



BASKETS & CONTAINERS

- Plant a sunken container
- Top tips for pots
- Trailing basket tips
- Best veg for containers

6 FROM CHELSEA



Amateur Gardening

BEST PRACTICAL ADVICE SINCE 1884

16 JUNE 2018

ASK JOHN NEGUS



Smart container top tips

Plant moth-friendly flowers



On test: tools for weeding

6 best garden pinks



In bloom!

**Best roses for containers
9 that will really shine!**

“My top tips for polyanthus” Anne



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16 JUNE 2018



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Cover photograph: *Rosa* 'Carefree Days' (pic: GAP)

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TRIED AND TESTED

Six very different hand-weeding tools tested

"The stars of this year's Chelsea Flower Show were in the Great Pavilion, and our own Peter Seabrook deserves credit for having a stand with 24 new plants (many grown in his garden). The show gardens were interesting, but showcased new technology, conceptual art and architecture rather than great gardening ideas to inspire AG readers. Aside from the enlightening segments from our own Toby Buckland, the BBC coverage bordered on inane and was too focused on designers and celebrities. I can understand why some people are left disenfranchised and bewildered. Still, well done Peter and Toby for flying the flag for the nation's enthusiast gardeners."



Garry Coward-Williams, Editor

Your Gardening Week

with AG's gardening expert Ruth Hayes



Top Tip

When you go away on holiday, cluster your containers together in the shade so they create a cool, damp microclimate and won't dry out so fast.

Brassicas are an interesting addition to ornamental pots

I planted up pots for colour and culinary use – and they will both look great in the garden

Step by step

Get your best pots

Regular care works wonders!



1 Deadhead regularly and feed with liquid tomato fertiliser every fortnight for long-lasting flowers.



2 Pots and baskets dry out fast in summer. Keep their compost moist but not waterlogged.



3 Stand your pots on feet to allow excess water to drain away and make it harder for pests to crawl inside.



4 Aphids go for new shoots, and snails eat leaves and lurk around the rims of your pots. Deal with them!

Go potty on your patio

Containers will give you fun and versatility, says **Ruth**

FOR many people, the arrival of the first swallows (not just one, obviously!) means that summer is here. But for gardeners, the season has finally turned when bedding plants become available to buy.

Many varieties are tender and need decent temperatures to survive, so their annual return is truly a reason to celebrate.

Containers – including hanging baskets and window boxes – are a wonderfully versatile form of gardening. They work for whatever space you have and can be used for plants that suit every situation and condition, from sunny rural patios to a shady, windy urban balcony.

This issue of *Amateur Gardening* is dedicated to helping you create the best containers yet. I look at the practicalities and suggest the best composts to use, and a variety of plants and planting ideas

to really make your garden shine.

Elsewhere our expert contributors tackle a variety of subjects including container crops, roses for pots and how (and what) to plant underneath standard container trees or shrubs.

This year I wanted to try something different so I partially buried a large

terracotta pot on the edge of a sunny border, backed with a curved row of mixed-colour cosmos 'Sonata Mix'.

The top plants (hardy *Fuchsia* 'Baby Blue Eyes', *Heuchera* 'Blackberry Jam' and an upright argyranthemum

'Summit Pink') will thicken up and fill the pot, while coleus, trailing calibrachoa and variegated nepeta will fill the spaces around them. I scattered wool slug pellets around the container and will top up the compost if it is washed down by rain and watering.



Cluster pots together for a great display

Ready for bedding? Don't miss next week's AG (in the shops 19 June) for everything you need to know about summer bedding.



4 ideas for containers

The potential is as unlimited as your imagination!

1 Standard trees are ideal for containers. Underplant them with colour that can be refreshed through the seasons.



2 Planting just one variety in a pot creates a blast of concentrated colour that catches the eye and creates drama.



3 Wellie boots, old cans, disused metal watering cans, even toilets and baths can all be adapted to make funky eye-catching planters.



4 If you prefer to use traditional bedding, give it some edge and height using grasses. Choose coloured and variegated varieties for extra drama.



Edible containers

Keep a pot of herbs near the kitchen door for easy access



Blueberries are ideal container crops



■ Many edible plants grow well in containers and make attractive alternatives.

■ Herbs are an obvious choice. They grow well and can be kept conveniently near the kitchen door.

■ Many soft fruits do well too. If you have alkaline soil, the only way to grow healthy blueberry bushes is in pots of ericaceous compost.

■ Dwarf fruit trees (look for M27, M9, M26 and MM106 for apples; Quince C for quince and pears; Pixy for plums and gages and Gisela 5/G5 for cherries) will also grow well in a pot.

■ Turn to page 37 for Anne's masterclass on crops in containers.

Step by step

Planting up a sunken container



1 Water your plants and stand them in water so the rootball is soaked and is easy to slide from its pot.



2 Dig an angled hole for your pot so the opening is higher than its base. Pack soil around it so it is secured.



3 Add crocks and some gritty soil to help drainage, then fill the pot with container compost.



4 Place the plants (still in their pots) on the compost until you create an arrangement you are happy with.



5 Add the plants with the tallest ones at the top, grading down. Intersperse them with training varieties.



6 Water the pot well and replace any compost that is washed down. Add slug-deterrent pellets too.



New plants at Chelsea

Six of the best new plants at the RHS show – and they're available to buy now!



1 RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year: *Hydrangea Runaway Bride Snow White*. Masses of delicate white lacecap flowers and gently weeping habit. Tipped to become a firm favourite. (Available from T&M and Hayloft Plants).



2 Runner-up: *Eryngium 'Blue Waves'*. 'Blue Waves' has the largest bracts of its type, with long-lasting flowers and repeat blooming. (Available from Hillier garden centres, Burford Plants, RHS plant centres).



3 Third place: *Helianthus annuus SunBelievable Brown Eyed Girl*. Reputedly producing 1,000 dazzling golden flowers per plant, it blooms from May to October. It's pollen-free, so ideal for cutting. (Available from T&M).



4 *Dahlia Lubega Power Tricolour*. A stunning plant that changes colour as the season progresses. Flowers from mid-summer to late autumn. (Available from T&M).



5 *Clematis Tranquillité*. A compact clematis that is perfect for smaller spaces. It is ideal for a shaded area. (Available from Taylors Clematis, T&M, Burford).



6 *Rosa Emily Brontë*. A shrub rose with neat, soft pink and apricot flowers and a strong scent. Val Bourne's favourite! (Available from David Austin Roses and Burford).



AG editor Garry Coward-Williams (left) with Peter Seabrook and RHS plant of the year *Hydrangea Runaway Bride Snow White*

Another triumphant show for Peter

AG COLUMNIST Peter Seabrook had a very successful Chelsea 2018.

His stand, which was a four-sided pyramid celebrating container growing, was awarded a prestigious Silver-Gilt medal. It contained 24 new varieties of plants and featured the show's Plant of the Year, *Hydrangea Runaway Bride Snow White* and third-placed *Helianthus annuus SunBelievable Brown Eyed Girl*.

It also included several of this year's short-listed plants, including *Dahlia Lubega Power Tricolour*, and *Isotoma axillaris Fizz n' Pop Glowing Purple*.

Peter said: "Our aim throughout was to show what a wide range of plants can be grown in containers and to include plants grown by schoolchildren.

"It is of note that people talk about attracting young people into gardening, but we were the only exhibitor to bring to the show, and onto an exhibit, schoolchildren who had been involved in growing plants on show."

At least 25% of the plants were grown by Peter himself, with help from Westland, as well as Sun gardeners Steve and Val Bradley.

The poignant teapot: Peter Seabrook's stand contained teapots planted with herbs by schoolchildren. One of the pots was bought by a mother to brew up for her son when he came home

from the Great War in 1918. He never returned and the pot was unused until it was donated for this display. Here it is with Johnson Beharry VC, youngest living recipient of the Victoria Cross.



**AG's
FAVE SHOW
GARDEN**



The charming *A Very English Garden* really caught our eye

Janine Crimmins and Andrew Loudon

Jewel-toned garden was our gem

THE garden that really stood out for AG wasn't one of the big show gardens but a smaller patch of paradise in the Artisan Gardens.

A Very English Garden was a mix of jewel-toned cottage-garden varieties including lupins, dianthus, sweet rocket, aquilegia, roses and delphiniums, all offset by dry-stone walls and a domed stone recess.

It was created by Cumbrian husband-and-wife team Janine Crimmins, a garden designer, and dry-stone waller Andrew Loudon, who built the walls and arbour.

We loved its lack of pretention and felt it was a garden that anyone could recreate at home.

"It's something for people to enjoy," said Janine.

She added that the harsh spring pushed the plants back by around three weeks and some of the varieties they planned to use had to be replaced with others because they weren't ready to use.

Andrew said: "People say we haven't got a theme, but we just wanted to design a nice garden that people would want to do at home."

**AG's
WORST
GARDEN**

A confusing tale to tell

THE garden that really had us scratching our heads was *Skin Deep*, which combined flowers and cement blocks 'to represent people with varying skin conditions'.

The promotional blurb explained how the plants and blocks image our skin and reflect our 'joys, stresses and worries in the form of everything from wrinkles to birthmarks'.

AG editor Garry Coward-Williams said: "When you have to explain what the garden is trying to communicate then clearly it has failed in its aim. Having read their description in the show guide I was none the wiser.

"After you had been through the garden you would apparently realise that 'We may feel weakened by our



What is it all about?

appearance, but when we see collectively we are not alone, we can be strong'. I wonder how many people grasped that from the lumps of stone and scattergun plantings they saw before them?"

**Show
news**



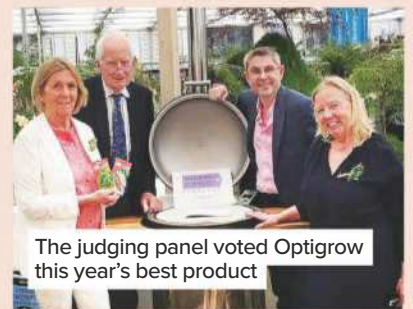
Chelsea plants need replenishing throughout the week

All in a week's work

THE work that goes into keeping the Great Pavilion's cut-flower displays looking fresh throughout Chelsea week was explained by daffodil expert Johnny Walkers.

Johnny, who has 22 Chelsea Gold medals, forces his bulbs, then cuts the flowers 10 days before the show when they are perfect and keeps them in cold storage.

The first batch of flowers start to droop after a couple of days, so Johnny and his team make the six-hour round trip back to base in Holbeach, Lincolnshire, to replenish the display. They do this twice during Chelsea Flower Show week!



The judging panel voted Optigrow this year's best product

Optigrow is Product of 2018

THE winner of the RHS Chelsea Garden Product of the Year 2018 is Mr Fothergill's Optigrow seeds, which AG is trialling successfully.

Optigrow is a revolutionary seed priming treatment that uses water and air to get the seeds biologically ready for germination. The treatment means seeds wake up and get underway within hours of sowing.

They germinate faster than untreated ones and produce vigorous seedlings that are able to out-grow competing weeds.

The judges, who included Peter Seabrook and entrepreneur Deborah Meaden, said: "Anything that removes disappointment in germination is to be welcomed."

Your Gardening Week



with AG's gardening expert Ruth Hayes



Succulents and alpine work well too



Be bold with your planting patterns for a fantastic show of colour

TopTip

Protect your basket if bad weather and high winds are forecast by standing it in a bucket in a greenhouse, shed or well-lit porch until the storm has passed.

Versatile appeal of baskets



Edible baskets are a great way to grow crops

- There is no need to limit yourself to annual bedding plants when creating your hanging baskets.
- Alpines of all varieties work well with succulents, begonias and thrift.
- Edible baskets are all the rage too. Try growing red or yellow trailing tomatoes such as 'Tumbling Tom', 'Garden Pearl' and 'Ildi'.
- Add herbs and hang them near the kitchen door for easy additions to summer meals.

Create a bold basket

Hang 'em high to add an extra dimension, says **Ruth**

A SUMMER garden isn't complete without a few jolly hanging baskets.

A great idea is to hang a basket of scented trailing petunias (such as Tumbelina 'Most Fragrant Ever' or Petunia 'Frills and Spills Anna') near a seating area and let them fill the air with fragrance. Other top basket plants include lobelia, pelargoniums, pansies, fuchsias and trailing brachyscome.

When planting, the best growing medium is proprietary compost that's moisture-retentive, free-draining, nutrient-rich and includes water-retaining ingredients.

If you are using multi-purpose or a loam-based compost such as John Innes No2, add water-retaining granules so you have to water less frequently.

Line your basket with a coir lining (or moss collected from the garden), as this

will allow water to drain through. Wicker baskets often come ready-lined, but if you are buying one with a wire frame you usually need to buy the lining.

Hang it where it will be protected from high winds and harsh weather. Water it regularly so the compost is moist and feed with liquid tomato food after the first month or so.

Step by step

How to plant up a trailing hanging basket



1 Start by standing your basket on a bucket or large pot to raise it and keep it stable during planting.



2 Start filling until you reach the level where you want your trailing plants to grow from.



3 Using a sharp garden knife, carefully cut planting holes around the side of the basket.



4 Plants are easier to insert if you clingfilm their roots. Remove it once all the trailers are in place.



5 Add more compost and your top planters, such as fuchsias, petunias and violas. Top up the compost level.



6 Water well and leave to drain before hanging it. The plants will soon grow and fill any spaces.



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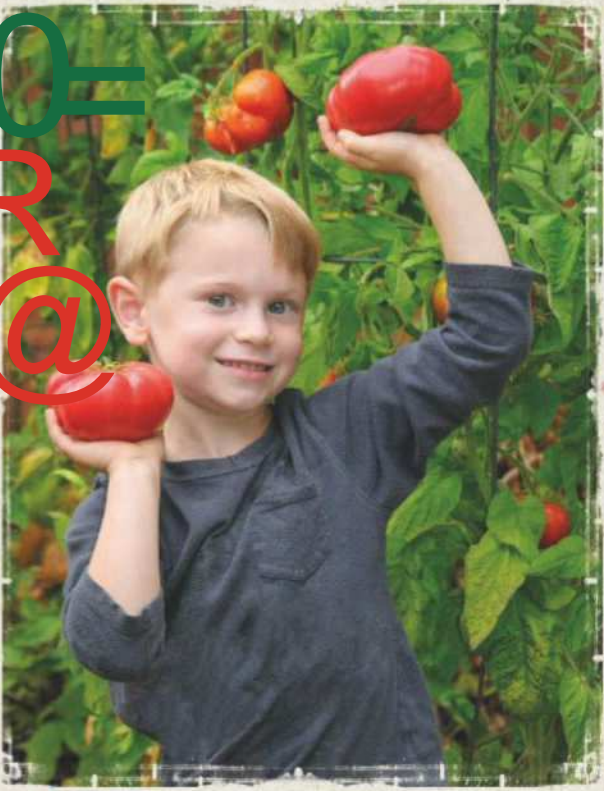
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Your Gardening Week

with Peter Seabrook, AG's classic gardening expert



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Peter with AG readers at the Chelsea Flower Show

Peter Seabrook

Take time to smell the roses

Support your local garden centres, says **Peter**

MEETING AG readers from behind the rope at national flower shows like Chelsea is a great way to hear your views, listen to your successes and hopefully help with gardening problems. The visitor profile is now changing, and we see a greater percentage of younger people these days, with folk more interested in an entertaining day out rather than being on a shopping mission to furnish their gardens with new plants.

Internet trading with prompt delivery to your door is having a dramatic effect, not just on small specialist family nurseries, but also on big chains, with Homebase/Bunnings and Wyevale, among others, facing difficulties. Horticulture has commonly been cyclical, with small businesses amalgamating into large groups that come under pressure when, for example, snow over March weekends hit turnovers hard in garden centres throughout Britain.

When they collapse, small independents step in to pick up the pieces and away we go again. It is to be hoped we see a resurgence among retail nursery people, who delight in growing a wide range of good plants.

Ashwood Nurseries in the West

“Support this Prettiest Rose Competition”

Midlands has an unbelievable collection of hellebores, while Blackmore and Langdon have begonias and delphiniums that just ooze quality, and such supreme growers as these deserve our support. From 23 June-1 July more than 60 garden centres, from Bournemouth in Dorset to Inverness in the Scottish Highlands, are holding a Rose Festival to celebrate Britain's favourite flower, some staging a Prettiest Rose Competition on 23 June.

I hope you will back this and go along to your nearest participant with a cut rose in a recyclable plastic water bottle to compete for the local prize. Winners will then be entered into the National Prettiest Rose Competition with a £1,000 first prize. This kind of activity can be entertaining for the family and it is in our best interests to help keep our garden centres trading successfully.

Peter's tips

What you can do in June



■ Buy roses when in flower, so you can choose the colours you like and check their fragrance. If you want fragrance and masses of blooms, Rose 'Charisma' is worth seeking out.



■ Rose flower colour will deepen and be richer as autumn approaches and the night temperatures start to drop.



■ When rose petals begin to fall, it is a good time to apply a second dressing of rose fertiliser to boost the second and subsequent flushes of flowers.



■ Clematis are good partners to climbing roses. Seek advice from specialists to get a clematis cultivar to suit your chosen rose cultivar. A visit to David Austin and/or Peter Beales Rose Gardens at this time is both entertaining and educational.

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Peter Beales Gardens

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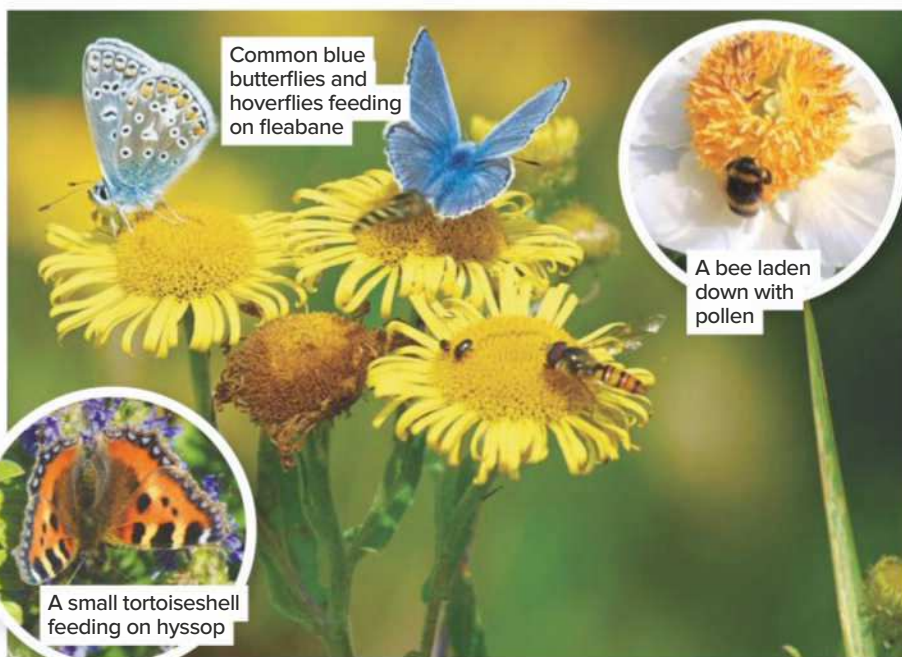
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Your Gardening Week

with AG's gardening expert Ruth Hayes



Common blue butterflies and hoverflies feeding on fleabane

A bee laden down with pollen

A small tortoiseshell feeding on hyssop

Step by step

The best of the bugs

Predators that help your garden



1 Ladybird: There are more than 40 ladybird species in the UK and they are ferocious predators of aphids. One seven-spot ladybird can eat up to 5,000 aphids a year!



2 Ground and rove beetles: These large bugs eat slugs, leatherjackets and cutworms. Larvae live in the soil and eat invertebrates and their eggs.



3 Hoverfly: Not to be confused with bees or wasps, these little flies pollinate plants and lay their eggs near aphid colonies, which provide a ready source of food for their larvae.



4 Lacewing: These delicate beauties feast on aphids. The larvae suck their juices and may even hide under their drained skins awaiting more prey!

Let's celebrate insects

Insects are so important and need our help, says **Ruth**

THIS is National Insect Week, a biennial event that encourages us to learn more about our six-legged friends (and enemies).

Insects, good and 'bad', are more at threat than ever before from pesticides, urbanisation and intensive farming where many native wildflowers have disappeared.

Our gardens are increasingly important for insects, so we need to help them where we can.

Start by planting native plants instead of exotics and highly bred cultivars that have little pollen and nectar and are hard to access by bees and butterflies. Also, grow a succession of plants that provide

food for insects all year, from crocuses in early spring to Michaelmas daisies and ivy in autumn. (Ivy also makes excellent hibernacula for overwintering creatures).

Leave an area of garden to grow wild, sow some wildflowers and try to garden organically. If you feel you have to use a chemical, spray it carefully on still days and don't use it on blossom as it will kill the pollinators as well as the pests you are after.

There are special activities taking place throughout the UK this week, and the website nationalinsectweek.co.uk is packed with details and events. Follow the NIW Facebook page or find them on Twitter @insectweek.

Keeping a list of what's growing

■ Each year sees more plants added to our borders and each spring finds me puzzling over an emerging shoot wondering 'what on earth is that – and when did I put it there?'

■ In a bid to be more organised, I have started keeping a diary with diagrams of what's going on in the garden.

■ This will hopefully stop me digging up dormant bulbs and buying plants I already have.

■ I will also keep notes on which plants failed, and why, so I can either avoid replacing them with the same



Keeping a note of what grows and fails helps create a better garden

varieties or take the right steps to treat any problems.

Your Gardening Week



with AG's gardening expert Ruth Hayes

Foxy gems are a garden must-have

Tradition and fashion meet in these wonderful foxgloves, says **Ruth**

ONE of the things that struck me most at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show was the foxgloves. They were in gardens everywhere!

Modernist cement-block gardens, large show gardens and (best of all) small, artisan plots all incorporated them in their designs to great effect. Their tall spires in white and shades of pink, cream, orange and blue never failed to give structure and traditional elegance.

This week's free seeds are for Mr Fothergill's 'Foxy Mixed' foxgloves which, if sown now, will flower in mixed pastel colours. These cottage-garden favourites are biennials and will develop leaves this year and flower the next.

Our garden is full of them as they seed freely in our light chalky soil. For the best results, sow thinly now in trays, modules or pots. Water, cover with a layer of compost or vermiculite, and place them somewhere warm and light to germinate. Prick them out when the seedlings are large enough to handle.

Harden them off and plant them



Sow thinly now for next year's blooms



Foxgloves were a Chelsea staple this year

Mr. Fothergill's

free seeds worth **£2.29** Gardening

Foxglove - Foxy Mixed

Bring colourful structure and elegance to your borders

where you want them to grow – you can do this until October. You can also sow them in situ, then thin them out and, when they reach a good size, move

them to their final flowering positions.

Foxgloves are wonderful for attracting pollinators, including moths, which will feed your neighbourhood bats.

What's on

Things to do near you

June 15-24: Delphinium Week: Godinton House, Godinton Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 3BP. ☎ 01233 643854, 🌐 godintonhouse.co.uk

16: Where's Best to Place That Plant: Crug Farm Plants, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1TU. ☎ 01248 670232, 🌐 crug-farm.co.uk

16-17: Open Gardens: Cranborne, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 5QB. ☎ 01725 551242

16-17: Plant Society Show: RHS Wisley, Wisley Lane, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. ☎ 0203 176 5830, 🌐 rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

16: Mill Dene Gardens talk: School Lane, Blockley, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos GL56 9HU. ☎ 01386 700457, 🌐 milldenegarden.co.uk

16: Hens and gardens: Great Comp Garden, Comp Lane, St Mary's Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8QS. ☎ 01732

885094, 🌐 greatcompgarden.co.uk

20-24: National Insect Week: RHS Wisley, Wisley Lane, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. ☎ 0203 176 5830, 🌐 rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

22-24: Harlow Carr Flower Show: Crag Lane, Harrogate, North Yorks HG3 1QB. ☎ 0203 176 5830, 🌐 rhs.org.uk/gardens/harlow-carr

24: Little Waltham Open Gardens, (classic cars, crafts and plants for sale: The Street, Little Waltham, Chelmsford CM3 3NY. Proceeds being donated to Farleigh Hospice. ☎ 01245 360513.

■ Please send details and images of your events to ruth.hayes@timeinc.com or What's On, *Amateur Gardening*, Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Industrial Park, Farnborough, Hants GU14 7BF.

■ Listings need to be with us at least six weeks in advance.

■ All details are subject to change without our knowledge, so please always check that the event is still going ahead before leaving home.

Let 'What's on' work for you!

■ Advertising your event for free on our 'What's on' pages certainly pays dividends.

■ We received a lovely email from the organisers of last month's Clavering Open

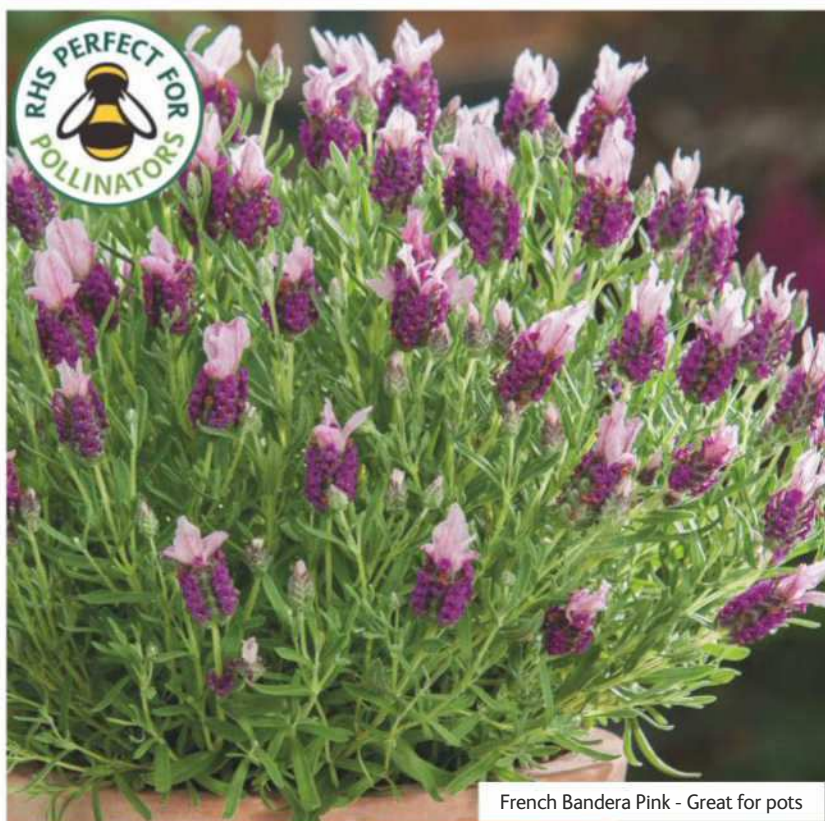
Gardens, who advertised their event in 'What's on'. As a result, it was very busy and received lots of visitors who donated generously to the open gardens' chosen charity.

■ **They wrote:** "Thank you so much for putting our Clavering Open Gardens event in your magazine. "It was fantastic – we got more visitors than ever before on a fab sunny day, and raised £2,850 for our local MENCAP. We are all most grateful for everyone's support."

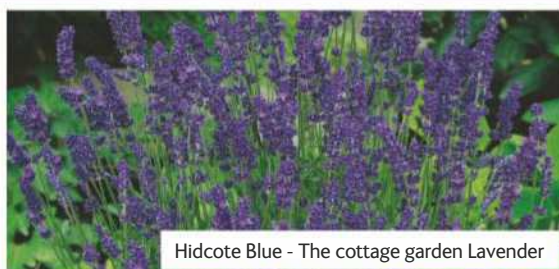


Clavering Open Gardens raised £2,850 for charity

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Hidcote Blue - The cottage garden Lavender



Kew Red - Flowers late spring to late summer



Thumbelina Leigh - Ideal for dwarf hedging



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Your Gardening Week

with Bob Flowerdew, AG's organic gardening expert



A few chickens will provide you with free compost and fresh eggs

Time Inc

Feathered friends

Keeping chickens is a no-brainer for keen gardeners, says **Bob**

HAVE you ever considered keeping a few hens or a couple of ducks? Increasing numbers of people are doing so and finding them tremendously productive. They're also pretty easy to care for – far less faff than a cat or dog. And you have a supply of fresh eggs on tap, which can never be a bad thing!

Poultry has many other advantages for gardeners. Not only will the birds get much of their sustenance from your garden wastes and surpluses, but they can also be used to process your compost ingredients – just chuck it at their feet and let them get started. They will happily search out any edible foliage, fruit and most of the seeds, and while doing this they will be scuffing all the stuff about and adding their own concentrated fertility booster!

When you rake up this mixture and pop it in the bin it really cooks, and it's

so enriched with droppings you can use the compost you've made in place of fertiliser. This can save you a packet. Then there is the grass control – if you construct a movable run you can rotate poultry from one place to another every day or two so nowhere ends up poached (worn bare). This reduces the amount of grass cutting you have to do, and all the

“Hens are pretty easy to care for”

grass the chickens eat makes their egg yolks go deep yellow and tasty.

Now it would be foolish to allow hens free range of your garden, as they steal fruit and crops, and will scratch up the soil everywhere. Ducks, on the other hand, steal far less and do not scratch. They use their bills to dibble in among plants, eating anything that moves, including slugs and snails. Does it get any better than a pest-eating egg machine?

Bob's top tips for the week



1 Remove (with gloves or scissors) flowers and (poisonous) green tomato-like seed pods from potato plants for a bigger crop.



2 Lay wet newspapers either side of rows of potatoes to trap slugs underneath. It makes them far easier to find and remove, so there's less slug damage to the leaves and tubers of potatoes.



3 When watering, be very careful not to splash the flowers of courgettes, pumpkins, marrows and squashes as this may start the rotting process.



4 It's Father's Day on 17 June, so why not offer to do any gardening job your dad requires? Weeding, watering, hoeing – his wish is your command!

All photographs: Alamy, unless otherwise credited

Celebrates Her Majesty's Sapphire Jubilee (65th anniversary) of Coronation

World first! TRIPLE Proof finish quarter sovereign with high-tech Holo-Proof security feature

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This year marks Her Majesty's Sapphire Jubilee (65th anniversary) of Coronation, the first time in history a British monarch has celebrated this milestone, and an event that will likely never be seen again in our lifetimes. As part of the Jubilee celebrations an exceptional new quarter sovereign coin has been struck. The new gold coin features a triple-Proof quality finish with different parts being frosted, matte, and mirror finished, also with a high-tech Holo-Proof security feature - and it is the first sovereign of its kind in the world.

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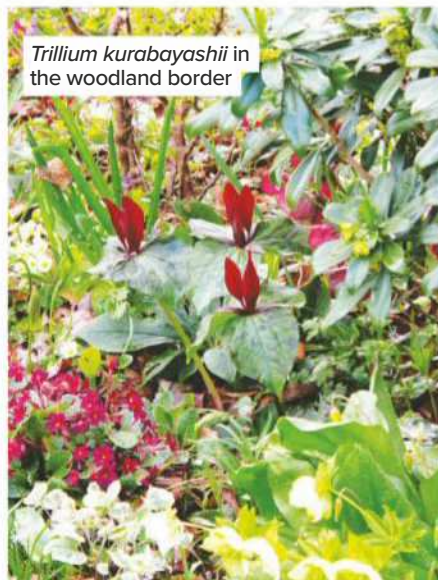


Your Gardening Week

with Val Bourne, AG's organic wildlife expert



"Phloxes do well for me, because I have spring water running through some parts of the garden," says Val



Trillium kurabayashii in the woodland border

Right place, right plant

Positioning a plant in the right place is not as easy as it sounds, as **Val** recalls from personal experience

LAST week (AG 9 June) I told you about my short-lived stint on a question-and-answer radio programme called Dig It. I was conscientious, and I wrote down every question asked on the programme. Sometimes the gardener had chosen an extremely poor plant, and this is a good opportunity to bang on about the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

This award is often shortened to AGM, or it's shown as a trophy logo. These awards are normally the result of an extensive trial and this is something I've been involved with for 12 years now. Some of the best brains in horticulture (and I'm not including me in the list) judge these trials, so if you're buying a plant it's really worth checking whether it has an AGM. If it has, it's almost certainly a good doer.

The other major problem occurred because people were growing plants in

completely the wrong positions. Mildew, which is a water-stress disease, was a common question, and I remember one listener phoning up about her border phlox. She explained that she lived on

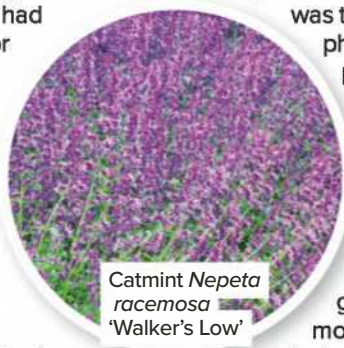
top of the Chilterns and that her soil

was thin and chalky. Growing a phlox up there is cruelty to plants because phloxes need moisture-retentive soil. This is why they grow so well at Spring Cottage, as we have spring water flowing under the garden.

It's not always easy to get it right, though. When I moved here 12 years ago I planted *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant',

because I'd grown it in my previous garden some 20 miles away. However, here it turned into a floppy mess because the soil was too damp, so I had to dig it up. I've planted *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' instead, having found a drier spot for this compact catmint.

Silver-leaved plants are often



Catmint *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low'

Alamy

aromatic and the oily covering acts as a sunscreen, with the pale foliage absorbing less heat. I noticed in daffodil time, when the temperatures soared for a few days, that my deep-yellow daffodils shrivelled up while the pale-coloured ones didn't.

The lower end of the garden is shaded by trees that don't belong to me, so that area has lots of ferns and woodlanders. I was desperate to grow trilliums, but these snow-melt plants need shade and shelter, and my garden is really windy. It took me about six years to find a suitable spot and I found that just a few yards separated success and failure. The easiest has been *Trillium kurabayashii*.



Plants like lavenders thrive in poor, well-drained areas of soil

Time Inc

TOP TIP If a plant doesn't look happy, move it. Sometimes a few feet will make a real difference. Go for plants that like your conditions and, if you're not sure, peek over some garden walls!

Your Gardening Week



with Lucy Chamberlain, AG's fruit and veg expert

Top Tip

If your fig tree is in a pot, you can move it somewhere frost-free for winter to ensure the autumn fruitlets survive.

Fan-trained trees can be cloaked in straw and fleece during winter to insulate the fruitlets.



Pruning new growth now will encourage more fig fruitlets that will overwinter and then ripen next year

Step by step How to prune figs



1 The way figs crop in the UK is slightly confusing, so let me lead you through it. Only fruitlets initiated in autumn ripen in our temperate climate. Now is the time to boost autumn fruitlet numbers. Cut back by half any new growth on your tree, using sharp secateurs.

Get more figs from your tree

Boost autumn fruitlet numbers for more figs next year

THERE aren't many fruits that immediately make me salivate at the mere thought of them, but figs are an exception.

Quartered, accompanied by Parma ham and mozzarella, then seasoned and drizzled with honey, it's the food of gods. Or how about split open and baked in a

frangipane tart? While the crop is a little while off ripening just yet (more's the pity), there's a task you can complete now that will ensure maximum numbers of fruits next summer. And if there's anything at all that I can do to encourage that, then it gets my vote! Let me explain it, step by step (see right).



2 This pruning will stimulate the fig tree to produce multiple side shoots. By pruning now, the side shoots will lengthen and develop an excess number of fruitlets come late October. At that point the tree will begin to lose its leaves, but the fruitlets will remain on the side shoots.

Use plastic to ensure perfect cherries

IF you live in a mild part of the country, I envy you, because you could be tucking into the very first cherries of the season. Early varieties such as 'Celeste' and 'Early Rivers' ripen in mid-June, whereas others such as the jet-black 'Penny' won't colour up until August. That's far too long to wait!

As cherry fruits ripen, their skin becomes softer. It also becomes more porous, and if the fruits get rained on the skin can absorb water causing splitting to occur. For commercial cherry growers this spells disaster because split fruits quickly rot – and it's not much good for us gardeners, either! Luckily, splitting can easily be prevented.

You may well have seen row upon row of small trees covered in polythene tunnels while driving around the countryside, and these could well be cherry orchards. Modern



By erecting a clear polythene 'hat' over ripening cherries, you'll prevent fruits' skins splitting

orchards grow trees far smaller than they used to – it's as if the growers have realised that home gardeners are on to a good idea! These compact trees are far easier to pick, and to cover in clear polythene once fruits begin to ripen. So, if your own cherry tree is showing the first signs of ripening fruit, cover its top with clear plastic – it's the ultimate shower cap!



3 The vast majority of these fruitlets will pass through the winter unharmed. Come spring, they then have a head start, and successfully swell and ripen in our temperate summer. Some fruitlets are initiated in spring, but these don't have sufficient time to ripen in UK summers.

Next Week: Tie in new growth on fan-trained fruit trees, summer-prune gooseberries and currants, melon training guide, control asparagus beetle, harvest globe artichokes

You might not see any weeds, but hoeing bare earth every two weeks will kill off germinating weed seedlings



Wield that hoe to prevent weeds!

WEEDS are such a pain. They can zap the motivation of experienced and novice gardeners alike, marching forth like a relentless tide of annoying greenness. Well, we can win that war! With so many other jobs vying for our attention on the summer plot, it's tempting to assume that the bare patch of earth you raked over last week can be left to its own devices – but think again!

Tiny weed seeds will be germinating unseen, so I hoe between my rows of veg every 7-10 days to ensure they don't take hold. Larger beds of earth can be raked over – it's quicker and just as effective, especially if you choose a windy, sunny day. Just imagine how long it would take you to hoe the weeds off if you allowed them to grow for a few more weeks – now that's a good motivator.

Sowing seeds in hot weather

QUICK-to-mature crops such as radish, rocket and salad leaves benefit from repeated sowings every 4-5 weeks throughout the growing season. Spring sowings, when the earth is moist, are a doddle, but what about when it's powder dry? In such conditions seeds can struggle to germinate, so what tricks can you apply?

Gardening for the past five years on light, sandy soil, I've learnt that making your drill slightly deeper than normal helps, so 3in (8cm) instead of the recommended 2in (5cm), for example, but check individual seed packets.

Additionally, I give this drill a thorough water before I sow to ensure soil moisture reserves are brimming. A nice



If you're making sowings into dry soil, thoroughly soak the drill beforehand to boost soil moisture levels

firm tamp down with the back of your rake after sowing also ensures good contact of the seeds with the soil – then it's just fingers crossed!



By shielding your runner bean seedlings with fleece for a fortnight, you'll help them settle into their final location

Plant out tender beans

RUNNER and French beans are stalwart crops for most grow your owners – they're easy, prolific and taste delicious. Those of you in milder parts might well have got yours outside already, but for the rest of us mid-June is plenty early enough to get these tender veg into the ground. Hopefully, as directed by yours truly in late April, you sowed some in pots under cover – if not, don't worry, because garden centres will sell seedlings.

The leaves of beans are lush and delicate, so it's essential to acclimatise them to life outside to prevent them becoming scorched. I harden mine off by planting them outside in their final positions and cloaking the plants in a vertical wall of horticultural fleece. Because I plant climbing varieties, I can peg the fleece to the beanpoles and then remove it in a week or two's time, by which point the beans will have settled in.

If you're growing dwarf beans, such as runner 'Millionaire' and French 'Safari', simply make a domed cover of fleece over cloches. Climbers are great if you have room for a wigwam of canes or poles – they yield steadily from late July right through until mid-October if picked regularly. Dwarf types are more suitable for pot culture, and they tend to yield their pods in flushes, so you often get a too many or not enough.

Regular, thorough picking will provide you with amazing yields – don't allow pods to develop large beans and become old. I plan to pick over my plants every few days.



Pick of the very best

Graham Rice chooses his six top RHS Award of Garden Merit winners



Valued for centuries for their fragrance and flowers, modern pinks have a long flowering season that makes them a must for borders

TopTip

Scented pinks are great for cutting. Before arranging your stems, help them last longer by stripping off any leaves that will be under the water.

This week it's

Garden pinks

They're great for cutting, flower for months and smell divine, but which pinks are on **Graham's** hot list?

GARDEN pinks have been popular since Elizabethan times, when their perfume was especially valued. Back in the 17th century domestic life was, shall we say, less fragrant than it is today, making any flower or herb with a strong scent particularly welcome.

By the early 19th century the focus had shifted from that clove-like fragrance to the flowers, and pinks were favoured by florists. They were also popular with exhibition growers: while Lancashire cotton workers championed the auricula and the miners of Yorkshire grew pansies, the weavers of Paisley in Scotland developed pinks.

Favourite varieties tended to be those

with intricate patterns of dark and light colours, and a smooth rather than toothed edge to the petals – so much so, that by 1840 more than 100 different “laced pinks”, as they were known, were grown. The longevity of the plants was always a big part of their attraction, but increasing industrial pollution in Scotland was a significant factor in their decline north of the border.

In the new century, further south,

interest grew in pinks as garden plants, rather than those destined for the show bench. Traditionally, June had always been flowering time. But thanks to the development of ‘perpetual-flowering’ varieties that would bloom all summer (the work of Sussex nurseryman Montagu Allwood), their popularity with gardeners grew.

These days, most of the pinks we grow have that same long flowering

Suppliers

Allwoods 📍 allwoods.net ☎ 01273 844229

Calamazag Nursery 📍 calamazagnursery.co.uk ☎ 07958 167096

Whetman Pinks 📍 whetmanpinks.com ☎ 01626 863328

The Award of Garden Merit is a mark of quality awarded since 1922 to garden plants (including trees, vegetables and decorative plants) by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).



'Devon Dove'

Set prettily against blue-grey foliage, the slightly flattish, clove-scented double flowers are pure-white with faint creamy tints and neat lacy serrations to the petal tips. Good for cutting, with noticeably rigid stems. H: 16in (40cm).



'Cranmere Pool'

Slightly frilly, faintly blushed double white flowers have neatly rounded frills to the petals and feature a deep-crimson centre. Neat and self-supporting, they've little scent, but the colour is beautiful and the habit good. H: 14in (35cm).



'Devon Wizard'

Strongly clove-scented and held on long, sturdy stems, the double flowers are rich and shining purple, shading to a deep-red centre. It's an impressively sumptuous combination; good for borders and cutting. H: 16in (40cm).



'Doris'

Fully double pale-pink flowers are beautifully scented and feature a band of rich reddish salmon-pink around the centre. Prolific and good for borders and cutting. Seventy years old and still superb. H: 14in (35cm).



'Houndspool Cheryl'

Slightly fringed flowers in a lovely rich, velvety scarlet add brightness to the many varieties in softer shades. Has a light clove fragrance. Descended from 'Doris', this cultivar has inherited all its good qualities. H: 15in (38cm).



'Gran's Favourite'

The intricately patterned double white flowers feature an edging to the petals the colour of summer fruits, along with a deep-scarlet centre. Can sometimes be a little weak in the stems, but well worth a few twiggy supports. H: 14in (35cm).

season. They are neat in growth, the flower stems are self-supporting and the tussocks of slender, pointed foliage tend to be silvery blue in colour, setting off the flowers beautifully.

The first garden pink to enjoy wide popularity was the white, highly scented 'Mrs Sinkins', developed by the master of the Slough workhouse in the mid-19th century and named after his wife. But the variety that truly cemented their reputation as garden plants was 'Doris'. Introduced by Allwood in 1945, its fully double, fragrant flowers are pale-pink with a dark-pink band.

In recent years there has been a flurry of new developments, with many of the best new varieties created by Whetman Pinks in Devon. Combining a long flowering season and impressive flower production with powerful fragrance,

attractive colouring and value as cut flowers, their varieties are grown around the world, and many have been given AGMs. For edging, for cutting, for borders and for containers – no garden is complete without them.

What makes a good garden pink?

- Long flowering season
- Abundant flower production
- Fragrance
- Good flower form
- Self supporting
- Attractive blue-grey foliage to offset the flowers
- Neat, bushy habit

Planting garden pinks

- Choose a site that gets sunshine for at least three-quarters of the day.
- Pinks are happy in most soils, so long as the drainage is good.
- Don't plant pinks where they will be smothered by their neighbours.
- Mail-order plants are sometimes sent out as large plugs; these are best potted into 7cm pots and grown on in a cold greenhouse before planting out when the roots emerge from the base.
- Plant in spring and water in well, with liquid feed added to the water.
- Keep moist until established.



Garden pinks aftercare

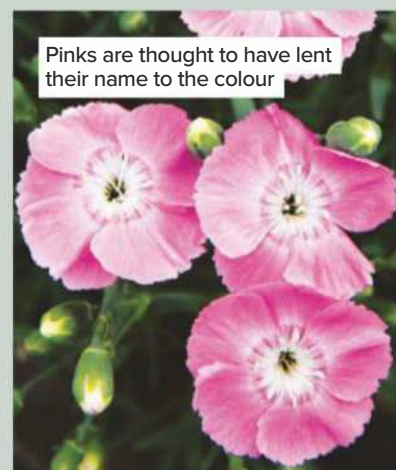
- Feed plants grown on poor soils in spring, using a general fertiliser. Just don't overdo it as this will make growth soft and floppy.
- Deadhead when the last flowers in each cluster fade – cut out the whole stem at the base.
- Cut for the house as colour starts to show in the buds. Keep away from fruit

as the ethylene gas it gives off will shorten the vase life of your flowers.

- Pinks are not long-lived perennials so propagate your favourite varieties by taking cuttings of non-flowering shoots in summer.

- Most problems are caused by soggy soil, or the plants getting old. However, aphids can also be troublesome.

Why are they called pinks?



It's often said that these plants are called 'pinks' because so many varieties have pink flowers. In fact, the name for the colour may have come from the name of the plant.

The most likely theory is that they were called pinks from the Celtic word *pic* (peak in modern English), referring to the serrated edge of the petals. This word also gave us the term 'pinking shears', special scissors used to cut a serrated edge.

In the 17th century words such as 'blush' or 'flesh' were commonly used to describe pink flowers, and Shakespeare used the word 'carnation' for the colour pink. 'Pink' was not in common usage as an adjective for describing colour until the middle of the 18th century, when these plants were beginning to become more widely grown.

Dwarf pinks

For smaller gardens and for containers, varieties known as alpine (miniature or dwarf) pinks are well worth growing, and have been awarded their fair share of AGMs.

These varieties measure less than 1ft (30cm) in height – some are as short as 6in (15cm). Look for 'Brilliant Star' (frilly white with a crimson eye), 'Evening Star' (pink with a crimson eye) and Mystic Star ('WP 05 Sapphire'), which is blush with a bold strawberry lacing.



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with Martyn Cox

Double up your containers

Martyn Cox explains how to use the redundant surface of pots that contain trees, shrubs and architectural plants for underplanting

ONE of the most exciting things about taking on a garden that's a blank canvas is filling it with your favourite plants.

I certainly couldn't wait to start introducing some treasures when I acquired my first garden, a 9x4.5m (30x15ft) plot in East London. Once I'd stamped a structure on the space I set about planting up beds, adding climbers to fences and arranging numerous large pots on the patio.

A couple of years later I'd run out of space, after squeezing more than 250 different plants into the garden. As a plantaholic I was determined to find other ways to shoehorn more plants in and hit upon the idea of utilising the redundant surface of compost beneath all the trees, shrubs and architectural plants that were displayed in containers.

Apart from enabling you to cram more plants into your garden, doubling up by making more of the dead space on the tops of pots has an aesthetic purpose – the bare trunks or stems of some trees and shrubs are far from ornamental, so adding plants with attractive foliage, flowers or fruit will help to hide ugly limbs and provide interest at ground level.

There are scores of different plants suitable for planting under taller species, including ground-covering trailers, low-growing fruit, herbs, leafy salads and compact vegetables, along with bedding plants for a splash of seasonal colour. I've even ramped up the interest by liberating houseplants from indoors and arranging them on the surface of large containers during the summer.

Of course, anything you plant below container subjects will compete with their hosts for nutrients and water. Therefore, it's best not to go for anything too vigorous or deep rooting. Also, avoid plants that grow too tall as they will interfere with the light available to the principal character,



and would result in an awful-looking unbalanced display.

A key rule is to team up plants that like the same kind of compost. For example, drought-tolerant carpeting thyme will thrive in a gritty John Innes No2 compost required for a lollipop-shaped bay tree, but its roots would soon start to rot if it were planted under a standard fuchsia in moisture-retentive multi-purpose compost.

Likes the same conditions

Equally, many trailing plants will perform poorly under a blueberry in ericaceous compost, so go for something that likes the same conditions, such as cranberries. As a combination, they provide a long season of interest. The blueberry

boasts spring flowers and summer fruit, while the cranberry's cascading evergreen foliage is smothered with glossy red berries in autumn.

If you are foodie, there are many more combinations that work well. Apple trees, standard gooseberries, figs, cordon currants and just about any fruit tree or bush suitable for a pot will have plenty of space around its bare stems. Alpine strawberries, tumbling tomatoes, annual herbs and mixed salad leaves are perfect for this.

Underplanting with annuals will jazz up containers for months. Violas, pansies and fibrous begonias will make a carpet of colour, while trailers look wonderful cascading down the sides – fuchsias, lobelia and other flowering types are good teamed with hosts that

Six space-saving heroes



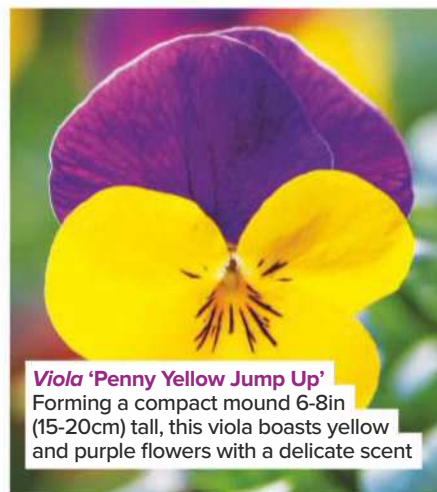
Chives

Easy to start from seed, this perennial herb will spread to form a mat of grassy leaves and lilac flowers in summer



Vaccinium macrocarpon 'Howes'

Introduced in 1843, this cranberry forms a trailing vine clothed with evergreen leaves and elongated, shiny-red fruit



Viola 'Penny Yellow Jump Up'

Forming a compact mound 6-8in (15-20cm) tall, this viola boasts yellow and purple flowers with a delicate scent



Ipomoea 'Lime'

A semi-trailing foliage plant with 3ft (90cm)-long stems and zingy, lime-green leaves. Drought and heat tolerant



Nasturtium 'Empress of India'

This trailing variety boasts dark-green leaves with a reddish tinge that is the perfect backdrop for the orange blooms



Mixed salad leaves

Mixes containing mustards look good thanks to their colourful leaves, which will also provide a piquant kick to salads

look a bit dowdy. Use foliage trailers if the main attraction boasts head-turning good looks.

A great way to get some long-lasting colour, and to soften the edges of pots, is to pop a few nasturtium seeds into the compost – three is ample in a 45cm (18in) pot. These can be sown from May until July, 1in (2.5cm) deep. Don't forget to make the most of their edible flowers – these have a peppery taste and are perfect for brightening up a salad.

There isn't really a downside to doubling up with pots, but you will need to pay closer attention to container maintenance. Water thoroughly as moisture will be quickly taken up by roots nearer the surface, so extra will be needed to penetrate to the roots of trees and shrubs below. Also, feed regularly as the compost will become exhausted far quicker than normal.

Underplanting mixed salad leaves

■ Mixed salad leaves are the perfect choice for growing under other plants in containers, as they are shallow rooted and compact. These tender leaves are ideal for sowing any time from late April until the end of August.


■ For an informal crop, scatter seeds thinly across the surface of the pot and cover with a ½in (1cm) layer of finely sieved compost. If you prefer a neater display, use a garden cane to make short rows, ½in (1cm) deep, and sow seeds along its length. Carefully cover with soil.

■ Water well, and thin out overcrowded seedlings when they're about 1in (2.5cm) tall – the distance

will depend on the variety, so check the information on the back of the seed packet.

■ Leaves will be ready for picking about three weeks after sowing, when around 2in (5cm) high. Either snip off individual baby leaves with scissors or cut the whole plant off leaving a ½in (1cm) stump – new leaves will soon re-sprout. Plants can be cut three or four times like this before they run out of steam.

■ Once plants start to flower and go to seed, pull them up and put on the compost heap as the leaves will taste bitter. Either re-sow or try growing something different on the surface of the container.



Even larger roses can be grown in pots. Make a statement with 'Lady of Shalott'

Compact roses for containers

Not just for borders, the right rose gives months of standout colour on the patio, too – and you may be surprised by the choice available, says **Tamsin Hope Thomson**

THE ideal container plant has big impact and a long season. And there is one plant group that fits the bill perfectly. With beautiful flowers that come in a huge spectrum of shades and sizes, roses are tailor-made for pots.

Granted, they are not the most obvious choice. In fact, when planning their containers people often discount roses, imagining large shrubs with a taxing pruning schedule. However, there are plenty of options that will work brilliantly in small spaces.

Miniature and patio roses remain compact and don't need regular pruning to keep them at the right size. What's more, these small options (around 1-2ft/30-60cm high) are usually repeat flowering, so your patio will be awash with blooms from June through to November. There aren't many plants that offer such good value for money – and spare you the chore of changing your planting every few months.

Growing in containers doesn't mean you're restricted to one form of rose. As well as bush or shrub roses, there are standards – great for adding impact to an entrance – plus ground-cover roses and short climbers that have been bred specifically for pots. Try 'Nice Day', which is a patio climber with scented pink flowers. Or opt for the yellow blooms of short climber 'Laura Ford'.

The perfect pot

Although many roses can be grown in pots, if you want to save time and effort (and an awful lot of pruning) it makes sense to avoid large, vigorous shrub roses and climbers that can reach 16ft (5m) or more in height. Bear in mind, too, that a large rose will require a large pot in order to hold the amount of compost it needs to grow well.

And why bother with the big guys when compact roses come in such a huge range of shades and forms? From those with clusters of small blooms to

generous pompom-style flowers – with the right rose it's easy to transform your space, whatever your taste.

Keeping them healthy and ensuring a good display in a container is largely a matter of two things: selecting a well-bred variety with good disease resistance, and being generous with the pot size to accommodate the rose's roots. Then simply choose a spot where your plant will get at least four hours of sun a day and you will enjoy a long summer of beautiful flowers.

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Top 9 container roses

Patio



Peter Pan

The hybrid tea-type blooms on this repeat-flowerer are dark red and are set off well by glossy leaves. Reliably floriferous, it will brighten a sunny spot on the patio from June to September. H&S: 1ft (30cm).



Flower Power ('Frycassia')

Plant this rose in a container positioned next to a bench or beside a path so you can enjoy the striking orange-pink blooms with their spicy fragrance. Repeat flowering from July to September. H&S: 1ft (30cm).



Carefree Days

In bright pink, the bold and beautiful double flowers will repeat flower throughout the summer (from June to September). They appear in clusters and really stand out from the glossy foliage. H&S: 16in (40cm).

Miniature



Robin Redbreast

Excellent for ground cover, this miniature is low growing and repeat flowering from June to November. Bright-red blooms with yellow centres are offset by glossy green leaves. HxS: 1½x2½ft (45x75cm).



Mr Bluebird

Small but impossible to miss thanks to flowers in shades of magenta pink and purple. The blooms are semi-double and will keep appearing throughout summer (June to October). H&S: 1ft (30cm).



Pretty Polly

Double flowers come in a beautiful traditional rose pink and have a light scent. They appear in clusters from July to September. A romantic option, it's perfect for a sun-drenched spot on the patio. H&S: 1½ft (45cm).

Compact



Little White Pet

Neatly shaped, with white flowers that look like pompoms and appear in clusters, this rose has a light scent. Ideal for a container near a doorway or seating area. Flowers from July to October. HxS: 2x3ft (60x90cm).



Sweet Dreams

This coral beauty is a prolific repeat-flowering bush rose. Blooms come in a light but vibrant shade of orange that will light up the border or a patio pot from June through to November. HxS: 1½x1ft (45x30cm).



Comte de Chambord

Dating from 1860, this Old Rose will grow into an upright shrub up to 4ft (1.2m) high. Plant in a deep container to fill a small space with fragrant and full pink blooms from July to September. HxS: 4x3ft (1.2mx90cm)

3 highly scented container roses



Munstead Wood

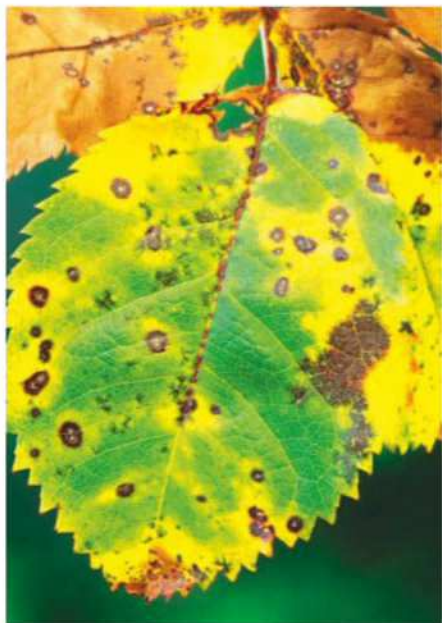
A little bigger than a patio rose at (3ft) 90cm high, this award winner is a good pick for a larger pot, with a strong, fruity fragrance and deep-crimson flowers that appear from June to September. HxS: 3ftx32in (90x80cm).



Marie Pavie

Covered in dense clusters of white flowers with a sweet scent, this repeat-flowering dwarf polyantha variety makes a compact, low-growing bush. Give it a sunny spot and it will flower from June to October. H&S: 1½ft (45cm).

Help! My rose has...



BLACK SPOT A fungal infection that affects leaves, which will eventually drop off. Destroy all fallen leaves and spray with a product containing fungicide – these will be clearly labelled for tackling black spot. There are both organic and chemical options available.



APHIDS Small green insects on your rose buds and shoots. Organic solutions include simply squashing them or using either a spray containing fatty acids or a homemade soapy spray. Insecticides are available, but these should be avoided once roses are in flower.



POWDERY MILDEW This fungus is easy to spot: leaves are covered in a white powder. Prune any affected stems and leaves; water regularly and mulch around the base of the rose. In spring, apply a fungicide before the problem develops.



De Rescht

Compact shrub roses are perfect for small spaces, and this fabulous variety has deep-pink flowers that appear for months on end, coupled with a powerful scent. Flowers from June to September. HxS: 3x2ft (90x60cm).

Planting and care

■ When planting roses in containers, you need to choose a deep pot as roses have long roots. For patio/minature roses, pots should be 1ft-14in (30-35cm) deep; for dwarf climbers, 1-1½ft (30-45cm) deep.

■ Choose a loam-based compost containing John Innes No3. This will give your plants the nutrients they need and keep them healthy in their containers over a long period.

■ Mulch in the spring with a layer of well-rotted garden compost or manure, and feed with a rose fertiliser (do not feed after August).

■ To help with drainage, stand your container on pot feet.



Choose a pot with room for deep roots to develop



Did you know?

Male emperor moths can use their incredibly developed sense of smell and complex antennae to track down a mate from over a mile away. Females only fly at night but males may also be seen during the day.

The tubular flowers of honeysuckle are an easy-to-access nectar source for night flyers like the colourful elephant hawk-moth

The best plants for a moth-friendly garden

Every bit as fascinating, beautiful and useful as butterflies, moths are equally in need of our help. **Louise Curley** reveals what to plant for these nocturnal pollinators

ATTRACTING butterflies and bees into our gardens is now recognised as an important thing to do, as our outdoor spaces provide opportunities for these insects to feed and breed. Moths, however, are rarely mentioned. Yet they are just as important for pollinating plants and providing food for other garden visitors, such as birds and bats. And like butterflies, they're under threat from climate change and loss of habitat.

Until recently, these nocturnal garden visitors were a mystery to me. My only encounter with them was when I came across the fluttering of a moth in the torchlight on a night-time slug hunt. But all that changed when I bought a moth trap. Suddenly, a fascinating world opened up, offering a window into my garden after hours.

Despite sometimes being dismissed as the butterfly's less-attractive cousins, moths can be just as captivating. There are 2,500 species in the UK, and many of them have fabulous names – the dingy mocha, brindled beauty, the three-humped prominent and the feathered gothic, for example.

And if you think moths are just brown and boring, you are in for a big surprise. Among the colourful species that might visit your plot are the garden tiger moth (so named for its orange and black markings), the delicately patterned pug moths, striking green emerald moths and the large and exotic-looking hawk-moths.

Plant the nectar-rich flowers of *Verbena bonariensis*, cross your fingers for a warm summer and you might be lucky enough to spot the day-flying hummingbird hawk-moth, a summer

migrant from Europe, with its rapidly fluttering wings.

Moths tend to be less visible than butterflies. Some fly as twilight falls and are known as night-flying moths; others fly during the day, but you'll often only see these if you inadvertently disturb them. Some plants have adapted to attract night-flying moths for pollination, with fragrant blooms that only release their perfume as the sun goes down. Many also have pale-coloured flowers that appear to glow in the dark, acting as a beacon to passing moths. Single blooms are better than doubles, as these tend to have nectar that is easier for the moths to access.

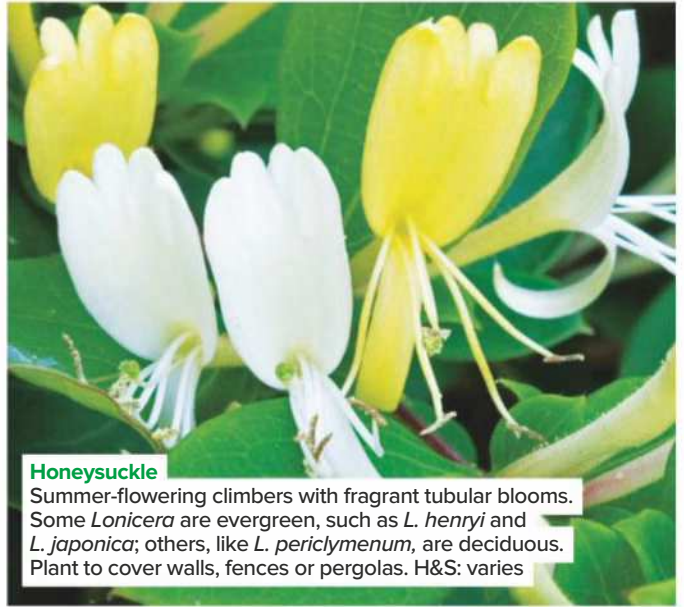
So invest in a moth trap, plant some of the plants moths love and check out the garden once the sun goes down – I guarantee you will not regret it.

5 plants for night-flying moths



Night-scented stock

An easy-to-grow annual with wiry stems and a sprawling habit. Can look a tad scruffy in daylight, but come twilight the pastel pink and white flowers really glow as they pump out their heady fragrance. H&S: 1ft (30cm)



Honeysuckle

Summer-flowering climbers with fragrant tubular blooms. Some *Lonicera* are evergreen, such as *L. henryi* and *L. japonica*; others, like *L. periclymenum*, are deciduous. Plant to cover walls, fences or pergolas. H&S: varies



Nicotiana glauca

Seek out this tobacco plant, which has night-time scent and flowers that can be accessed by British moths. Some nicotianas like *N. mutabilis* have evolved in their native countries to be pollinated by hummingbirds. HxS: 2ftx16in (60x40cm)



Sweet rocket

A short-lived perennial that's easy to grow from seed. White or pink flowers bloom from May to July if deadheaded. Sow in late spring for flowers the following year, or buy as established plants. HxS: 3x1½ft (90x45cm)



Evening primrose

The pale yellow, cup-shaped blooms of *Oenothera* have a delicate evening scent. Some are low-growing, while others have tall, slender stems. Biennial – sow in late spring/early summer for flowers next year. H&S: varies

Easy ways to help moths

- Don't tidy up fallen leaves and seed heads in autumn, as these can provide vital shelter for moth pupae and caterpillars over winter.
- Ditch pesticides and weedkillers as they can be harmful to moths and the plants on which they feed.
- Grow more plants and have less hard landscaping.
- Different moths are active throughout the year, so go for a diverse mix of plants.

Fallen leaves provide shelter for moth pupae and caterpillars



5 moths to look out for



Buff tip
An incredible moth that, when at rest, resembles a silver birch twig. Night-flying from May to June, it's widespread across Britain. Likes hedgerows, open woodland and gardens. Caterpillars feed on the leaves of deciduous trees.



Mint moth
Small brown moth with distinctive golden-yellow spots. Flies both day and night, and can often be found on the leaves of mint during the day. Look for it in gardens from March to October, in England, Wales and southern Scotland.



Blood vein
Buff-coloured, with a trademark reddish-brown line across the wings and pink-tinged wing edges. Seen during the day in low vegetation. Flies May to September, and is common in England and Wales, but less so in Scotland.



Brimstone
A striking yellow moth with brown markings on the wing edges. Most likely to be seen flying around dusk, it is common across the UK. Pupae will overwinter on plants, in debris on the ground, or in cracks in garden walls.



Heart and dart
The grey-brown wings are blotched with black and there's a black V-shape across the collar. Males are generally paler. Two generations per year – April to May, and August. Common in England and Wales.

Plants to attract day-flyers

- *Verbena bonariensis*
- Scabious
- Ivy (the flowers are a great source of nectar in autumn)
- Thyme
- Red valerian
- Mint
- Lavender
- Buddleja
- Wallflowers
- Honesty
- Primroses



Plant red valerian for day-flying moths

Moth trapping

- Moth traps consist of a wooden box, Perspex sheets and a lightbulb. You can make your own, but if you're not experienced with electrics it's best to purchase one as a kit (visit angles.com). There are two types of bulb to choose from: mercury vapour (MV), which are very bright and best used only in places where you won't annoy the neighbours; or actinic, which give off less light.
- Place your moth trap on an old white bedsheet as this will also help attract moths.
- Collect some egg boxes and put these inside and outside the box, to give the moths somewhere to settle.
- You'll also need something to help

you identify them – try the *Field Guide to Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*.

- After checking the forecast to make sure it won't rain, set up your trap at dusk, then return to it the following morning.
- Don't trap every night as you could attract the same moths and they will not get the chance to feed.
- Release any moths you've caught. Some will fly off of their own accord; for those that don't, carefully move them to some undergrowth so they don't become a tasty meal for a passing bird.

- Try a homemade trap: at dusk, drape a white bedsheet over a washing line or between branches in a tree, and place a bright torch behind it. Wait for a couple of hours, then check which moths have been attracted to the light.
- The Butterfly Conservation Trust is running a moth count to help with its research. Record your sightings and follow the links on its dedicated website (mothscount.org) to upload the information.



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Anne Swithinbank's masterclass on: *container veg*



Top Tip

Herbs are generally lower maintenance than veg, but still deliver regular pickings for flavouring food. Mix the Mediterranean ones like sage, thyme, marjoram and lavender.

A potted veg garden is ornamental and delivers an impressive range of pods, leaves, petals, tubers and roots

What's the best veg to grow in containers

Q Our garden is tiny and I don't have time for digging and weeding, but I would love to grow edible plants in containers. I tried a few salad leaves in a pot in the spring, but didn't get much off them. What compost should I use and do the veg need feeding?

Peter Howarth, via email

A Raising veg in a collection of containers might be easier than managing a vast allotment, but this is a dynamic type of gardening and there is plenty to do. Small compost changes between crops, making sure there are seeds and plants at the ready to fill gaps, watering, feeding and regular harvesting are all important. I'm very fond of the old Chinese proverb 'the best fertiliser is the shadow of the gardener', as constantly observing and tending will boost production.

I suspect your salad plants were sown close as a cut-and-come again crop and were soon over. If planted at, say, 4in (10cm) spacings, cropped by the leaf from the outside and treated to fortnightly liquid feeds, they should last longer. Winter hardy salads like rocket and spring sowings of spinach and lettuce will run up to seed as the weather warms up in spring and early summer.

You can grow almost anything in a container, and I tend to use a mix of composts. Recently, I've used equal quantities by bulk of John Innes No2

and two peat-free multi-purpose composts to achieve the texture I want. To save money you could use well-rotted garden compost, leaf mould or well-conditioned garden soil. A good pot size is around 12in (30cm) diameter, although those smaller and larger will also work. Climbing peas and beans make great use of vertical space, but for these 18-24in (45-60cm) pots are best.

Spacing is tricky because one tends to cram young plants tighter in pots than you would in the open ground. Use your intuition and experiment, as there is no wrong or right. Sometimes I plant one type of crop per pot, but at other times I mix them up. To save time and keep containers working, sow into modules alongside the containers, so plants are ready to slot in. From now, you could try French beans, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, carrots, kohlrabi, radicchio and Swiss chard.

Garden tea

Why not use containers to create a pretty and aromatic 'tea garden' for fresh (and later, dried) herbal garden teas? Plant yarrow, lemon balm, lemon verbena, thyme, lavender, chamomile, mints and rose (for petals) and invest in a clear teapot with built-in strainer.

Try growing these vegetables



■ Growing these clusters of beetroot in modules means they are ready to plant straight into containers.



■ The beetroot modules are set about 4in (10cm) apart, alongside spinach, salad leaves and calendula (petals used for salads and to flavour cakes).



■ Calabrese are planted slightly lower than they were in their pots and firmed well so they make sturdy plants.



■ Potatoes planted back in April are a thirsty crop, so make sure you water them regularly.





Ask John Negus

John has been answering reader queries for 49 years

John will reply personally to all your gardening questions every week



Unorthodox pruning hasn't stopped this wisteria from flourishing

Am I pruning my wisteria right?

Q This is our wisteria, which I trim every now and then. It thrives on it – but is this the right way to do it? And have you ever seen a better wisteria! **Tony Wildey, Norwich, Norfolk**

A I wouldn't like to say whether it is the best one ever as there are some stunning examples to be seen in gardens all over Britain, but yours is quite splendid.

It must be a challenge when doing some pruning regularly, but the method obviously works for your plant.

I'm wary of giving too much advice as your plant is so floriferous, but here is the recommended way to prune a wisteria,

just for your interest. However, it takes no account of rampant growth that needs to be kept within bounds!

■ Once flowering is over, only remove the whippy strands that held the flowers.

■ In July or August (the later the better) prune all the long, newly produced (those produced this year) lateral growths back to a bud about 6in (15cm) from where they join the main branch. Don't summer-prune any long growths that you want to keep for the main framework of branches, just tie them in.

■ In December or January, all the stems that were pruned to 6in (15cm) in summer should be shortened to two buds that will flower next year.

What's got my viburnum?

Q Little grey caterpillars have shredded my *Viburnum compactus*. What are they and how can I control them?

Hazel Moore, Stevenon, Oxfordshire

A This pest is viburnum beetle, whose larvae shred viburnum leaves. When mature, they pupate in the soil and the new adults emerge in July and August – and they will also feed on the foliage.

Each adult lays several hundred eggs that hatch the following spring.

Treat the plant with Vitax Organic 2-in-1 or Provado Ultimate Bug Killer, a systemic chemical that is taken into the plant and protects it from within.



Viburnum beetles strip the shrub's leaves

What disease has hit my toms?

Q One of my tomato plants has developed some kind of disease and I am not sure how to tackle it. Can you help?

Derek Ward, via email

A The tomato leaves are showing signs of a disorder called oedema. This occurs when a plant contains more water than it can use, resulting in swollen water-filled areas on the leaves.

After a time the swollen areas are likely to cause some cell death with brown or corky

patches developing. It is not a serious problem in that it is unlikely to have a significant effect on plant growth, but it does indicate that the growing regime might not be quite suitable.

Oedema results when a plant is growing in excess humidity and/or has too much moisture at the roots. The solution involves adjusting either the watering or humidity levels.

If your tomato plants are in a greenhouse it might be worth increasing ventilation, which will reduce humidity and let the leaves dispose of more moisture through evaporation. If they are outdoors and there is anything you can do to increase air movement around the foliage, this will help. Alternatively, it may be simpler just to give the plants less water or water less often.



Too much water can cause plant leaves to swell



Box blight should be cut out

RHS Kay Davis

Is this box blight?

Q What has happened to my box – is it cold weather or box blight?

Mrs A Bean, Dunstable, Beds

A I fear it is infected with box blight. Two fungi are responsible (*Cylindrocladium buxicola* and *Volutella Buxi*) and they often occur together.

There are no infallible cures, so cut back diseased shoots to healthy growth and bin or burn the cuttings.

Feed your plant with sulphate of potash monthly from April until September. Sprinkle it over the root area and water it in.

Is this a good time to plant soft fruits?

Q I've recently had to lift all my rusted garlic and I fancy trying raspberry or maybe blueberry plants in their place. Can I plant them now?

James Couling, Portsmouth, Hants

A It is perfectly fine to plant pot-grown raspberries and blueberries now, but they will need more attention than autumn-planted bushes. This is because they are in full leaf, which needs to be supported by a ready supply of water and nutrients at the roots.

Newly planted shrubs will take a while to put new roots out into the surrounding soil so you will almost certainly find, unless we have a very wet summer, that you need to water your new plants to help support the existing top growth and encourage good root establishment deep into the soil.

The water is best applied as a really good soaking twice a week, rather than a small drink every day.

A good soaking encourages roots to go deep into the soil and this stands the plants in good stead for coping with prolonged dry periods.

You will probably need to keep watering until the end of summer (unless



the weather dictates otherwise) when damper conditions arrive and growth slows down.

Roots keep on growing long after the top growth has gone dormant, usually until mid-December. Thus, autumn-planted trees and shrubs have a chance to establish in the ground before the onset of full dormancy, which means they have a head-start when new growth begins in the spring.

But with proper attention it is certainly possible to establish woody plants at this time of year.

When to prune your skimmia

Q My skimmia has started to put on new growth above the existing foliage, but it's quite tall and unsightly. Could I cut this off to shape the plant?

Christine Felton, via email

A The best time to prune skimmia is in spring after flowering. What is normally recommended is just to cut back the dead flower heads to allow the plant to set its flower buds in time for autumn – the flower heads sit tight through the winter before opening the following spring.

However, this clearly isn't going to help in your case. It is also worth noting that skimmia are quite slow-growing, and although they can be cut back hard it is often best to replace rather than try and renovate.

Skimmia produce their flowers on wood that grows in the current season, so cutting off all the new growth will have an impact on flowering next year. You could either accept this and restore the plant's shape by pruning evenly all over, or you could think about having a slightly uneven-looking plant by cutting



out some of the new stems this year, and doing the rest next winter. If you select stems throughout the plant (rather than doing just one side) it will look less odd!

Once you have done the pruning it will benefit the plant to have some feed – either slow-release balanced fertiliser or fortnightly liquid feeding until the end of July. This will help encourage new growth and keep it healthy.

Quick Questions & Answers

Q What is this and how do I prune it?

Trevor Bayes, via email



A Your plant is probably *Deutzia magnifica* 'Staphyleoides'. A beautiful shrub, it is best pruned after flowering.

All you do is cut back a third of older flowered shoots to lower side shoots or to a node (stem joint), and new stems will appear from stumps to flower next year.

Q Could you please tell me the name of this orange flower?

Christine Boyd, via email



A This is a globeflower. The Latin name is *Trollius* and it is in the same family as buttercups. I'm not quite sure which variety you have as it is difficult to get a true sense of the colour from a photograph, but I think it might be 'Golden Queen' or 'Orange Queen'.

It has striking flowers and the foliage is also attractive.

Q Can you help identify this plant, please?

Jean Wilson, via email



A This is pokeweed or American pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*). I suspect that a bird 'dropped' a seed in your garden.

Its columns of white blossom develop into maroon and highly toxic berries, so fruits must not be eaten. It is not fully hardy and needs a sheltered position in free-draining soil in full sun, though it tolerates light shade.



Tried & tested by Tim Rumball

Tim tests six products every week to determine the best for you

Hand-weeding tools

You have to get in close to tackle weeds effectively in flower and vegetable beds. We look at a range of tools designed to help you win the battle, says **Tim**

WEEDS grow at an alarming rate at this time of year. If you don't keep on top of them, plants won't grow as well as they should and your garden will look a mess. A long-handled hoe used

regularly will keep areas of open soil clear of weeds, but in tightly planted flower and vegetable beds you need more control otherwise you risk damaging plants you want to keep.

We looked at small hand tools with

different designs of head, to see which does the best job of knocking out weeds while leaving your prized plants intact. None of them worked perfectly on all weeds, so for best results you will need more than one tool.

Sophie Conran Weeder **£16.99**

☎ 0114 233 8262 for stockists or visit 🌐 burgonandball.com



Score
12
/15

Features ★★★★★

Stainless-steel head, waxed FSC beechwood handle, brass ferrule. Three-pronged head designed for tackling deep roots of dandelions and similar. Overall Length 10in (25cm), head width 1¼in (3cm).

Performance ★★★★★

High-quality tool that oozes class. Slip the prongs around the crown of a dandelion or other weed with a tap root, thrust down, twist and then lift the weed out root and all. Works like a dream on light soils, but needs a strong wrist on heavy soils. Not designed for clearing annual surface weeds.

Value ★★★★★

Designed for lifting deep-rooted perennial weeds, which it does very effectively on well-worked soil. No good for surface annual weeds.

Stainless-Steel Weeding Knife **£9.99**

☎ 01869 363635 for stockists or visit 🌐 wilkinsonsword-tools.co.uk



Score
13
/15

Features ★★★★★

Stainless-steel head, weatherproof ash handle, leather hanging strap. Designed for working in tight spaces and for lifting deep-rooted weeds. Overall length 14in (35.5cm), width 1¼in (32mm).

Performance ★★★★★

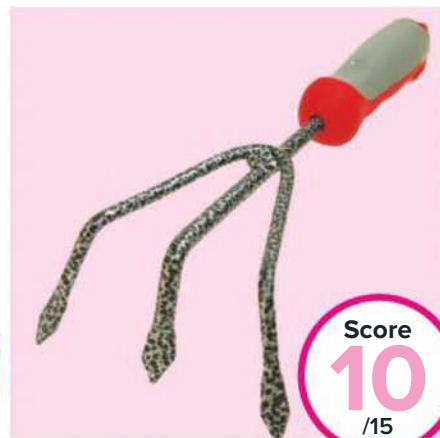
Well balanced and light. Used like a trowel, thrust vertically down around the crown of dandelions, working around the root, then lift the weed out root and all. Effective but slower than the Sophie Conran weeder (see left). The blade tip was good for weeding around plant stems, and the edge could be used for annual weeds. Also an effective small bulb-planting trowel.

Value ★★★★★

A nice multi-purpose tool, useful for weeding close to plants and lifting deep-rooted weeds.

Wilko Hand Cultivator **£3**

☎ 08000 329 329 for nearest stockist or visit 🌐 wilko.com



Score
10
/15

Features ★★★★★

Three-pronged carbon steel head, epoxy powder coated for rust resistance. Soft-grip plastic handle. Hole for hanging strap. Overall length 12in (30cm), head width 4¾in (12cm).

Performance ★★★★★

Classic small three-pronged hand cultivator. Sturdy head and a good grip. The prongs pushed deep into the soil and, used in a push-pull motion, knocked out small surface annual weeds with ease. No cutting action, so weeds are simply uprooted and some may re-root. The long prongs could be used to dig out some deeper-rooting weeds. Also handy for loosening surface compost on large containers.

Value ★★★★★

A strong tool at a very modest price that can help to slow down annual weeds.



BEST BUY...

Kew Collection Midi Onion Hoe **£14.49**

☎ 0114 281 4242 for stockists or visit 🌐 spear-and-jackson.com

Amateur Gardening
Best buy
14
/15



Features ★★★★★

Polished stainless-steel head, long 12in (30cm) handle in FSC hardwood. Leather hanging loop. Sales support the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Overall length 19¾in (50cm), head width 3½in (8cm).

Performance ★★★★★

Looks great. Light to handle and well balanced. Classic half-moon onion-hoe head chops easily into soil, and is then used push-pull to scour small weeds from the soil surface, cutting their heads off. It was easy to work up close to plants and control the depth of action, so avoiding damage to shallow roots. Covered large areas quickly, and long handle offers excellent reach. Won't tackle deep roots of dandelions or similar, but ideal for clearing annual weeds in flower and veg beds. Easy to clean.

Value ★★★★★

This tool does exactly what it was designed for. It's pricey, but should last for years. (Spear & Jackson also sells a less expensive short version called the Elements Onion Hoe.

Charlie Dimmock Wooden Hoe **£1**

☎ 0333 2341877 for stockists or visit 🌐 poundland.co.uk



Score
11
/15

Features ★★★★★

Pressed steel double-sided head featuring three prongs and spade end. Wooden handle with leather hanging strap. Overall length 10½in (27cm), head width 6in (15cm).

Performance ★★★★★

A surprisingly versatile tool, though it's a bit too light so requires more effort to use. The three-pronged head loosened the soil effectively. Turn it over and the spade-end head could be used for drawing seed drills or breaking up clods of earth. Used on its side so the edge of both heads sits on the soil, it made an effective hoe for small annual weeds. Quite good in tight situations, but the head sticking up could catch on plant foliage.

Value ★★★★★

Amazing low price buys you a fairly effective and adaptable hand tool.

National Trust Speed Weeder **£6**

☎ 0300 1232025 for stockists or visit 🌐 shop.nationaltrust.org.uk



Score
8
/15

Features ★★★★★

Made from a single piece of heavy-gauge steel wire bent into a loop for the handle, and twisted to form a hooked working head. Plastic-coated handle. Overall length 7¾in (19.5cm), head width 2¼in (5.5cm).

Performance ★★★★★

Minimalist looks and super-lightweight. Very manoeuvrable. With the head flat on the soil surface, used in a push-pull motion it will uproot small annual weeds, but it doesn't cut them so they may re-root. It won't deal with deep taproots on dandelions and the like, and it jammed when used to rake weeds from paving joints. It would probably work better if the hook had a sharpened inner edge.

Value ★★★★★

Interesting and fun-looking, but not terribly effective.



A Gardener's Miscellany

Gardening's king of trivia and brain-teasers, Graham Clarke

THIS WEEK IN

Gardening history 12-18 June

12 June 1914

John Seymour, prolific early author in the self-sufficiency movement, was born. His seminal book, *Self Sufficiency*, was published in 1970. He died in 2004.



15 June 1621

The first greenhouse in Britain was erected in Oxford, in preparation for a predicted severe autumn and winter. It had no heating and, during the winter nights, a gardener had to wheel a charcoal fire around to keep the temperature up.

16 June 1975

American Randy Farland found a 14-leaved white clover (*Trifolium repens*) near Sioux Falls, South Dakota.



17 June 1974

A tree, the Molucca albizia (*Falcataria moluccana*), was planted in Sabah, Malaysia. In its later life it was recorded as having the fastest rate of growth for any tree, at 35ft 3in (10.74m) in 13 months – that's 1.1in per day.



18 June 1835

British-born William Cobbett, writer and horticultural economist, died. As an MP he had been a supporter of reform, but fled to the US in fear for his safety. There he wrote *The American Gardener*, one of the earliest gardening books published in the US.



June jargon

“June is bustin’ out all over” was sung by Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones in the musical *Carousel* (1956). And *Flaming June* is a classic painting (see right) by Sir Frederic Leighton (1895), the title of which has become a synonym for hot days during the month – or more often cries of derision and sarcasm when June days are cool and cloudy!

But references to June are not confined to the arts – there are plenty of ‘Junes’ used in gardening parlance too, so let’s look at some of them...



What is June drop?

June drop is the name given to the natural phenomenon of apple trees shedding some of their young fruitlets. It is normal for up to a third of all fruit to fall from the tree. It means there is reduced overcrowding of the fruit trusses, and the apples are not malformed or vulnerable to premature rotting while still on the branch.

If the trusses are still crowded after the June drop, use scissors to remove the ‘king’ apple (the largest, central fruit), particularly if it is misshapen. Then remove the smallest and damaged fruits. The aim is to give you better-sized, better-quality and healthier apples.



4 decorative plants with June in the variety name



Fuchsia 'June Marie Shaw'



Verbascum 'June Johnson'



Paeonia lactiflora 'Gayborder June'



Rhododendron 'June Fire'

Juneberry

This large, deciduous shrub or small tree is also known as the snowy mespilus, shadbush or serviceberry. Its Latin name is *Amelanchier lamarckii*, and it is in the rose family.



It has white, star-shaped flowers in spring followed by small, plum-like berries, which are dark red to dark purple (they are edible with a sweet, apple-like flavour). The tree produces good autumn leaf tints, too.

■ The common name of snowy mespilus refers to its close botanical relationship to another plant in the rose family, the medlar (the genus of which is mespilus).

June grass

June grass or smooth meadow grass (*Poa pratensis*) is a perennial grass species. Valuable for pastures, it thrives on well-drained, fertile soil, and is used widely as grass in parks and gardens.

Native to Europe, northern Asia and parts of north Africa, it is not native to North America, so early European colonists took seed over in mixtures with other grasses. In the US it is called

Kentucky bluegrass. On Canada's native grasslands it's considered an unwelcome 'exotic', and is said to 'disturb' and 'degrade' the landscape.



Junellia

Some of the most popular summer bedding plants are the verbenas. They come in more or less every colour, and the flowers are long-lasting. The verbena genus is large, but until relatively recently, the verbena catalogue was of medium size, and there were closely related glandularia and junellia plants. Then, botanists decided to combine them into one large verbena genus. The other two genera all but disappeared.

Today, you can still find rare examples of *Junellia micrantha*, *J. succulentifolia* and *J. thymifolia* (pictured), mostly regarded as choice alpine plants.



Prize draw

Westland Gro-Sure Smart Patch mix is designed to repair any patch in any lawn quickly and easily. It can be used in high-traffic areas where the lawn is worn away, in patches caused by pet urine damage, in shady conditions such as under trees, and in and around children's play areas. The 1.2kg pack will treat 15 patches of 45cm diameter using approximately 75g per patch.

We have two 1.2kg packs to give away, each worth around £10. See below for details of how to enter the prize draw.



How to enter

Send your name and address on the back of a postcard to Westland Gro-Sure Smart Patch Mix Draw (16 June), Amateur Gardening, Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 7BF. Or you can email your details to ag_giveaway@timeinc.com, heading the email Westland Gro-Sure Smart Patch Mix Draw (16 June). The closing date is 22 June 2018.

WIN
£30

Word search

No:
420

This word search comprises words associated with the month of June, along with other words mentioned in this week's Gardener's Miscellany. They are listed below; in the grid they may be read across, backwards, up, down or diagonally. Letters may be shared between words. Erroneous or duplicate words may appear in the grid, but there is only one correct solution. After the listed words are found there are 10 letters remaining; arrange these to make this week's KEYWORD.



BERRY
CAROUSEL
DAYS
DROP
FLAMING
HOSTA
IRIS
JUNE
JUNO
LONG
MAY
MONTH
NARCISSUS
SOLSTICE
SUMMER
VERBENA
WHITFIELD

HOW TO ENTER: Enter this week's keyword on the entry form, and send it to AG Word Search No 420, Amateur Gardening, Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BF, to arrive by Wednesday 27 June, 2018. The first correct entry chosen at random will win our £30 cash prize.

This week's keyword is

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Email

Tel no

Time Inc (UK) Ltd, publisher of *Amateur Gardening* will collect your personal information solely to process your competition entry.

A Gardener's Miscellany

A host of June hostas

These lovely leafy border perennials are generally regarded as plants for lightly or dappled shady borders. However, 'June' (see right) is a variegated British hosta with a blue-green outer edge to the leaves and a bright yellow centre. It needs plenty of sunlight, especially early in the season, to develop and retain its golden central colour.



Other hostas with 'June' in the name include 'June Fever' (see left) with leaves of shiny gold and a thin blue-green margin; 'June Spirit', chartreuse with wide blue-green margins; 'June Moon', lime-green with a white margin; and 'Frosted June', yellow with a white margin.



National fun 'June' days

Where else but America can you have official days dedicated to such things as popcorn? Well, I'm pleased to say there are plenty of gardening-related National Days as well – and the following are all in June:

- June 1: Olive Day
- June 6: Gardening Exercise Day
- June 10: Herbs & Spice Day
- June 12: Red Rose Day
- June 13: Weed Your Garden Day
- June 22: Onion Rings Day
- June 23: Pink Day
- June 27: Orange Blossom Day



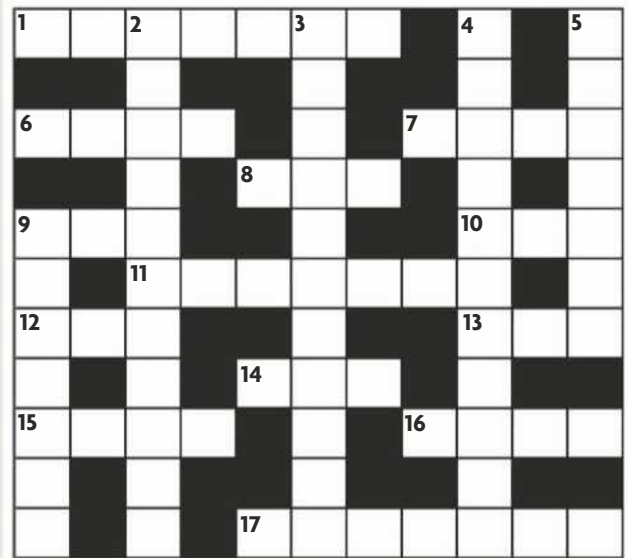
Plants named after Junes

In 1995, Harkness Roses launched a gorgeous orange hybrid tea rose and named it 'June Whitfield', after the famous comedy actress (born in 1925). A cross between 'Avocet' and 'Prima Ballerina', it was not considered as resilient as some other orange hybrid tea roses, so is no longer available.

Meanwhile, June Allyson (1917-2006) was an American actress, dancer and singer, with a long and successful career. A large cupped daffodil is named after her, with only one supplier listed by the *RHS Plant Finder* – Fentongollan Farm in Cornwall.

Arguably the best known other Junes are June Brown (Dot in *EastEnders*), June Carter Cash (former wife of Johnny Cash) and US actress June Lockhart, but none has a plant named after her. Come on, flower breeders – celebrate these wonderful ladies!

Crossword ...just for fun!



ACROSS

1 and 6 across Painting by Sir Frederic Leighton (7,4)

6 See 1 across

7 Above-ground stalk of a vascular plant (4)

8 Sounding like koi, but fundamental to coconuts! (3)

9 Research scientists know tobacco mosaic virus as this (1,1,1)

10 Tree of the quercus genus (3)

11 Genus of tender flowering plants known as 'pineapple flower' (7)

12 Layer of acidic humus formed in cool, moist areas where decomposition is slow (3)

13 Hard substratum of soil (3)

14 Area for plants in the garden, as in the daylily

varieties '___ of Roses' and '___ of Nails' (3)

15 Harvest a pear! (4) (anag)

16 Small perching bird (of the genus troglodytes), and a variety of rhododendron (4)

17 Must his narrow strip of land have sea on either side? (7) (anag)

DOWN

2 Celebration of the hybrid tea rose 'Silver ___' and clematis 'Diamond ___'! (11)

3 The Boston fern genus (11)

4 Genus of evergreen shrubs or small trees, chiefly native to Australasia, with typically small fragrant flowers (11)

5 Plant of the gourd family producing large, round fruits and large, lobed leaves (7)

9 Genus of deciduous shrubs and small trees, with tiny, scale-like leaves – notably good for coastal gardens (7)

ANSWERS
ACROSS 1 Flamingo 6 June 7 Stem 8 Shy 9 TMV 10 Oak 11 Eucomis 12 Mor 13 Pan 14 Bed 15 Reap 16 Wren 17 Isthmus
DOWN 2 Anniversary 3 Nephrolepis 4 Pittosporum 5 Pumpkin 9 Tamark

KEYWORD TO WORDSEARCH 415 (AG 12 May)

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Top Tip

Polyanthus look great in containers, but I always plant them out afterwards. In the ground, they are less vulnerable to vine weevils than when they are in containers.



The dainty native cowslip *Primula veris*

Dividing and moving polyanthus is best done immediately after flowering, but I'm sure these plants will be fine shaded from harsh sun, watered in thoroughly and mulched well

How to grow... Polyanthus

Fancy an early flowering plant that is tough and will last for years in your garden? You won't go far wrong with polyanthus, says **Anne Swithinbank**

WHILE reworking the border near our driveway, I came across several groups of tired-looking polyanthus. These have been in the garden longer than we have and bloom faithfully every spring, starting in early February and flowering well into April. They raise tired wintry spirits and provide a great source of nectar for bumblebees coaxed from hibernation by warm sunshine.

Having brightened the garden with pale-pink blooms when little else was around, they have now entered a state of suspended animation, sitting out late spring and summer while thick, fleshy roots can survive periods of drought. I don't take them for granted, and having prised larger clumps apart I will plant them carefully back in small groups.

Polyanthus, which means 'many-flowered', are characterised by producing clusters of flowers at the top of stout stems. In this way the blooms are held well above the foliage. By comparison, primrose flowers are held individually on slender stems emerging from the crowns.

At one end of the scale we have the dainty native cowslip (*Primula veris*), now a common sight on motorway verges. At the other end are large-flowered bedding polyanthus. In between are plenty of cultivars that are great for bringing colour early in the year. I find mixtures like 'Crescendo' somewhat garish en masse, yet enjoy choosing individual plants of certain colours for spring containers or to brighten the porch.

Polyanthus were once more prized than they are today. The Elizabethans

loved the 'hose-in-hose' kinds where one flower seems to sit inside another and gold-laced varieties became very collectable. These were known as 'florist's polyanthus', and during the 18th and 19th centuries they were much bred and shown, with champion growers awarded the prize of a copper kettle. Rich, dark, reddish-maroon petals are edged with gold and the flowers centred with yellow. By the 1900s, breeding was producing a much wider range of colours, and during the 1930s Florence Bellis produced the famous Barnhaven strains in Oregon, USA.

There are fewer named varieties around now, but these lovely spring flowers are still worth raising from seed or buying as plants. Most are hardy and will last for years in the garden.

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Your letters



with Wendy Humphries

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star letter

Wildflowers growing in the bombsite areas of London



Flower power

I LOVE wildflowers and my first memories of them were seeing them growing on London bombsites in the 1950s. I was born in North London in 1948 and my mother would take me by train to Liverpool Street Station and then by bus to the West End shops.

Many of the city's bomb sites had not been redeveloped until years after the war had ended, and I still have vivid memories of the bombed-out basements of huge buildings covered with wildflowers growing in the rubble

and up the walls. There was rosebay willow herb (called fireweed during the war), ox-eye daisies, buddleja, poppies, ragwort, forget-me-nots and foxgloves. These wild plants were joined by cultivated plants whose roots and seeds survived the carnage of Hitler's bombs.

Nature will always bring back beauty to the face of destruction – a thought that always puts a smile on my face. We were not defeated during the war and neither was nature.

Christina Warren, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Knife law omission

I NORMALLY find your weekly *Tried & Tested* article to be useful with good recommendations. However, I feel that the article appertaining to pocket knives (AG, 26 May) is dangerously misleading. Of the knives tested, five have a blade length of less than 3in (7.5cm), which makes them legal to be carried in public, and yet the 'Best Buy' carries a blade with a cutting edge which is ½in over this legal requirement. This knife cannot be carried anywhere without good reason – and you try thinking of a 'good reason' if stopped by a policeman.

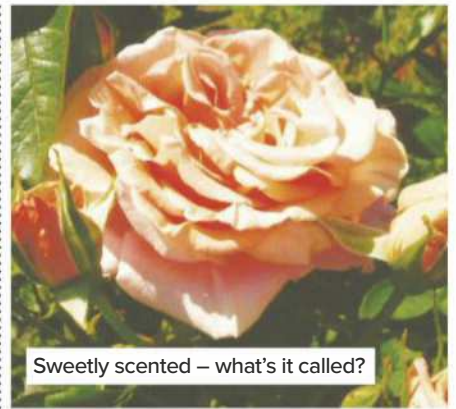
As a keen gardener I am never without my pocket knife, and I make sure it complies with the appropriate law as otherwise I could quite easily find myself before the magistrates and in my naivety ending up with a criminal conviction. Maybe there are still some of your readers who are not aware of this

legal requirement, so I feel this important factor should have been pointed out in your article.

C. Jones-Evans, Pwllheli, Gwynedd

Wendy says You are absolutely correct and have highlighted a very important point concerning knives in public places which, sadly, is a very hot topic these days. We tested the knife as a garden tool and apologise for omitting this information. It is illegal to carry a knife in public unless it has a folding blade of less than 3in; our best buy has

a lockable blade 3¼in. Visit gov.uk/buying-carrying-knives.



Sweetly scented – what's it called?

Rose identity

WHEN I moved into my house three years ago, it had an old established garden and I have gradually been trying to learn the names of the plants. This is my favourite rose – it flowers in June and July and smells of sweets and sherbet. I have no idea what it is called, but it is a joy to beyond.

Miss Linda Keen, Sheffield

Wendy says Can anyone identify this rose for Linda? Please let us know.

Appropriate footwear for gardening please

THERE is a photograph showing Lucy Chamberlain wearing sandals (AG, 19 May). She and your readers

must be very careful with such footwear. In many parts of the country there are large numbers of tick-carrying animals. Here in Suffolk, for example, we have our share of various breeds of deer. I am sure you know that ticks can give you Lyme disease, which is a most unpleasant thing to get, and it is a very real threat.

Simon Wilson, Ashfield, Suffolk

The editor says Thank you, Simon. It's about commonsense when it comes to footwear in the garden.



Share your stories, tips and photos with us and if your letter is published you will receive a new book. When you write, please indicate your area of interest!



Beautiful iris: clumps can be rejuvenated

Inheriting a few surprises

AFTER moving to a cottage last October and inheriting a garden that needs some tender loving care, I find it's useful to take a daily walk around the garden to see what's flowering. The roses are out and it's exciting seeing things pop up, including these Siberian irises. Some of them are congested but it may be wise to leave them for a few months rather than tackle them after flowering. **Audrey Horton, Fordingbridge, Hampshire**

Wendy says Lift and divide the irises in the autumn, adding plenty of well-rotted compost before replanting the divisions.

Reader's Quick Tip

FURTHER to Ruth's suggestions for controlling slugs and snails (AG, 19 May), I have found really crushed-up eggshells do the trick. Wash them first, then scatter thickly around vulnerable plants. **S Mann, via email**

Photo of the week

Wendy and Stefan's garden project successfully combines both hobbies



And after...

Railway garden

WE have a keen interest in gardening and heritage railways. About 18 months ago we decided to combine our two hobbies and create our own railway garden. My partner Stefan had collected a few items and we started with some rails. Then further rail was acquired and the decision was made to remove all the lawn and create a feature, but also give more space for planting (see right). **Wendy Best, via email**



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Hilltop challenge

Colourful planting complements breathtaking views in Alison Napier's picturesque garden, says **Sue Bradley**



HILLTOP gardens bring their own particular challenges, and Alison Napier's Derbyshire plot is no exception. For while it is framed by spectacular views of farmland, the site was especially exposed and windy when she moved to her Victorian detached home with her late husband Ian Hill during the early 1980s.

"I did wonder if we would have to plant a shelter belt to get anything to grow at all, but we were loath to do this because we would lose the view," Alison explains.

Instead, the couple adopted a restrained approach and soon realised that a thick band of protective trees

and shrubs would not be necessary.

"It became clear that the plants would hold each other up," she says. "At the same time the neighbour's trees grew bigger, which provided extra protection for our garden. Nowadays the garden isn't as exposed as it was."

A plot that sloped in two directions was another challenge, although the key to overcoming it lay closer than Alison and Ian expected.

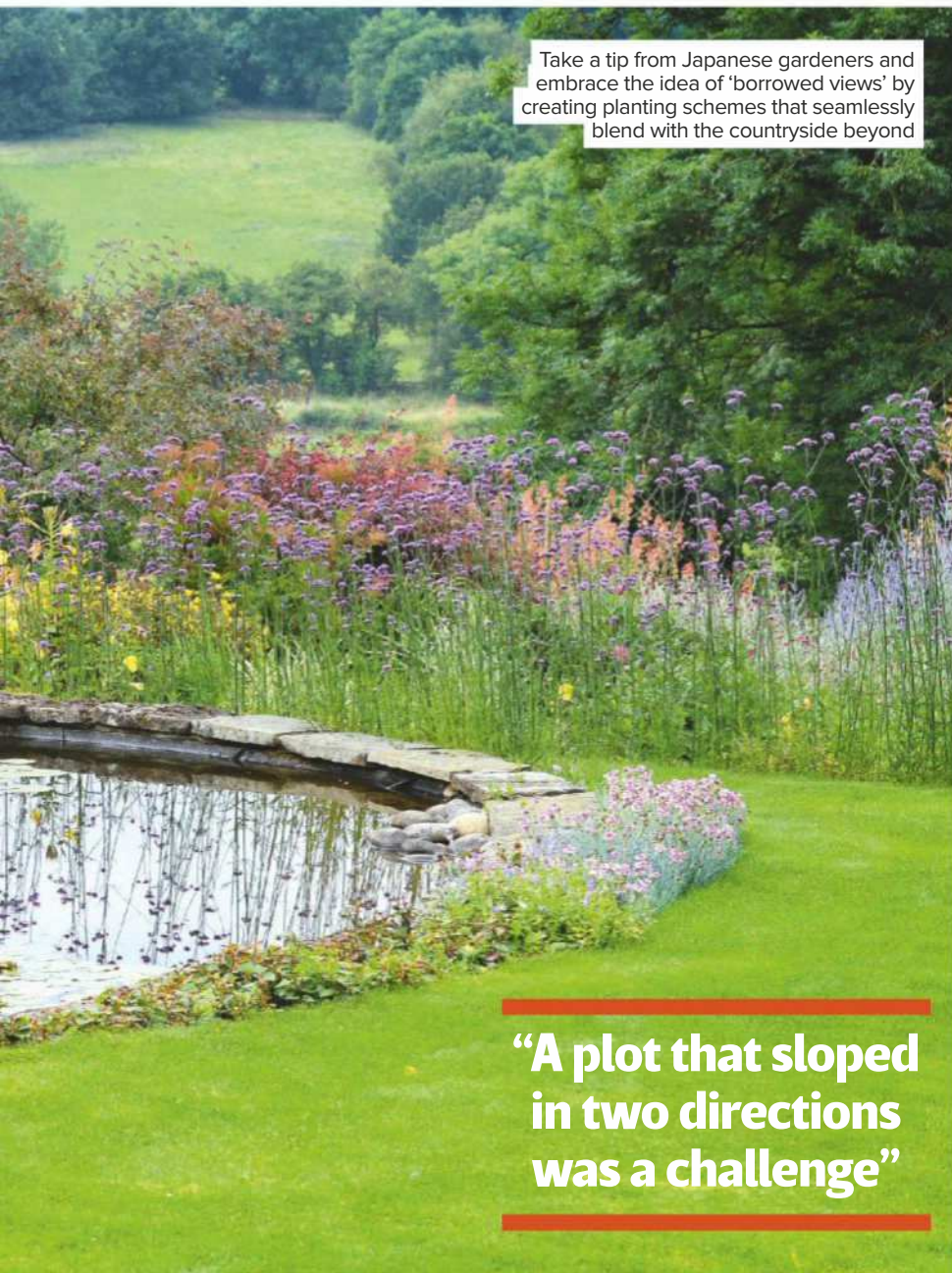
"When we moved in there was a lawn with an enormous circular driveway around the edge of it, taking up most of the site," she explains. "When my husband did a bit of investigating he discovered that the previous owner had been in the

demolition business and used to bury rubble in the driveway."

Some 25 lorry journeys were required to remove all the refuse, although Alison and Ian were careful to salvage all the old stone, which they went on to use to build terracing to make the site easier to manage.

"I cannot begin to think what all the stone would have cost if we had to buy it," Alison laughs.

"Ian did all the basic earth moving and we had landscaper and gardener Ron Eaton, an excellent professional, who helped us with the hard landscaping and some of the tree planting following a design I had worked out on squared paper.



Take a tip from Japanese gardeners and embrace the idea of 'borrowed views' by creating planting schemes that seamlessly blend with the countryside beyond

"A plot that sloped in two directions was a challenge"

"He came to us for about five years and we carried on doing bits after that: all in all it was 15 years before the whole thing was complete."

For Alison, a keen visitor of gardens and reader of books by inspirational authors such as Christopher Lloyd and Graham Stuart Thomas, the opportunity to create her own horticultural heaven was one she grasped with relish, even if she did have to modify her plans to fit the topography of the plot.

"I did have ambitions to make it more of a 20th century formal garden, but quickly realised this was beyond my skills on a site that sloped in two directions," she says.

"Having abandoned my original

idea it was a case of getting it so that it would flow and blend in with the landscape around."

Key features of the garden include a large wildlife pond, ringed by colourful planting that softens the stone edges without compromising what lies beyond.

"I always wanted a pond," admits Alison. "I made it kidney shaped to fit with the landscape."

A bog garden, a gravel and scree area, and a wisteria-draped terrace are also part of the mix, along with a variety of colour-themed borders.

"For me, the garden is an outlet for my creativity," says Alison. "I enjoy it and always get pleasure from the view. It's lovely."

A pebble 'beach' provides easy access for frogs, newts and birds to bathe



Plant 'curtains' of airy *Verbena bonariensis* to create the feel of an enclosed pathway



Meet the gardeners

OWNER:

Alison Napier

ADDRESS:

9 Main Street,
Horsley
Woodhouse,

Derbyshire, DE7 6AU

GARDEN SIZE: 1/3 acre

ASPECT:

South facing (slightly west of)

SOIL: Well-worked clay. Slightly alkaline

VISITED:

SPECIAL FEATURES: Hilltop garden overlooking farmland, with terracing and planting designed for colour effects. Pergola, large wildlife pond, bog garden, gravel and scree gardens.

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Your Get the look

Ideas for gorgeous gardens



This bog garden has a unifying yellow theme in summer with its plantings of *Lysimachia ciliata* 'Firecracker', *Inula hookeri*, *Ligularia* and evening primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*), all of which are complemented by the purple of *Verbena bonariensis*



Keep lawns short and edges crisp so that carefully thought-out combinations of trees, shrubs and perennials can 'sing'



Seek out cultivars that will work, like 'Headbourne Hybrids' agapanthus. The fern-leaved corydalis in the wall came from Hyde Hall before it belonged to the RHS



Dianthus give colour for months



Airy plants such as rose campion (*Lychnis coronaria*), Russian sage *Perovskia atriplicifolia*, plume poppy *Macleaya cordata* and summer-flowering tamarisk provide layers of colour without compromising the view beyond



Indulge in the wildlife-friendly blooms of *Inula hookeri*: "I like its scale and it makes me smile, like a clown in the corner of the garden," says Alison



Prune wisteria lightly in autumn and hard in spring for a second display in summer. It works well with *Agapanthus africanus*



A collection of unusual pots to display types of houseleeks (*sempervivums*), which have distinctive rosettes



Use plants, such as containers of houseleeks and agapanthus, to soften where the home meets garden



Add *Clematis jackmanii* with an evergreen ivy, providing stunning contrast to the reds of the crocosmias 'Vulcan' and the taller 'Lucifer' and the oranges of daylily (*hemerocallis*)



Recycle materials: Here pieces of stone found in the driveway have been put to much better use as walls and steps to tame the slope of the garden



Try *Crocsmia* 'Vulcan'. Alison made hers stand out by teaming it with the dark leaves of *Sambucus nigra* 'Black Lace'

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Toby Buckland



Nurseryman and former Gardeners' World host



The herb buchu (left) featured on Jonathan Snow's South African Wine Estate garden at Chelsea, which won a Silver-Gilt



Trends at Chelsea

Toby Buckland takes a look at some of the themes in the gardens at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show

NOW don't get me wrong... I think hyperbole is quite literally the best thing ever, but when overused it can be misleading.

I once viewed a house encouragingly described in the estate agent's blurb as being 'in audible distance of the A10'. Thinking this meant it was in a nearby village I schlepped over to find that the lounge was right next to the slow lane, making the joy of listening to car radios and traffic a permanent fixture.

A characteristic of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show brochure is that the garden descriptions are also embroidered with estate-agent spiel and don't always match up with reality. 'Water features represent sea views,' is an example which, when translated, really means 'garden with small pond'.

However, once the superfluties have been stripped it's possible to spot the shared flowers, colours and concepts that unite the unique and creative designs. For my BBC TV slot 'Trends at Chelsea', it's my job to look for these threads and this year the prominent theme is escaping. The gardens this year are based on the Middle East, the Med, South Africa and, for those on a

budget, the Yorkshire countryside and a vignette of Cornwall.

The designs taken as whole might bear little resemblance to an ordinary back garden, but details and ideas do translate. Pavilions have always been a focal point, but this year, along with arches and lean-tos, they have an airiness that demonstrates how height can create a sense of privacy/escape without stealing the sunshine.

One group of plants that unites almost all the gardens are herbs. Instead of being clustered in edible collections, fennel and oreganum are used as brush-by aromatics and mint between paving

Toby's top tips



1 *Mentha requienii* is a ground-hugging mint that is excellent as a grass/gravel alternative between paving stones.



2 For home-grown privacy, plant small trees on a garden boundary, as in Tom Massey's Lemon Tree Trust Garden, which won a Silver-Gilt, at Chelsea.

to scent your footsteps.

One herb, called buchu, on Jonathan Snow's South African Wine Estate garden, is new to me. Apparently, this fragrant South African shrub is a traditional remedy for everything from arthritis to flatulence. I guess it cuts through the hot air, which there's a lot of at the Chelsea Flower Show, but with it if you take the time to look, there are clever ideas that can be copied.

Garden design layouts

DESIGNERS at Chelsea use three basic layouts on their rectilinear plots and all are useful, especially when setting out new gardens. The 'diagonal' design with an entrance at one corner and a pavilion that draws the eye on the opposite side, makes the garden seem bigger and distracts from the boundary. 'Barcode' designs divided into a series of rectangles make a narrow garden feel wider, while designs with a central serpentine path are perfect for plant lovers as borders are big and create areas to hide out of view from overlooking neighbours.



Alamy

RHS/Neil Hepworth

RHS/Neil Hepworth

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