and silvery leaved shrubs.

*Nevertheless, I cannot help hoping that
the great ghostly barn-owl will sweep silently
across a pale garden, next summer,
in the twilight – the pale garden that I am
now planting, under the first flakes of snow.*



Vita Sackville-West writing on the Sissinghurst White Garden

The Sissinghurst White Garden had poetry at its heart from the beginning. Conceived fitfully in the years around the Second World War, its originality and Vita Sackville-West's growing celebrity as a garden writer quickly propelled it to a position of stratospheric fame and influence.

It has spawned so many imitations that it is now quite hard to imagine that it was once an entirely original idea. Although many colour-themed gardens sprang up among the disciples of Gertrude Jekyll, no one, before Vita and her husband Harold Nicolson, had attempted an all-white garden. Jekyll used white sparingly, to leaven 'real' colours as her painterly eye demanded. But Harold and Vita recognised the dual qualities of ghostliness and freshness that might suffuse an all-white composition and created perhaps the most famous of English garden 'rooms'.

To those of us who might follow them, it would seem a simple matter to create a garden of purely white flowers, enriched by fresh green and ghostly silver foliage. What could be easier than combining white with white? Vita's initial ambivalence around the naming of the garden hints otherwise. She referred to it initially as her 'pale garden' or the grey, green, white and silver garden.

Her initial, pre-war conception of the planting included touches of pink. And you will find, should you attempt to combine a 'white' lupin with a rose such as 'Iceberg' for

instance, that the lupin has a yellowish tinge, which shows up harshly against the Persil-white of the rose. It is important to exclude all such yellow tints from a white garden. Pale ice-blue and the occasional pink are better admitted, as they will not muddy the predominant fresh tone of the garden. Preserving the atmosphere should be the primary concern.

The slightest hint of senescence will quickly undermine the special atmosphere of a white garden. In the hurly-burly of a full-blooded flower border we might accept the July collapse of a plant such as *Phlomis russeliana* in return for the fine structural contribution of its seedheads; a white garden must remain fresh for as long as possible. It cannot be reconciled with the visible presence of decay. For this reason it is important to choose plants where the flowers and foliage age well. Some plants 'self-clean' and lose their petals discreetly; *Orlaya grandiflora*, *Erigeron annuus*, *Browallia americana* (there is a white form) and *Cleome hassleriana* 'Helen Campbell' are nice examples. A white buddleja or lilac, on the other hand, will not deadhead itself and will become an object of reproach until someone else performs the service for it.

Plant form

Plant form and texture become ever more important in a garden that excludes colour. Some plants are somewhat shapeless but will ▷

White Gardens to visit

1 Hidcote Manor Gardens

Created at the same time as Sissinghurst, Hidcote has a White Garden set within a yew garden 'room'.

Website nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote
Tel 01386 438333

2 Juust Wa'k Wou, the Netherlands

Mixed climbing roses cascade from trees and silver pears and shrubs add structure.

Website juustwakwou.com
Tel +31 117 401252

3 Le Jardin de l'Alchimiste, France

Drifts of iceberg roses and plumes of miscanthus in this white garden in Provence.

Website jardin-alchimiste.com
Tel +33 4 90 90 67 67

4 The Barn

In designer Tom Stuart-Smith's garden, which opens under the NGS, *Hesperis matronalis alba* and *Eremurus* 'Joanna', cast their spell.

Website ngs.org.uk

5 Crathes Castle

Open throughout the year, but the double white borders are at their best in late June.

Website nts.org.uk/Property/Crathes-Castle-Garden-and-Estate
Tel 08444 932166

6 Furzelea

Open for the NGS, the garden has a small space set aside for black and white plantings.

Website ngs.org.uk
Tel 01245 225726

7 Sissinghurst Castle (previous page)

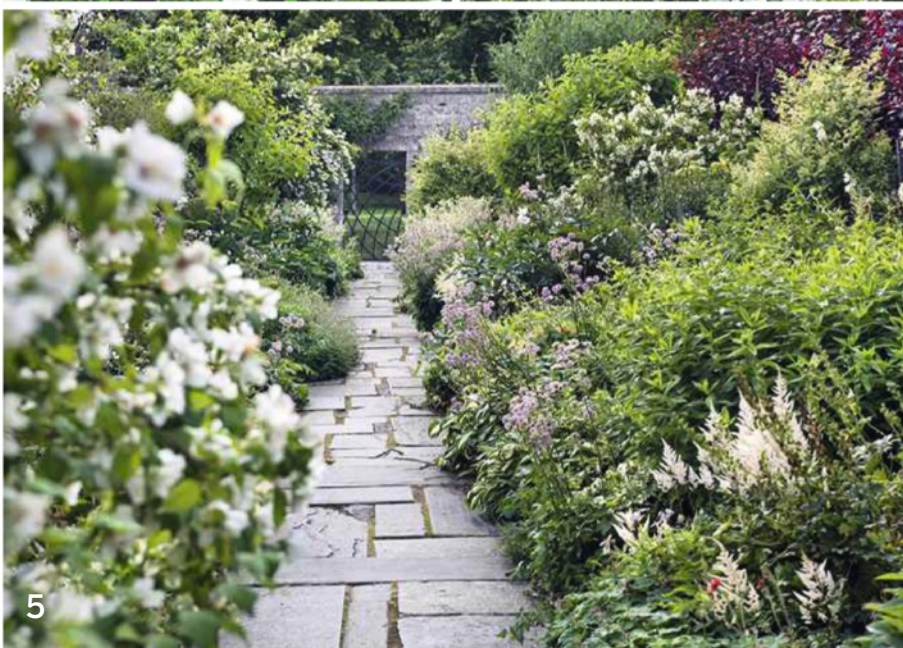
Visit in early July when the *Rosa mulliganii* is at its magnificent height.

Website nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle/
Tel 01580 710700

8 Malverleys (not pictured)

Beautiful White Garden hidden within a Victorian walled garden.

Open Visiting by appointment only.
Email head gardener, Mat Reese at fastdog40@mac.com



1 & 5 ANDREA JONES / GARDEN EXPOSURES; 2 MAAYKE DE RIDDER; 3 LE SCANIFF-MAYER / BIOSPHOTO; 4 & 6 MARIANNE MÄJERUS. OPPOSITE: JOHN HEDGECOCK / TOPFOTO

If you have room for just one small tree or shrub, be sure to include one as it will help to cast a spell over your plot

▷ help to stitch your planting together in a kind of textural haze. Such a plant is *Erigeron annuus*, for summer, with forget-me-nots performing a similar function in spring. These plants are invaluable but it is also important to include a proportion of plants with a more definite shape or your planting will lack structure and interest.

Take for example, *Ammi majus*. With its horizontal plates, carried on an airy frame, it is indeed an elegant plant. But it will be even more pleasing if you can accentuate its umbelliferous form by positioning it so it contrasts with the vertical spires of a delphinium or an annual larkspur.

Globular alliums have a strong personality and offer a third contrasting shape. In this case you could use 'White Cloud' as it flowers later than most of its tribe and will coincide with the July flowering of the *Ammi*. Such effects, although they lend 'structure' to the planting, are temporary.

The basis of any good planting is its permanent framework of woody or evergreen perennials – these will anchor the ephemeral contributions of other plants and ensure the garden has a distinctive character.

Permanent framework

A good 'framework' plant will have a strong and consistent presence throughout the growing season. For white gardens, a preponderance of silver, grey and glaucous foliage is a welcome enhancement. Even if you have room for just one small tree or shrub, be sure to include it, as it will help to cast a spell over your plot.

Remember that if you keep a shrub or tree 'bare-legged' by pruning, it needn't obliterate too much of your planting space at ground level. *Pyrus salicifolia* is a small, solid tree of flashing silver foliage; it is very tough and has the added advantage for small gardens that it can be clipped successfully. Another good silver foliage shrub is *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver'. It

produces a clean crop of silver leaves annually and makes a particularly good host for *Lathyrus latifolius* 'Albus' or *Clematis* 'Alba Luxurians'.

The silver stems of the bramble *Rubus thibetanus* are a great feature of winter and early spring, when 'structure' is hard to come by, and looks well partnered with snowdrops or *Narcissus* 'Thalia'. It also has good soft silver leaves in growth, of an almost fern-like appearance. In midsummer, remove the previous season's flowered wood right down to the ground, leaving the current season's unbranched growth intact. This will ensure a steady succession of new growth and prevent the bramble taking over without ever leaving a void. Another silvery plant that responds well to hard pruning is the coyote willow, *Salix exigua*. It will tolerate annual pollarding, in spring, to a woody framework.

Leaves with strap-shaped foliage tend to stand out and create focal points that can be used effectively to punctuate displays of flimsier subjects. *Astelia chathamica* in its cultivar 'Silver Spear' is one of the finest examples with its dramatic sword shaped foliage. A couple of kniphofias are worth considering as structural foliage plants; their flower spikes can be removed.

Kniphofia northiae is a lovely writhing mass of leaves that looks good with petunias or *Stachys byzantina* growing through it. A good form of *Kniphofia caulescens* will perform a similar function on a smaller scale and has slightly more silver in its leaf.

A good structural framework really anchors a white garden and becomes the backdrop against which the unfolding drama of the season can play out. □

NEXT MONTH

In part two we'll look at how, by carefully choosing a succession of flowering plants, you can keep your garden looking fresh and white for as long as possible.

9 structural plants for a White Garden

1 *Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea'

Combines strong architecture with delicacy of detail. 1.5-2m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b†.

2 *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver'

Extremely tough and offers gorgeous warm scent in July. Can sometimes be difficult to establish and does better in lighter soils. 2.5-4m. RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Astelia chathamica*

Its icy fountain of sword-shaped leaves makes a fabulous focal point. Does well in sun or shade but needs protection in a cold winter. 1-1.8m. AGM. USDA 8b-11.

4 *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle'

Prune hard back in the spring to encourage the production of fresh silver filigree foliage throughout the summer. 60-90cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 5b-9b.

5 *Rubus thibetanus*

With arching white stems in winter and delicate, fern-like, metallic foliage in the summer, this bramble makes important contributions at either end of the year 1.5-2.5m. AGM. RHS H5.

6 *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula'

The weeping branches of the silver pear hang around the statue of the Vestal Virgin that presides over the Sissinghurst White Garden. 8-12m. AGM. RHS H6.

7 *Kniphofia northiae*

Remove the flowers and its evergreen foliage possesses a sculptural form reminiscent of sea-tossed kelp. Prefers good, well-drained soil. 1m. AGM.

8 *Salvia officinalis* 'Albiflora'

A lovely foil for early spring bulbs. In flower it works well with *Orlaya grandiflora* or *Nigella*. 60-90cm. USDA 5a-11.

9 *Salix exigua*

Plant among taller perennials and pollard to a height that allows its new, slender wands of minnow-like leaves to interact with its neighbours. 2.5-4m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-6b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.



1 MARTIN HUGHES; 2 JONES; 3 JOHN GLOVER & 8 ARCO IMAGES GMBH HALL ALAMY; 4 ELKE BORKOWSKI; 5 JONATHAN BUCKLEY; 6 MARK BOLTON; 7 JO WHITWORTH & 9 MAXINE ADCOCK ALL GAP PHOTOS; 4 ANNAÏCK GUITTENY



nowdrop-clad banks are common in many Cotswold villages. Shilton, in Oxfordshire, is no exception except that it also hides a very special garden, that of Dr Ronald Mackenzie, planted with more than 120 different kinds of *Galanthus*.

The well-drained, sloping, south-facing garden lies exclusively to the rear of the Cotswold cottage. Here hundreds of snowdrops enjoy the deep, slightly alkaline, loamy soil. The elevated position maximises the available winter sun, which draws a faint honeyed fragrance from these winter flowers. In this acre of garden, several terraces negotiate the sloping terrain. Ribbons of lawn conjoin neatly stocked beds and borders, bright with snowdrops, hellebores and other early flowering winter bulbs. In a working area young snowdrops are nurtured.

Dr Mackenzie's fascination with snowdrops began before he even had a garden, after he bought a copy of FC Sterns's book *Snowdrops and Snowflakes* in the 1960s (first published by the RHS in 1956, it is still available from secondhand book sellers). Years later, presented with the perfect snowdrop plot, he began collecting. Although hugely popular at the start of the 20th century, Dr Mackenzie found that by the early 1970s snowdrops, and their supply, were very much in the doldrums. It was difficult to obtain the exciting and unusual varieties he had read about. Precious specimens were cherished by a clan of British 'galanthophiles' – keen snowdrop collectors – who became his friends through their mutual passion. It was thanks to their generosity that his collection grew. This industrious group discovered many new garden hybrids, the result of collaborations in established snowdrop plots.

Dr Mackenzie, by now privy to these collections, was instrumental in increasing the availability of snowdrops and of re-populating and re-popularising them.

He was one of the first to increase stock vegetatively, delicately 'twin-scaling' the small bulbs, dividing a single bulb to create up to 32 new, genetically identical offspring (his step-by-step guide is overleaf). Such was his success that he established The Snowdrop Company in 1991, supplying snowdrops in the green via mail order, spreading the availability of specimens that were rarely available before. He was later helped by fellow aficionados Ruby and David Baker.

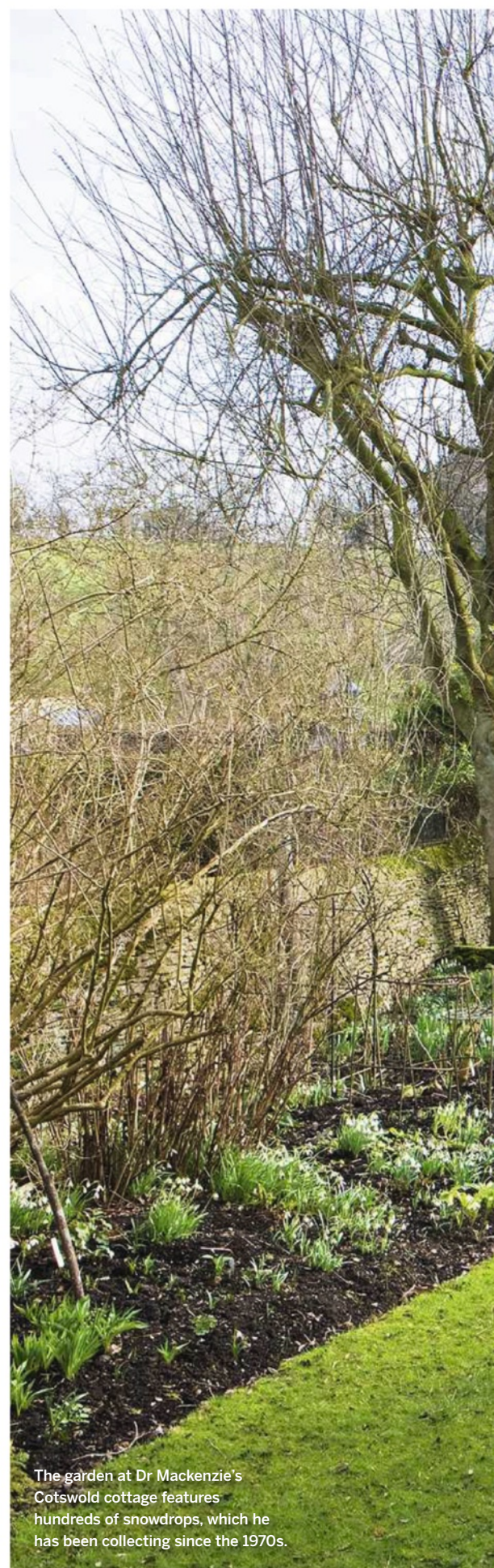
His own garden flourished, adorned throughout the winter months with a succession of pristine snowdrop blooms. His success can be attributed to soil and aspect, good bulb stock, planting in the green and planting deep (at least 20cm) to avoid baking the bulbs in summer.

Snowdrop diversity

Dr Mackenzie's snowdrops are carefully selected specimens, which give him flowers from December to the end of March. Early flowering varieties, such as *Galanthus* 'Faringdon Double', appear before Christmas. *G. plicatus* 'Colossus' shows if it's mild, and *G. reginae olgae* 'Hyde Lodge' normally blooms in November. Late flowering varieties, which follow a glamorous glut of mid-season February types, include green-tipped *G. nivalis* 'Fiona Mackenzie', *G. 'Fieldgate Superb'*, with distinctive X-shaped markings on the inner segments and *G. 'Ruth Birchall'* with a large, green heart emblazoned on the inner petals.

Snowdrops can be differentiated in three main ways: by their foliage (applanate, plicate or convolute); by their flower form, which may be single or double; and by distinctive markings on their outer and/or inner petals. Fragrance ranges from honey through almond to violet. Colouration is predominantly, but not exclusively, white with green. Dr Mackenzie has a leaning ▷

Dr Mackenzie's snowdrops are carefully selected specimens, which give him flowers from December to the end of March



The garden at Dr Mackenzie's Cotswold cottage features hundreds of snowdrops, which he has been collecting since the 1970s.

A treasure garden of snowdrops

Flowering at a time when there are few other plants in bloom, snowdrops have a special place in the heart – and the garden – of self-confessed galanthophile Dr Ronald Mackenzie

WORDS JACKY HOBBS PHOTOGRAPHS CLIVE NICHOLS

In brief

Name Barn Cottage.

What A plantsman's garden.

Where Shilton in Oxfordshire.

Size One acre cultivated and a third of an acre meadow.

Climate Sheltered but in a frost pocket.

Soil Loamy, slightly alkaline soil.

Points of interest 120 different kinds of snowdrops together with other winter flowering plants and bulbs.

This personal, truly historic, collection represents the 'who's who' of snowdrop hunters of the past half century

▷ towards the yellow cultivars, embodied in his namesake *G. 'Ronald Mackenzie'*, a fine 'yellow'. It has a golden ovary and striking markings in a rich yellow on the sinus and base of the inner petals. He discovered it in Gloucestershire woodland and it was named after him by Ruby and David Baker.

Dr Mackenzie believes it is the surprising detail and diversity of this tiny, winter-flowering bloom that so passionately claims our affections. It is the galanthophiles, those keen collectors and breeders of snowdrops, who have breathed popularity back into the flower and his garden is testimony to many of these people. He describes each specimen not by its place of origin, but by the name of the person who discovered it.

This personal, truly historic, collection represents the 'who's who' of snowdrop hunters of the past half century. *G. 'S. Arnott'*, a tall, honey-fragranced specimen, is named after a 19th-century snowdrop expert and is from the gardens at Hyde Lodge. *G. Fiona's Gold'* and *G. 'Primrose Warburg'* are both yellow specimens from the garden of the late, renowned, plantswoman Primrose Warburg. *G. 'Lady Fairhaven'* is named after the owner

of Anglesey Abbey where it was found by the head gardener. Then there's *G. elwesii* 'Godfrey Owen' a unique six outer-petalled flower found in Shropshire woodland and named by Margaret Owen for her husband.

Dr Mackenzie's collection is a unique tribute to the many individuals who we can thank for the snowdrops in our gardens. □

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIERS (mail order)

- **Avon Bulbs**, Mid Lambrook, South Petherton, Somerset TA13 5HE. Tel 01460 242177, avonbulbs.co.uk
- **Foxgrove Plants** Enborne, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6RE. Tel 01635 40554, foxgroveplants.co.uk
- **North Green Snowdrops**, North Green Only, Stoven, Beccles NR34 8DG.
- **The Snowdrop Company**, Barn Cottage, Shilton, Oxfordshire OX18 4AB (send A5 stamped addressed envelope for catalogue).

RECOMMENDED READING

Snowdrops, A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus by Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis and John Grimshaw.

9 of Dr Mackenzie's favourite snowdrops



Dr Mackenzie recommends *Galanthus* for both their beauty and their garden worthiness

1 *Galanthus* 'Ketton'

A large cultivar of elegant habit. Pure-white outer segment and a marked inner segment with two pale-green smudges at the base and a 'humped-back bridge' mark at the tip. A superb old cultivar.

2 *G. fosteri*

Uncommon dwarf with elongated outer petals and inners with apical and basal marks. Sometimes difficult; with careful cultivation will grow in the open garden.

3 *G. elwesii* 'Marjorie Brown'

A very late flowerer and a good clump-forming snowdrop with blue-grey foliage and bold, well-marked blooms.

4 *G. elwesii* 'Godfrey Owen'

A uniquely six-petalled snowdrop, inside and out, found in a Shropshire woodland.

5 *G. 'Lady Fairhaven'*

A beautiful concentric double snowdrop from the gardens at Anglesey Abbey, regarded by Dr Mackenzie as the best double he has ever grown.

6 *G. 'South Hayes'*

A pagoda-like, flared and waxen snowdrop with an unusual green vertical marking on the outer petal and a unique green inner rimmed in white.

7 *G. 'Hugh Mackenzie'*

Late flowering cultivar. Outer petals are apple green on the lower two thirds of their length with white tip and edge, while the inner petals have a thick green 'W' mark. Prefers neutral or acid soil.

8 *G. 'John Gray'*

An early flowerer, claimed to be "one of the best" snowdrops Dr Mackenzie has grown, with a large bloom on a long pedicel with green cross-like markings.

9 *G. plicatus* 'Greenfinch'

With crescent-shaped green stains on the outer petals, this tall, robust, rounded form was found in the former garden of plant breeder Heyrick Greatorex.



How to propagate by twin scaling

A Ensure sterile conditions. Swab a clean, flat surface and the bulb with methylated spirits. Wear latex gloves and use a scalpel or razor blade for division. After cutting each bulb, flame the scalpel. After each batch (variety) use new blade/gloves and clean the surface. **Reduce the selected named plant** to a bulb and remove the brown tunics to leave a shiny white surface. A nailbrush is useful for this.

B & C Cut off the 'neck' or about a third to leave a wider flat surface. Remove the roots carefully, to avoid damaging the basal plate.

D, E & F Divide the bulb into 4 parts, then slice each quarter lengthways into 4 parts, more if the size of bulb allows, ensuring all have a portion of the basal plate. Very small thin segments not advised.

Soak the scales in a fungicide for 30 minutes. Prepare vermiculite by adding water in the proportion of 100ml vermiculite to 8ml water. This mix will heat, so allow to cool. **Drain the segments**, pat dry with kitchen roll. **Put into plastic bags of prepared vermiculite**, sealing bags with air trapped within. Label clearly. **Place in a warm, dark place.** After several weeks (10-12), a small bulbil will form on the side of the scale. **Carefully plant this out into a terracotta pan** filled with light, sandy compost where the labelled bulbils will remain for an entire year, under glass. **Seedlings can be removed carefully** from the pan and planted out individually in the garden's nursery beds until mature.





1 ANDREW LAWSON; 2 & 7 RONALD MACKENZIE; 3 JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS; 4 MARIANNE MAJERUS; 8 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS



Hostas

Ranging in size from the tiny to the lusciously large, the sculptural shape and rich colours of hosta leaves make this hardy shade lover a firm favourite of gardeners – and sadly slugs

WORDS VAL BOURNE PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

In brief

What Ornamental plants with foliage in many colours, from white fleshy roots. Six-petalled flowers vary in shape, in shades from pure white to mauve-purple.

Origins 43 species native to the Far East, growing on woodland edges and open clearings in Japan, China and Korea in high-humidity 'rainy season' areas with wet, warm summers and colder, drier winters.

Season New foliage in late spring or early summer, persisting until the first frosts. Most hostas flower in July – August.

Size Up to 1m high, but there are also miniatures.

Conditions Shade or semi-shade in moisture-retentive soil.



Val Bourne is a garden writer and lecturer and judges plant trials at RHS Wisley

The hosta is the chameleon of the plant world, for it can produce foliage in shades of butter-yellow, gun-metal grey, almost-blue, clotted cream and green in its many guises. Leaves can be finely margined, or bear broad brush strokes of vibrant colour, or have a subtle overwash that adds a luminous sheen. Foliage can be smoothly varnished, or as richly textured as the thickest cotton quilt, or have a dull patina worthy of the finest antique, or pucker up like a taffeta skirt.

Some hostas are positively statuesque and make a huge statement like an elegant swirl of silk. Others are quiet enough to mingle with the humble fern and some are so tiny they fill the smallest gap. It's this diversity of form and colour that makes them such popular plants for shadier places especially in the USA where gardeners have to contend with bitterly cold winters and hot summers.

Japan is the heartland of the wild hosta, with three-quarters of the 40-odd wild species found there. Natural hybrids occurred widely in woodland populations there and were eventually moved into gardens. As a result the hybrids and species became muddled. Further confusion has arisen because natural mutations, or sports, have also occurred. A green-leaved form, for instance, might throw up a variegated section one year and then produce a completely different variation the next. In more recent times micropropagation has produced variations as well, and now there are 8,000 named cultivars of this very hardy perennial with more popping up every year. With all this choice it's imperative to pick the very best: the ones that become superstars.

When I visit Japan, as I do most years, I find many hostas bred in America and Europe on their garden centre benches and they love the warm, Asian rainy season, which lasts for about six weeks. Bursts of torrential rain are interrupted by hot sunshine, producing lavish foliage that catches every raindrop. ▷

HOSTA 'PAUL'S GLORY'

Seersucker leaves in an irregular mixture of chartreuse-green and dark blue-green with different amounts of colour on separate leaves. A good grower, best in light shade and benefits from being divided every three to four years. Light lavender flowers in late-June. Voted Hosta of the Year 1999 by the American Hosta Growers Association. Sport of *H.* 'Perry's True Blue'. 45-75cm. AGM*. USDA 3a-8b†.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ Try to emulate these damp conditions by watering copiously in May and June.

The key to using hostas well is to space them far enough apart to display their graceful form, rather than packing them cheek by jowl. This will allow them more space as they mature and allow you to tackle any slug problems. Choose the right sized hosta for your gap and then consider foliage. Too much mixed variegation will jar the eye, so use brighter gold and green forms to lighten up shade, alongside green forms. Cream and white are subtler in colouring and mix well with blue-grey hosta foliage, but can clash with rich greens.

Blue-leaved hostas are highly prized, for few shade lovers come in this cool colour. The blue sheen is produced by a waxy coating that will rub off between finger and thumb. This waxy covering melts away in hot sunshine so blue-leaved hostas need a cool position well away from midday sun. This seems to defy gardening logic, because grey-leaved plants generally prefer brighter light.

H. 'Halcyon' is one of the bluest, but it has produced 11 sports, many with very different foliage. The most stunning is *H.* 'Buckshaw Blue' (on page 69) because the thick wax coating adds even more texture to the rounded, veined leaves, turning raindrops into pearls.

Conversely, golden-leaved hostas produce chlorophyll slowly due to a blocked gene. More chlorophyll is produced in warmer weather and in better light. The very large *H.* 'Sum and Substance' (on page 70) was named Hosta of the Year by the American Hosta Growers Association in 2004. It has heart-shaped leaves that colour best when grown in sun in the cooler British climate. It has produced a host of sports and deliberately bred offspring since its inception in 1980.

With such a range on offer it's worth using a specialist hosta nursery where plants are raised by division. A specialist will be able to tell you which can be grown for flower, which are most slug-resistant, which tolerate bright light, which can be grown in very warm gardens and so on. They'll also be able to suggest combinations that flatter rather than clash. One thing is sure though, this chameleon of a plant will continue to fascinate gardeners who admire foliage.

• Val's recommendations for hostas continue over the next six pages.



***H.* FORTUNEI VAR AUREOMARGINATA**

A large hosta, a sport from *H. fortunei*, with dark olive-green leaves edged in yellow. Late to emerge in spring, but tolerates sun. Foliage keeps its colour through the season. Admired by flower arrangers. 1m. AGM. RHS H7.



***H.* 'FRANCES WILLIAMS' (SIEBOLDIANA)**

Large hosta with glaucous blue leaves edged in chartreuse yellow. Its rounded, heavily textured leaves, are arranged at a tilted angle. White flowers. A sport of *H. sieboldiana* 'Elegans'. 50-75cm. AGM. RHS H7. USDA 3a-8b.



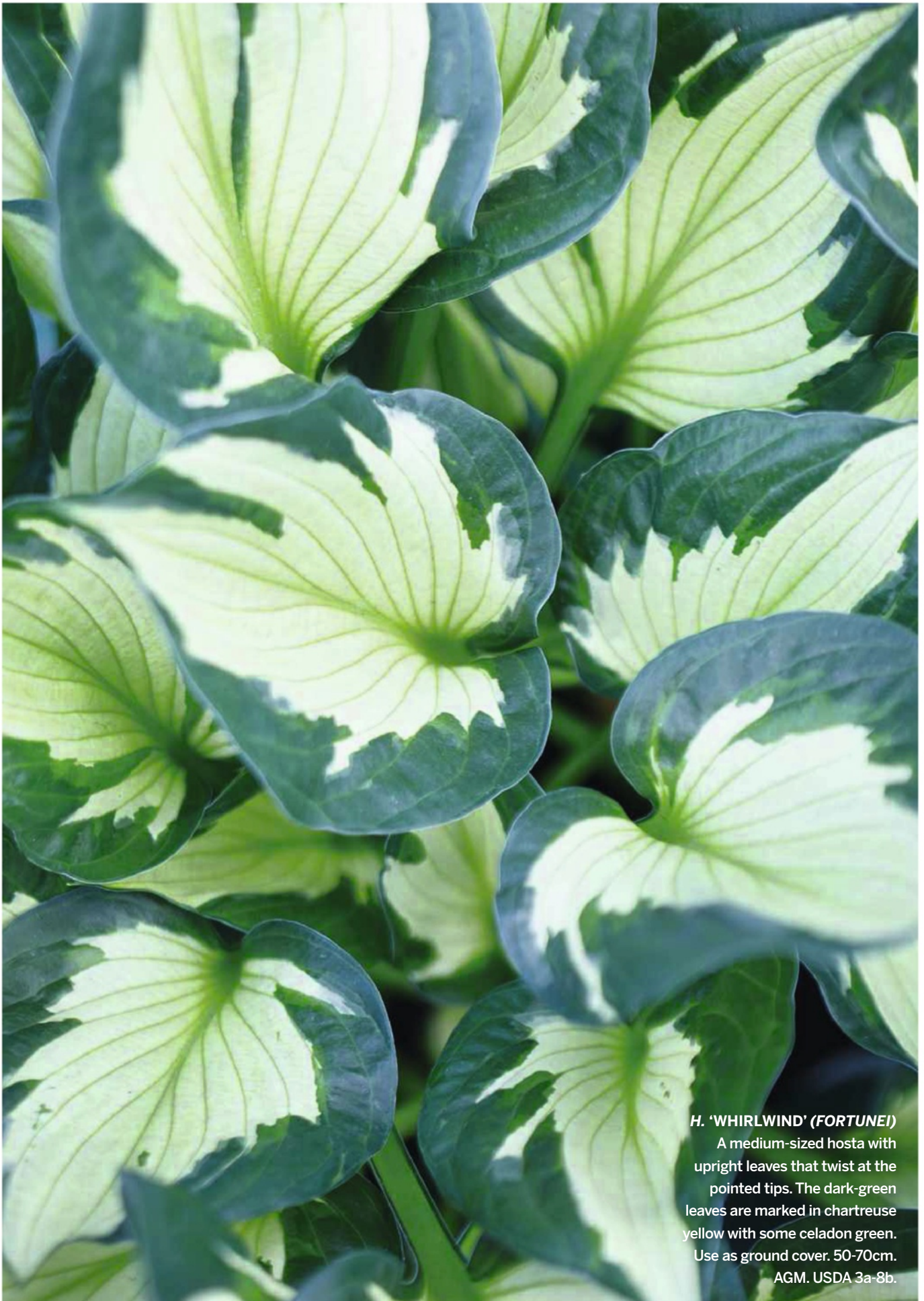
***H.* 'ORANGE MARMALADE'**

A large hosta with pucker yellow centres to the leaves surrounded by green edging. As summer fades the central panel develops orange tones, hence the name. A sport of *H.* 'Paul's Glory'. 90cm-1.2m. USDA 3a-8b.



***H.* 'JUNE' (TARDIANA GROUP)**

Tissue-cultured sport from 'Halcyon' with the same profile and constitution, but with blue-green leaves shaded in chartreuse yellow. Needs light shade and cooler temperatures to keep its colour. 50cm. AGM. USDA 3a-8b.



H. 'WHIRLWIND' (FORTUNEI)

A medium-sized hosta with upright leaves that twist at the pointed tips. The dark-green leaves are marked in chartreuse yellow with some celadon green. Use as ground cover. 50-70cm.

AGM. USDA 3a-8b.

HOSTA 'YAKUSHIMA-MIZU'
(GRACILLIMA)

A miniature green-leaved hosta with narrow, wavy edged leaves. This *H. gracillima* cultivar, from Yakushima Island in Japan, needs shade or semi-shade. 10-15cm. USDA 3a-8b.





H. 'DEVON GREEN'

This high-gloss, medium-sized hosta has ribbed foliage in a rich green. Good in a container and the most popular green-leaved hosta in Europe. A sport of *H. 'Halcyon'*. 50cm. AGM. USDA 3a-8b.



H. 'PATRIOT'

Dramatic medium to large hosta, a sport from *H. 'Francee'* (*fortunei*) with dark-green leaves margined in cream. Satin-textured, the leaves keep their colour best in light shade. Violet shoots are a spring bonus. AGM. USDA 3a-9b.



H. 'BUCKSHAW BLUE'

Medium-sized, dark-blue hosta with heavily seer-suckered leaves, which are very rounded in shape. Thick waxy coating deserves full shade to look its best. Arguably the best blue hosta ever. 45-70cm. USDA 3a-9a.



H. 'BLUE MOUSE EARS'

Tiny, blue-green, mouse ear-shaped rosettes with interesting buds and lavender flowers held just above the foliage. Voted Hosta of the Year 2008 by the American Hosta Growers Association. 10-15cm. AGM. USDA 3b-8b.

The history of the hosta

Hostas were first recorded by Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716) who was stationed on a tiny Japanese island while working for the Dutch East India Company. He made drawings and sent them back to the Netherlands, but couldn't send any plant material because it was forbidden.

However, the hosta was named after an Austrian botanist called Nicolaus Thomas Host (1771–1834) in 1812. Five years later the plant was also named *Funkia* after Heinrich Christian Funck (1771–1839), a Bavarian who collected Alpine ferns. The name *Hosta*, which was coined before *Funkia*, became the valid name.

The Japanese call the hosta the *giboshi* because the rounded shape of the leaves resembles an ornamental cap, rather like a door knob, widely used on the posts of temples and bridges. The young leaves were traditionally eaten in spring, but the familiar woodlander wasn't highly regarded in Japan as an ornamental plant until recent times.

The first hostas to arrive in Europe (*H. plantaginea* and *H. ventricosa*) came from China (not Japan) in the mid 1700s. Almost a century later Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866) and Scottish botanist Robert Fortune (1812–1880) sent back specimens of *H. sieboldiana* and *H. fortunei*.

Growing hostas

Hostas adore summer rainfall, which encourages more sumptuous foliage, but they also need prolonged cold weather to encourage a necessary period of dormancy. Their roots are extremely hardy, but resent being too wet in winter. Hostas are extremely long-lived and very hardy, but tend to be slug-prone. However, one of the Plant Heritage's National Collections is held at HRH Prince Charles's Highgrove House garden in Gloucestershire. There, the birds, hedgehogs, amphibians and some small rodents keep the slug problem down so that damage is minimal – even in wet summers including that of 2012. ▷

HOWARD RICE / GETTY

▷ • Slugs only begin to feed at dusk and do most damage when hosta leaves are emerging. Frisk your plants regularly at dusk and destroy any slugs attacking your leaves. Lay small plant pots on their sides to collect snails.

- Water on slug nematodes in April to keep slug numbers down. Choose a damp evening when the weather is warm.

- Disturb the soil by hoeing with a small onion hoe, getting right between the plants. This will bring slug eggs to the soil surface where they will either be eaten, or dehydrate.

- Collect up wilted foliage so that slugs and snails cannot hide in the autumn.

- If growing hostas in pots, avoid any with overturned lips because slugs and snails hide underneath. Use straight-sided pots and get them off the ground, using feet. Rub petroleum jelly around the rims to discourage them further.

- Vine weevils can be a problem, especially if the hostas are grown in pots of soft, peaty compost. Tip any plants out that show flagging foliage, or generally look ill, or have notches out of the sides of the leaves. Rinse the roots well and re-pot, using grittier compost.

- Keep your pots as dry as possible during winter. Put them in the lee of the house, or move them to a garage, shed or unheated greenhouse. This should prevent ice freezing inside the pots.

- Top dress with well-rotted manure or garden compost twice a year. Apply just as the plants enter dormancy in the autumn and then again in spring, just as the shoots begin to appear.

- Divide congested plants in spring, just as the shoots are emerging.

Where to see and buy

- **Mickfield Hostas**

Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5LH.

Tel 01449 711576 (call before visit),

mickfieldhostas.co.uk

- **Bowden Hostas**

Okehampton, Devon EX20 2NL.

Tel 01837 840989 (call before visit),

bowdenhostas.com



H. 'DAYBREAK'

Good as ground cover, this large, Japanese-bred hosta produces a wide mound of almost horizontal, heart-shaped leaves. Resistant to many pests and good for lighting up dark borders. 50-70cm. AGM. USDA 3a-8b.



H. 'EMERALD TIARA'

A tissue-culture sport of *H. 'Golden Scepter'*, this vigorous hosta has lavender flowers above foliage of muted gold, which brightens as the season progresses, margined in dark green. 25-50cm. USDA 3a-8b.



H. 'SUM AND SUBSTANCE'

A giant hosta with substantial, satin-gold leaves that colour up best in sun, in cooler climates. Give it morning sun and plenty of water in hot gardens. 75cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9a.



H. 'NIAGARA FALLS'

A giant hosta with wavy edged – known as piecrust edges – green leaves that flounce downwards creating a graceful outline. The glaucous bloom on the leaf needs a shady position. 50-70cm. AGM. USDA 3a-8b.

H. 'CRACKER CRUMBS'

A very small, yet striking, hosta, reaching just 15cm in height, with shiny yellow leaves occasionally margined in deep green. It increases quickly and is one of the best tiny hostas. Sport of H. 'Shiny Penny'. 10-15cm. AGM. USDA 3a-8b.



Veronica Cross

Usually an outstanding plantsman occupies a revered niche in the world of horticulture; Veronica commands an entire architectural edifice

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Veronica Cross knows everyone. And everyone who is anyone in gardening knows Veronica. Her conversation is peppered with references to her good friends Roy (Lancaster), Chris (Brickell) and John (Massey). Tucked away under the trees is a bevy of tropical-looking treasures collected by planthunter Michael Wickenden of Cally Gardens. Martin (Rickard – the fern expert) is kindly taking her fern spotting next weekend.

“Whatever I’m interested in, I make a point of getting to know the person at the top of what ever it is – King Magnolia, King Fern or whatever, and make friends with them. It’s so much better than [learning from] books,” she says.

Even notoriously prickly customers have proved unable to resist Veronica’s determined charm. Having fallen out with Christopher Lloyd on the subject of bergenias, she was surprised to be invited to Great Dixter, while the formidable Princess Greta Sturdza, doyenne of Le Vasterival garden in France, became her gardening mentor and lifelong friend. “If you meet someone who’s keen, and wants to learn, you want to help them, don’t you?” reasons Veronica. “Nothing’s more infectious than enthusiasm. I can’t bear people who are all blasé.”

At this time of year, it is the galanthophiles who descend eagerly on her Herefordshire garden. To be invited to one of her snowdrop lunches is a rare treat. Her pheasant and prune stew is legendary; a summons to her table a precious sign that you have entered the hallowed ‘inner segment’ of the snowdrop world. Hundreds of rarities, the fruits of four decades of patient collecting and judicious swaps, are squeezed on to a moated island, where they interbreed to make new treasures. *Galanthus* ‘Wasp’ is one of her selections, and the larger, finer, *G.* ‘Dragonfly’. She already has one snowdrop named after her; next year, there will be one named for her dog (look out for *G.* ‘Tilly’).

“I’ve always collected things. When I had horses, they all had to be greys. Then it was first period Worcester [porcelain]. Now it’s plants. I start with snowdrops, then hellebores and magnolias, then peonies of all kinds, then hydrangeas and finally colchicums.” This is not to mention the 60 oaks, the Judas trees, ginkgos and stewartias, or her latest passion, podophyllums and ferns.

To start with, gardening was a hobby. As a young farmer’s wife, she hunted all winter, and gardened all summer, gardening as she rode – passionately, hard, to the exclusion of

all other pastimes. Then her husband died, absurdly young, of tetanus. The mid 1980s found her widowed, broke, living in a caravan with her two young sons. Veronica scraped together the money for a ten-week course at the Inchbald School, and reinvented herself as a garden designer. Drawing was not a problem – she had studied Fine Art at Oxford – and she had already begun to build up a formidable plant knowledge.

“There are an awful lot of very good designers, but very few who are plantsmen. Things got better. I got a little cottage. Then I met Giles [her second husband]. I didn’t want to live in his rather nasty house, so we found this – with five and a half acres of nothing.” That was 22 years ago. Today that ‘nothing’ is a kind of living Louvre of rare and desirable plants, crammed in wherever she can find a spot. Walking the garden is a wonder: everywhere you look is some glorious plant you will never have clapped eyes on before, often not commercially available, but wheedled from some distinguished nurseryman. Her joy in them is unconfined; they are clearly cherished friends.

Some are so lovely, they take your breath away: huge hydrangeas with flowers delicate as ice-crystals, a cut-leaved walnut like an airborne fern. Some are just odd, like *Acer platanoides* ‘Cindy Lou’, less like a tree than a bolted lettuce. Can she really love a plant like that? “Oh yes – the more peculiar the better. Especially if no one else has it.”

Veronica is vague about her age. Indeed, trying to pin her down to any date at all is a futile exercise. Despite the deportment of a duchess, the figure of a girl and the energy of a young red setter, she must be, her friends reckon, over 80. Suffice to say that at a time of life when most people would be trying to simplify their garden, she is busy filling in ponds and digging up lawns so she can cram in more. As if 160 magnolias weren’t enough, there are ten more coming this winter. “I decided that if I’m not going to live much longer, I want to see them flower before I die.” And then, there are the ferns, which she believes will soon supplant the current craze for snowdrops.

“After a bit you want some new excitement, don’t you?” she muses. “Gardening is rather like alcohol, or hunting: it becomes an obsession. Once you’re in, there’s no way back.” □

NEXT MONTH

Christabel King, Kew’s longest-serving botanical artist

Her joy in her plants is unconfined – she introduces them like cherished friends



A romantic garden scene featuring a circular fountain with a central water jet. The fountain is surrounded by a variety of flowers, including purple and yellow blooms. In the background, there is a large, rounded tree with purple foliage. The scene is framed by green leaves in the foreground.

10

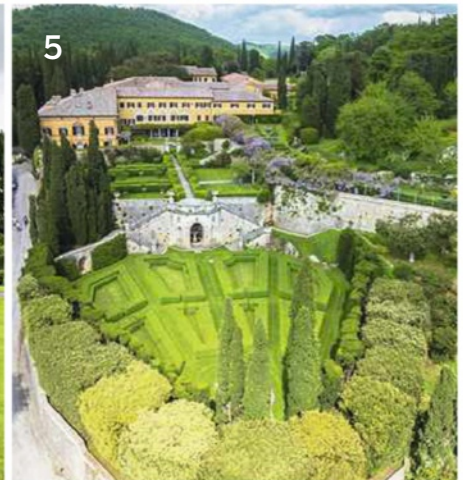
of the world's most
romantic gardens to visit

chosen by Anna Pavord

1 Endsleigh

Humphry Repton, the great 18th-century landscaper, worked at Endsleigh and in the valley to the west of the house you catch the essence of his genius. Water charges under paths, tips down rock faces and meanders obediently along leats. 'Of all picturesque subjects there is none so interesting as Water in rapid motion,' he wrote. Endsleigh has a quality that is increasingly difficult to find in a garden: romance and a strong spirit of place. In 2014 the garden opens for the first time for the National Gardens Scheme.

Address Hotel Endsleigh, Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0PQ. **Tel** 01822 870000
Website hotelendsleigh.com



2 Dundonnell

When you cross the stone bridge over the river to Dundonnell in Scotland, you arrive in a different world. First are the trees – huge limes, beech and sweet chestnuts, as well as sycamore and ash. Then the house, superbly strong, white-harled, standing in a meadow of long grass. Then the walled garden, three acres of inspired beauty arranged around a monumental yew, thought to be at least 2,000 years old. Thrilling. Astonishing. Open for charity (see scotlandsgardens.org).

Address Dundonnell House, Dundonnell, Little Loch Broom, Wester Ross IV23 2QW.
Tel 07789 390028

3 Bolfracks

Bolfracks tells you immediately that it is a much-loved garden, beautifully looked after and impervious, quite rightly, to fashion. It has a quiet peace and self confidence, the planting still singing of the 1950s: cherries, acers, berberis, good species rhododendrons. The twig house makes a romantic hideaway.

Address Bolfracks, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2EX.
Tel 01887 820344 **Website** bolfracks.com

4 Gresgarth

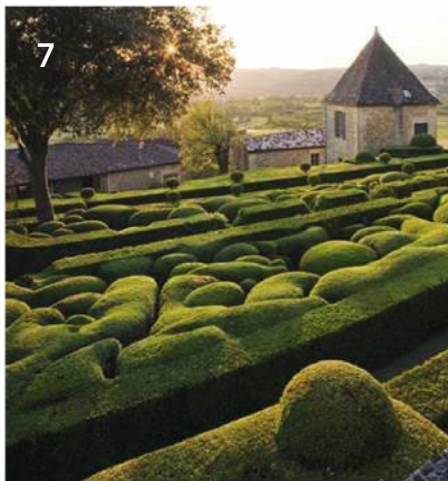
"I'm getting more Italian as I get older," says designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd about her own garden at Gresgarth where a geometric arrangement of steps and terraces leads down to meet the lake on the southwest front of the house. The design may be formal but the planting is rich, lush and passionate. **Address** Gresgarth Hall, Caton, Lancashire LA2 9NB. **Tel** 01524 771838
Website arabellalennoxboyd.com

5 La Foce

For more than a decade in the first half of the 20th century, the brilliant architect-designer Cecil Pinsent worked with Iris Origo on her garden at La Foce in Italy's Val d'Orcia. Were they in love? "He was. And I was," said Iris Origo. "But not at the same time." Around the villa, a series of intimate gardens are enclosed by yew hedges and walls of gorgeous travertine stone. At a higher level, a pergola swathed in wisteria gives staggering views out over the vale. **Address** La Foce, Strada della Victoria 61, 53042 Chianciano Terme, Siena, Italy.
Tel +39 057 869 101 **Website** lafoce.com



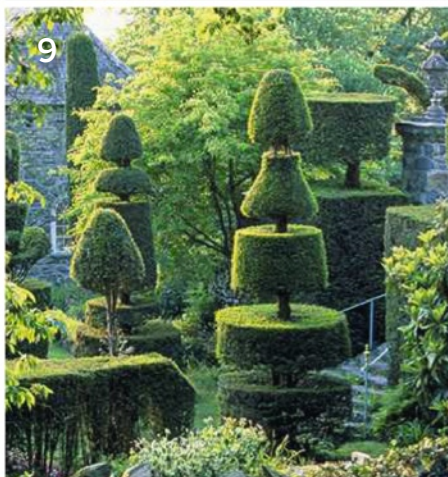
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6 Villa Lante

The garden at Villa Lante in Italy is said by connoisseurs to mark the beginning of the story of the pleasure garden in Europe. Made by Cardinal Gambara for love of himself, rather than another, the design hangs on a dramatic central vista stretching over fountains and pools, shady benches and stairways to a delicious grotto (just made for proposals) at the far end of the garden. **Address** Villa Lante, Via Jacopo Barozzi 71, 01031 Bagnaia (VT), Italy. **Tel** +39 0761 288008

7 Marqueyssac

Marqueyssac overlooks the Dordogne, one of a clutch of battlemented châteaux that glare at each other from their respective peaks. The garden was created by Julien de Cervel, who adored Italy and made this place as close to his Italian dream as he could manage. The result, more than 150 years on, is spectacular: molten box topiary under tall cypresses and umbrella pines. **Address** Les Jardins Suspendus de Marqueyssac, 24220 Vezac, Dordogne, France. **Tel** +33 5 53 31 36 36 **Website** marqueyssac.com

8 Misarden Park

When I let myself into the garden at Misarden, it was so still, so enclosed in its own bubble of tranquillity, I thought I might have tripped into a golden afternoon of the Edwardian era. Generous herbaceous borders run down either side of a central lawn: echinops, plume poppy, inula, stately spires of delphinium. A pergola of roses and a wide yew hedge shield a kitchen garden. Timeless. Gorgeous. **Address** Misarden Park, Miserden, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 7JA. **Tel** 01285 821303 **Website** misardenpark.co.uk

9 Plas Brondanw

Architect Clough Williams-Ellis lived at Plas Brondanw in Wales for more than 70 years, gradually surrounding himself with architectural topiary and allées of box and yew, curling flights of steps, fountains, and the best vista in Britain, ending in the peaks of Snowdonia. For him, the place became a passion “an obsession if you like,” and romance still lingers in this wonderful place. **Address** Plas Brondanw, Llanfrothen, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6SW. **Tel** 01766 772772 **Website** bronndanw.org



10 Lotusland

To British eyes, the extraordinary garden at Lotusland in Santa Barbara, California, is like a giant film set for the Disney film *Fantasia* with weird but wonderful cacti, superb succulents, rare cycads, flowering aloes and a forest of dragon trees. The only thing more extraordinary than the garden itself, with its Moorish rills and lotus pools, is its creator, the self-styled Madame Ganna Walska (1887–1984), who spent the fortunes of six husbands making this place. Not to be missed. **Address** Directions to garden given when booking a visit. Ganna Walska Lotusland Foundation (offices only) is at 695 Ashley Road, Santa Barbara, California 93108, USA. **Tel** +1 805 969 9990 **Website** lotusland.org

6: CUBONIMAGES.SRL / ALAMY; 7: OLIVE NICHOLS; 8: DEREK HARRIS / THE GARDEN COLLECTION; 9: CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS; 10: ANDREA JONES



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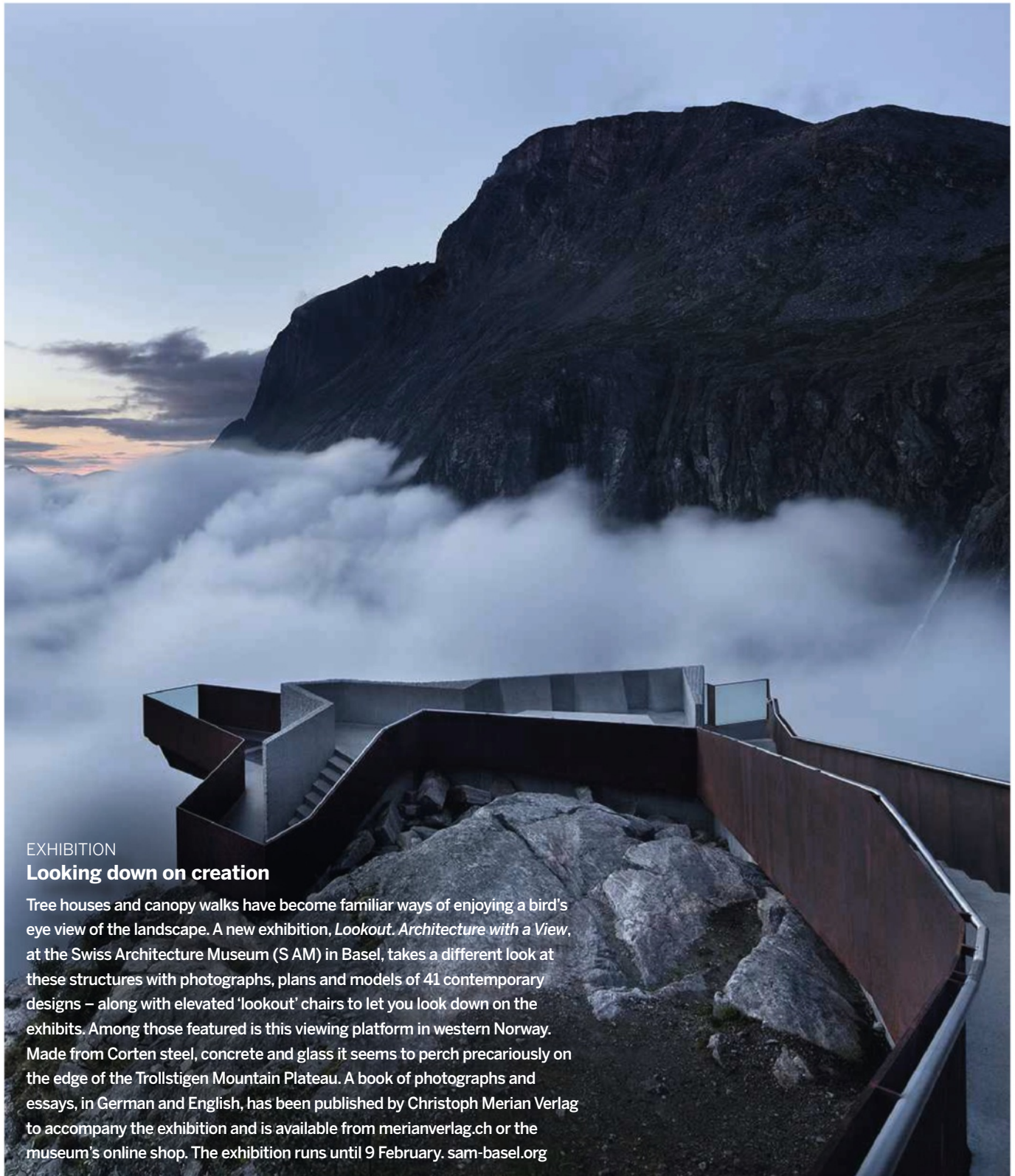
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NEWS COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



EXHIBITION

Looking down on creation

Tree houses and canopy walks have become familiar ways of enjoying a bird's eye view of the landscape. A new exhibition, *Lookout. Architecture with a View*, at the Swiss Architecture Museum (SAM) in Basel, takes a different look at these structures with photographs, plans and models of 41 contemporary designs – along with elevated 'lookout' chairs to let you look down on the exhibits. Among those featured is this viewing platform in western Norway. Made from Corten steel, concrete and glass it seems to perch precariously on the edge of the Trollstigen Mountain Plateau. A book of photographs and essays, in German and English, has been published by Christoph Merian Verlag to accompany the exhibition and is available from merianverlag.ch or the museum's online shop. The exhibition runs until 9 February. sam-basel.org



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AWARD

Changing landscapes

A wetland park in east London and a new look for one of the capital's busiest squares were among the winners of the 2013 Landscape Institute Awards. Beam Parklands (shown), a natural open space in Dagenham that also acts

as a flood defence won designers Arup, working with the Environment Agency and the Land Trust, top honours in a new category: Adding Value Through Landscape. The prestigious President's Award went to landscape

architect Burns + Nice for its reshaping of Leicester Square. "The ribbons of seating and planting, and the reflections of water and fencing, have radically changed the quality of this difficult space," said president Sue Illman.

GOLD-HOSED REINDEER

Christmas may be over but, you'll still want to give pride of place to this Swedish-designed reindeer hose mount from Barbed. Made from galvanised metal, with a gold or black lacquered finish, it's even more stylish when paired with this 20m gold-coloured hose that uses reinforcement around the inner tube to prevent kinks.

Reindeer mount, £210. Hose, £120 in gold, also available in black, pink or grey, £85. From Barbed, 3 Liffords Place, Barnes High St, London SW13 9LR. Tel 020 8878 1994, barbed.co.uk

A VISION FOR PLAY AMONG THE WETLANDS BY ARUP © DAVID WALKER



AWARD

Path to success

Garden designer David Keegan has been named Landscape Designer of the Year in the 2013 Northern Design Awards. His winning garden – a scented journey along a sinuous path to an enclosed raised platform – transformed a 32m-long neglected plot in Chorlton, Manchester, into a place of mystery and magic. The Commercial Landscaping Design award went to Sunderland City Council's Landscape Architects for a sensory maze garden that includes a cordwood roundhouse with wildflower turf roof, for children with severe learning difficulties.



PRIZE-WINNING LANDSCAPING

Horticultural healing

An inspirational garden at Salisbury Hospital's Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre has been honoured in the 2013 BALI National Landscape Awards. Created by Bournemouth-based Wycliffe Landscapes, from a design by Cleve West, Horatio's Garden provides patients in the spinal unit, many of whom face long stays in hospital, with an accessible and tranquil space away from the wards. Judges praised the garden for its exquisite dry stone walls, its beautifully planted flower beds and its outstanding seating areas, and named it winner in the Communities and School Development category.



CHARITY AUCTION

Flights of fancy

Julien Macdonald has gone for a screaming pink glittery look while Katherine Hamnett hits the spot with a bold black and white statement. These highly individual takes on the humble nestbox by 20 of the country's leading fashion designers will be sold by auction to raise funds for the RSPB at the start of London Fashion Week (14-18 February) – just when birds are beginning to need nesting sites. But these boxes are strictly for decoration, birds actually prefer a plain box, according to the RSPB. For more information or to bid for a box go to rspb.org.uk

VIDEO

Second life

In May 2013 ceramic artist Rosa Nguyen took a dead *Cercis* tree from the Peckham garden of designer Dan Pearson and gave it a new lease of life in her installation 'Tree Folly', which was displayed last year at London's Garden Museum. Rosa will be reworking part of 'Tree Folly' into a new piece to be shown at Touchstones Rochdale in the autumn. Before then you can get an insight into her creative process in a short video conversation in which Rosa and Dan discuss the project and their individual approaches to working with landscape, plants and objects. Visit danpearsonstudio.com/journal



Notebook

- **Gardening Scotland** (30 May – 2 June) has increased the number of prizes in the Artisan Design Competition. There will now be three awards of £2,000 each, in a competition developed to encourage designers to create exhibits that reflect real gardens. Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh EH28 8NB. Tel 0131 333 0965, gardeningScotland.com

- **Arne Maynard Garden Design** is offering two new courses for 2014. 'The Making of the Garden for All Seasons' is a series of four one-day courses run over the course of a year. 'Planning of the Complete Garden' is a three-day course (17-19 June) that includes visits to Cothay Manor and a Devon garden designed by Arne. Courses take place at Allt-y-bela in Monmouthshire. For details of these and other courses, call 020 7689 8100 or visit arnemaynard.com/courses

- **Learn some of the secrets of design drawing** on a one-day course from designer Andrew Wilson at RHS Wisley on 6 February. Andrew will also be covering the special elements that make up the modern garden on a two-day course also at Wisley on 8 March and 5 April. Tel 0845 612 1253, rhs.org.uk/Courses/Leisure-learning/Leisure-learning-at-RHS-Garden-Wisley.

- **The RHS London Plant and Design Show** takes place at Westminster Halls on 21-22 February. Tel 0844 338 7502, rhs.org.uk/shows



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1 Lean-to greenhouse

A lean-to greenhouse can be attached to a house wall or even a garden shed. South- or west-facing walls are good but can be very warm. A structure with a high apex helps to maximise the available light. If the greenhouse is made of wood, painting it the same colour as the building to which it is attached will make it integrate well into the garden.



1 HOWARD RICE / GAPPHOTOS



Annie Guilfoyle is Director of Garden Design at KLC School of Design. She is also Garden Course Co-ordinator at West Dean College and runs her own garden design studio.

A glass act

A greenhouse can make a big difference to plant cultivation, but how do you choose the right one – and where's the best place to site it?

WORDS ANNIE GUILFOYLE



2: WOODBOARD / ALAMY; 3: MARCUS HARFUR / GAP PHOTOS; DESIGN: CHARLES RUTHERFORD; 4: GABRIEL ASH

2 Open windows

Smaller greenhouses are particularly susceptible to overheating due to the higher ratio of glass to floor area, so adequate ventilation is essential. If it gets too hot plants will dry out quickly and perish. Air movement helps plants cool down, so choose a greenhouse with sufficient windows to open manually or that have automatic vents.

3 Geodesic dome

Why not build your own Eden Project with a geodesic dome greenhouse? The structure is made up of triangular sections, which makes it incredibly strong, and the uniform shape means it will receive the maximum amount of light. These domes can be bought in kit form and self-assembled on site.

4 Roof vents

Hot air rises to the top of a greenhouse so a roof vent with an automatic opening device is the most efficient method of ventilation in hot weather. This example from Gabriel Ash has an aluminium roof vent running the full extent of the ridge.

There was a time when the greenhouse would have been tucked away out of view, in a forgotten corner of the garden. Things are different now thanks to the 'grow your own' revolution, the greenhouse can often take centre stage and be the focus of the garden.

If you are planning to get a greenhouse it is worth spending some time thinking carefully about what you really want to grow, not only now but also for the future. This can be the hardest decision, as you may not know the full answer until you actually start using one. Is it for protecting and overwintering tender plants; for sowing seeds and bringing on crops; or do

you want to cultivate plants that will live permanently under glass?

The size and style of the greenhouse will depend largely on how you want to use it and, of course, your budget. Where to position it in the garden needs careful planning; it must be sited in a sheltered location out of the cold north and easterly winds. Most importantly it has to be orientated to maximise the sunshine. If you place it running east to west then it should help to extend the availability of winter sun. If it runs north to south then it will have more benefit in the summer and be better for growing summer crops such as tomatoes. More often than not ▷

5 Historic inspiration

To see some of the finest glasshouses visit the magnificent kitchen gardens at West Dean, West Sussex. Sixteen glasshouses, built between 1890 and 1900, have been restored from dereliction. The range of plants grown there will inspire you, whether you want to grow edible produce or ornamental plants.



5

6 Wardian case

This is where it all started, with the earliest form of protected growing under glass. The Wardian Case was developed by Dr Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward in the 1830s to transport plants safely from overseas. Inside the glass case, plants would be completely sheltered from inhospitable conditions, especially those on ships.



6



7

7 Do research

Before you make a purchase, it's always a good idea to visit gardens with greenhouses and talk to people who garden under glass who can help you make the right decision.

▷ it will be the site that dictates where it can be built, but make sure to keep it well away from the shade of neighbouring trees or buildings. It is much simpler to increase the shade in summer using blinds than to have a greenhouse that does not receive sufficient light throughout the year.

When it comes to the choice of materials, (including the choice of glass or polycarbonate for the glazing), this will often be dictated by budget. The taller the greenhouse the more light it will allow in. If possible the eaves should be between 1.5m and 1.8m high, with the ridge at least 60cm above the eaves. Good ventilation is crucial in order to provide free circulation of

air to cool the greenhouse down when it is hot but also to reduce the risk of pests and diseases. If space is limited, consider a lean-to or mini greenhouse. It is surprising how much can be grown in even a very small space, allowing you to extend the season and enjoy tender plants.

I could not write about greenhouses without asking Sarah Wain, the Garden Supervisor at West Dean Gardens in West Sussex, for her tips (see right). As one of the country's most experienced glasshouse gardeners, her advice is invaluable. □

NEXT MONTH Ideas for lawns



8 MARK BOLTON / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

8 Invest with care

Today the greenhouse often takes centre stage in the garden, when once it would have been hidden away in a corner. It can be a major purchase, so before you buy do investigate any special offers available at flower shows, as there are often exceptionally good deals to be had.

Useful contacts

Gabriel Ash

Monument Farm, Farndon,
Chester CH3 6QP
Tel 0844 880 7909,
gabrielash.com

Grow-Dome

For geodesic domes.
Shropshire Trading Ltd,
PO Box 20, Oswestry,
Shropshire SY11 4WF
Tel 01691 668002
grow-dome.co.uk

West Dean Gardens

Nr Chichester,
West Sussex PO18 0QZ
Tel 01243 818210,
westdean.org.uk

For details of other suggested manufacturers, turn to our feature The Short List – Greenhouses with porches on page 89.

Top tips from Sarah Wain

- Buy as large a glasshouse as you can afford. You will want the space – trust me. Consider cold frames too, for hardening off young plants.
- Make sure a tap is within reach.
- With careful crop selection glasshouses can be used all year. If possible run electricity for heat and for grow lights. For unheated glasshouses in winter, choose crops that tolerate low light levels and the cold (such as salad leaves).
- Glasshouses are generally sited south facing, but north-facing ones can be used for growing ferns, for example.
- Bear in mind the ultimate size of the plants and the shade they might cast within the glasshouse.
- Some crops require a lot of work; investigate watering, feeding and maintenance before you commit yourself to a plant. Learn how to look after your chosen crops and increase your knowledge through courses and books.
- Be pest aware. Learn how to recognise pests (use a hand-held magnifying lens as some are tiny) and investigate biological controls. Seek professional advice and make this a winter activity in preparation for a spring introduction.



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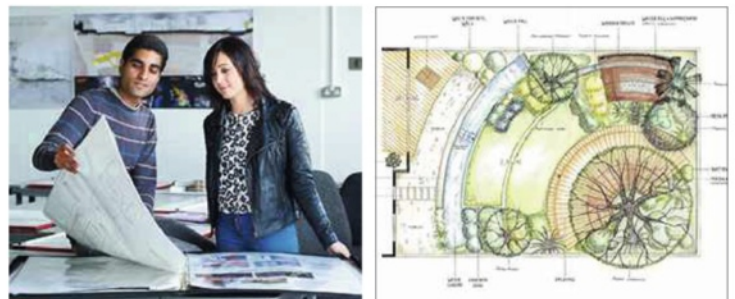
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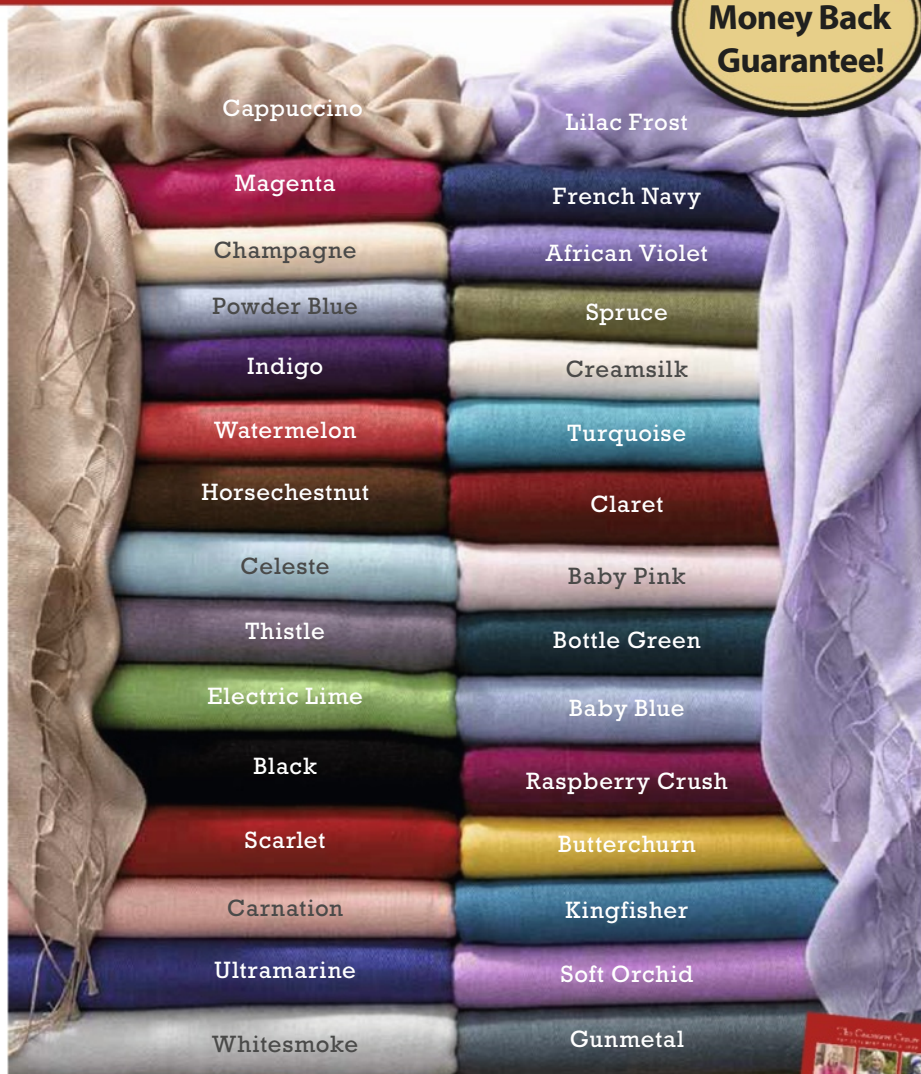
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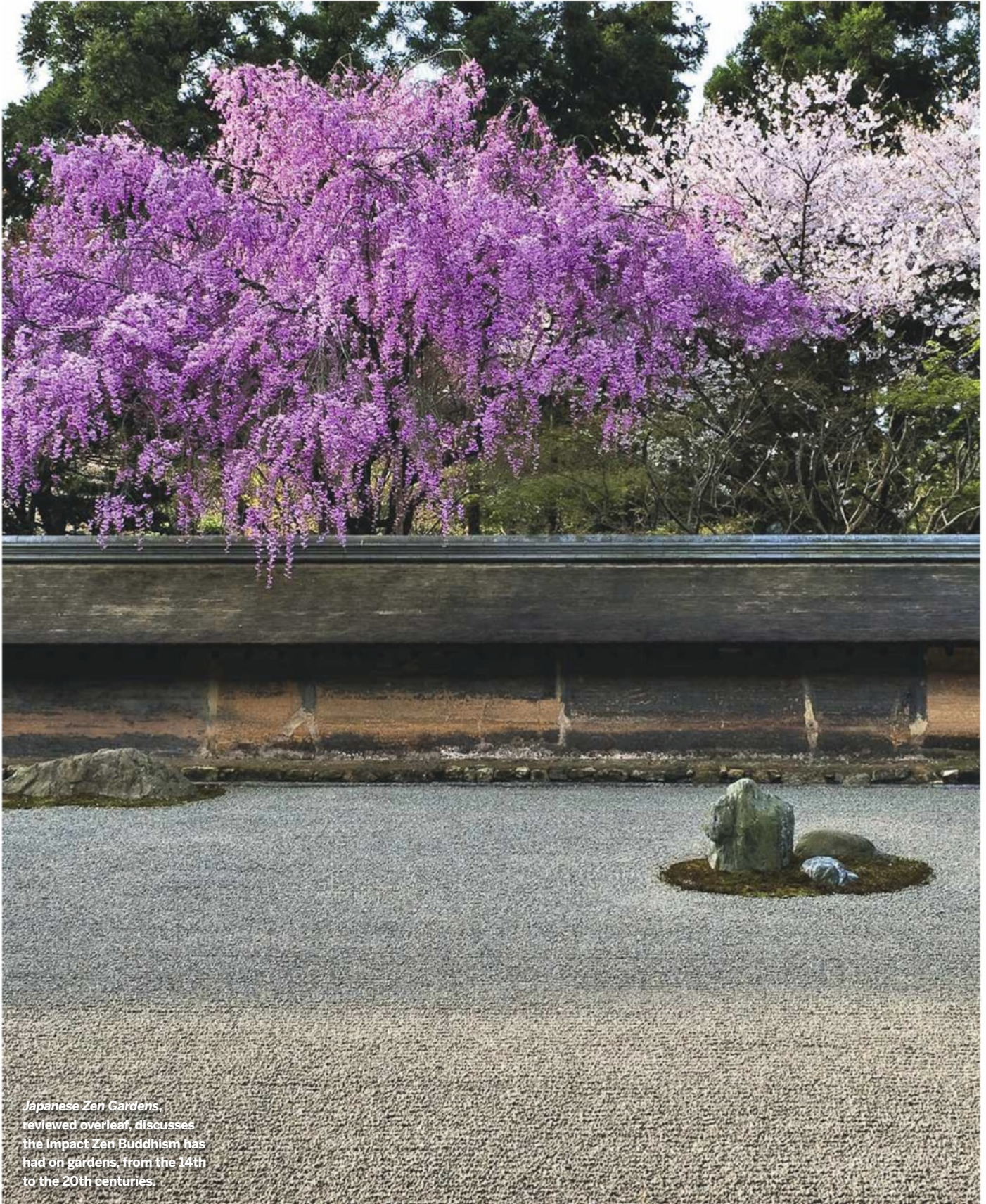
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Book reviews, readers' letters, crossword, reader offers



Japanese Zen Gardens, reviewed overleaf, discusses the impact Zen Buddhism has had on gardens, from the 14th to the 20th centuries.

ALEX RAMSAY

Book reviews

JAPANESE ZEN GARDENS

by Yoko Kawaguchi

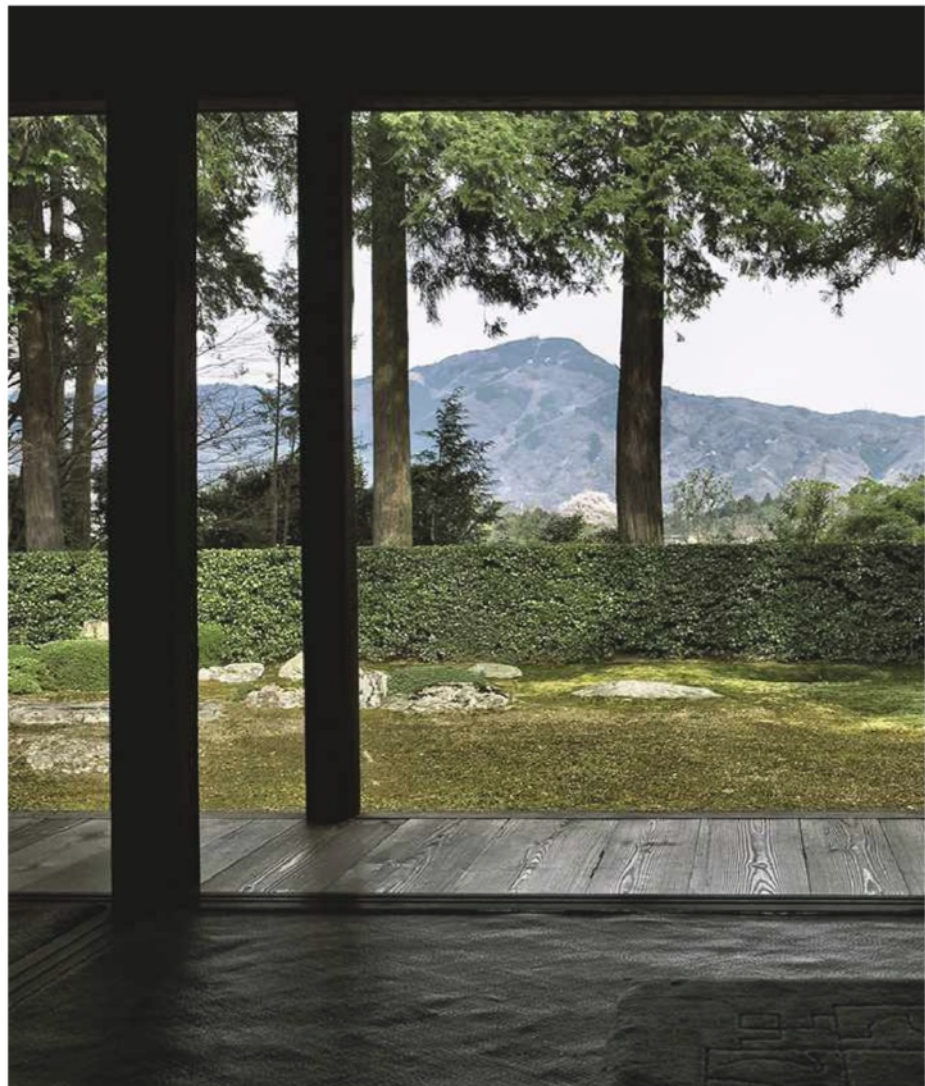
Frances Lincoln, £30

ISBN 978-0711234475



Japanese Zen Gardens by Yoko Kawaguchi is a scholarly account of a fascinating subject. Its erudition is beautifully balanced by Alex Ramsay's exquisite photography. The photographic echoes from Ramsay's earlier collaboration on *The Gardens of Japan* with his wife Helena Attlee (Frances Lincoln, 2010) are many, but welcome. They capture the Japanese reverence for nature and the seasons, from swoony cherry blossom to fiery maples and an extraordinary palette of clipped evergreens. There are pages of serene stones and swirling gravel 'seas'.

With garden making at the centre of Japanese imperial, feudal and spiritual heritage, the story of the gardens is inextricably linked to the history of the nation. As well as detailing the introduction of Zen Buddhism to Japan, Kawaguchi includes tales of feuds and fires, especially the devastating impact that the 15th-century Onin wars had on many of the temple gardens. There are also stories of emperors abdicating to indulge in the patronage of garden makers, Zen masters and abbots. The author is thorough but transparent about the difficulties of pinpointing historical accuracy. Timber temple buildings and



The garden at Entsu-ji famously has a *shakkei* (borrowed landscape) with views over a moss garden to Mount Hiei in the distance.

stones are evidently easy to move around and moss likes to invade a gravel sea.

In part one Kawaguchi outlines the work of leading exponents of Japanese Zen gardens from Muso Soseki in the 14th century to Shigimori Mirei in the 20th. Part two deals with symbols and motifs. When it comes to spiritual interpretation, Kawaguchi has a light touch. You get to the end of this book fully conversant with the symbolic shorthand by which the breadth of the cosmos could be captured in the correct configuration of stones and gravel in a *Kare sensui*-dry landscape 'sea'. You will know your *Sanzon-seki*

(triangular stone grouping) from your *Shumisen* (eight-ringed mountain) as well as your *Shoin* (abbot's private study) from your *Hojo* (abbot's hall). Kawaguchi lays down the essentials beyond which you are free to let your mind wander. Wondrously.

A map would be handy but the glossary is great, the timeline illuminating and the addresses and opening times spot on.

Tania Compton is a designer and a trustee of the Garden Museum.

book offer

RRP £30. **Reader offer price £27**, including p&p.

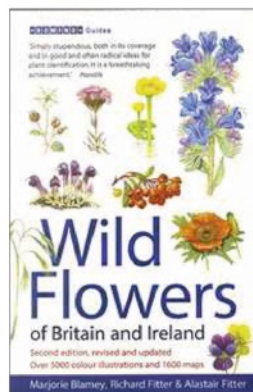
ALEX RAMSAY

WILD FLOWERS OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

by Marjorie Blamey, Richard Fitter and Alastair Fitter

Bloomsbury Natural History, £18.99

ISBN 978-1408179505



When it first appeared in 2003 this field guide, graced with Marjorie Blamey's paintings, was hailed as the most complete and best-illustrated companion to British and Irish flora. It certainly remains the most visually attractive and comprehensive, covering flowers, trees, grasses, ferns, horsetails and club-mosses, although the recently published *Harrap's Wild Flowers* (A & C Black, 2013) illustrated with photographs rather than paintings and confined to flowers, shrubs and trees, is a user-friendly competitor.

Richard Fitter, one of the authors of this guide who died in 2005, was the co-author of the first field guide that I ever owned, in 1963. One of its features was a one-, two- and three-star system denoting scarcity, something that appealed to a rarity-obsessed apprentice botanist. Half a century later the first edition of this, his last field guide, retained the star system and included much more symbol-based information, including distribution maps, so that each species entry had become an object lesson in information compression. After a further decade little new data has been added in this second edition and it's tempting to speculate that

this volume represents the apogee of printed wild flower field guides as far as information content, portability and ease of use are concerned. Perhaps the future now lies in digital field guides for smart phones and tablets, free from the constraints of printed media.

Apart from a minor rearrangement of sections, the major change in the new edition is in the revision of Latin names in the light of a decade of taxonomic research. So lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* is now *Ficaria verna*, something that might raise a groan from those who learned plant names decades ago. But it is a reassuring sign that academic research into our flora is alive and well; when Latin names stop changing we'll know that the study of traditional aspects of botany has finally withered away. The printing of the colour plates is more clearly defined and vivid in the new edition, but it's a pity that the editors did not take the opportunity to amalgamate the unnecessary dual Latin and English indices.

Dr Phil Gates is a Guardian Country Diarist and former senior lecturer in botany at the University of Durham.

book offer

RRP £18.99. Reader offer price £17.99 including p&p.



SIMPLE FLOWER ARRANGING

by Mark Welford and Stephen Wicks

DK, £16.99

ISBN 978-1409337355

As former Royal Ballet dancers, Mark Welford and Stephen Wicks were schooled to produce an artistic flourish from a young age and transferring their skills to floral design over the past 20 years has been a natural progression. The emphasis is on the achievable – 60 arrangements are dissected and presented in recipe style, so even the more complicated are eminently copy-able, thanks to Carolyn Barber's excellent photographs and step-by-step instructions. There are many insider tips, such as plunging wilted hydrangeas head first into cold water to revive them and slitting stems of tulips below the flower to prevent them growing in the vase.

The clean layout, long mastered by DK, makes it painless to navigate, with useful summary pages at the start of each chapter, plus pages on equipment, flower shapes and maintenance tips. In some cases, the flowers used could be hard to source and expensive, so suggested alternatives would have been appreciated. Gardeners might prefer to see more garden flowers rather than pricey florists' blooms, but overall, this will both inspire and enable.

Paula McWaters is a gardening writer and editor.

book offer

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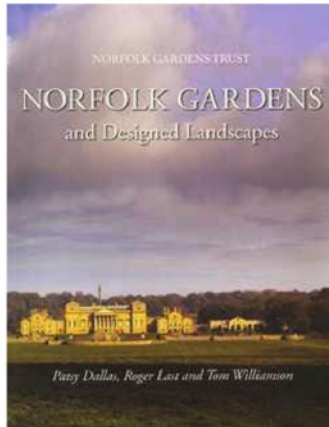
Books

NORFOLK GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

by Patsy Dallas, Roger Last and Tom Williamson

Windgather Press, £25

ISBN 978-1905119929



Even living as I do in neighbouring Suffolk, I was surprised to learn that in Norfolk there are more than 300 gardens and parks considered worthy of inclusion in this absorbing volume published by the Norfolk Gardens Trust.

The book is carefully researched and generously illustrated, providing a historical record of the county's rich heritage of gardening and landscape architecture. The familiar gardens of Holkham and Houghton are there, but you will also find hidden gems such as 16th-century Little Hautbois Hall with its avenue of ancient quince trees; Happisburgh Manor gardens designed by Arts and Crafts architect Detmar Blow; and the quirky Jungle Garden, created since 1999 by its owner Jon Kelf.

Due recognition is given to the giants of garden design who left their mark on the county, including 'Capability' Brown, William Kent and Humphry Repton, who was involved in 15 Norfolk gardens. Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll are included though their creations have all but disappeared, while contemporary

designers including Tom Stuart-Smith and George Carter bring the story into the 21st century.

The gardens are put into historical context, from early fortified and moated manor houses to the elegant parks paid for by the county's 18th-century wealth, and from 19th-century civic spaces to contemporary private gardens created by plantsmen and amateurs.

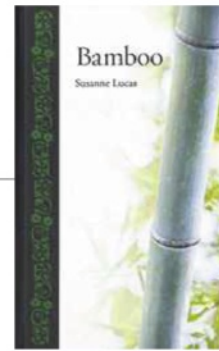
The book is a mine of fascinating information about significant Norfolk gardens and their creators, and a useful introduction to the wider history and development of English gardens. But why is there no map for those unfamiliar with the area, nor any indication of which gardens are regularly or even occasionally open to the public? Enthusiasts will be keen to see some of the gardens themselves.

The authors describe this as a 'Pevsner' for lovers of designed landscapes. It serves as a challenge to other counties to follow Norfolk's lead and ensure our garden heritage is documented for future generations.

Widget Finn is a freelance garden writer and editor.

book offer

RRP £25. Reader offer price £24 including p&p.



BAMBOO

By Susanne Lucas

Reaktion Books, £16

ISBN 978-1780232010

Bamboo comes with so much cultural baggage that it can be difficult to look at it with a fresh mind. For western gardeners, plantings of bamboo invariably conjure up images of Japanese lanterns or cloud-pruned shrubs. Which is where this little book comes in handy, for its perspective on bamboo is very wide-ranging, from its botany to its uses, history and cultural associations.

What comes across is how widespread bamboo is and I am glad to see much discussion about the New World bamboos, which are even more varied than the Asian and African. Particularly exciting is the discussion of the vast range of contemporary technical uses; we may know about bamboo socks, but there is much more, with many new applications linked to sustainability.

The book is the latest in a series exploring plant groups in a rounded way, concentrating on human interaction with each plant. The production values are high and the books are set to become a collector's series. The design is conventional, or perhaps deliberately retro? The book is not, sadly, made of bamboo, although technically, I feel sure it could have been.

Noël Kingsbury is a writer and plantsman.

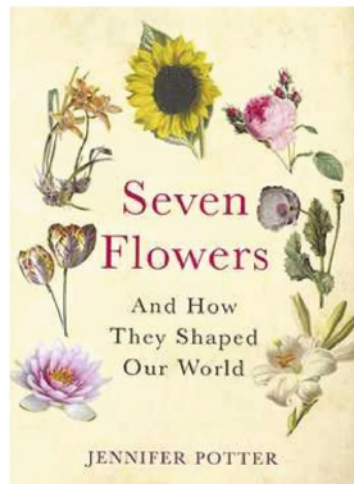
book offer

RRP £16. Reader offer price £15 including p&p.

SEVEN FLOWERS AND HOW THEY SHAPED OUR WORLD

by Jennifer Potter

Atlantic Books, £25, ISBN 978-0857891648



With this engaging book, there's no need to dread the long winter evenings. Jennifer Potter's endlessly beguiling study of seven flowers 'and how they shaped our world' isn't exactly that – it's more a study of 'the power of flowers to speak metaphorically', of the way that different societies have used these flowers to say something essential about themselves.

Potter's cultural journey leads her from foot-binding in China (the deformed foot a 'golden lotus') to the sexual rituals of the Minoans; from the tomb of Tutankhamun to the Aztec court of Montezuma; and from her childhood garden in Malaya to the pre-continental land-mass of Pangaea, 100 million years ago.

Clearly, the author enjoys some of her seven flowers more than others. The lotus sags somewhat and the lily hangs its waxy head under the sheer weight of the associative burden they have to bear. The tulip, a flower of 'no utility whatsoever' she finds 'curiously hard to love'. Her favourite remains the rose,

celebrated in an earlier, eponymous, book. Yet her prose ignites when she comes to the 'creepy' sunflower, adored by Oscar Wilde for its 'gaudy leonine beauty' and the delicate and dangerous opium poppy. She finds herself reluctantly seduced by the slippery duality of the orchid, denoting virtue in the east yet rampant sexuality in the west.

Potter's range of reference is huge, from Dante to Ginsberg, from the flower-and-bird paintings of the Song dynasty to Manet and from early Christianity to Hindu creation myths. She speculates that crushed lily bulbs might have treated the corns of Roman foot-soldiers; she observes that in the White House rose garden, under the George W Bush administration, all roses that had Democrat associations were dug up.

Every page yields up some delicious nuggets: that John Evelyn proposed a green belt of roses round London, or that the wholesome Louisa May Alcott was a user of opium. The opium poppy turns out to originate not in the east, but the western Mediterranean.

I would have enjoyed a few more illustrations – I found myself Googling images as I was reading. But this would be simply the icing on an exceptionally well-made and satisfying cake.

Ambra Edwards is an author and garden writer.

book offer

RRP £25. **Reader offer price £23**, including p&p.

Other recently released books for gardeners



PLANTIFUL

by Kristin Green
Timber Press, £14.99
ISBN 978-1604693874

Practical tips on how to get the most out of spreading and self-seeding plants.



CHARLES DOWDING'S VEG JOURNAL

by Charles Dowding
Frances Lincoln, £14.99
ISBN 978-0711235267

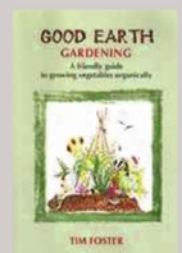
Seasonal checklists and advice from the UK's best-known no-dig gardener.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY FRUIT GARDEN?

by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth
Timber Press, £16.99
ISBN 978-1604693584

Reference book on organic fruit-growing and problems.



GOOD EARTH GARDENING

by Tim Foster
Pomegranate Books, £8.95
ISBN 978-1842890202

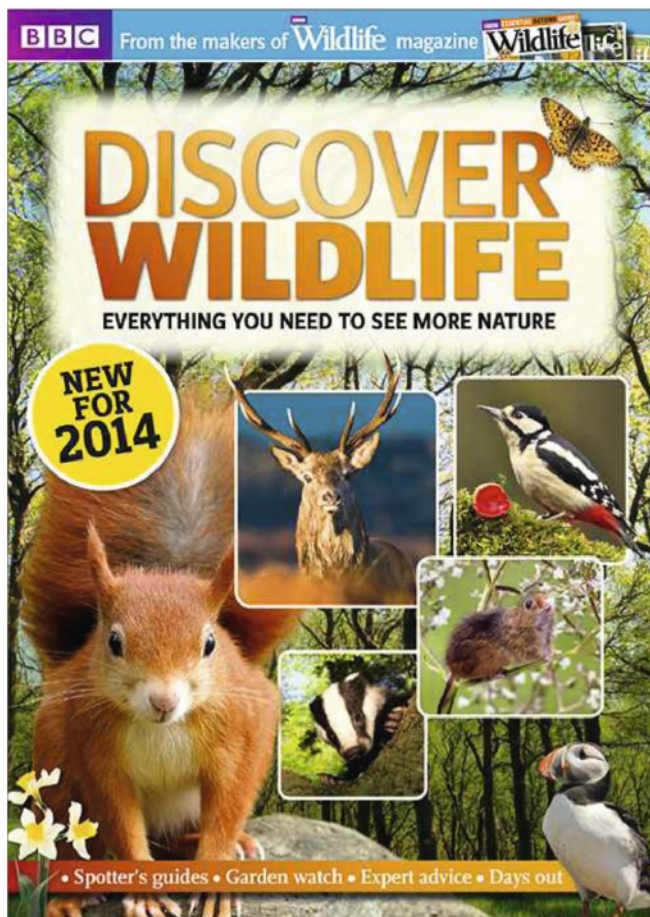
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Reader offers

OFFER ONE

10% off Dan Pearson's 100 must-have plants selection



See Dan's feature on p33



Dan Pearson has long been an admirer of Beth Chatto and was entranced by her Chelsea Flower Show displays right from his first visit to the show as a 12-year-old in 1976. He still cites Beth as one of his key influences. So it is especially pleasing to have The Beth Chatto Nursery offering readers a 10 per cent discount on orders made not just for the 100 best plants chosen by Dan, but across its entire plant range.

To order go to bethchatto.co.uk and select your plants from the nursery's plant list. When prompted use the code

GILL2014 to gain your discount. Orders can also be placed by post, please quote 'GARDENS ILLUSTRATED'. For a free plant list please call 01206 822007.

Plants can only be sent within the UK and Ireland. For mainland UK postage and packaging is £10 for all orders. This will be calculated automatically at the checkout. There is no minimum order. For delivery to Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Isle of Man and Isle of Wight, p&p is £20.

Closing date 31 March 2014

Please note: Although The Beth Chatto Nursery stocks a good selection of Dan's mentioned plants, it does not stock all of them. The *RHS Plant Finder* book or apps. rhs.org.uk/rhsplantfinder/inex.asp lists nursery suppliers for specific plants.



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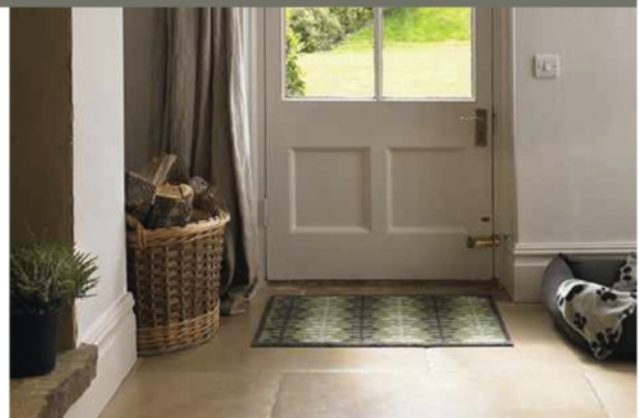
Made in Britain, the Turtle Mat Luxury Collection takes inspiration from the treasures and artwork of the National Trust, Royal Horticultural Society and Historic Royal Palaces, providing an added touch of interior flare to any hallway or doorway. New additions include 'Formal Leaf' and 'Seed Head' (shown right), both from the National Trust Collection, priced at £49.95 each.

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Letters

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Star letter



Festive cheer

In the December issue of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED there was a fantastic section on creating natural festive decorations. This feature was a welcome change to the often twee seasonal alternatives found elsewhere.

I manage a charity-run walled garden in Suffolk, which is maintained by a team of volunteers, and in December we took part in a local Christmas fayre in a bid to raise some money for the heritage fruit trees we are hoping to purchase and plant this winter. Having been inspired by GARDENS ILLUSTRATED we set about making Christmas decorations to sell and raise money for this cause. The stall was a great success and thanks to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED we are in reach of those desperately needed trees.

Lucy Skellorn, Suffolk

HOME DECORATIONS

Making mirth

Just like to thank all those involved in the Garden goodwill feature [issue 204, p47]. I was reluctantly persuaded to make some of these decorations by my family and in the end had hours of fun with my children who really started to manage a production line. By following Kristy Ramage's instructions, and with Britt Willoughby Dyer's wonderful photos as our guide, we proudly produced yew snowflakes and ivy stars galore, as well as tired, but very happy, children.

David Beale, Kent

BOOK LOVERS

A good read

As one of your plant-addicted, regular readers, I always turn first of all to The Writer's Plot and Frank Ronan's brilliantly crafted horticultural gems. I am never disappointed. I loved his December description of Anna Pavord's *The Curious Gardener*, and in spite

of living in a small bungalow (owned by our two cats apparently) with bulging bookcases in need of a good pruning, meekly obeyed his instruction to 'get it'.

My top wish for a new bedside publication would be a collection of Frank's Writer's Plot witty contributions. My second wish would be for a kind soul to be brutal and force me to reduce my unwieldy pile of reading matter to an orderly, manageable number.

Sally Smith, by email

BIG AMBITION

Small wonder

I had to smile – while looking out at my little 21-foot-wide town garden – when I read Ann-Marie Powell's advice [issue 204, p40] that 'even in a tiny garden' you can create a woodland atmosphere by planting a multi-stemmed birch. It reminded me of Gertrude Jekyll's famous dictum: 'However small the garden, one should always leave a few acres for woodland'.

Ian Forsyth, Durham

WRITE TO US AND WIN

The star letter wins a large heavy-duty oilskin carrier from Carrier Company (worth £58) perfect for moving things around the garden, such as clippings, logs or soil. It's also waterproof so can be used as a cover too. Find details of Carrier Company's range at carriercompany.co.uk



TALKING POINT

Ancient trees can be as valuable to the eco system when dead as they are alive



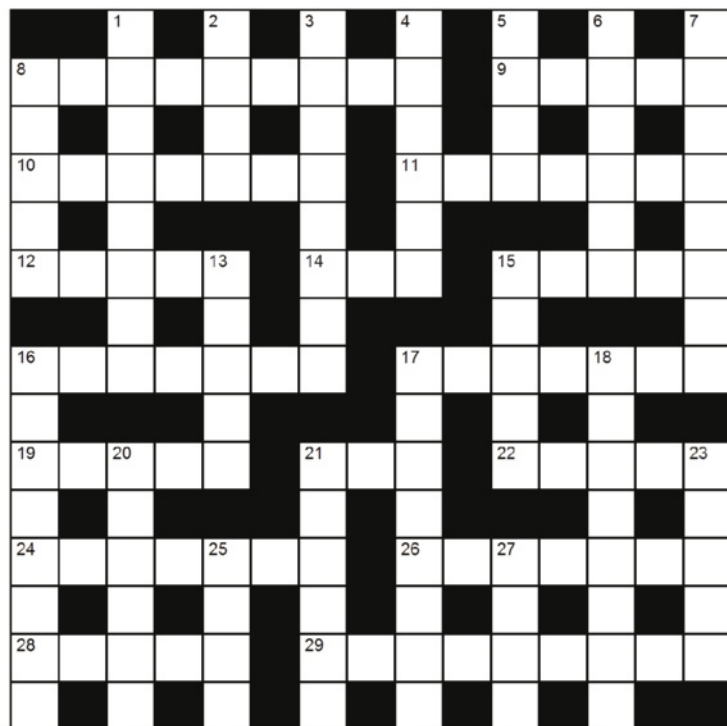
Edward Parker is former project manager of the Ancient Tree Hunt and is now trust manager at the Springhead Trust.

We should be rightly proud of our ancient tree heritage here in the UK. We have more ancient and veteran trees than any other northern European country. It's estimated that the UK is home to 90 per cent of all the remaining ancient yew trees in Europe, while parks such as Windsor and Richmond in London have more veteran trees than some European countries. But trees aren't just valuable when they are alive, they remain vitally important for the UK's rarest fungi, lichens and invertebrates for decades after they succumb to the ravages of time.

Ancient tree experts such as Brian Muelaner at the National Trust and Ted Green of the Ancient Tree Forum know the value of crumpled, old, wrecks of trees that have shuffled of their mortal coils. Ted has been heard to say: "That's not a dead tree, that's full of life." Meanwhile Brian, his voiced edged with awe, has been heard to say: "Now that's dead gorgeous." So next time you see decaying timber on the ground, or a fallen tree gracefully disintegrating, think just how important and, to some of us, beautiful, they are.

• What's your view? Write to us by post or email (details above). We reserve the right to edit letters.

Crossword



ACROSS

- 8/21** A mid-Feb (usually) flowering *Chionodoxa* – for the romantically inclined? (9,3)
9 Spiky perennial flower of legume family (5)
10 US city's variety of broom plant genus (7)
11 Poisonous plant of *Apocynum* genus – sadly, gone bad (7)
12 The alder genus – removes awful greed from 'alder genus'! (5)
14 Wow! – endless centre of apple (3)
15 Divide (5)
16 Sows again – and withdraws by the sound of it (7)
17 To reduce a tree's growth, drop all off (7)
19 Bet it's a plant support! (5)
21 See 8 across
22 Greenfly etc found in lace-cap 'Hispaniola' (5)
24 Make use of waste – put top of carrot in cooked celery (7)
26 I steal a fantastic plant with sword-like silvery leaves (7)
28 Term applied to cultivar with white flowers – for eg book of photos? (5)

29 Type of lettuce, like iceberg – sadly, is parched (9)

DOWN

- 1** Plane tree genus – USA plant, perhaps (8)
2 They 'milk' aphids, in dormant stage (4)
3 The teasel genus US capsid blighted (8)
4 Money offered for description of a non-hardy plant? (6)
5 Iris wilt? (4)
6 Spread in straggly fashion (6)
7 As a cold frame is then due a change (8)
8 Genus of vetch – partly civic, I assume (5)
13 Turnip-related veg, cultivated weeds! (5)
15 Dwarf, double-flowered hydrangea – hidden by colossal sage (5)
16 One who fancies a David Austin flower, say (8)
17 Chinese lantern plant: exotic, says Phil (8)
18 A lilac he confused for yarrow (8)
20 Japanese laurel genus (6)
21 Thoroughly soak (6)
23 Green turf draws back (5)
25 A main shoot ending in a flower – in juicy medlars (4)
27 Hints: turns over a spade's-depth of soil? (4)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

JANUARY'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 8 Larva 9 Run to seed 11 Weeping 12 *Eucomis* 13 Remontant 15 *Nyssa* 17 *Astilbe* 19 Tea rose 20 Broom 21 Courgette 24 Triffid 26 Forcing 28 Smoke tree 29 Yukon. **DOWN:** 1 Flower 2 Tree 3 Marion 4 Brogdale 5 Insect 6 *Coccinea* 7 Geum 10 Disease 14 Motto 16 Shoot 17 *Arbutus* 18 Lime-free 19 Truffles 21 Cedars 22 Garrya 23 Edging 25 Iron 27 Inky.

DECEMBER'S BUMPER CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS (answer to question: chestnut)

ACROSS: 1/45 Christmas box 6 *Fatsheadera* 11 Rainfall 12 Early 13 Magnet 14 *Viscum* 15 Elder 17 *Endives* 18 Cyclamen 20 Ellen 22 Myrtle 24 Annual 26 Hulls 27 Gas plant 29 *Beeches* 30 Cicor 32 Awning 33 *Hermes* 35 Strim 36 Tricolor 38 Miracle 41 Acorn 42 Repton 43 Public 44 Habit 46 Tropical 47 *Begonia rex* 48 *Damascena*. **DOWN:** 1 Charity 2 Ring culture 3 Swarm 4 Mullein 5 Speedwell 7 Thyme 8 Humid 9 Dug over 10 Reeks 16 Rolls 19 Mulches 21 Niger 22 Muscari 23 Linen 25/6 Noble fir 26 Hoses 28 London pride 30 *Carya* 31 Composted 34 Morello 36 Tiny Tim 37 *Odorata* 38 Mauve 39 Cacti 40 Esher 42 Roots.

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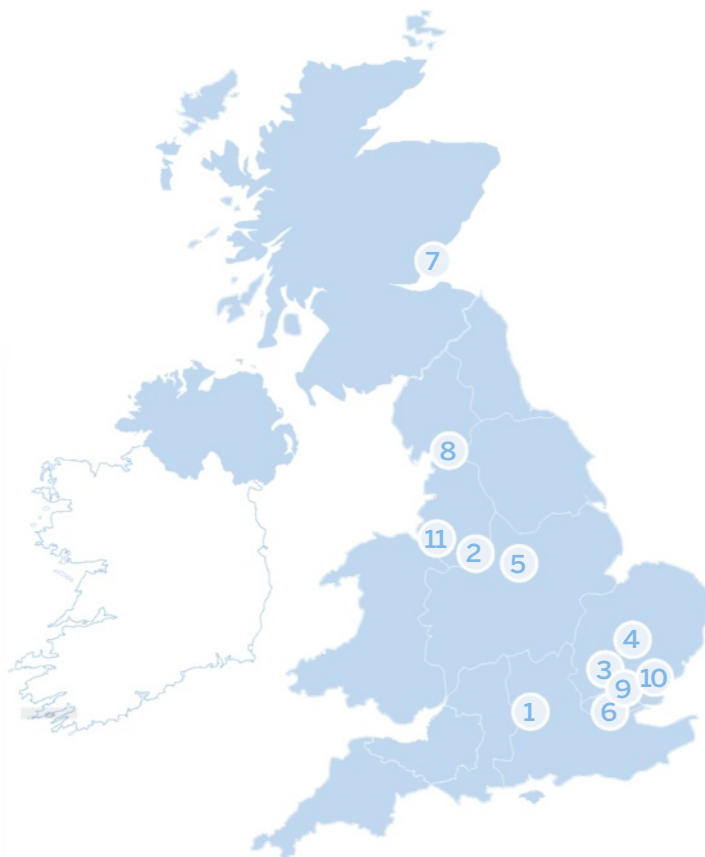
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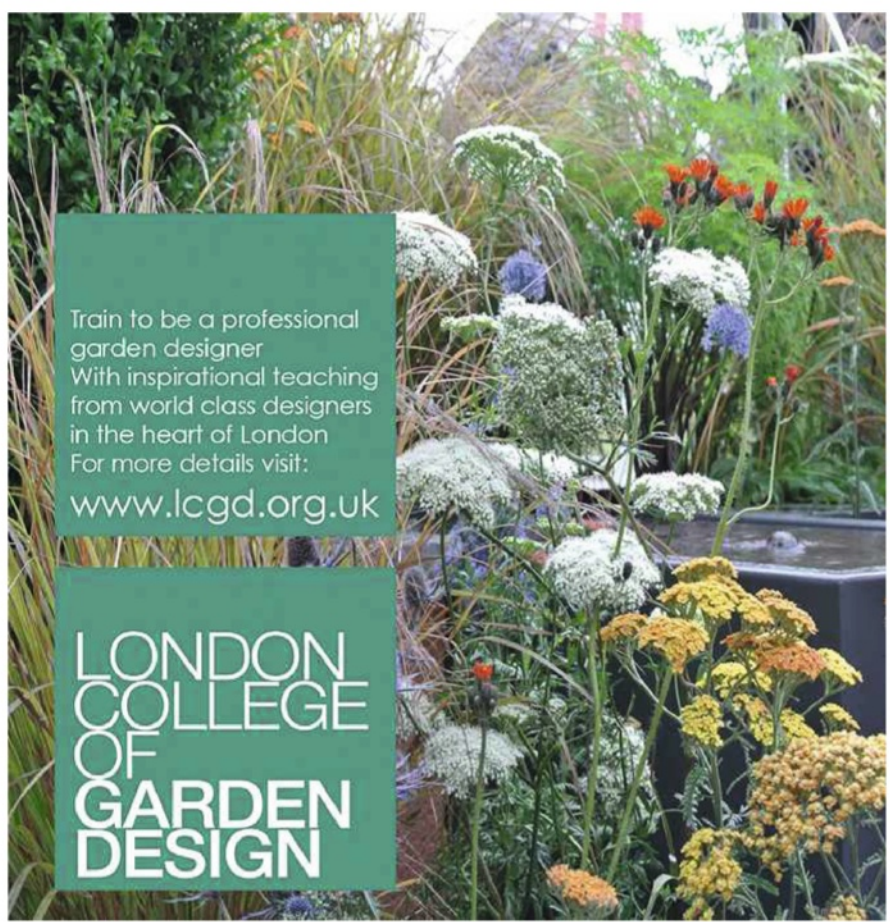
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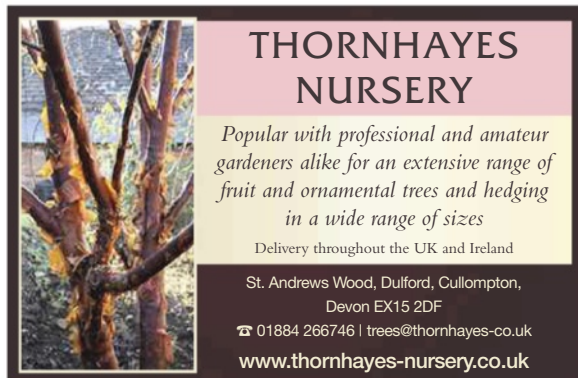
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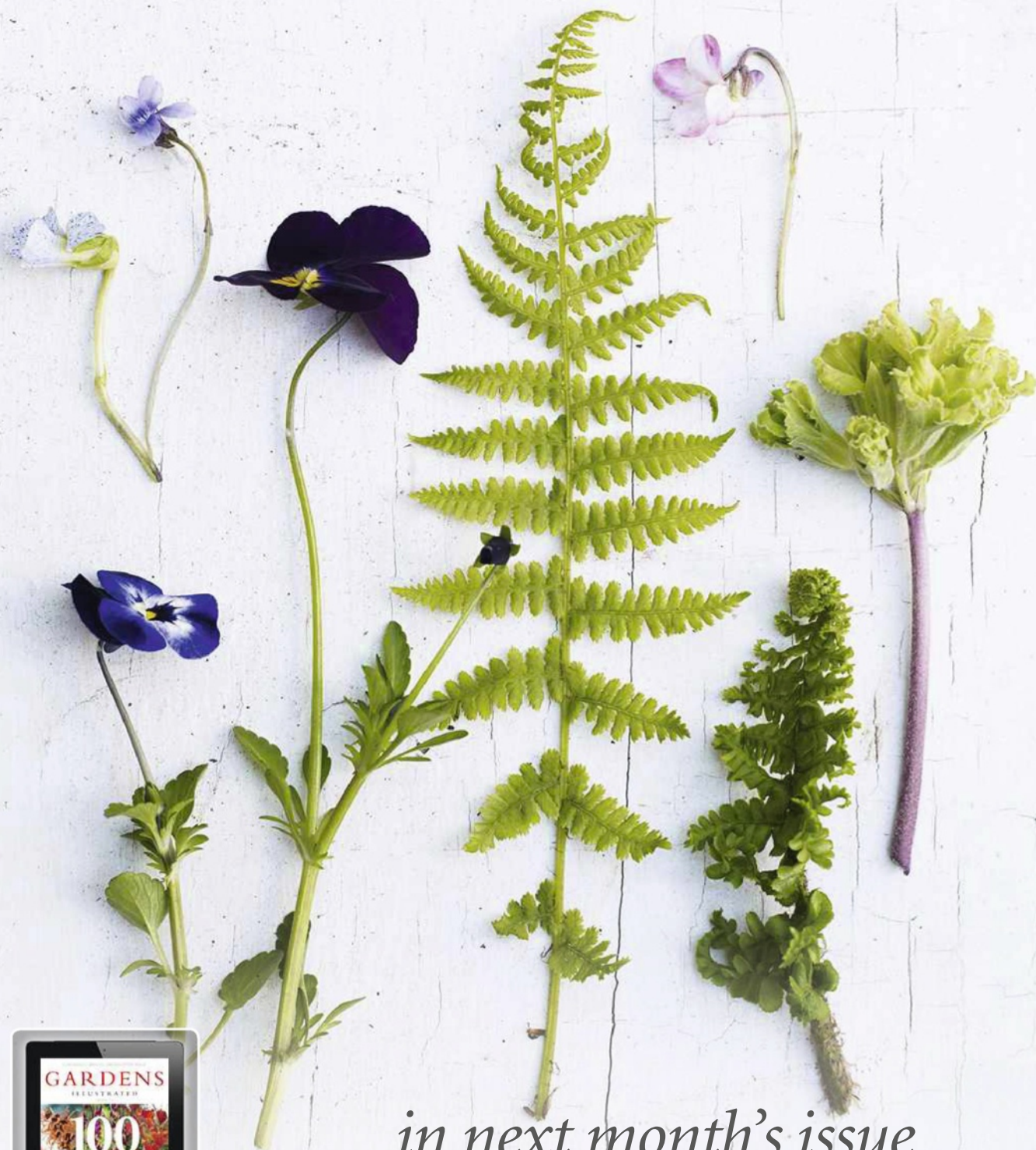


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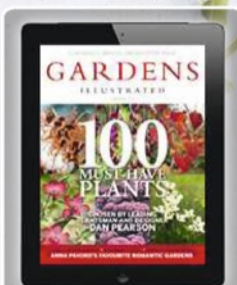


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The last half jar

The end is nigh for Mrs Warwick's horseradish and with it some of life's flavour will be lost

WORDS FRANK RONAN ILLUSTRATION ANGELA HARDING

The last jar of Mrs Warwick's horseradish is almost finished. It really is the last because Mrs Warwick died last year, and my friend Jeanne, who worked with her at the WI market, never managed to wheedle the recipe out of her, despite my constant nagging. Mrs Warwick was one of those astonishing tiny women who retain, even at a great age, a bristling energy and a gimlet eye; who dug and grated the horseradish roots herself right up to her admirably useful end. There was a possibility that she might have let a relative in on the secret, and I pumped Jeanne the day after the funeral to see if she had gleaned anything.

"I couldn't ask," she said, "it wouldn't have been proper."

"You could," I said, "that was probably our last chance."

The Warwick horseradish was so much better than any other, it is hard to know what we will do now. Nine times out of ten when I was going to stay with someone and asked what they would like from Tenbury, that is what they would ask for, if they knew about it. I had to order in bulk and keep a stash for the purpose (and only hope now that the extra labour didn't see her off). Once she died, the stash became a hoard, and that is how I managed to eke it out until this week. Next week the steaks and the roast beef and the smoked salmon and the beetroot and the bloody Marys will taste of tragedy. It will seem pointless to cross the threshold of the WI.

We all call it the WI still, though it has nothing to do with the Women's Institute any more and they changed their name to Country Markets nearly ten years ago to avoid the confusion. There is one, I think, in almost any town in England and Wales. They date back to 1919 when, as a result of war efforts and the growth of the



Angela Harding

*Next week the roast beef and the smoked salmon
and the bloody Marys will taste of tragedy*

allotment movement, ordinary people needed a legitimate way to sell off spare produce. The fee for joining was a shilling, and still is.

There are chutneys and cakes and knitting. It is a good place to get fruit and vegetables, with none of the nonsense of things being organic. 'No Chemicals' is what the labels say in good honest English. And for us gardeners, best of all, there are plants. If you were new to an area the WI (sorry, Country Markets – I will never get used to it) should be your starting place. Because they are selling spare plants that they have propagated themselves just down the road, whatever you get is more likely to do well than the stuff from the garden centre that came from a greenhouse in Holland. And because the person in a tabard standing behind the plant is

likely to be the person who grew it, you can have a proper conversation about it. Inevitably they will try to induce you to hand over your shilling for a life membership. You could do worse.

None of which helps us with the horseradish. The ingredients are written on the jar, but there is nothing unusual in them. I am told that the precise moment that you add the vinegar is crucial. I am also told that making it is hell and best done in a diving helmet. Digging it out is not supposed to be fun either. The more I find out about it, the more lost I am in admiration of Mrs Warwick.

The first thing I suppose, will be to get some going in the garden. *Armoracia rusticana* is not a beautiful plant, though handsome enough in a ducky kind of way, if you like docks which, happily, I do. There is a variegated version. It likes wet soil; it doesn't mind shade; it looks after itself: so far so good. Then how many years of painful experiment before we can make something that is a substitute for Mrs Warwick? □



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

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