


# SARAH PRICE'S 100 most beautiful and useful plants

WORDS SARAH PRICE

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a blue short-sleeved top and light blue jeans, stands in a lush garden. She is surrounded by various plants, including tall purple flowers and red daisies. In the background, a greenhouse with a white frame and glass panels is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Some plants in my garden are familiar and beloved companions whose appearance marks the year. Other plants are exciting prospects that I'm still trialling to discover their full potential. I prefer varieties that possess the elegance and poise of their relatives in nature. They look good singularly or en masse. But it's not just about how plants look. I love flowers that animate the garden at certain times of the year by attracting clouds of bees and butterflies.



## Annuals

### 1 ERIGERON ANNUUS

Myriad simple, fine-rayed, white daisies appear to float in mid air. Self-seeds vigorously, a desirable trait only for wilder areas where there is plenty of competition. **Height (H)** 1.5m. **Spread (S)** 40cm. **Conditions (C)** Dry sun. **Season of interest (SI)** July to November. **Hardiness rating (HR)** RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b†.

### 2 PAPAVER DUBIUM SUBSP. LECOQII 'ALBIFLORUM'

Luminous in sunshine, its clear-pink petals float just above the fresh growth of early summer. Poppies are at their best when sown direct, emerging with surprise and spontaneity. **H** 50cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. Not great on wet clay soil. **SI** May to June. **HR** USDA 6a-9b.

### 3 PHACELIA TANACETIFOLIA

A green manure I sow for its soft lavender-blue flowers, that are decoratively shaped like a scorpion's curved tail. Beloved by bees and insects, it's unfussy and fast growing, with dense, weed-suppressing foliage. Robust winter annual. **H** 60cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** March to May. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.

## Bulbs

### 4 ALLIUM OBLIQUUM

Robust yet dainty-looking allium that elegantly emerges above early fresh foliage.

Newly unfurled, lime-yellow flowers droop before standing upright on thin, glaucous stems that have a quirky yet graceful line. I plant this with the delicate pink umbels of *Pimpinella major* 'Rosea'. Gently self seeds. **H** 40cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; sheltered, sunny position. **SI** May to June. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

### 5 ANEMONE NEMOROSA 'ROBINSONIANA'

Although you can't surpass our native anemone for its simplicity, I love this for its ethereal lilac colour that glows in the shade. Grow en masse to appreciate how their petals open and stems straighten in spring sunshine. **AGM\***. **H** 15cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist or well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** April to May. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

### 6 CAMASSIA LEICHTLINII SUBSP. SUKSDORFII 'ALBA'

A North American bulb with tall, intense blue spires. Looks exotic yet not out of place flowering in long grass among British natives, such as cow parsley. Best grown in generous drifts as if self sown. Will naturalise quickly given moisture and free-draining soil. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** May to June. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 3a-7b.

### 7 CROCUS TOMMASINIANUS

Slender crocus that battles hard through winter, opening wide in spells of sunshine. Self-seeds profusely and will spread to form unbelievable carpets of purple across borders and lawns. **AGM**. **H** 10cm. **S** 10cm.

**C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** February to March. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

### 8 CYCLAMEN HEDERIFOLIUM

Prospering in dry shade, often at the foot of an old tree, these autumn-flowering cyclamen will in time form venerable colonies. Marbled, ivy-shaped leaves in summer followed by rosy-pink flowers. **AGM**. **H** 10cm. **S** 15cm. **C** Well-drained soil; part shade, sheltered position. **SI** October to November. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

### 9 FRITILLARIA MELEAGRIS

Iconic white-and-purple chequered bells dangle like lanterns on delicate stems. When naturalised in damp grassland, the purple and sometimes white blooms create hypnotic pointillist-like patterns among the grass. **H** 30cm. **S** 8cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** April and May. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.

### 10 GALANTHUS NIVALIS

Simple and elegant, I always return to our resilient native snowdrop. The colonies that transform banks and ancient churchyards with their pure-white blooms are testament to its tenacity. Plant in the green as generously as you can. Will naturalise. **AGM**. **H** 10cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; shade. **SI** January and February. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

### 11 GLADIOLUS 'RUBY'

Incredibly lavish yet refined gladiolus, with rich, velvet-red flowers that adorn a tall,

arching flower spike. I weave it through low, tussock grasses so that its sword-like leaves and elegant, upright form can be fully appreciated. **H** 1m. **S** 1m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun, sheltered position. **SI** July to September. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

### 12 LILIUM MARTAGON

Turk's cap lilies look spectacular when naturalised en masse in rough grass. The vertical stems are covered in masses of dusky-mauve flowers, with scrolled-back petals and pronounced, orange anthers that dangle from their throats. Best in dappled shade. **H** 1.5m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade, sheltered position. **SI** June to July. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

### 13 NARCISSUS 'WHITE LADY'

Slender, white buds open wide into a simple flower with well-spaced petals and a shallow, pale-yellow trumpet. After flowering, the fine leaves and stems fade away discretely. Delicately scented. **H** 50cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

### 14 NECTAROSCORDUM SICULUM

Alluring allium with pinky-green pendulous flowers that dangle decoratively around a central upright stem. Looks beautiful among fresh-green foliage, bronze-toned grasses and pink flowers. Bulks up quickly in sunny, free-draining soil. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** May and June. **HR** RHS H5.

*Poppies are at their best when they are sown direct, and are emerging with surprise and spontaneity*

### 15 NERINE BOWDENII

A lily impersonator with lipstick-pink, frilly flowers that have a glittery sheen in the sun. Strong, slender stems and a long-lasting flower make them perfect for cutting and are so uplifting among the seedheads of autumn. Shallow planting suits them best. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun in a sheltered position. **SI** September to November. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

### 16 TULIPA HUMILIS

Short species tulip that is perfect peppering sun-baked gravel plantings with intense magenta accents. Its sparse narrow leaves lie low and nearly flat, emphasising the goblet flowers. **H** 15cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun, sheltered position. **SI** March to April. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

### 17 TULIPA SYLVESTRIS

Dainty, wild tulip, ideal for naturalising through grass. Rich-yellow flowers open wide like goblets in the sun. Each petal has an endearing curl at its tip. Drought tolerant once established. **H** 35cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun in a sheltered position. **SI** March to April. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

## Climbers

### 18 CLEMATIS 'BETTY CORNING'

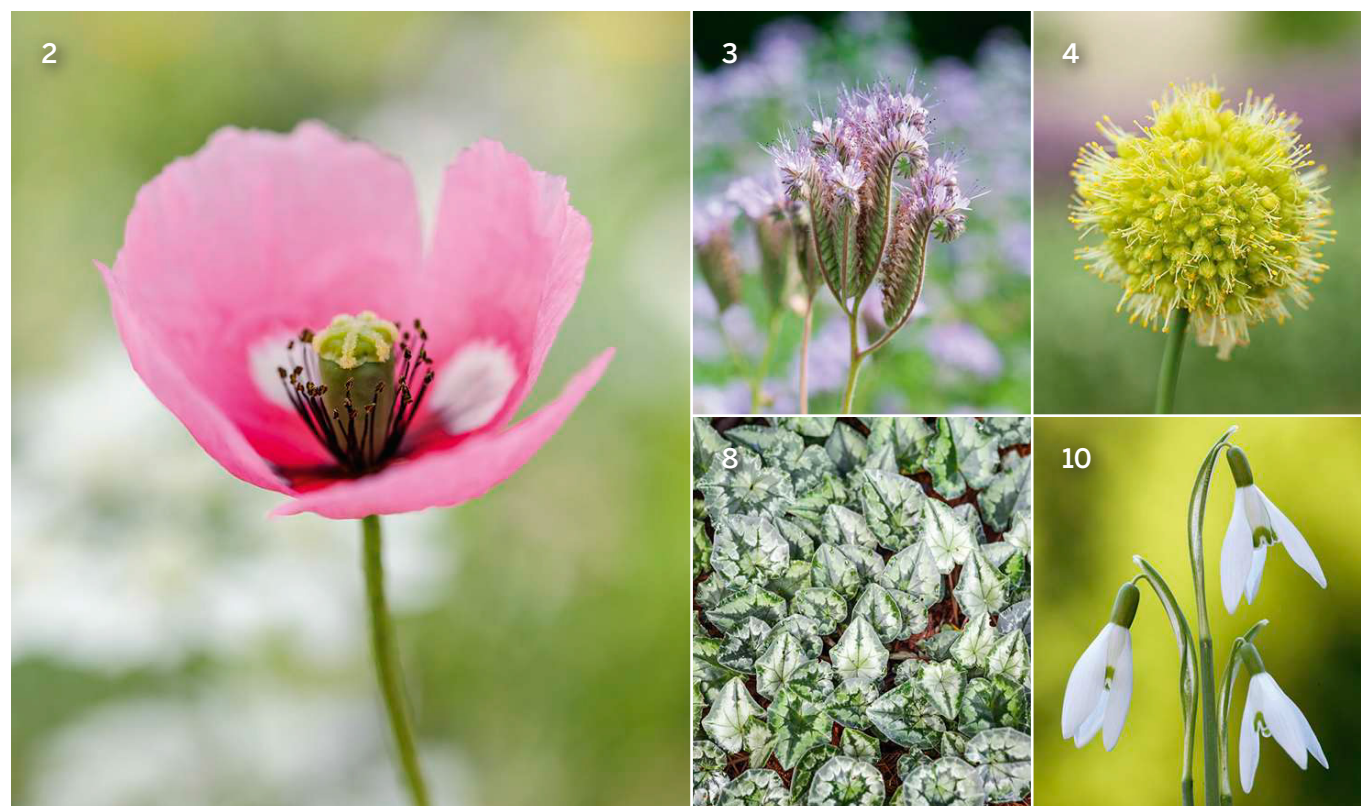
Sweetly scented and prolific, this clematis has the vigour typical of *viticella* species. Will scramble along climbing roses, shrubs and trees forming dense clouds of pretty, pale-lilac bells. Plant in a sunny position for maximum flowers. **AGM**. **H** 3m. **S** 1m. **C** Moisture-retentive, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. Cover base of plant with pebbles to keep cool. **SI** July to September. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

### 19 CLEMATIS X TRITERNATA 'RUBROMARGINATA'

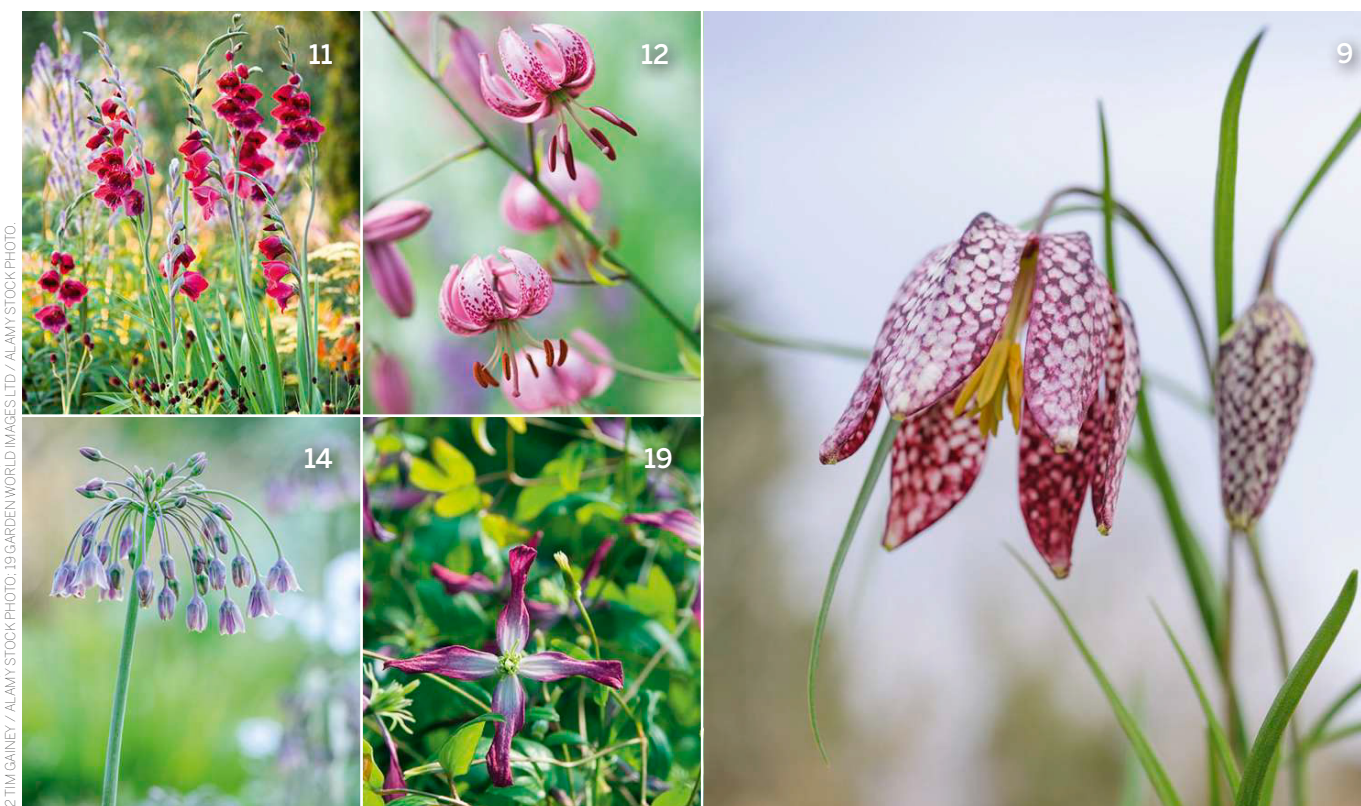
Hundreds of marzipan-scented flowers, which look as if they've been generously dipped in ruby-red ink, are held in clouds from midsummer to early autumn. Tolerant of dry soils and shady positions. Flowers freely. **H** 4m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** July to September. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

### 20 ROSA MORTIMER SACKLER (= 'AUSORTS')

Intensely scented with deep-pink buds and paler flowers held on red-flushed, near thornless branches that makes picking them a pleasure. A repeat flowerer that grows into a tall shrub or short climber with an attractive loose habit. **AGM**. **H** 4m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-10a. ▷



2 & 8: JASON INGRAM; 3: CLARE GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 4: ANNAICK GUITTENY; 10: IMAGEBROKER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



9 & 14: JASON INGRAM; 11: CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS; 12: TIM GAINEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 13: GARDEN WORLD IMAGES LTD. / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

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



## Ferns

### ▷ 21 *ASPLENIUM SCOLOPENDRIUM*

Hart's tongue is an indispensable fern that grows in moist and dry niches. The gentle ripple of its glossy, evergreen leaves stand out against the lacy patterns of companion ferns. **H** 30cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Humus-rich, moist but well-drained soil; can survive dry shade when established. **SI** Evergreen. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

### 22 *BLECHNUM SPICANT*

A hardy native fern that forms generous colonies in shady woods. Its fertile fronds with near-black stems and glossy divided leaves emerge compact out of evergreen rosettes. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist soil; in light shade, will tolerate dry shade. **SI** Evergreen. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

### 23 *ONOCLEA SENSIBILIS*

Known as the sensitive fern on account of its frost tenderness. Red-tinged new growth in spring unfurls into upright fronds. Creates a lush understorey in a damp spot, gradually creeping by rhizomes. Requires waterside and moist soil conditions. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **S** 2.5m. **C** Moist soil; part to full shade. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

### 24 *OSMUNDA REGALIS*

A deciduous fern that forms stately, long-lived clumps in damp, part shade. Develops raised crowns that look prehistoric as their spring fronds unfurl. I partner it

with diminutive subjects, such as wood anemones. **AGM**. **H** 1.2m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist soil, good for very wet sites; full sun to full shade. **SI** Green spring to summer; autumn colour. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

### 25 *POLYPODIUM VULGARE*

Resilient, evergreen fern, that will form stable communities in the most inhospitable of locations. It will thrive in periods of drought, only to reward you with a carpet of green, like a finely designed tapestry, in late summer. **H** 35cm. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade in sheltered position. Tolerant of moderately moist conditions. **SI** Evergreen. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-6b.

## Grasses and restios

### 26 *BRIZA MAXIMA*

A clump-forming annual grass, with low, leafy tufts and beautiful flowerheads composed of a mass of spikelets. These dainty, trembling 'loquets' are flushed purple before turning golden. Useful for creating a meadow-like feel. Self seeds. **H** 45cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May to August. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

### 27 *CALAMAGROSTIS EMODENSIS*

Initially, I was unimpressed with this grass as I hadn't provided it with the space it needed. Now it's in gravel so that its arching stems and pale-pink flowers can be appreciated. The fluffy seedheads are so persistent it almost seems a pity to cut them

down in early spring. **H** 1.2m. **S** 40cm. **C** Well-drained soil; sun or light shade if soil not too dry. **SI** June; flowerheads stay through winter.

### 28 *CHONDROPETALUM TECTORUM*

One of the hardiest restios with narrow, rush-like foliage and tightly bunched, dark-brown filaments. I use it as a dark, evergreen backdrop to make its colourful South African counterparts – dieramas and gladioli – glow. Good for coastal gardens. **H** 50cm. **S** 1m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil (will not tolerate waterlogging); full sun. **SI** Evergreen. **HR** RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.

### 29 *HORDEUM JUBATUM*

Loved for its long, purplish-pink, silvery awns that have a spectacular halo when backlit by sunshine. At its best when grown in an open, gravel scree, where its plumes appear to float above dianthus, thymes and other grounded sun lovers. Produces flowers over a long period. Best grown as an annual. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to July. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

### 30 *MELICA ALTISSIMA 'ALBA'*

White, bead-like flowers hang in airy sprays on low, gently arching, fresh foliage. Lovely planted en masse or among ferns so you can see the spikelets tremble in the breeze. Cut down after first flush of flowers to stimulate a second. **H** 50cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** May to June. **HR** RHS H6. ▷



21 FLOWERPHOTOS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 22, 29 & 30 JASON INGRAM; 28 MBPLANTS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



THE FLUFFY SEEDHEADS OF  
CALAMAGROSTIS EMODENSIS  
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MAAYKE DE RIDDER

27



▷ **31 MOLINIA CAERULEA SUBSP. CAERULEA 'HEIDBRAUT'**  
Indispensable mid-height moor grass. Upright flower stems gradually fan outwards as they gain height. Beautiful as a singular accent, en masse, or when woven through herbaceous plantings as a gauzy veil. **H** 1.2m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained, neutral to acid soils; full sun to part shade. **SI** June to November. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

**32 MOLINIA CAERULEA SUBSP. ARUNDINACEA 'TRANSPARENT'**  
Its airy, see-through inflorescences create a shimmering cloud of flower. Large mounds of green foliage support stems that reach upwards spreading outwards in an arc that captures the light. **H** 1.8m. **S** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil; sun. **SI** June to November. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

## Half-hardy perennials

**33 DAHLIA AUSTRALIS**  
Most sultry of all dahlias with star-shaped, lilac-pink blooms that droop downwards. Even the leaves are more refined and slender. Borderline hardy. **H** 1.5m. **S** 75cm. **C** Moist but not waterlogged soil; full sun. **SI** July to October. **HR** RHS H2, USDA 7a-10b.

**34 DAHLIA 'DOWNHAM ROYAL'**  
Perfectly formed, deep-burgundy, pom-pom flowers. Impeccable in a vase, where close inspection reveals the pale-pink hairline drawn on each petal. Dahlias are

greedy feeders, which means good soil is essential. **H** 1m. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; sheltered spot in full sun. **SI** July to November. **HR** RHS H2, USDA 7a-10b.

**35 DAHLIA 'EDINBURGH'**  
A bi-coloured beauty with a spirograph-like pattern of royal-purple petals that fade to white. Petals have a beautiful curl as they open out, adding to hypnotic effect. Easy to grow with prolific flowers for cutting. **H** 1.25m. **S** 40cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun (the more sun, the bigger the blooms), shelter from wind. **SI** July to October. **HR** RHS H2, USDA 7a-10b.

**36 DIGITALIS CANARIENSIS**  
Dramatic tall spires of apricot or tawny-bronze flowers that are all the more pronounced against the dark stems and evergreen pointed leaves. Becomes woody with age. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. Don't grow outside if frosts are likely. **SI** July to August. **HR** RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

**37 SALVIA CURVIFLORA**  
Evergreen tender sage, with hot-pink flowers that illuminate a late-summer garden. Each bloom is covered in fine hairs creating a fuzzy outline that glows in sunlight. Good for containers. **H** 90cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil; sun. **SI** July to October. **HR** RHS H3, USDA 4a-8b.

**38 SALVIA LEUCANTHA 'PURPLE VELVET'**  
Downy foliage, calyces and flowers look, and

feel, like velvet. A shrubby plant but its arching form and the wide spacing of its silver-green leaves mean it has grace. I grow it near pathways or in large containers to best appreciate its sprays of purple flowers. Easily grown from cuttings. **H** 1m. **S** 80cm. **C** Well-drained, rich soil; sheltered spot in sun. Winter protection from frost. **SI** Late summer to autumn. **HR** USDA 8a-10b.

## Perennials

**39 ALTHAEA CANNABINA**  
Almost too pretty with hollyhock-like, rose-pink flowers widely spaced on narrow, willowy stems. I've yet to trial it in my garden but it's so exceptionally tall, elegant and diaphanous, I had to include it. **H** 2m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained, moderately fertile soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** July to October. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

**40 BUPLEURUM FALCATUM**  
Long-flowering clouds of small, lime-yellow umbels on fine, branching stems. Narrow leaves add to the airy look. A hardy, biennial that loves sun and will self sow in well-drained soil. Adds sparkle and immediate volume to new planting schemes while slower-growing, longer-lived perennials become established. **H** 50cm. **S** 20cm. **C** Dry soil; sun. **SI** June to July. **HR** RHS H4.

**41 CALLIRHOE BUSHII**  
Lightly scrambles over more grounded neighbours, peppering them with the eye-popping magenta of its mallow-like

blooms. Native to dry prairies. **H** 45cm. **S** 90cm. **C** Well-drained soil; sun. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

**42 CENOLOPHIUM DENUDATUM**  
Soft, white umbels age beautifully above finely cut, filigree foliage. A useful transition plant to visually link formal and wilder garden areas. **AGM**. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** July to October. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

**43 CEPHALARIA DIPSACOIDES**  
Scabious-like, pale-yellow flowers on wiry stems, that make them appear to float in mid air. A wonderfully diaphanous plant that is easy to weave through light grasses and natural-looking perennials. **H** 2m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

**44 CIRSIUM CANUM**  
Rich-purple thimbles tower above mounds of serrated, silver-green leaves. Best in deep borders or naturalistic settings where its stately presence can be appreciated. May self-seed so chop after flowering. **H** 2m. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil, not too dry; full sun to part shade. **SI** August to September. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

**45 DIANTHUS CRUENTUS**  
Pinpricks of blood-red flowers offset by dark calyces make a statement when partnered with purple groundcovers, such as thyme, or the fuchsia pink of its longer-

*Everything about dieramas is exquisite – their papery bracts, tubular bell-like flowers, arching stems – even the seedheads*

stemmed relation *Dianthus carthusianorum*. Given an open, free-draining spot both are easy to grow from seed. **H** 60cm. **S** 15cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

**46 DIERAMA PULCHERRIMUM 'BLACKBIRD'**  
Everything about dieramas is exquisite – their papery bracts, tubular bell-like flowers, arching stems – even the seedheads. Water well in dry summers but ensure they don't get waterlogged in winter. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained, fertile, loamy soil; full sun. **SI** July to August. **HR** RHS H4.

**47 ECHINACEA PALLIDA**  
Drooping, pale-pink petals artfully arranged around a dark central cone make this immediately recognisable. Luminous autumn grasses, such as *Andropogon*, make the dark accents of its wonderful seedheads stand out. **H** 1m. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July to September (seedheads into early winter). **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-10b.

**48 ERYNGIUM PANDANIFOLIUM 'PHYSIC PURPLE'**  
Worth growing for the spectacular sculptural seedhead that will suddenly

appear and surprise you. The tight, maroon flowers look similar to those of a sanguisorba, but are held high above an architectural clump of spiny, narrow foliage. **H** 2.5m. **S** 90cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun in a free-draining spot to prevent winter rot. **SI** October to December. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

**49 EUPATORIUM MACULATUM 'RIESENSCHIRM'**  
The *Eupatorium* I reach for when I need to match a setting's grand scale. It looks incredible at every stage; dark-purple stems support heads of earthy-pink flowers that age into a towering winter skeleton. **AGM**. **H** 2.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** July to November. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

**50 EUPHORBIA CERATOCARPA**  
Large, frothy, lime-green bracts that keep flowering from spring through to winter. Narrow, pale-green leaves add to its elegance. Grows in wide clumps and requires a very dry position in full sun. **AGM**. **H** 1m. **S** 2.5m. **C** Well-drained, light soil; full sun. **SI** March to July. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

**51 EUPHORBIA OBLONGATA**  
Easily grown from seed, this lime-yellow spurge flowers from spring to winter in my garden. Forms compact, knee-high clumps, so ideal for smaller spaces. Native to poor soils so don't fertilise. It's recommended you grow from seed every year, but it successfully overwinters in ▷



31: JONATHAN NEED / GAP PHOTOS; 37: REX MAY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 38: RACHEL WARNE; 46: MARCUS HARTMANN / GAP PHOTOS



44: BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 45: 47 & 48: JASON INGRAM; 50: MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



▷ free-draining situations. **H** 50cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May to September. **HR** RHS H5.

#### 52 GLAUCIUM CORNICULATUM

I love the theatricality of the colour contrast between its pale, glaucous leaves and scarlet flowers. Good for a gravel garden where you can admire its crinkled, evergreen leaves. **H** 60cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Well-drained soil; sun. **SI** May to November. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.

#### 53 KIRENGESHOMA PALMATA

Elegant woodlander from Asia, with soft-yellow, broadly bell-shaped flowers. Grows into a small, graceful shrub with reddish purple stems and vertically spaced, pale-green palmate leaves that overlap. Needs deep, leafy soil. **H** 1m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade. **SI** August to September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

#### 54 LASER TRILOBUM

Newly introduced umbellifer; carefully defined like a line drawing. Stems terminate in elongated, spoke-like stalks with rounded clusters of white flowers at their tips. Makes a statement in dappled light. **H** 1.2m. **C** Moist soil; part shade. **SI** May to June.

#### 55 LIATRIS ASPERA

Nodules of tightly clustered, needle-thin flowers are widely spaced on a tall spire, creating a clear silhouette. The red-violet flowers continue for weeks in mid to late summer. Striking as an exotic vertical accent

### I grow *Ligusticum lucidum* in gravel where the, lacy mounds of evergreen leaves can be appreciated

among less defined forms. **H** 90cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil (drought tolerant); full sun. **SI** August to October. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

#### 56 LIGUSTICUM LUCIDUM

I grow this in gravel where the lacy mounds of evergreen leaves can be appreciated. The ammi-like, white umbels have a strong seedhead that stands well, casting defined shadows into early winter. Usually monocarpic. **H** 1m. **C** Well-drained soil; part or full sun. **SI** June to July. **HR** USDA 4a-8b.

#### 57 LINARIA PURPUREA

Slender toadflax spires that look ethereal when allowed to self sow and grow up through plantings. Creates an hypnotic effect en masse, especially when partnered with the acid green of parsnip flowers. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained, sandy soil; full sun. **SI** June to October. **HR** RHS H6.

#### 58 LYCHNIS CORONARIA 'BLOOD RED'

For me, this plant has it all: intense colour, summer-long blooms (especially if deadheaded), downy-grey leaves and an open, branching mid-height structure that makes it versatile and easy to place. **H** 70cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May to July.

#### 59 ORIGANUM LAEVIGATUM 'HERRENHAUSEN'

Dark calices and a rich, dusky purple pink flower give this marjoram the edge. Lovely cut and mixed into informal posies. The vertical branches stand well after flowering, creating a wiry, dark silhouette through the winter. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun, suitable for exposed site. **SI** June to September. **HR** RHS H6.

#### 60 PAEONIA MASCULA

Lipstick-pink flowers are slightly more open than cup shaped and have dense clusters of yellow stamens. Flowers prolifically in sun. Easy once established, but doesn't like to be disturbed. **AGM**. **H** 80cm. **S** 1m. **C** Deep, fertile, moist to well-drained, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade, sheltered position. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 7a-10b.

#### 61 PENSTEMON BARBATUS 'COCCINEUS'

Narrow, tubular flowers that are a very bright shade of coral. Stunning with *Echinacea* in prairie-style plantings where the tall, branching and floriferous stems create a tangerine haze. Needs very sharp drainage. **H** 1.5m. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

#### 62 PERSICARIA AMPLEXICAULIS 'ROSEA'

Fine, pale-pink spires bloom until the first frost. The rhythmical repetition of the spikes, their long season and their muted shade makes this invaluable for knitting together planting schemes. Adaptable and easy.

**H** 1.2m. **S** 1m. **C** Poorly drained or moist soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** July to September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

#### 63 PEUCEDANUM VERTICILLARE

You need to surround this magnificent giant with space to appreciate its towering status. Layers of boldly cut leaves are held on stout, pink-purple stems, so look good when thrown into visual relief by low, hazy grasses. The flower spikes are a mass of yellow-green umbels. Monocarpic. **H** 2.4m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** June to July. **HR** RHS H6.

#### 64 POLYGONUM SCOPARIUM

The broom-like foliage of this perennial is spangled with long-lasting, small, white flowers over a long period. Tolerates dry and windy conditions. A wiry plant that has a sophisticated beauty that improves with age. **H** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** July to October. Evergreen.

#### 65 SALVIA CANDELABRUM

A statuesque salvia that is worth hunting out for a spacious sunny spot. It takes its name from the long, thin stems that branch up and out like a candelabra and are adorned with blue-violet and white hooded blooms to create a hazy, blue fuzz at eye level. It forms a generous hummock of evergreen leaves that look like culinary sage. **AGM**. **H** 1.3m. **S** 60cm. **C** Sun, free-draining. **SI** July. **HR** RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

#### 66 SALVIA GLUTINOSA

A sultry salvia that's invaluable for shady schemes. The gentle, sage-like, yellow flowers light up dark corners but it will also grow in the sun, making it a useful 'linking' plant in varied light conditions. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained, or moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** July and August. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 7a-9a.

#### 67 SANGUISORBA OFFICINALIS 'RED THUNDER'

Taller and more ostentatious than its parent, our native meadow burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, but with the same tight bobble, wine-red flowers and finely cut foliage. Beautiful growing among meadow cranesbill or the veils of *Molinia* grasses. **H** 1.2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June to September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

#### 68 SCABIOSA COLUMBARIA SUBSP. OCHROLEUCA

Pale, butter-yellow pincushion flowers are held on thin, wiry stems. Flowers profusely through the summer, bringing a fresh note of colour among the muted purples I plant it with. Suitable for smaller spaces and large containers. Deadhead to promote more flowers. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained soil; sun. **SI** June to September. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

#### 69 SILENE FIMBRIATA

Easily mistaken for a bladder campion with its large inflated calyx, this silene has fringed,

white petals that give it a deceptively delicate look. In my garden I've planted it on a partially shaded dry bank where the detail of its pronounced profile can be seen among fine-textured grasses. **H** 75cm. **S** 23cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full or part shade. **SI** May and June. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

#### 70 SYMPHYTUM X UPLANDICUM 'MOORLAND HEATHER'

Rough textured leaves make the deep-purple, tubular flowers of this comfrey all the more charming. More refined and less vigorous than the common comfrey but still beloved by bees. Can repeat if cut back after flowering. **H** 2m. **C** Damp soil; part or full shade. **SI** April to June. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

#### 71 SYMPHYOTRICHUM TURBINELLUM

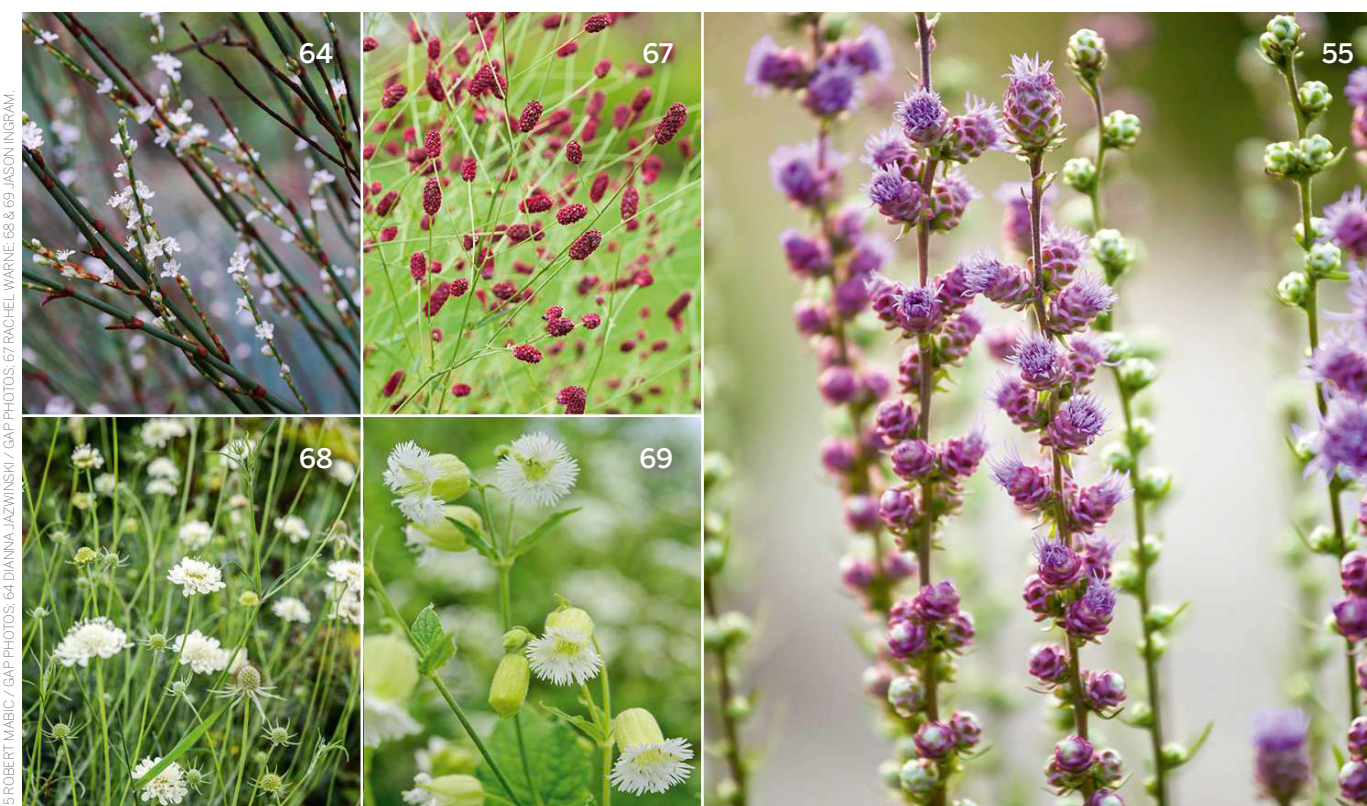
An arching poise and widely spaced, single lavender-blue flowers distinguish this aster from traditionally stocky Michaelmas daisy cultivars. Native to dry prairies, this is a drought-tolerant species, as beautiful in gravel plantings as it is among grasses from its American homeland. **H** 1.2m. **S** 1m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** September to October. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

#### 72 THALICTRUM 'ELIN'

A towering meadow rue with glaucous, pinnate leaves and dark-purple stems; exquisite details against its airborne froth of tiny lilac flowers. Beautiful at all stages of growth. **AGM**. **H** 1.8m. **S** 90cm. **C** Well-drained soil; part to full shade. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b. ▷



56 MAAYKE DE RIDDER; 58 JASON INGRAM; 59 THE GARDEN COLLECTION/FP/BLDAGENTUR BECK; 60 NALL MCDIARMID/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 63 REX MAY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



55 ROBERT MABIC/GAP PHOTOS; 64 DIANNA JAZWINSKI/GAP PHOTOS; 67 RACHEL WARNE; 68 & 69 JASON INGRAM.



▷ **73 TRICYRTIS FORMOSANA**  
**'DARK BEAUTY'**

It's hard to resist the smouldering beauty of toad lilies' orchid-like flowers. They're all the more desirable because they bloom so late – and in the shade. This form has smoky-pink flowers speckled with maroon detailing that can only be appreciated up close. **H** 70cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist but well-drained, humus-rich soil; part or full shade. **SI** August to October. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

**74 VERBENA OFFICINALIS VAR. GRANDIFLORA 'BAMPTON'**

Shimmering low clouds of tiny, mauve flowers are held on dark-purple stems for many weeks in summer. When grown from seed, it takes a couple of years for the plants to reach knee height and branch out into its mature form. Suited to a sunny, open spot where it can self-seed in gravel and you can appreciate looking through its delicate, see-through form. **H** 80cm. **S** 1m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Midsummer to autumn. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

## Shrubs and trees

**75 CORNUS MAS**

Clusters of bright-yellow, miniature blooms look dramatic against winter skies. Beautiful as a mature, spreading tree with mottle bark or as a young thicket fringing woodland. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full to part shade. **SI** February. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

**76 CORYLUS AVELLANA**

A small, native tree that quickly regenerates whether coppiced, laid into a hedge or thinned. Its branches covered in long, yellow catkins are a special way of bringing spring inside. In autumn its bright, lime-yellow leaves illuminates surroundings. **H** 8m. **S** 8m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil, grows well in chalky soil; sun or part shade. **SI** December to February. **HR** RHS H6.

**77 CYDONIA OBLONGA**

The strong perfume of the quince's fruit is intensified when cooked; it will fill the whole of your home with fragrance. 'Bereczki' or 'Leskovac' are top hardy choices. Prefers damp but not waterlogged ground. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil in a sheltered position; full sun. **SI** Flowers in spring, fruits in September. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 4a-6b.

**78 DAPHNE BHOLUA 'JACQUELINE POSTILL'**

Evergreen leaves frame clusters of deep-pink buds and pale-pink flowers in late winter, when its delicious perfume hangs in the air. Needs shelter and is not reliable in exposed conditions. Hates being moved. **AGM**. **H** 1.8m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moist but well-drained, fertile soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** February to March. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

**79 EUONYMUS EUROPAEUS 'RED CASCADE'**

Native spindle turns a fiery red in autumn but its real charm comes later, when the

leaves have fallen and the pink and orange winged fruit continue to decorate its branches. Grow in well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. **AGM**. **H** 4m. **S** 2.5m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** Autumn. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

**80 MORUS NIGRA**

A sprawling tree, which when mature, is perfect for children to climb. The delicious taste of black mulberries and my hands stained red from picking them is an enduringly happy memory. **H** 12m. **S** 8m. **C** Humus-rich, fertile soil; full sun, sheltered from cold, dry winds. **SI** Flowers May to June; seeds ripen August to September. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

**81 MUEHLENBECKIA ASTONII**

A New Zealand native with a delicate tangle of wiry red branches and tiny, heart-shaped leaves that create an attractive cloud; a frothy hedge supported by many slender legs. Suited to London and coastal gardens. **H** 3m. **S** 3m. **C** Fertile, moist but well-drained soil, sheltered from cold, dry winds; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

**82 NOTHOFAGUS ANTARCTICA**

Uncommon but hardy tree. Its small, glossy leaves, with a crinkled texture, change from green to glowing yellow tones in autumn. It's prone to lateral sprawling, which creates interesting, almost balletic contortions. **H** 12m. **S** 8m+. **C** Fertile, lime-free, moist but well-drained soil; full or part sun. **SI** Autumn. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 7a-10b. ▷



75 SHAPENCOLOUR / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 76 JASON INGRAM; 79 AMOMENTINTIME / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 80 HOWARD RICE / GMP PHOTOS; 82 RICHARD BLOOMGAP PHOTOS.



IT'S HARD TO RESIST THE  
SMOULDERING BEAUTY OF TOAD  
LILIES' ORCHID-LIKE FLOWERS  
– ALL THE MORE DESIRABLE  
BECAUSE THEY BLOOM SO LATE

JASON INGRAM

73



▷ 83 *QUERCUS ROBUR*

Oaks are rapid growers and it's surprising how even a ten-year-old tree can command presence. What makes them so beautiful – their crevices, deeply fissured bark, spreading branches, soft leaves, acorns, open canopy – also contribute to their high biodiversity rating; they support more life forms than any other native tree. **H** 20-30m. **S** 8m+. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** Deciduous (flowers April to May). **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

84 *ROSA X ODORATA* 'BENGAL CRIMSON'

An absolute favourite. Worth hunting down and waiting for the twiggy form to grow into a mature bush. The single flowers, are the most luxurious shade of pinky-red. Understated buds gently open into relaxed single flowers, each one with a slight twist. Grow in view of a window so you can see the blooms from June to December. **H** 2.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Fertile, moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June to August (repeat flowerer). **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5b-10b.

85 *ROSA* 'STANWELL PERPETUAL'

Timelessly romantic and deeply scented with ruffled flowers of pale pink, this rose was a favourite of the Victorians. It has an arching, non-suckering habit and repeat flowers. It has inherited the pinnate leaves, small thorns and resilience of its parent, *Rosa spinosissima*. **H** 1m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moist but well-drained, fertile, humus-rich soil, in sheltered position; full sun. **SI** June to November (repeat flowerer). **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

*Bird's foot trefoil gently self-seeds around my garden brightening grass and gravel with clusters of yellow, pea-like flowers*

## Wildflowers

86 *AGROSTEMMA GITHAGO*

Our native corncockle is making a comeback in wildflower seed mixes. Sow among low, light grasses so that you can appreciate the unfurling of its buds and the long, thin sepals arranged like a star around the flower. **H** 70cm. **S** 5m. **C** Well-drained, loam, sand; full sun. **SI** April to August. **HR** RHS H5.

87 *CONOPODIUM MAJUS*

A dainty herb with finely divided leaves and white umbellifer flowers that repeatedly bloom. In my garden it enjoys a sloping bank where the soil does not remain waterlogged. **H** 25cm. **C** Well-draining soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April to June. **HR** RHS H6.

88 *CRAMBE MARITIMA*

Sea kale's puckered, glaucous-blue leaves, once dominated shingle shorelines, making it ideal for gravelly areas. Its wild, windswept companions – red valerian and sea campion – provide inspiration of what to plant it with in our gardens. **H** 60cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained to dry soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** May to July. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

89 *DIANTHUS DELTOIDES* 'LUNEBURG HEATH MAIDEN PINK'

Sweet, rosy-pink flowers flutter above a compact cushion of winter green foliage. Enjoys sunny, dry, well-drained positions making it a treasure for green roofs and rock gardens. **H** 20cm. **S** 25cm. **C** Dry, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to September. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

90 *ECHIUM VULGARE*

Clumps of brilliant-blue spires bloom continuously through the summer creating an architectural statement among informal plantings. Its small, trumpet-shaped flowers are pollinated by long-tongued insects, such as bees and butterflies. It's a grassland biennial, with roots that extend deep into the ground so suited to drought-prone land. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

91 *GALIUM VERUM*

Once used as a sweet-smelling filling for mattresses. I love the frothiness, of its honey-scented, primrose-yellow flowers and the way it creates bright patches in meadows. Will not thrive in very acid soils or hot climates. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; sun or part shade. **SI** July to August. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

92 *GERANIUM PYRENAICUM* **F. ALBIFLORUM**

Wild geraniums have a delicate, sprawling habit that makes their small flowers appear to hang airily in unprepossessing spots. This

cranesbill, a close relation of the mauve-flowering hedgerow cranesbill, has white flowers that will add exquisite detail to a shady, overlooked nook. Will repeat flower in September if cut back after first flowering. **H** 30cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained, soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June to July. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

93 *LIGUSTICUM SCOTICUM*

Forms a neat clump of glossy, carefully sculpted, multi-lobed leaves. Strong, purple stems support fresh, white umbels. Can tolerate coastal exposure. **H** 60cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Moist soil; full sun to full shade. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b.

94 *LOTUS CORNICULATUS*

Bird's foot trefoil gently self-seeds around my garden brightening grass and gravel with clusters of yellow, pea-like flowers. When planted alongside *Prunella vulgaris*, its procumbent growth makes it a drought-tolerant alternative to lawn. An invaluable food and nectar plant for the declining common blue butterfly. **H** 20cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May to September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

95 *ONONIS SPINOSA*

En masse it creates an alluring pink haze; up close, the branches of this sub-shrub are covered with pretty, pink, butterfly-shaped flowers. Fast growing, and can grow in nutritionally poor soil. **H** 60cm. **C** Dry or moist soil; full sun. **SI** May to August. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

96 *PAPAVER CAMBRICUM*

The self-seeding Welsh poppy is always welcome in my garden. Its intense bursts of yellow and vermilion come and go through the summer months, appearing in unexpected places. It will grow in both sun and shade adding sparkle wherever it nestles. Sow successively to start the flowering cycle. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil, in a sheltered position; part shade. **SI** June to July. **HR** RHS H6.

97 *PULSATILLA VULGARIS*

A rare, native pasqueflower that makes a beautiful low detail in gravel. Bell-shaped, violet flowers bend upwards, revealing a yellow stamen-filled centre. Stems, buds and blooms are covered in long, silky hairs that catch sunlight. After flowering fluffy seedheads stand proud above filigree foliage, sometimes persisting for months. **AGM**. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** April to May. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

98 *RESEDA LUTEOLA*

Slender, pale-yellow spires that are best grown en masse to create hypnotic, swaying populations. A Mediterranean herb that is equally spectacular for cutting in generous bunches. Another invaluable food source in July and August for pollinators. Behaves as a biennial, self-sowing in an open patches of well-drained, gritty ground in the sun. Deadhead regularly to keep under control. **H** 1.35m. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist, rich soil; part sun. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

99 *RHINANTHUS MINOR*

Yellow rattle is one of our most important meadow wildflowers; it looks unassuming yet it is a magical ingredient aiding flowering diversity. It is an hemiparasite; drawing water and minerals from adjacent grass, reducing its vigour, creating more opportunity for wildflowers to get a foothold. **H** 35cm. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May to August. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

100 *SUCCISA PRATENSIS*

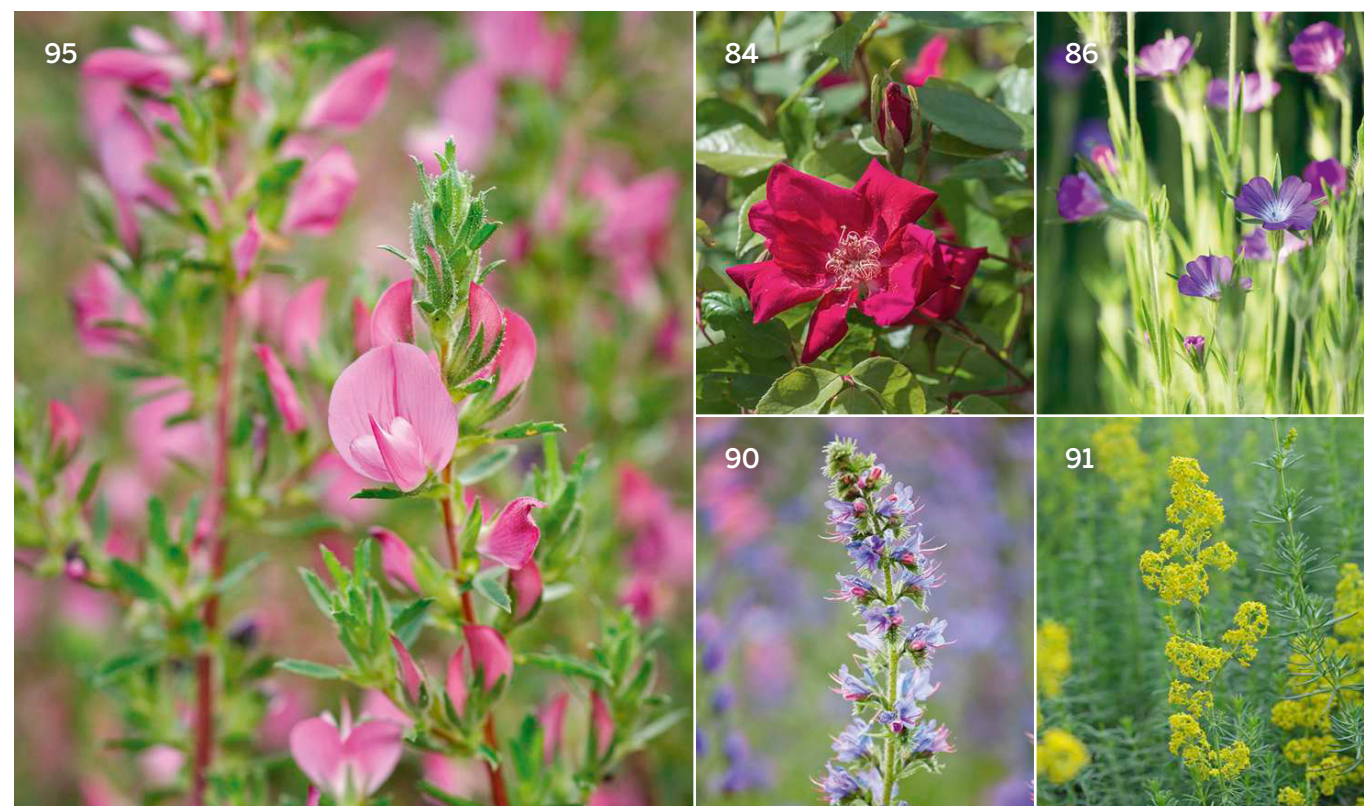
If happy will form dense colonies; its tight, spherical flowers held on leafless, wiry stems create a shimmering blue haze among grasses in areas of damp ground. Flowers late making it an important source of pollen and nectar at a time when these are in scarce supply. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** July to October. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b. □

## Reader offer

Readers can enjoy a 15 per cent discount on plants, bulbs and seeds and at Crocus ([crocus.co.uk](http://crocus.co.uk)), which offers many of the plants chosen by Sarah. For details see page 111.

## About the author

Sarah Price is one of the UK's most prominent garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She is returning to Chelsea this year, after a five-year absence with a garden for M&G. Find out more at [sarahpricelandscapes.com](http://sarahpricelandscapes.com)



94 NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS; 95 S&O / GAP PHOTOS; 97 JOANNA KOSSAK / GAP PHOTOS; 98 PHILIP SMITH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 100 JASON INGRAM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 91 STEFFEN HAUSER / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES; 96 GILLIAN PLUMMER / GAP PHOTOS; 90 JULIE PIGUJA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CAMBRIDGE BOTANIC GARDENS; 86 GILLIAN PLUMMER / GAP PHOTOS; 84 HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS



94 NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS; 95 S&O / GAP PHOTOS; 97 JOANNA KOSSAK / GAP PHOTOS; 98 PHILIP SMITH / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 100 JASON INGRAM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO