

AUGUST PLANTS

A gentian-blue salvia, a favourite French marigold and a late-flowering, delicate, pink umbellifer are among Fleur's choices for the peak of summer

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ANEMONE 'DREAMING SWAN'

Elizabeth MacGregor's *Anemone* Wild Swan (= 'Macane001') was the eye-catching RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year in 2011, but we had problems growing it in our garden. This seedling of Wild Swan has the same large, beautiful, semi-double white flowers with a soft-lilac streak on the back of the petals, but is very healthy and vigorous. Like all of MacGregor's Swan series – which also includes 'Elfin Swan', 'Dainty Swan' and 'Ruffled Swan' – it is not invasive and fits well into naturalistic plantings.

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden origin.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer.



TAGETES 'CINNABAR'

Just as chefs have their signature dish, so nurserymen and women have their signature plant, and this single-flowered, warm-orange tagetes is ours. It has everything we would could want in an annual plant – a beautiful, vivid colour, natural appearance, it's easy to grow and to combine with perennials, has a long and abundant flowering period and works well in a pot. One of our trainees brought us the seed from Great Dixter, where it was known as 'Dixter Strain'. In the Netherlands it is often sold under the incorrect name of *T. patula* Linnaeus.

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden origin.

Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



AGERATUM HOUSTONIANUM 'DONDOSCHNITTPERLE'

Several breeders have tried to turn the long-stemmed *Ageratum houstonianum* into monster bedding plants, but the results have not always been great. This cultivar, however, is the exception. Its soft blue-purple buds in small umbels fit beautifully into our borders, and will also grow in shade. At Hermannshof in Germany, several square metres of the blue ageratum have been planted under a broad spreading *Malus x floribunda*, where earlier in the year the ground was blue with forget-me-nots. Heavenly.

Height 80cm.

Origin Garden origin.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun and shade.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.

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

DAHLIA 'DARK DESIRE'

We love naturalness in plant combinations and much prefer the single-flowered dahlias to the big, dinner-plate doubles. Although incredibly chic, *Dahlia* 'Dark Desire' works especially well in natural combination. Its dark, velvety red petals appear chocolate brown from a distance, almost like the related *Cosmos atrosanguineus*, and contrast dramatically with its golden-yellow stamens. However, the combination of the dark flower with bronze leaf and stem can make it look a little dull unless it is contrasted with brightly coloured neighbours, such as the lime-green *Nicotiana langsdorffii* or the spicy pink *Diascia personata*.

Height 75cm.

Origin Garden origin.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3†.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



**SALVIA PATENS
'GUANAJUATO'**

Plants that have been introduced from subtropical Mexico always provide plenty of colour and spectacle to our cooler climate. This salvia, found by Jamie Compton, John d'Arcy and Martyn Rix in the Sierra de Guanajuato in 1991, is no exception. It's tall with large flowers that are an unlikely but beautiful pure gentian blue, and it always stands out wherever it is planted. In everything it is bigger than the regular *Salvia patens*. The pale-green leaf usually has a clear brown-red spot, but when propagated from seed some variation occurs in the markings.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Mexico.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

HIBISCUS TRIONUM

This pretty annual is sometimes known as flower-of-an-hour because its flowers bloom for only a few hours during the day before wilting. Even so it is a must for lovers of annuals, as every day, over a period of months, new large (5cm) flowers open, which are cream to soft-yellow coloured and have a dark heart containing a golden-yellow stamen and a dark-red pistil. It is a well-branched plant with deeply grooved leaves that combines well with perennials, but also looks good grown in a pot. The flowers are followed by hairy, bell-shaped seed capsules and are best left to self-seed.

Height 1m.
Origin Central Europe, Asia, Africa.
Conditions Medium moist soil; full sun.
Hardiness USDA 2a-11.
Season of interest Summer.



CALAMAGROSTIS EMODENSIS

Unlike many other grasses in the *Calamagrostis* genus, which have a more upright growth, this feathery flowering species has a more weeping habit with soft, fluffy, silver-pink flower stems that hang far down and spread out widely. It's become a popular grass for New Perennial plantings but was first described in 1850 by the German botanist August Heinrich Grisebach (1814-1879), who named the species after the Emodus Mountains in Nepal. Although it's happy in most soils, make sure the soil isn't too fertile, otherwise the grass mound will collapse.

Height 1m.
Origin Nepal.
Conditions Any soil that's not too fertile; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Summer.



**PLACES
TO VISIT**

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best both in Europe and the UK

The specialised nursery **Tuingoed Foltz** run by Bob Foltz and his partner Andries Bierling is one of the best perennial nurseries in the Netherlands. It also has a very beautiful garden, including a new exotic garden that is very lovely to explore in late summer. Both Bob and Andries are keen plant collectors, and among the many thousands of perennials on display you

will find the Dutch national collections of *Salvia* and *Echinacea*. The nursery itself offers a wide range of ornamental grasses, herbs and annuals, and offers a wide selection of agapanthus, geraniums, and dahlias. It also has many plants ideal for a shade garden including hostas, epimediums and some spectacular-looking arisaemas, alongside other

botanical rarities. Hereweg 346, 9651 AT Meeden, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)598 635 000, tuingoedfoltz.nl

Another Dutch nursery with a beautiful garden is **Kwekerij en Tuin De Boschhoeve**, near Arnhem. Set amid farmland and hidden by enormous deciduous trees, this large idyllic garden behind an old farmhouse, is divided into

several areas, including colourful summer and autumn borders, a shade garden and an orchard with spring bulbs. But what makes the garden stand out for us is its decorative and inspiring vegetable garden where unusual vegetables are combined with flowers, including many summer bulbs and dahlias. Every year the garden hosts various events, of which



EUCOMIS PALLIDIFLORA

Impressive and exotic, this bulbous plant from South Africa is the largest *Eucomis* in cultivation. Its flower torches alone measure up to 40cm and these sit atop sturdy stems of more than a metre with large, long leaves. The flowers are a modest green-white colour that can create a calm haven in the middle of a colourful border and combine beautifully with colourful echinaceas and grasses. On top of each flower is a small, green crest that looks a little like a pineapple; hence its common name of pineapple plant. It's a great plant for pots but needs winter protection.

Height 1.2m.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



SESELI LIBANOTIS

Grasses and umbellifers are everywhere in nature, and so perfect for giving planting schemes a naturalistic feel. Luckily, there are so many umbellifers that you can find one to use from spring through to autumn. This one has small umbels, which are white with some shades of pink and red. The asparagus-like leaves are a very dark green and almost evergreen, and its airy and transparent growth is perfect for the front edge of a border where its beautiful leaf rosettes can be shown to full effect.

Height 60cm.

Origin Europe, Siberia, northern Iran, Caucasus.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer.



LOPHOSPERMUM ERUBESCENS LOFOS WINE RED (= 'SUN-ASARO')

A versatile plant that can work as a climber or for weaving through other plants in a border. Its triangular soft-green leaves have a quiet presence growing through other plants, and the large, trumpet-like, pink flowers appear on the tendrils in increasing numbers as the season progresses. If there are no frosts it will bloom until January. After flowering, it forms fresh-green seed capsules and can be overwintered in situ, provided it remains frost-free.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Mexico, Guatemala.

Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



▷ the Snowdrop Fair is the best known. Dineke Logtenberg, Boshoeve 3, 6874 NB Wolfheze, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)26 482 1231, boschoeve.nl

Among our favourite UK gardens at this time of year are those of **Powis Castle** in north Wales. Its dramatic Italianate terraces have been blasted from solid rock and feature a theatrical mix of giant topiary and dancing

statues. For us though the real highlight are the lavish herbaceous borders that line the terrace. Planted in fiery, hot colours they look spectacular in late summer and feature several rare and tender plants sheltered by the impressive 300-year-old yew hedges that can reach up to 14m. There's also a formal Edwardian garden and informal woodland area. The medieval castle, which

rises up above the terrace offering superb views of the surrounding countryside, is also worth a visit. Welshpool, Powys SY21 8RF. Tel 01938 551944, nationaltrust.org.uk

Another Welsh garden offering both a touch of drama and some impressive hedging is **Veddw House Garden** near Chepstow. Created by the garden writer Anne Wareham and her husband

photographer Charles Hawes, the ten-acre garden combines art and history in spectacular fashion as well as some clever planting. Veddw House Garden, The Fedw, Devauden, Monmouthshire NP16 6PH. Tel 01291 650836, veddw.com

In the north of Scotland, on the banks of Loch Ewe, is the unexpectedly exotic **Inverewe Garden**. Warmed

by the Gulf Stream and sheltered by woodland, this beautiful garden, created out of bare rock in 1862 by Osgood Mackenzie, is home to many rare and colourful plants, including Wollemi pines, Tasmanian eucalyptus and Himalayan blue poppies, all grown in international zones. Poolwe, Achnasheen IV22 2LG. Tel 01445 712952, nts.org.uk □