

Flora

FLOWERS & PLANTS FOR THE HOME AND GARDEN

*Princess Diana's
Favourite
Flowers*

*Celebrating
Jane Austen*

*Styling
Death in
Paradise*

*Herbal
Wedding*

*A century
of Colour*

14 STEP-BY-STEP
DESIGNS

*Dazzling
delphiniums*

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Standing tall

Celebrate summer's splendour with stately cottage-garden favourites arranged in a loose, country-style bouquet.

Image: Funnyhowflowersdothat.co.uk



Summer calls for a flowing, natural bouquet with white *Delphinium* as the key player supported by summer favourites *Ammi majus*, *Cosmos* and *Gladiolus*.

Flora

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THIS BUMPER SUMMER ISSUE of *Flora* is packed with step by steps and articles on all things floral.

Death in Paradise is a TV programme loved by all and when renowned UK set stylist Mo Holden told me she was off to Guadalupe, or should I say Sainte Marie, I had to know more – about the flowers of course. Her article is on pages 60–61.

Last September I created a carousel with Neill Strain for Belgravia in Bloom with four horses

from the Mary Poppin's film and a stray Jumbo elephant. It took weeks of planning and sleepless nights, but it was all worth while when I put my granddaughter Penny on one of the horses. Penny and some of the other installations are on pages 30–31.

In 2011 Paul Burrell and I got together to cover William and Kate's wedding for a television channel in the States. We stayed in touch and I am delighted that he has written a piece on Princess Diana's favourite flowers for *Flora*. Turn to pages 22–23.

We feature two very different weddings, visit Pat Hutchinson's garden in The Dales and are amazed by Chrissie Harten's For One Night Only story on page 59.

JUDITH BLACKLOCK
EDITOR

Judith

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A beautiful bowl of *Alchemilla robusta*, *Alstroemeria*, *Clematis*, *Ranunculus* (butterfly) and spray *Rosa* arranged in chicken wire, with a wrap of flexible stems gives an ethereal romantic look.
Design: Trudie Easton
Image: Thomas de Hoghton



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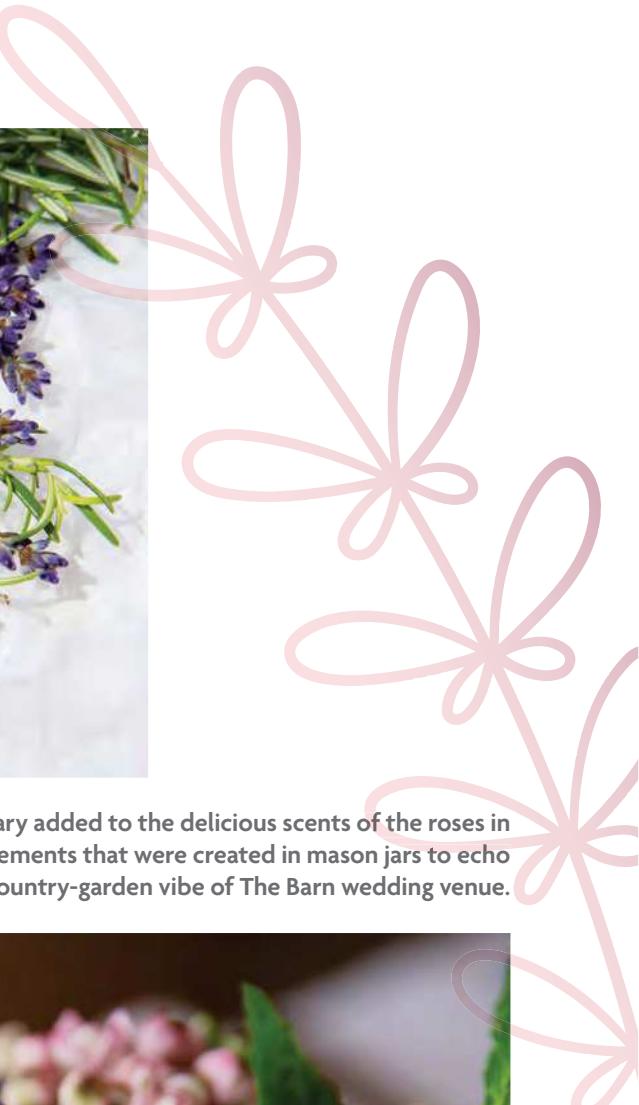


HERBAL WEDDING

Fragrant herbs peppered the floral designs for Laura and Chris' summer wedding in Tunbridge Wells.
Photographer: **Helen England Photography**

Chris is wearing a wonderfully scented buttonhole of Kent lavender and rosemary, while Laura carries her fragrant herb-filled bridal bouquet and wears a delicate and beautiful floral crown.

Rustic buttonholes of locally-sourced Kent lavender and rosemary, tied with twine.



Mint and rosemary added to the delicious scents of the roses in the table arrangements that were created in mason jars to echo the rustic country-garden vibe of The Barn wedding venue.

Laura and Chris' beautiful summer wedding was an exciting first for us at Colonnade Florists. The style was to be loose and natural, but the bride and groom wanted a unique twist for the theme and this was to be herbs.

Each table was named after a different herb. To complement this, we incorporated as many varieties into their wedding flowers as we could. We added dill, lavender, mint, rosemary and thyme to the beautiful flowers. The venue smelled delicious!

What was in the table centrepieces?

The tables were long trestle tables, which we dressed with mason jars to give the wholesome, rustic, country garden vibe of the wedding. The venue was 'The Barn' in Tunbridge Wells, which is the perfect combination of country pub and classic wedding venue, and we felt that these arrangements set it off beautifully.

We filled the mason jars with small-headed dainty flowers such as blush spray roses, *Eustoma* (*lisanthus*) and *Veronica*, and offset these with, you guessed it, herbs to give these little jars a rustic texture and a delicious scent.





Pretty scented roses, *Eustoma* and *Veronica* in Laura's bouquet were supplemented with fragrant rosemary and *Eucalyptus* leaves. Two wedding rings in the heart of a beautiful summer rose.



FIND OUT MORE

Colonnade Florist, Royal Tunbridge Wells, info@colonnadeflorist.co.uk

Pretty as a picture

An ideal design for using short stems from the florist or garden.

Design & Image: Judith Blacklock



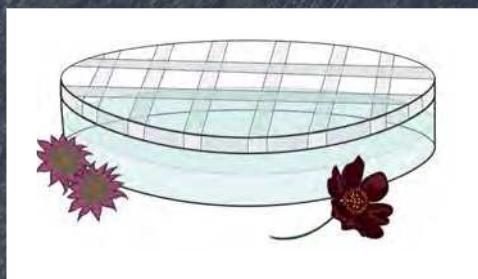
YOU WILL NEED

A mix of flowers. I have used:

- *Alchemilla mollis* (lady's mantle)
- Spray *Chrysanthemum*
- *Clematis*
- *Cosmos*
- *Hypericum*
- Spray roses
- Small pink roses such as *Rosa 'Heaven'*

AND

- Thin adhesive tape
- Shallow, straight-sided glass container – this one is 8cm high and 25cm wide



HOW TO

- 1** Make a criss-cross of tape across the opening of the container.
- 2** Fill two-thirds of the container with water.
- 3** Insert your round forms, such as the roses and *Cosmos*. These have the dominant form, so ensure there is an even balance across the design before you add further flowers.
- 4** Finish with a mix of flowers of choice.

* TIPS

Make sure there are no leaves on the stems below the tape grid.

Place on a low table for maximum effect.

You can use any flowers but choose those that do not branch too low down and include a mix of round and spray shapes.

Not everyone appreciates the art of flexing flowers, but it is an interesting concept that's currently on-trend.

Design: Tomasz Koson

Image: Afsheen Navid

Flexi-ability

YOU WILL NEED

- 2–3 stems *Ribes sanguineum* (flowering currant)
- 3 white roses that are relatively mature and open
- 3 stems *Ammi majus*
- *Cryptomeria* or any conifer
- 1 stem *Chamelaucium* (waxflower)
- 2–3 x *Fatshedera* leaves

AND

- Large pin holder – this one is 6cm in diameter
- Tall slim vase – this one is 18cm tall

HOW TO

1 Place the pin holder in the bottom of the vase.

2 Insert the *Ribes* stems on to the pin holder to create the basic outline.

3 Flex the roses by manipulating the outer petals so that they curve outwards and create a large form.

4 Place the roses at different heights, one near the top, one lower down to the right and the third lower again at the left.

5 Fill in the design using the *Ammi*, conifer and waxflower.

6 Angle the x *Fatshedera* leaves over the rim of the vase.

Easy Design
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£12



* TIPS

Try to create a design that is about one-and-a-half times the height of the vase.

Large *Hedera helix* (ivy) leaves would work well. Choose any cultivar, particularly ones with a cream variegation.

In April and May gather wild *Daucus carota* (Queen Anne's lace) from roadside verges – a wonderful substitute for the *Ammi*.

Designer **Martina Coleman** and the Winchester Cathedral Flower Arrangers created a special themed exhibit around the grave of the great novelist.



CELEBRATING *Jane Austen*

Winchester Cathedral is a magnificent building and place of worship that holds the grave of the much-loved author Jane Austen. The area around her grave has become an integral part of a visit there and being given the opportunity to create a floral design in this part of the cathedral for the Winchester Flower Festival last September was very special.

For me the connection to Jane Austen has always been her books, so they needed to be the focus of my design concept. By looking at how books were incorporated into shop displays and wedding themes, I was inspired to include a book wall and shelf along the ledge beneath the memorial together with seating for reading and small tables displaying the books she had written, and so the design began to take shape.

The Winchester Cathedral Flower Arrangers understand the importance of Jane Austen and are often involved in

creating flowers in this area to commemorate her birthday or anniversary. Having given the main concept of the design to their team leader Helen McGarry, various mechanics and materials were delivered to them so the team could begin working on the design.

Four small square plywood tables, along with some old paperback Jane Austen novels were given so that pages could be glued to each table to form their surface. These were used to display groups of Jane's novels, along with simple vases of flowers, to highlight the books she had written and the way flowers would have been placed in the home at that time.

Two tall metal stands (0.6m wide/1.8m high) created the free-standing book wall with team member Bob Crockett sorting out how to cover these using plywood sheets. He came up with the idea of making the back, which would be visible, look like a book cover once in place.



Image: Joe Low

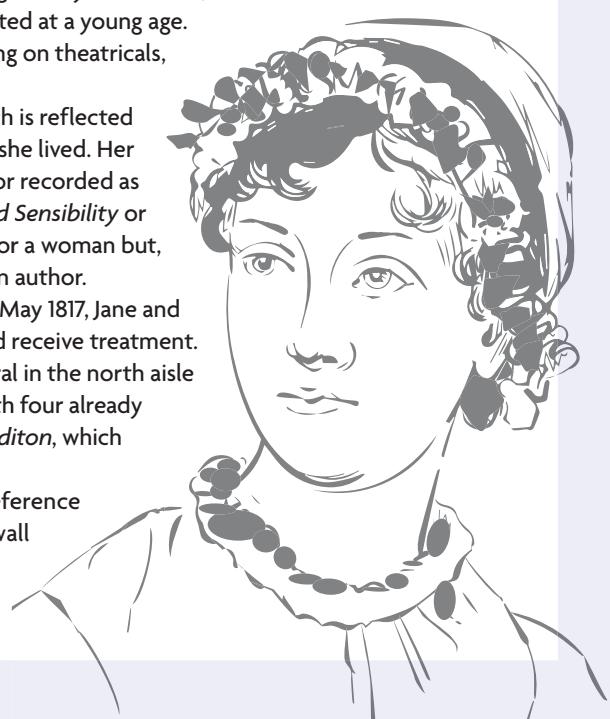
Jane Austen's life

Jane Austen was born in 1775 in Steventon, Hampshire, later spending some years in Bath, then Southampton and finally Chawton, near Alton. Her writing started at a young age. Inspired and encouraged by a family who enjoyed reading and putting on theatricals, she wrote short stories and plays to amuse them.

Jane was a great observer of people and social circumstances, which is reflected throughout her writing and gives a real sense of the period in which she lived. Her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility* was published in 1811 with the author recorded as 'By a Lady' and subsequent books stated 'by the author of *Sense and Sensibility* or *Pride and Prejudice*'. Writing was not seen as a suitable occupation for a woman but, despite trying to remain anonymous, she slowly became known as an author.

However, by early 1816 her health had begun to deteriorate and by May 1817, Jane and her sister moved into lodgings in College St, Winchester so she could receive treatment. On 18 July 1817, Jane died and was later buried in Winchester Cathedral in the north aisle of the Nave. By the time of her death, she had written six novels, with four already published, two awaiting publication and work having started on *Sanditon*, which remained incomplete.

Her grave is marked by a simple memorial stone that makes no reference to her writing. In 1872 a brass memorial plaque was placed on the wall close to her grave to redress this fact and this area is a much-visited part of the Cathedral.



A large supply of old hardback books were handed over with some used to cover one side, either as single pages or entire books. Consideration had to be given to the actual weight involved in doing this, so two paving stones were used to add weight and balance across each base. The back of each piece was painted deep red to resemble a book cover and then slid down onto the two stands. Once in place, the two pieces were joined together with a strip of wood doweling glued to the back to look like binding.

On the front, a vertical row of books was nailed across the join. A lined box containing Sideau® was secured to the top right corner, enabling a small cascade of flowers to flow front and back. Test tubes/orchid tubes covered in rolled pages were glued to the front of the wall so that single or small groups of flowers could be added. Plaques bearing a portrait of Jane with quotes from her books completed the wall surface and four long troughs containing chicken wire were filled with displays of flowers and foliage around the base, hiding the paving stones and adding visual weight.

The ledge beneath the memorial plaque held a line of large books supported by a heavy pile of bookends. It was finished on each side with a lush asymmetrical arrangement flowing towards the floor created in a bowl using chicken wire. Page-covered tubes were glued to the back edges of the book line with some containing drilled holes to allow them to hold further tubes. Simple groups or single flowers were placed in these tubes with glass vases and bottles filled with flowers nestling behind to add depth.

Finally a two-seater sofa that was being discarded was stripped back and covered in plain cotton to become the base for further flowers. Again, bowls or troughs were used with chicken wire to hold the designs placed around the chair on the floor, with low-edged seed trays holding Sideau® encased in chicken wire and placed directly onto the sofa seat or drilled onto the wooden back. These were then worked on to create tumbling designs that filled this seat with flowers and colour.

Overall, I wanted the flowers to reflect the garden that Jane had loved in the cottage at Chawton, so I chose roses, *Antirrhinum*, *Delphinium* and *Consolida* with the addition of carnation blooms, *Chrysanthemum* and *lisianthus* plus touches of *Alchemilla* and *Daucus* (Queen Anne's lace) and splashes of bold darker dahlias. *Danae racemosa* (Alexandrian laurel) and *Eucalyptus parvifolia* and *E. nicholii* were interspersed with garden foliage from the team, including fragrant *Laurus* (bay), *Viburnum*, *Pittosporum* and trails of *Hedera* (ivy) to complete each design.

With a delicate colour palette of pale blue, pink, cream and soft yellow reflecting the Regency period in which Jane lived, the design was complete. The original concept was now a reality and the Winchester Cathedral team had done a fabulous job, working entirely without traditional floral foam.

I trust that our exhibit 'Resonance' was enjoyed by those who attended the festival or visited the cathedral and reflected the influence Jane Austen had on literature and women, both then and now.



Image: Beverley Moore

The art of using colour

Like musical notes, the pigment hues make up the colour wheel, from which the flower artist can select a varying palette of tints and tones. Carolyn Brown explains more. Designs & Images: **Carolyn Brown**



This creative colour wheel uses the three primary colours – blue, red and yellow – and the three secondary colours – purple, orange and green.

FLOWERS ARE ONE of nature's greatest expressions of colour – saturated hues or soft, delicate tints, tones and shades. Flowers stimulate all our senses. We **see** tints, tones and shades of the prism – and the alluring mathematical curve of a petal or a stamen. We **smell** the fragrance, sweet or spicy. We **touch** velvety petals and **feel** prickly leaves. We **taste** the petals and stems in teas and honey. We **hear** the breeze as it moves through fields of flowers. Their language goes far deeper than we realise. Flowers are also sensual, erotic and evocative. They are a life force.

Line, texture, shape and colour are all elements of design. The line of a drooping poppy bud, or a lily with petals radiating from the centre, forever fascinate flower-loving eyes. Texture is expressed as the velvet surface of a rose

petal, or the spines on a prickly cactus. Both round and oblong petal and leaf shapes, repeated in uncountable numbers, enchant the eye and activate the imagination of flower lovers. But what is colour? Science says colour is the light an object reflects, judged by hue, saturation and value. The rods and cones of the human retina receive these reflected rays of light, but, strangely, colours do not look the same to all eyes. Some people have trouble seeing colour – or certain colours – for various reasons. The use of colour theory is an aid to interpretive art.

The three primary pigment colours are red, yellow and blue, from which all other colours are derived. The three secondary colours are orange, purple and green, each derived from the mixing of two primary colours.



An arrangement of the adjacent colours blue and purple. Blues and purples recede into the background.

An arrangement using the primary colour yellow and secondary colour green.



This arrangement uses the primary colour red with its complementary colour green. All complementary colours are located opposite each other on the colour wheel.



An adjacent (analogous) colour scheme is when two colours next to each other on the colour wheel are used together.

Like musical notes, the pigment hues – red, red-orange, orange, yellow-orange, yellow, yellow-green, green, blue-green, blue, blue-purple, purple and red-purple – make up the colour wheel, from which the flower artist may select a palette of varying hues, tints, tones and shades.

Hue identifies the pure colour. A **tint** is a colour mixed with white, a **shade** is a colour mixed with black. The more saturated a colour, the purer the pigment. Warm colours (red, orange and yellow) 'advance' in visual space, and cool colours (green, blue and purple) 'recede'. The **tone** of a colour (the amount of greyness) and its **value** (lightness or darkness) constitute a delicate variety of notes to make colour chords we see.

The context of a colour – colours that surround it – may change the perception of the colour – a phenomenon called **simultaneous contrast**. The surrounding colour subtracts or adds to the **value** (lightness or darkness) or **tone** (greyness) of a colour hue, making the original colour appear darker, lighter, brighter or duller. For example, black backgrounds enhance the glow and saturation of the samples here.

Today, we celebrate **colour!**

Pale pinks, white and greys dominate this composition.



Three colours equidistant on the colour wheel, such as red, yellow and blue, make a triadic colour scheme. This image uses saturated colour with few tints, tones or shades to project happiness and joy.



An arrangement with the primary colour yellow predominating. Yellow is an advancing colour, which seems to jump off the page.



FIND OUT MORE For more examples of Carolyn Brown's work visit: carolynbrownphotographer.com

BEAUTIFUL LEONARDSLEE LAKES
& Garden with many hills provided a magnificent setting for Flower Power 2021. I was thrilled to be asked to design this floral extravaganza, organised by the Sussex Area of NAFAS, as an outdoor event last September and set about forming a design team.

I wanted some new, bold ideas and knew Claire Bryant and Stephanie Maynard were both modern and forward in their thinking. With all the designs being set outside we experienced some unique challenges – and that was before we discovered we had a herd of hungry deer for company! Working within Covid-19 guidance gave us the biggest challenge and we never knew how many flower arrangers would be able or willing to continue with the festival. But with our can-do hats on, the three of us set about designing the festival.

Both people and flowers would be transported by a

This floral extravaganza, set outdoors in the charming location of Leonardslee garden in Sussex for 2021, attracted dynamic and impactful large-scale designs.

Designer **Stephen McDonnell** gives us a behind-the-scenes look into their creation.

Images: **Pauline Pearce**

team of golf buggies. We decided on a reduced number of designs, which could be gathered in a closer group that was easier to access, but scaling them up to provide more impact.

The designs themselves were a combination of ideas from the garden and creations to amuse, challenge and inspire. We were offered 5,000 crocheted flowers, which was a great way to include

people who were isolated at home, and we naturally wanted to include these. Many people were also involved in creating hundreds of spheres included in one design called *Fetch*. Finding a giant bronze lion in the garden gave me the starting point for a design in tribute to NHS frontline workers. Representing bravery, the lion became the centrepiece for my *Brave and Beyond* design.

Designs for the lakes were our biggest challenge, but with the help of the gardening team we launched our creations with many crossed fingers!

FLOWER POWER

Image: Richard Bloom and Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens



INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN

— Stephen McDonnell

While we were planning Flower Power, my partner, who had lost his airline job, joined Brighton Hospital as a nurse's aid. I soon became aware of the overwhelming situation that all frontline workers were dealing with, so it was a given for me that we should create a design that acknowledged their efforts.

The life-size statue of a damaged lion, hidden in a

BRAVE AND BEYOND

Stephen McDonnell

Between us and Covid-19 stood an army of frontline workers. We acknowledge and remember their sacrifice and bravery.

hedge, was the perfect starting point. Once this forgotten object was repaired and given a new coat of paint, he looked very majestic. I needed the design to show bravery, solidity and to provide a moment for reflection. With the lion as the centrepiece, I teamed king *Protea* and *Cymbidium* orchids with bold *Monstera*, *Philodendron* and palm leaves.

The whole design was then constructed on gold panels. Cost wasn't an issue because many parties wished to fund it. It was a surprise to everyone because it was the last design to be constructed. The first member of the public to see it remarked: "it looks like it has been created with love" — we had our tribute!



INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN

— The Steyning Flower Club Team

What a place... What a challenge... When we accepted, our hearts ruled our heads, no doubt helped by the many Pimms-fuelled planning meetings!

Ten bikes including a tricycle; small, medium and large bikes; and bits of bike; were collected from Council dumps and varied sources. All were then cleaned and the chains, nuts, bolts and brake leads removed. Succinct instructions had been received to emphasise speed in a designated area – be vibrant, be individual and flower covered... then it's up to you.

Hours were spent using wacky-coloured aerosols, collecting unusual bits and pieces and making the mechanics needed to keep each bike stable, upright and safe. It all took place over many months.

Each person took a bike away to work on, and it was not until we met at the staging spot that we saw all of each other's work in progress *in situ*.

The logistics of collecting, delivery and staging over hot days; the water needed for quite intricate, involved

**DOWNSHILL
DASH**
*The Steyning Flower
Club Team*
With our new love of
bicycles, we thought we
would join in the fun!



designs; working on a slope; knowing hungry rabbits were lurking everywhere (I even met a rogue wandering wallaby); compounded our fears that all would not survive until the end of the show... but somehow it did. Pat was also 'catering executive' – a crucial

cog in the chain with 30°C temperatures.

So finally 10 individual concepts from Steyning and District Flower Club members gelled to achieve our *Downhill Dash* display. Yes, there were many Uphill Struggles, but we gloss over those now! It was a great team effort and enjoyed by all.



INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN

—Dr Christina Curtis

This large-scale design with an unusual triffid-like outline was created on the sloping lawn behind the restaurant. The structure was composed of stripped white willow purchased dried as withies from Somerset Willow Growers. The withies were soaked in

the bath and bound in groups before manipulating. Eight to ten stems were made into tentacle forms and 10–16 for the fan forms.

A length of 2mm galvanised garden wire was bound into 30–50cm of the free ends with silver decorative reel wire and the tip was finished with a cream pearl. Also, simple flower forms made from willow bound onto wire petal-shaped outlines were used in

the composition.

A ‘swosh’ of spray paint in silver, cerise and purple was applied to harmonise with the chosen colour palette of bloom carnations massed together in spheres of varying sizes. The forms and flowers in florist wrap holding water were assembled onto lengths of copper pipe and on two large metal tree armatures to create a design with a true fantasy ambience.



INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN

—Ann Kennedy

The three ladies depicted at Leonardslee were inspired by the term ‘tree hugging’ and its links to the Chipko movement, also called Chipko andolan. This non-violent social and ecological movement by rural villagers, particularly women, in India in the 1970s, aimed to

protect trees and forests from government-backed logging. The movement originated in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand (then part of Uttar Pradesh) in 1973 and quickly spread throughout the Indian Himalayas. The Hindi word chipko means to ‘hug’ or ‘cling to’ and reflects the demonstrators’ primary tactic of embracing trees to impede loggers.

The mechanics for these 2.5m-high

figures were challenging and we learnt what worked as we went along! The base was a welded A-frame pegged into the ground for stability. It was a very contemporary take on figures, only featuring arms and faces that were screwed to the frames.

The bowls on the heads were made from heavy-duty wires, mesh and many layers of papier mâché, painted with a waterproof tinted glue.

INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN

—Sue Flight

When I received the title Flower Power during lockdown I had time to think. My husband Graham suggested basing it on lyrics from a Lynsey De Paul song: "A philosopher who with his friend create a ray gun to burst the clouds". I googled the song and video and it also made me think of the Kate Bush song *Cloudbusting*, which provided the name.

When I visited in early March to see the site location and the trees where the designs were going to hang, it was quite high up and a big space. One of my first thoughts was: what happens if it's windy?

Three hoops found lurking in my flower room formed the base of the designs. Hanging at 5m high, strung from chains from my local home store and based on chicken wire from my shed, the clouds began to emerge. Creating the shapes was a challenge to do and I kept wondering why I'd said yes!

I sat and watched the clouds on

CLOUDBUSTING

Sue Flight

Inspired by Lynsey De Paul and Kate Bush songs, these clouds required a small feat of engineering to install but were well worth the effort.



different days – white fluffy ones; long grey, thin ones; and very large black ones. Recycled bubble wrap and white wrap were used to form the fluffy one with a little white spray. The grey cloud was just constructed with chicken wire then covered with hawthorn and lichens.

Lots of chicken wire and bubble wrap covered with a black liner formed the black cloud, which was probably a little over-sized but it needed to make an

impact. A small amount of foam was hidden in the black and fluffy clouds to anchor the plant material and to hang down.

The idea was when you looked up you would see the orchids and carnations tucked up in the clouds, with little white and lilac flowers in tubes to create a softer look for the grey cloud. They were high up and probably okay if you had good eyesight!



HUG A TREE

Ann Kennedy

*Image: Pauline Pearce
In an act of resistance in the Himalayan area of the Uttar Pradesh region (1974), women surrounded local trees to save them.*

Princess Diana and flowers



In a special interview with *Flora* magazine, **Paul Burrell**, former butler to Princess Diana reveals some of the favourite floral associations with the Princess.

I JOINED THE Royal Household at Buckingham Palace in December 1976 as a household footman at the age of 18. The only previous experience I had was working as an assistant manager at a hotel in Torquay that summer!

After several years I started to learn floristry in the basement at Buckingham Palace and some of my favourite memories were being introduced to the basics – the shapes, colours and how to arrange flowers for use in the different rooms at the Palace.

Her Majesty loves all kind of flowers and her favourites include 'Queen of Night' tulips, which always appear in the King's border in the Buckingham Palace garden. She also adores lily-of-the-valley, *Narcissus* and garden roses, which she dead-headed regularly when she was out walking the corgis.

In 1987 I moved to Highgrove with Charles and Diana to give my family a better lifestyle. My children were able to grow up in the countryside and shared a happy childhood with William and Harry.

Together with the housekeeper at Highgrove we created gigantic arrangements in the drawing room. For the Prince it was always a large display of longi lilies on his desk in the library – he loved the scent of longi. Scented flowers were

also key for Diana and her favourites were 'Stargazer' lilies, stocks, sweet peas, roses and hyacinths.

At the couple's London residence at Kensington Palace, I prepared the flowers with my friend, the florist Stephen Seedhouse. We bought from the traders at Nine Elms flower market at 4am on a Monday and generally displayed the flowers in chicken wire with water so that they lasted longer and had support.

At Kensington Palace Diana always had a large vase of flowers in her dressing room, although not in her bedroom. Her favourite were multi-coloured stocks with that magnificent scent, or *Freesia*. We often included perfumed 'Stargazer' lilies, such as on the piano in a Lalique vase and on her desk.

She also loved forget-me-nots and lily-of-the-valley, which is also one of Her Majesty's choice blooms, so Diana always sent a bunch to Windsor Castle for Her Majesty's birthday on 21 April.

Scented white flowers were a feature of her stunning waterfall wedding bouquet. *Gardenia* and *Freesia* were included for their fragrance; white *Odontoglossum* orchids with a touch of yellow in the centre complemented the *Rosa 'Earl Mountbatten'*, the latter linking to the family name into which she was marrying; and cascades of *Stephanotis* and trailing *Tradescantia*, myrtle and ivy provided the waterfall effect. On her wedding day, Princess



Diana had two bouquets, one for St Paul's and another for the photos back at Buckingham Palace.

Diana was not a gardener, but she loved cut flowers – two very different things in her book! She requested hand-tied bouquets when she was presented with flowers so that they could be kept and placed in water. Diana was never interested in arranging flowers but she would pop a hand-tied bouquet in a vase of water and place it on her desk.

She did prefer to see pastels – lilac, pale blue and especially white flowers – in the

gardens rather than reds or purples. She wasn't keen on spray carnations or spray chrysanthemums.

She often presented people with gifts of her floral favourites. At the famous meeting with Oprah Winfrey at Kensington Palace, Diana gave her a spectacular floral bouquet of highly-perfumed sweet peas. However, interestingly, her love of flowers did not reflect in her clothing. Diana never wore the Laura Ashley floral prints that were in vogue in the 1980s – she preferred to wear solid colours.

The night before Diana's funeral, I asked Her Majesty if the Princess could spend her last night in her home in apartments 8 and 9 Kensington Palace. When Her Majesty agreed, I thought it appropriate that some of the floral tributes left at the gates at Kensington Palace should be with the Princess on her last night there, so I asked a policeman to bring them in for me and I filled the apartments with her favourite 'Stargazer' lilies.

The plaque on her memorial contains roses and forget-me-nots and is surrounded by roses, which not only represents two of Diana's favourite flowers, but also reflects on how she is remembered as the epitome of an English rose!

The new Sunken Garden at Kensington Palace, which opened in July 2021, is filled with her favourite blooms. More than 200 roses, 100 forget-me-nots, 500 lavender plants, 100 *Dahlia*, 50 sweet peas and 300 tulips were planted around her memorial statue, creating a lovely display of pastel colours and scent that I'm sure she would have loved.

Floral mobile

Create a simple mobile with an eye-catching floral display.

Design: Claire Hall Image: Thomas de Hoghton



YOU WILL NEED

- 5–7 stems spray roses
- 5 Alstroemeria
- 2 stems Asparagus fern

AND

- 2 willow hoops 35cm in diameter
- Reel of bindwire (paper-covered wire)
- Glass fishbowl – this one is 10cm tall and 7cm wide

HOW TO

- 1 Interlink the two hoops by slotting one through the centre of the other and tying firmly together with bindwire.
- 2 Next, wrap the bindwire tightly around the bowl, pulling the wire taught as you go. Repeat numerous times to give strength.
- 3 Create a loop with the bindwire so you can hang the bowl in the centre, tying off where the two hoops meet. Twist and leave the ends long to suspend the design.
- 4 Add water and place flowers and foliage to trail over the rim of the bowl.

* TIPS

Suspending flowers is never easy, but a nail or hook in the ceiling would be perfect to provide a permanent display where only a few flowers are needed.

If this design is hanging where it is difficult to access for watering, consider using dried or faux flowers.

Incorporating a vibrant mix of Christian, Muslim and Hindu traditions, this dream wedding reflected the couple's Austrian-Arabian and Indian roots. Floral designer Timo Bolte created a range of floral installations to match the two different ceremonies.

Floral fusion

NADINE AND SUNIT'S Austro-Iraqi and Indian roots meant their two-day wedding at Laxenburg Castle close to Vienna was a vibrant fusion of Christian, Muslim and Hindu traditions. Fresh white florals mixed with greenery graced tablescapes for the first day's European ceremony, then the venue was transformed with vibrant oranges and pinks for the Hindu-Muslim celebrations.

Flora asked Timo about his stunning floral creations.

The bride was Austro-Iraqi and the groom from India, so there were two distinct styles of dress and floral decoration for the dual ceremonies. How much time did you have between the two events?

The wedding was held over two days. The first day was the white European princess wedding day and we had one and a half days for the set-up. After the fireworks at midnight we had about 10 hours to change the entire theme into colourful Indian-inspired decorations.

What are the main differences when styling an Eastern wedding?

One of the first things that might surprise Western guests is the baraat, or groom's procession, for which he arrives on an ornately decorated white horse. Guests dance around him to the beat of a dhol, a traditional Indian drum. The bride and her family then greet the groom and the couple exchange floral garlands to wear around their necks. This symbolises their acceptance of each other.

For the ceremony, the priest, groom, bride and bride's parents sit beneath a mandap, a canopy similar to a Jewish chuppah. The ceremony starts with the kanya daan in which the bride's parents give her away. The couple join hands and circle around a small, enclosed fire (the agni) in a ritual called the mangal phera.

The couple then take the saptapadi, or seven steps as they vow to support each other and live happily together. Finally, the groom applies a red powder to the centre of the bride's forehead and ties a black beaded necklace around her neck to symbolise she's now a married woman. Everything about this ceremony was vibrant and colourful.

How did you manage the preparation?

Everything was created at the venue because it was one of the hottest summer days of the year and we wanted to avoid unnecessary transportation of the flowers. I like to work hand-in-hand with the event production and technical teams. This means that as soon as they set up the structures, such as a flower wall or mandap, we can jump directly on it and start working. It's all to do with preparation, communication and organisation. Planning was key to the success of the event.

Did the bride have any specific requirements regarding the flowers?

No, she totally trusted us. We were only told the number of centrepieces and where the ceremonies would take place. Everything else, such as the big table installation with delphiniums or the photo wall with their logo, were our suggestions. The bride's only wish was white for the first day.

The table centrepieces were used for both occasions yet the room looks totally different. How did you achieve this?

All the first-day florals were re-used on the second day, but we changed their position and function. For example, the flower stands in the main room became the decor for the buffet station the next day. Big changes were made by switching the fabrics. As part of our planning we put the colourful carpets for day two beneath the white ones for day one. By swapping the lighting from a warm amber to a hot pink, and changing the table linen and chairs, we altered the mood of the room entirely.

The ceremony is the most important and ritualistic part of an Asian wedding so we spent a large part of the budget focusing on transforming the look and mood. Changing the flowers and fabrics and how they were draped achieved a totally new look.





Floral connections

Event design should look good from every angle, even on the way to the restrooms, so we used flowers to connect different areas. It is the detail that makes a wedding unique.

Ceremony

In the centre of the mandap, a fire is kindled. A Hindu marriage is a sacrament not a contract. To signify the

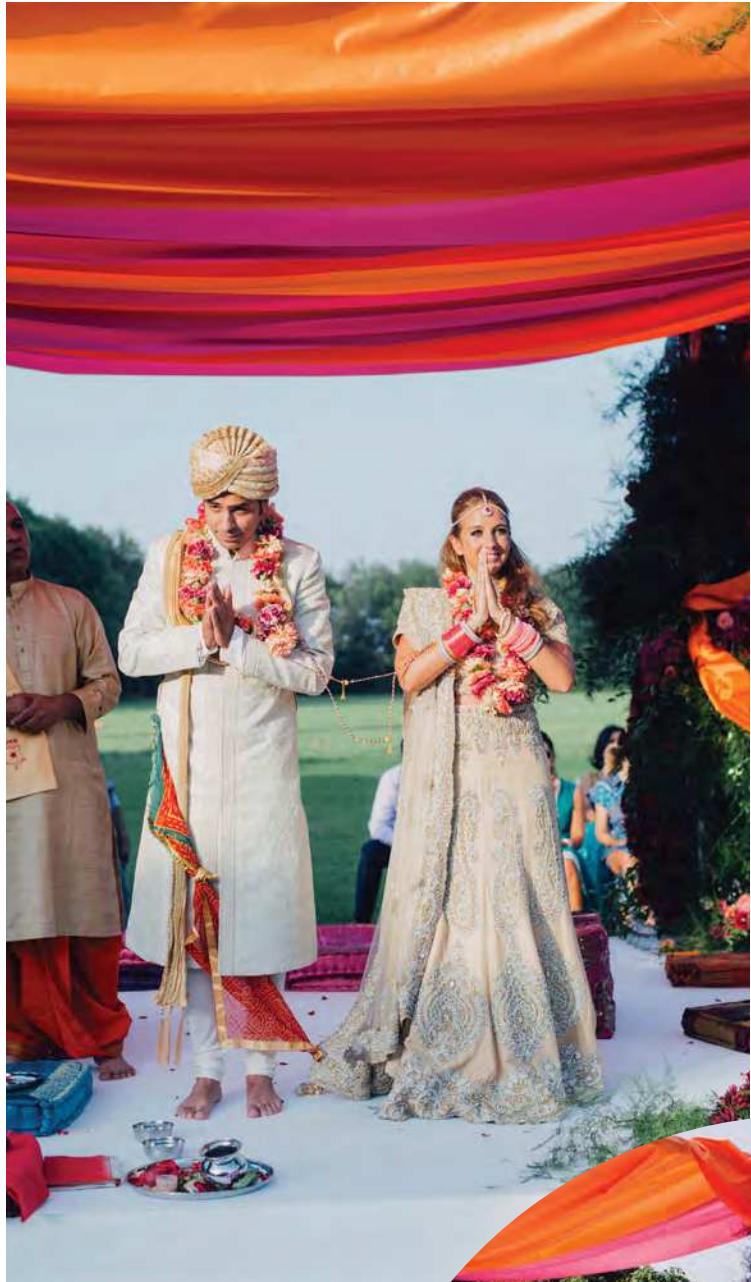


viability of the ceremony, fire is kept as a witness and offerings are made. The bride's brother gives three fistfuls of puffed rice to the bride as a wish for his sister's happy marriage. Each time the bride offers the rice to the fire. This offering is known as a homam.

The jai mala is a garland comprising strung flowers that is exchanged between the newlyweds. The ritual ends with each half of the couple wearing one. For Hindus the jai mala symbolises the partners welcoming each other into their families.

Colours

When a particular colour scheme is not requested for an Indian wedding you can create an impressive colour palette by using red, gold, maroon, orange and pink, with embellishments in gold or silver. The colours included should be vivid and rich to do justice to the event.



Mandap

The stacked containers at the four corners of the mandap symbolise the four elements: earth, water, fire and air.

The fifth, the top cover, symbolises space. The four pillars that hold up the mandap symbolise the four Vedas. They also represent the bride and bridegroom's parents.



Flower Wall

As our generation is getting more and more viral it's very important to create spaces where the guests can take photos. Everyone wants to remember this special moment, take a selfie and share it with the world. Flower walls have become a standard piece at a wedding, but they are still exciting and brides love them.



Flower selection

The flower selection was relatively limited. Only flowers from local growers were used such as *Dahlia*, *Hydrangea*, *Delphinium* and *Rosa 'Avalanche'*. It's always good to think seasonal – you get more floral volume, and the flowers are more sustainable and of better quality.

The challenge of this wedding was the two totally different ceremonies and cultures in the one room, with the same number of tables and chairs. We wanted to save budget and reuse the flowers from the first day. So, we started super elegant – white, clean and chic and changed overnight to the vibrant colours of the second day.

Ceremony

The installations for the ceremony were lavish and impressive but at the same time incredibly elegant and light. We decided not to use the top parts of the metal installation but allowed the fabrics to create a mood of clouds, which also created shade for this super-hot summer day.

Bouquets

I often get asked if there should be a bouquet for the bride to throw. My answer is YES, absolutely. The main bridal bouquet should be placed in a lovely vase at the bride's table. It's been too much hard work wiring all those blooms and, who knows, the photographer may need it later. So, when talking about a bridal bouquet, please plan for a second for the single ladies to fight over.

The Walkway

A detail that makes a big impact is a printed floor with a logo of the couple. This one was framed with transparent fabrics and wild florals. The ceremony felt like an extended ballroom.



Flower stands

Flower stands or pedestals are very useful. When planning events, we always plan a couple of extras. There is often a moment during the set-up when you realise that something needs covering or there's an empty space.



The WOW effect

The WOW effect is for me the most important part of any event design because that's what people talk about and what goes viral. Yes, it's important to think about every corner and make it pretty, but I recommend my brides create one area where a third of the decor budget goes. Then you can save on other positions and make them a bit smaller. No guest ever notices if there are 10 or 15 roses in a centrepiece. But having one massive installation with great lighting makes a massive impact.

FIND OUT MORE

Timo Bolte is an atelier who creates ephemeral experiences for events using flowers to transform mood and create ambience. Timo travels the globe designing lavish events. His style is bold, simple and luxurious with a unique take on form and colour. His floral creations have won the hearts of guests, celebrities, critics and royalty and put him on the map as an international tastemaker.

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BELGRAVIA & CHELSEA *In bloom*

Breathtaking floral displays brought to life the 2021 themes of the Fairground in Belgravia and Extraordinary Voyages in Chelsea, transforming the streets and bringing joy and colour to all.



A mouth-watering display of candy floss outside Jo Malone in Elizabeth Street was created from Gypsophila in a multitude of colours. Design: Moyses Stevens Image: John Nguyen

A camel and pyramids installation on Duke of York Square (below) by Wild at Heart, was created in association with the Co-Existence Charity at Chelsea in Bloom.

Images: PA/Matt Alexander





The Statue of Liberty (left) on Pavilion Road, as part of Chelsea in Bloom, reached a staggering 7m tall. Design: Wild at Heart. This floral carousel (above) by Neill Strain and Judith Blacklock featured spectacular fairground horses.

Images: PA/Matt Alexander

The interior of Salisbury Cathedral is shown, featuring its famous fan-vaulted ceiling and large stained-glass windows. The floor is covered in green plants and flowers, creating a lush, natural environment within the historic architecture.

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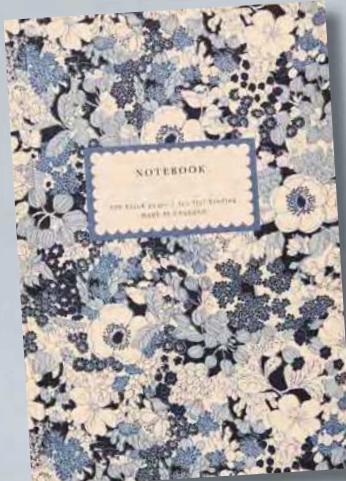
Entry from £15 per person

Salisbury Cathedral
salisburycathedral.org.uk

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TRENDING

BY SCARLETT GOLDSACK



LEAMON FRESH

Katie Leamon's exquisitely-designed stationery and notebooks are inspired by the warmth and satisfaction associated with receiving handwritten correspondence. The brand has been plastic free since 2020 and the paper-based products are beautiful, while having a limited impact on the environment. Katie's products are designed from her home studio in Essex and stocked by Anthropologie, Selfridges, Harrods and Fortnum & Masons. The notebook left is £25 from Selfridges. Buy direct from Katie at katieleamon.com/p/heirloom-bloom-lay-flat-notebook



Bird & Branch

Bird & Branch combine the traditional technique of woodturning with a modern design language. All their wooden products are unique and designed by hand in their London workshop. To produce the unusual patterns, fallen beech trees are left on their side for 3–5 years and the patterns are created as the log breaks down. The bottle vases are developed for dry or ornamental use with prices starting from £60, available from birdandbranch.london



PLANT POWER

Born from more than 40

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Set, price £29.99, contains

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indoor greenery in top

condition. Available at

plantsmith.co.uk

Wedding crates

This simple large-scale design looks impressive without breaking the bank.

Design & Words: Claire Wallace

Image: VeVi Photography

Creating a large, impressive display that doesn't cost a fortune isn't always easy. At this wedding at Wasing Park, Berkshire, I placed three white stacking crates each side of the gazebo for the wedding ceremony. Afterwards, the crates were moved quickly and easily inside the barn for the wedding breakfast and reception. Ideal in every way! Here's how to do it.

TOP CRATE

Place a high-density foam brick inside a large plastic container, such as a bulb bowl or similar, large enough to hold a good reservoir of water. This is crucial for this design because the top crate contains a lot of flowers and foliage. Wrap the foam in chicken wire and make sure it is well secured with florist's tape.

MIDDLE AND BOTTOM CRATES

Measure the size of a large jam jar and insert two screws inside the crate the same distance apart. Arrange the flowers in the jar and place it inside the crate. Add florist's fix at the bottom of the jar for additional security. Attach twine to the screws and around the jar.

FLORAL INGREDIENTS

- Alchemilla robusta*
- Symphyotrichum* (syn. *Aster*)
- Chrysanthemum 'Stallion'*
- Delphinium 'Dewi Boy'*
- Eucalyptus parviflora*
- Eustoma (lisianthus)*
- Gladiolus*
- Papaver (poppy) seed heads*
- Pittosporum*
- Rosa 'Miss Piggy'*
- Scabiosa stellata*
- Solidago*
- Thlaspi*
- Veronica*

NOTE Sideau® and SMITHERS-OASIS® now manufacture a range of biodegradable foam and eco-friendly fibre bricks, which weren't available when Claire constructed this design. Now Claire only uses eco-friendly products.



* TIP

Line the crates with polythene to avoid any water leaks – or crates can be purchased that are already lined, which saves a lot of time.

COLOUR SCHEME:
blue, white and green

CONTAINER:
large blue and white jug

MECHANICS: none

PLANT MATERIAL:

Aconitum napellus
Agapanthus africanus
Cosmos bipinnatus 'Purity'
Oenothera lindheimeri 'Papillon'
Hydrangea macrophylla
Lathyrus latifolius 'White Pearl'
Lysimachia clethroides
Nepeta racemosa 'Walker's Low'

FLOWERS FROM the Dales

The beautifully planted garden at Yorke House in the Yorkshire Dales provides a glorious assortment of material for **Pat Hutchinson**'s floral designs.

Images: Tanya Smith



YORKE HOUSE IN the Yorkshire Dales has been my family home since 1976. This typical Dales stone-built house nestles on the hillside above the River Nidd, overlooking the beautiful Nidderdale countryside. It is surrounded by four acres of land with a small nature reserve with woodland, wildflower meadow and wildlife pond to the north; while the southern two acres contain mainly ornamental plantings that provide materials for my floral designs.

In summer the colour-themed borders overflow with flowering shrubs and perennials. The heavy clay soil has been enhanced over many years with compost and manure, supporting those plants that require moist conditions. Mulching the borders is a lifetime obsession!

Our collection of rambling roses gives an exuberant backdrop to the borders as they scramble over walls, through trees and over gazebos. My favourites include the lush pink rosettes of *Rosa 'Noisette Carnée'* and floriferous white *Rosa 'Rambling Rector'*. In June and July our perennial borders brim with the tall

spikes of *Delphinium*, *Veronicastrum*, *Filipendula* and *Phalaris*, as well as mounds of *Astrantia*, *Phlox*, hardy *Geranium*, *Astilbe*, *Penstemon*, *Paeonia*, *Hosta* and many others.

A natural stream flows from the hillside above Yorke House, providing a moist habitat for a stunning display of candelabra *Primula* in tints and tones of pink and mauve, alongside feathery *Astilbe*, stately *Iris* and a range of ferns. The umbrella leaves of *Darmera peltata* and stunning blue flowers of *Iris laevigata* dominate the large pool, which attracts hordes of damsel and dragon flies on warmer days. A huge weeping willow tree dominates the main lawn, providing a shaded area for visitors enjoying afternoon tea on National Garden Scheme open days (see p37).

In 2019 our son and his family moved into Yorke House and we constructed an accessible home in the former white rose garden to meet my husband's needs following a stroke. We are continuing to develop our accessible garden with distinct areas of associated plantings – a woodland

garden with white-stemmed birch trees and ferns, winter garden full of *Cornus 'Baton Rouge'* and hellebores, and cottage garden supporting our favourite perennials, grasses and clematis adorning the trellises. The patios are filled with potted *Hosta*, *Agapanthus* and *Echeveria*.

COLOUR SCHEME:

red, green and grey

CONTAINER:

red glass bowl

MECHANICS:

pin holder at base with wire mesh overlay

PLANT MATERIAL:

Astilbe chinensis 'Vision in Red'

Clematis viticella 'Flore Pleno'

Cotinus coggygria

Fuchsia 'Mrs Popple'

Heuchera 'Mahogany'

Hosta 'Halcyon'

Hydrangea macrophylla

Penstemon 'Andenken en Friedrich Hahn'
(syn. 'Garnet')

Rosa glauca

Rosa 'Chevy Chase'

Rosa 'William Shakespeare'

Sambucus nigra f. porphyrophylla 'Eva'
(syn. 'Black Lace')





COLOUR SCHEME:

green and white

CONTAINER:

tall, white ceramic vase

MECHANICS:

kubari sticks of *Cornus*
inserted across interior of
container to create a lattice
for supporting the stems

PLANT MATERIAL:

Carex 'Amazon Mist'
Cosmos bipinnatus 'Purity'
Dryopteris wallichiana
Hosta 'Fire and Ice'
Hydrangea paniculata
‘Limelight’
Phlox paniculata 'Jade'
Rosa 'Long John Silver'

COLOUR SCHEME:

pink/mauve coloured harmony

CONTAINER:

white jugs

MECHANICS: none

This design was created by deconstructing the design on the right but using no mechanics.

PLANT MATERIAL:

Anemone hupehensis var. *japonica*
Astilbe x arendsi
Clematis 'Polish Spirit'
Dahlia 'Park Princess'
Lathyrus odorata
Lythrum salicaria
Phlox paniculata
Physostegia virginiana
Rosa 'Compassion'
Rosa 'The Fairy'
Veronicastrum virginicum





COLOUR SCHEME:
pink/mauve coloured harmony

CONTAINER:
green glass dish

MECHANICS:
biodegradable floral foam

PLANT MATERIAL:
Anemone hupehensis
var. *japonica*

Astilbe x arendsii
Clematis 'Polish Spirit'
Dahlia 'Park Princess'
Lathyrus odorata
Lythrum salicaria
Phlox paniculata
Physostegia virginiana
Rosa 'Compassion'
Rosa 'The Fairy'
Verbena bonariensis
Veronicastrum virginicum

**FIND
OUT MORE**

Yorke House garden is open for the National Garden Scheme on Sunday 26 June, 11am–5pm; and Sunday 10 July, 12noon–5pm. Visit ngs.org.uk and yorkehouse.co.uk for more details.



PEONY ARCHWAY

To create this wonderful entrance, *Danae racemosa* (soft ruscus) was woven through the existing structure outside the front door of this charming cottage in Old Warden, Bedfordshire. **Amanda Shand** then inserted peonies in tubes and attached them to the structure with cable ties.

Design & Image: Amanda Shand





The peonies were supplied by Kate Blacker of Blacker & Moore.

Nature at its best

Flowers arranged naturally
in a low bowl give
long-lasting pleasure.

Design: **Trudie Easton**

Image: **Judith Blacklock**





YOU WILL NEED

- Handful flat moss
- Vine-type foliage material
– *Hedera helix* (ivy), *Rubus tricolor* or *Jasminum*
- Flowers of choice

AND

- 30cm metal wreath frame
- Reel/binding wire
- Aluminium wire
- Wool or string
- Large 35cm flat bowl

HOW TO

1 Cover the wreath frame with a thin layer of moss using the reel wire. Be sure to leave the holes in the frame.

2 Using the aluminium wire, wind wool or string around the moss-covered wreath frame. Choose a colour or texture to match your flowers.

3 Weave the aluminium wire through the framework in a random fashion.

4 Add the vine-type material throughout the design. Aim to create an open framework ready for the flowers.

5 Place your wire frame over the bowl and add water.

6 Thread the flowers through the framework. Their stems should be long enough to touch the bottom of the bowl.

★ TIPS

You could add floating candles to the centre of the design or floating flower heads such as hellebores in spring.

This rustic design suits natural garden materials, but you could use an inexpensive supermarket bouquet, adapting the flowers to suit the season.

GENTSE FLORALIËN

With a theme of Flowers of Taste, this annual show in Belgium attracted a huge variety of masterful floral decorations.

Words: Pieter Toebaert Images: Sofhie Legein – Gemeente Koksijde

LAST SEPTEMBER, BELGIAN florists and international designers brought masterful floral decorations, with a wink to the culinary, to the seaside town of Koksijde. The theme of the event at Koket Koksijde – a collaboration between Koksijde and Floraliën Ghent – was Flowers with Taste and it was staged in the town hall.

Pieter Toebaert, CEO Floraliën and Art Director for Koket says: “People find experience and authenticity increasingly important. Apart from the artistic impact of our actions, we wanted to show that flowers and plants connect people. With the borough of Koksijde, we want to put flowers and plants in the spotlight.”



This spinning top design symbolises turning back in a free world, to the dance floor where we can simply circulate without thought and continue to go crazy and enjoy ourselves. It was made only with Chrysanthemum, sponsored by Dekker Chrysanthemum.



This romantically decorated table was created by the Vanneste sisters of Maison Julie and 't Hof ter Velde.



Working with the theme of the seaside, florist Phebe Bovyn was inspired by hundreds of coquilles Saint Jacques (giant scallops) with reference to cuisine, the Atlantic Ocean and the traveller's route to Compostela.



The work of international Japanese designer Haruko Noda featured in the council chamber. Underwater World referenced the Japanese Chrysanthemum Festival.

This year's Gentse Floraliën is being held in the ICC, the Floraliënhall and Kuijke from April 29 to May 8, on the theme of My Paradise, My Worldly Garden. Find out more at floralien.be



Hang up high

This hanging design is suitable for numerous occasions and can be attached to pew ends in places of worship, to any wall area or even to a staircase.

Design: Dawn Jennings Image: Judith Blacklock



* TIPS

The leaves need to be large enough to cover the piece of foam.

Make sure all the bear grass used for the ponytail is positioned in the same direction so that just the green side shows – not the silver/grey back side.

To make it easy to insert the last mini *Gerbera* into the foam through the *Aspidistra*, first cut the leaf with a knife.

Secure the foam into the container and hang for a few hours before needed so the excess water can drip away.

YOU WILL NEED

- 2 large *Aspidistra* leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch *Xerophyllum tenax* (bear grass)
- 3 *Ruscus hypophyllum* (hard ruscus)
- 4 mini *Gerbera*

AND

- $\frac{1}{3}$ piece of biodegradable floral foam
- A rectangular-shaped plastic tray with a hole punctured in the handle end (often referred to as a shovel)
- Floral tape
- Pins
- Raffia
- Ribbon, bindwire (paper-covered wire), raffia or length of wire for hanging

HOW TO

1 Secure the wetted foam into the tray with floral tape.

2 Wrap the *Aspidistra* leaves around the foam and the tray to cover the foam. This can be achieved by wrapping higher and lower than the foam, so it is completely hidden from view.

3 Secure in place with pins and a neat band of raffia.

4 Insert most of the bear grass in the bottom end of the tray (at the opposite end to the handle). This will create a ponytail effect.

5 At the handle end, cut the hard ruscus short and cover the foam.

6 Insert three mini *Gerbera* at various heights, remembering to cover the handle. Place the remaining small amount of bear grass in this area, circled around and secured with wire. At this point, position the last mini *Gerbera*.

7 Thread a length of hanging material through the hole of the handle to enable it to be secured in position around a hook, post, spindle or banister.

Ben Cross, also known as Alstroemeria Ben, is a 4th-generation grower at Crosslands Flower Nursery in West Sussex.

It was established in 1936 and remains one of the last flower nurseries producing cut flowers in a full colour range all year-round. Ben is an avid campaigner for British Flowers and takes any opportunity he can to spread the word that British Flowers Rock!

BEST OF BRITISH



What are the advantages to buying British?

British-grown Alstroemeria are a lot fresher than flowers that have to travel around the world. Most importantly all the stems are harvested at a 'ripe' big fat bud stage, giving a bigger, more vibrant flower unlike the imports that are harvested too tight so more can be transported in boats and planes. In addition, we only employ local people and have apprenticeship schemes with local horticultural colleges.

How sustainable is your crop?

The flowers are not sprayed with any chemicals after being harvested and go into recyclable, reusable boxes and arrive with customers the next day. No soil-cooling techniques are used to force production and some flower beds are more than 20 years old, still producing premium quality stems. Less than 5% of the crop is replanted each year so sterilising the soil is kept to a minimum.

When purchasing Alstroemeria what should people look for in a quality flower and how ripe should the flower be?

The flower buds should be elongated and plump, ripe and juicy. This ensures that the buds will produce vibrant colour. If the stems are harvested too



tight in bud they won't open up properly and the bright colours will fade as the buds begin to open.

What colours are available?

I have a full colour range available all year round – the only colours I don't grow are blue and black!

Do you have any tips to make the cut-flowers last?

All the leaves should be removed from the stem to put energy back into the flower heads to help them last even longer. However, you can leave the foliage around the top of the stem. Other tips to make them last is to keep them out of direct sunlight and place somewhere cool. Change the water every 2 or 3 days and, when you do, make sure to cut a bit off the end of the stem to enable

it to take up fresh water. Also keep your vases and vessels clean.

How long should Alstroemeria last under optimum conditions?

Following this advice, my freshly-picked British Alstroemeria have been known to last more than three weeks!

What is your favourite Alstroemeria?

My grower's favourite is 'Dana', which is a pretty pale pink cultivar. It produces well all year round and is a low-maintenance plant. My favourite for cut-flower colour is 'Odessa' (pictured), which has white, pink and green flecks on the petals.

Who do you supply?

We supply direct to the public and florists alike – see p47 for our contact details.

Anything else our readers might be interested in?

Readers might be interested to hear about my British Flowers Rock campaign. With more than 90% of cut flowers now being imported in the UK, the campaign aims to raise awareness and educate people about the benefits of sustainable homegrown blooms compared with imported blooms.



ASTOUNDING *Alstroemeria*

Three designs by Dawn Jennings and Anna Leoniak show the versatility and beauty of this long-lasting flower.

This fan-shaped design works well with the size and shape of the vase and would suit many areas within the home because you get to see all the flowers – none is visually lost to the back. Simplicity at its best.

Design: Dawn Jennings

Image: Afsheen Navid

YOU WILL NEED

- About 60 *Alstroemeria*
- AND
- Tall vase – this one is 30cm high
 - Wool-covered wire

HOW TO

- 1 Fill the vase with water. Make a small rectangle-shaped grid using wool-covered wire and place on the rim of the vase.
- 2 Thread the flower stems through the grid at perfect angles. The more stems that are added, the easier it is to hold and judge where the next placement should be.
- 3 Position shorter-stemmed *Alstroemeria* at the front.



These orange *Alstroemeria* shine against a bed of rich green folded leaves with a ponytail of *Genista* bringing some added curve appeal to the design.

Design: Dawn Jennings
Image: Afsheen Navid

YOU WILL NEED

- 7 stems *Alstroemeria*
- 5 mini *Fatsia* leaves
- 7 mini *Aspidistra* leaves
- 1–3 blades *Typha*
- *Genista* (broom) – in this design it was harvested after flowering

AND

- Container – this one is 8cm wide and 14cm tall
- Twine to tie

HOW TO

- 1 Hold all the *Alstroemeria* stems together just under the flowers to create a tight, neat cluster and tie. Place in the container so the flowers rest on the rim.
- 2 Add the *Fatsia* and folded *Aspidistra* around the *Alstroemeria* heads together with looped *Typha* to create a collar effect and make a second tie.
- 3 Bundle the stems of *Genista*. Tie off and position in the container to create a ‘pony-tail’. Make sure you curve the *Genista* around the container base to show visual movement.



* Tip

Remove the leaves from the *Alstroemeria* stems – they are easily bruised and can detract from the flowers’ subtle beauty.

A purple collar of *Alstroemeria* around an ornamental *Brassica* looks royally good!

Design: Anna Leonik
Image: Afsheen Navid

YOU WILL NEED

- 1 *Brassica olearacea* ‘Ornamental Cabbage’
- 6 *Alstroemeria*
- 2 small *Monstera* leaves

AND

- Large purple container – this one is 20cm high and 30cm wide at the base
- Garden twine

HOW TO

- 1 Prepare the stems by removing the leaves from below the binding point (the point where the hand will hold the stems).
- 2 Position the *Brassica* as the core centre of the handtied.
- 3 Add a ring of *Alstroemeria* flowers around the *Brassica*, positioning more at the front of the design.
- 4 Position the two *Monstera* leaves on one side.
- 5 Firmly tie the stems at the binding point and place in the vase.



FIND OUT MORE Crosslands Flower Nursery is at Barnham Lane, Walberton, Nr Arundel BN18 0AX. Contact Ben on 07712 332241 for information and to place an order. More on Twitter and Instagram @alstroemeraben and on Facebook at **Crosslands Flower Nursery**.

Hole Park Gardens

ROLVENDEN

This is the home of the spectacular *Agapanthus 'Hole Park Blue'* and a visit in summer offers a chance to see these impressive blooms where they've grown for more than 100 years in this 16-acre garden. Bluebells are an absolute delight in spring and the website's bluebell barometer shows when they are at their peak.

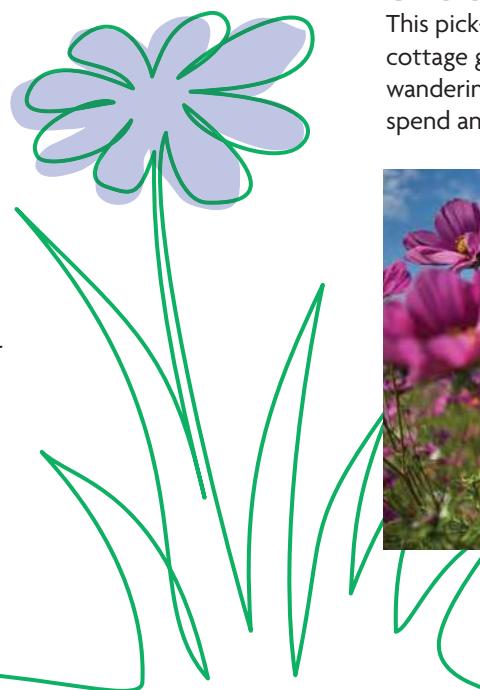
The herbaceous long borders are a riot of colour in summer with the exotic border coming into its own later in the season. Stunning autumn hues round off the visiting year.
holepark.com



Brogdale Collections

FAVERSHAM

Home to the National Fruit Collection, Brogdale has 4,000 fruit tree species and cultivars including apples, pears, quinces, plums and cherries. Visitors can walk in the orchards or join a tour and there are courses, events and festivals throughout the year including the Hamami event at cherry blossom time to celebrate all things Japanese. Fruit is also available to purchase when in season.
brogdalecollections.org



KENT The Garden of England

Living up to its title, the county of Kent has a host of hidden gems to attract flower and garden lovers. Words: **Gill Smaggasgale**

KING HENRY VIII reputedly christened Kent 'The Garden of England' after eating a bowl of finest Kentish cherries. Even today, Kent is famed for its fruit growing, rolling countryside, spectacular coastline and a host of visitor attractions including Sissinghurst, Scotney Castle, Hever Castle and Penshurst Place. Here are some fabulous hidden gems to attract floral and garden enthusiasts.



Godinton House & Gardens

NR ASHFORD

With only two major changes of ownership in more than 600 years this fascinating house has a true integrity. The gardens are stunning and highlights include the Italian Garden and Walled Garden.

Delphinium Week in mid-June, held in connection with the Delphinium Society, celebrates the delphiniums grown at Godinton. godintonhouse.co.uk

Cherry Gardens Organic Farm Shop

GROOMBRIDGE

This pick-your-own farm includes an opportunity to gather cottage garden flowers. Taking a bucket from the shop and wandering the rows making your selection is a lovely way to spend an afternoon. cherrygardensfarm.co.uk



Mig Kimpton Flowers

DEAL

During the summer, flower clubs, WI's, horticultural societies and other groups are welcome to a delicious lunch followed by a demonstration of floral art from Mig.



A selection of workshops take place throughout the year and there are theatre productions in the garden. Details of all the activities are on the website.

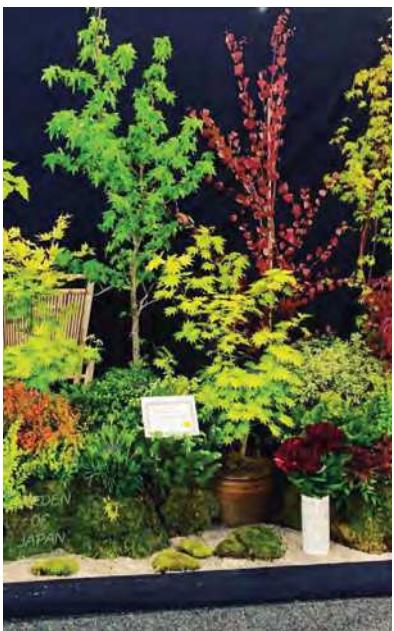
migkimptonflowers.co.uk



Little Budds Peony Farm

NR MAIDSTONE

This rural farm grows 6,000 peony plants with 50 cultivars. On farm open days between mid-May and mid-June you can walk the fields to see the plants in bloom, talk to the growers and buy plants and cut flowers. littlebuddspeonyfarm.co.uk



Kent Garden Show

DETLING – NR MAIDSTONE

Held at the County Show Ground during the last weekend in May (Fri 27– Sun 29), this show is a feast for all things gardening with a large number of traders and specialist nurseries and the Annual Show of Kent Floral Art (affiliated to NAFAS). kentgardenshow.com and kentfloralart.co.uk



Southeast Flowers

ASHFORD

A host of wonders await in the Aladdin's cave of this wholesaler's sundries section. It is open to florists and flower club members but it's best to phone ahead to check that it's convenient to visit.

southeastflowers.co.uk

Hush Heath Winery

STAPLEHURST

With interest in English wine increasing, there are many opportunities to visit wineries in the area. At Hush Heath you can join a tour, take part in wine tasting and enjoy a self-guided stroll through the vines, apple orchard, oak wood and wildflower meadow of the 400-acre estate.

hushheath.com



Dancing flowers

A filigree of dainty flowers floats above a rustic stand of birch and metal bands.

Design: Philipp von Arx Image: Bernhard Kägi

This arrangement plays with the lightness of the flowers and the heavier sections of birch. The metal bands around the birch dominate and are reminiscent of a wooden barrel. They are raised on metal legs to give space at the base. The flowers – *Astrantia*, *Jasminum officinale* (common jasmine), *Nectaroscordum siculum* (Sicilian honey garlic), *Nigella damascena* (love-in-a-mist) and *Philadelphus coronarius* (mock orange) – are a floating filigree giving the impression of dancing happily.









1980s



1960s

A CENTURY IN COLOUR

Fashions and tastes might ebb and flow but colour always remains a key component of our lives. **Rebecca Young** looks back at the changing colour palette of the past 100 years and the influences behind each decade's evolution.

COLOUR IS, PERHAPS, the most personal and dramatic way of expressing ourselves. Throughout the decades we have been influenced by what we see in media, fashion and art, and the way we use colour has evolved over the past hundred years. Here we journey through the most popular colours of each decade, from the jazz age, through to the decade 'taste forgot' and on to the colours of modern Britain.

It's the roaring '20s and interior paint colours are light,

neutral shades with colour achieved through extravagant, vibrant accessories. This glamorous decade has Hollywood's influence filtering through. Lavish rooms are created in peacock blue and shades of red, with ostrich and peacock feathers used in large, decadent displays. During the 1920s and '30s, the movement that became known as Art Deco influences colour and style choices. Striking, bold yellows, reds, greens, blues and pinks are all in fashion and can be seen in Clarice Cliffs ceramics, which were popular at the



1930s



1950s



1930s



1960s



1990s



time. Often these colours are punctuated by shiny chrome, silver or black accents in highly stylised geometric designs.

During the '40s most of the world is either engaged in, or recovering from war. People aren't concerning themselves about decorating their homes or what they're wearing but colour is achieved in different ways with women encouraged to wear bright red lipstick to keep everyone's spirits up during tough times. However, the post-war boom brings massive changes in the home with colours influenced by such things as the American diner. Fashionable shades now include pastel pinks, baby blues and pale greens. Think Neapolitan ice cream and you'll see the colour palette of the '50s.

The flower power generation turns away from pastel

shades to embrace psychedelic colours. A new colour palette using vivid acid yellows, candy pinks, lime greens and vibrant blues becomes popular with Pop art influencing what we wear and how we decorate our homes with its use of pattern and colour influencing wallpaper especially. But of course, as the saying goes, if you can remember the '60s you weren't there!

The 1970s are often referred to as the decade that taste forgot, with its infamous avocado bathroom finding a unique spot in history books. In reality, it carries on the '60s vibe where any colour goes and lurid patterns feature in an eye-watering colour palette that includes lava lamp orange and neon pink. Imagery created by the likes of David Bowie and Queen is also infiltrating into interiors. We turn our



backs on this in the 1980s as the country house chintz look, with soft floral patterns, comes to the fore, widely thanks to the influence of Laura Ashley. Paint techniques such as sponging, rag rolling and stencilling become popular as the shabby chic look takes hold. Pale pinks, soft blues and greens are all in vogue.

Beige saturates the '90s' walls, floors, furniture and linens! After years of colour this is the decade of blandness. Interior designer Kelly Hoppen's signature colour is taupe and soft, neutral shades of browns, peaches and beige are popular. Then, in 2000, the Pantone Colour Institute™ starts forecasting their colour of the year, which now influences colour across various industries. The 2002 shade is 'true red' and the noughties sees the use of deeper, richer

colours being matched with paler background shades. In this decade the feature wall creates a pop of colour and pattern in rooms.

For 2022 Pantone™ has, for the first time in its 23-year history, created a new colour called Very Peri. With the nation having spent most of the past two years working, living and playing within the same four walls, interior design has taken on an unexpected importance in people's lives. Our interiors are having to double up as homes and workplaces and with this new shade of blue with a violet undertone, Pantone™ is seeking to help us embrace a new kind living and future as we hopefully find light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel.



Feeling Rosy

Roses come in such a range of beautiful forms and colours that they lend themselves to many types of arrangements. Here **Jonathan Moseley** pairs them with poppy seed heads for dynamic textural contrast.

COMMERCIALLY-GROWN CUT roses are available in many distinct and different cultivars; in fact there are literally thousands to choose from. For this design I've teamed three rose cultivars together to create a serpentine swirl of plush velvety petals enhanced by a few poppy seed heads. The low, textured, S-shaped pottery container is a favourite for arranging flowers at any time of year and really does lend itself to round forms of flowers such as roses, *Ranunculus*, pom-pom *Dahlia* or *Calendula*.

To make the design, cut each rose to a similar length and remove all the foliage. Mass the flower heads together with one rose head supporting the next. Finally add the poppy seed heads. I chose poppies because the centre of the roses resembles the crown of the poppy seed heads. The wonderful smooth, waxy texture of the poppies offers a dynamic textural contrast next to the smooth and sensuous rose petals.



MATERIALS USED

Low ceramic S-shaped container
(36cm long x 4cm high)
Rosa 'Green Eye'
Rosa 'Red Eye'
Rosa 'Noble Antony'
Papaver (poppy) seed heads



Permitted at

RHS Chelsea Flower Show

due to material being compostable

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Charming peonies

Paeonia 'Red Charm' has a mass of intricate petals at the centre enveloped by a flurry of looser petals and certainly lives up to its name!

Design: Dawn Jennings Image: Judith Blacklock

YOU WILL NEED

- 7 *Paeonia 'Red Charm'*

AND

- Large pin holder – this one is 10cm in diameter
- Red bowl – this one is 8cm high and 35cm wide

HOW TO

- 1 Place the pin holder in the bowl and half-fill the bowl with water.
- 2 Cut the peonies short and impale on the pin holder so they form a pleasing mass.

* TIPS

If you have a space to grow only one peony, *Paeonia 'Red Charm'* is a top choice. The flowerheads also dry exceedingly well.

Large blousy garden roses would work, but you would need to include more or choose a smaller bowl to create the same effect.



NOTE This bowl was bought from TK Maxx but any low bowl about 8cm tall is fine.

For one night only

The night-time blooming of *Epiphyllum oxypetalum* is a moment to be treasured. Words & Image: **Chrissie Harten**



LOOKING AROUND MY

garden on a lovely day at the end of July, I was amazed to see a single flower bud on my *Epiphyllum oxypetalum*, commonly known as queen of the night. I'd bought the plant as a single cutting several years previously and it had since grown into quite a sizeable specimen. Although it was always healthy, it had never flowered – until now!

This *Epiphyllum* is native to Mexico and South America, so I keep it in my conservatory here in Worcestershire over winter, but I put it outside during the summer. I'd never had a flower on it before, so I didn't really know what to expect, but I knew this particular *Epiphyllum* only flowered once a year, for one night only and I was determined not to miss it.

Each night at about 11.30pm, sometimes in the rain, I grabbed my torch and wandered down the garden in pitch blackness to see how the flower was progressing! Each night it had grown a little more, the deep pink bud elongating and stretching downwards.

On 4 August the straight bud began its final transformation, showing the first signs of the typical

bending that heralds the flower opening, but still it continued to grow. Finally, by the afternoon of 10 August, the bend was at

45 degrees and I was certain tonight was the night!

Sure enough, an amazing sight met me and my torch in the darkness – the fully open flower measured around 18cm in diameter with stunning white petals, pink on the underside, and the scent filled the air.

I was reluctant to go to bed but the flower was still open at 8am the following morning and attracting lots of attention from hoverflies and bees so I managed to get some better photos of it in daylight.

In its natural habitat this plant can set fruit, which I'm told is delicious. It is pollinated by bats, moths and other insects, but is not self-fertile and requires pollen from a different clone to fertilise the flowers. Maybe if I obtain another plant from a different source, I might be lucky next time!

By around 10.30am the flower was beginning to straighten out again and wither. Its spectacular 'for one night only' display was over, but certainly worth waiting for!

Shooting a TV drama on a Caribbean island might seem glamorous, but the heat and humidity can cause problems. Production designer **Mo Holden** set off to Guadeloupe last year with a shipping container of supplies required to enhance the sets of *Death in Paradise* including an abundance of faux flowers and foliage.



Image: Courtesy of Alex Gill

DEATH IN PARADISE



Image: Courtesy of Alex Gill

Clockwise from above: Ralf Little alias DI Neville Parker outside the police station in Sainte Marie; Little on the beach; faux flowers are used for some scenes, which better stand up to the heat; the beach shack; *Heliconia* in its natural habitat

Work as a production designer for film and TV is always interesting and varied because I oversee the look of the whole production. This involves reading and breaking down scripts, looking at locations, taking lots of photographs, sketching out ideas, putting colours and textures together, organising furniture, fabrics and flowers for set dressing, plus any action props. When filming, my day usually starts around 4am as I make final adjustments to the set before shooting starts at 7am.

Last May, I'd just finished working on a comedy set in south London, filmed in a cold, dark disused warehouse, when I was offered the chance to oversee the production of *Death in Paradise*, and I jumped at the chance. Once the 20ft shipping container was loaded with props and supplies including a life-size foam rubber dummy and quantities of faux flowers and foliage, I set off for the beautiful Caribbean island of Guadeloupe.

It's known as 'Karuakera', which means "island of

beautiful waters" and a common saying there is: "it's the magic of the island". After several weeks I began to understand what that meant – "don't worry if you can't get what you want, because the island will supply what you really need" – and I was never disappointed!

Three main locations are used in the drama: Catherine's bar, the beach shack and police station with numerous other locations featuring in each episode. While driving along the winding roads of the island to each location, the tropical flora simply took my breath away.

Against a backdrop of dark foliage, the island has a whole palette of bright clashing colours and subtle balanced shades that somehow work together harmoniously. I was overwhelmed by the lushness of the greenery and exotic flowers. The tropical heat and humidity were intense and very sudden showers of warm rain were frequent but often short lived – I'd be absolutely soaking one minute, but dry as a bone the next.

Bougainvillea is everywhere, the most plentiful colour being bright pink, which stands out amid the greenery of the island. I often saw several hummingbirds sipping nectar from these bushes. I've regularly bought flowers such as the balisiers or *Heliconia* and birds of paradise (*Strelitzia*) in Covent Garden over the years, but there's nothing to beat seeing them growing in their natural habitat.

Although there was an abundance of real flowers, faux blooms were often required, especially when filming took place over several days. Fresh flowers would have quickly wilted in the heat and continuity would have been a problem. For a one-day shoot I might use real blooms from a florist or the garden of one of the local crew, which would then need conditioning and prepping before going onto set.

I'll never forget my time on Guadeloupe and treasure the memories of *Aloe vera* growing on the roadside over one metre high, palm trees towering into the azure-blue sky, *Hibiscus* flowers in bright colours, ferns everywhere and trees covered in creepers and epiphytes. Looking down over the treetops onto the golden sands and then to the turquoise sea, you are indeed in paradise.

**"don't worry
if you can't get
what you want,
because the
island will
supply what you
really need"**



Britain's best

Flora meets some of the key personnel selling locally-grown cut flowers and foliage at New Covent Garden Flower Market.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS ago a hub was set up where British flower growers could sell their produce to a captive audience that appreciated a wide variety of blooms, beauty and seasonality. Now known as New Covent Garden Flower Market, it is the centre for selling British flowers. Often produced by smaller artisanal

growers and more naturally than many imported blooms, British-grown flowers tend to have a natural beauty that sets them apart from more cultivated imports. Mostly grown outdoors, they use fewer inputs and less artificial heat, travel fewer miles to reach the end consumer and reflect the season perfectly.



Neil Birks

Neil Birks is a florist and has a studio on the first floor at New Covent Garden Market (NCGM). His British-grown roses are available to buy through Green and Bloom.

He wants to encourage small independent florists back to the market particularly now it's firmly returned to its roots. Neil celebrates the scent, uniqueness, character, beauty and non-uniformity that sets British-grown flowers aside from all others, and believes enjoying a vase of English scented roses indoors is the ultimate in natural luxury.

His roses are grown under the English skies and the effect of the weather and seasons adds to the character of his roses and strengthens the wonderful scent they produce.

Neil states that growing his roses under cover would increase the risk of pests and diseases. Yes, rain can affect his outdoor-grown blooms but it's a risk he's prepared to take.

UK-grown flowers aren't subject to import and handling duties that are now applied to European-grown flowers. So, to sum up, Neil's flowers at NCGM look more naturally beautiful, reflect the seasons, are typically grown with fewer chemicals and have a lower carbon footprint.



Porters Foliage and GB Foliage

Next to each other, on the side as you enter the market, they both have a superb range of British cut foliage. Brian (left) at Porters and David (right) at GB Foliage are both knowledgeable and helpful.



L Mills Trading Ltd

This fourth-generation family business specialises in selling pot plants and pot bedding produced in the UK. Bob is always there and happy to show you his almost-naked image in the market's charity fundraising calendar!



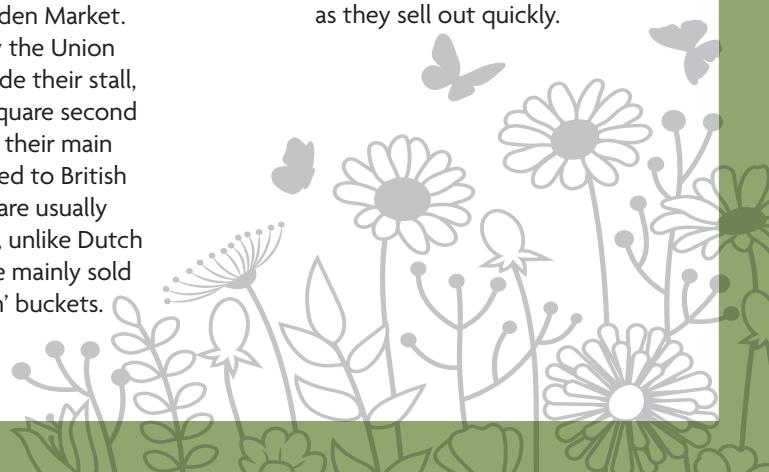
Pratley Flower & Plants Ltd

Prately's has the largest selection of British flowers in New Covent Garden Market.

Recognisable by the Union Jack hanging outside their stall, they also have a square second stand, opposite their main position, dedicated to British flowers. These are usually displayed in boxes, unlike Dutch flowers, which are mainly sold in white 'Dutch' buckets.

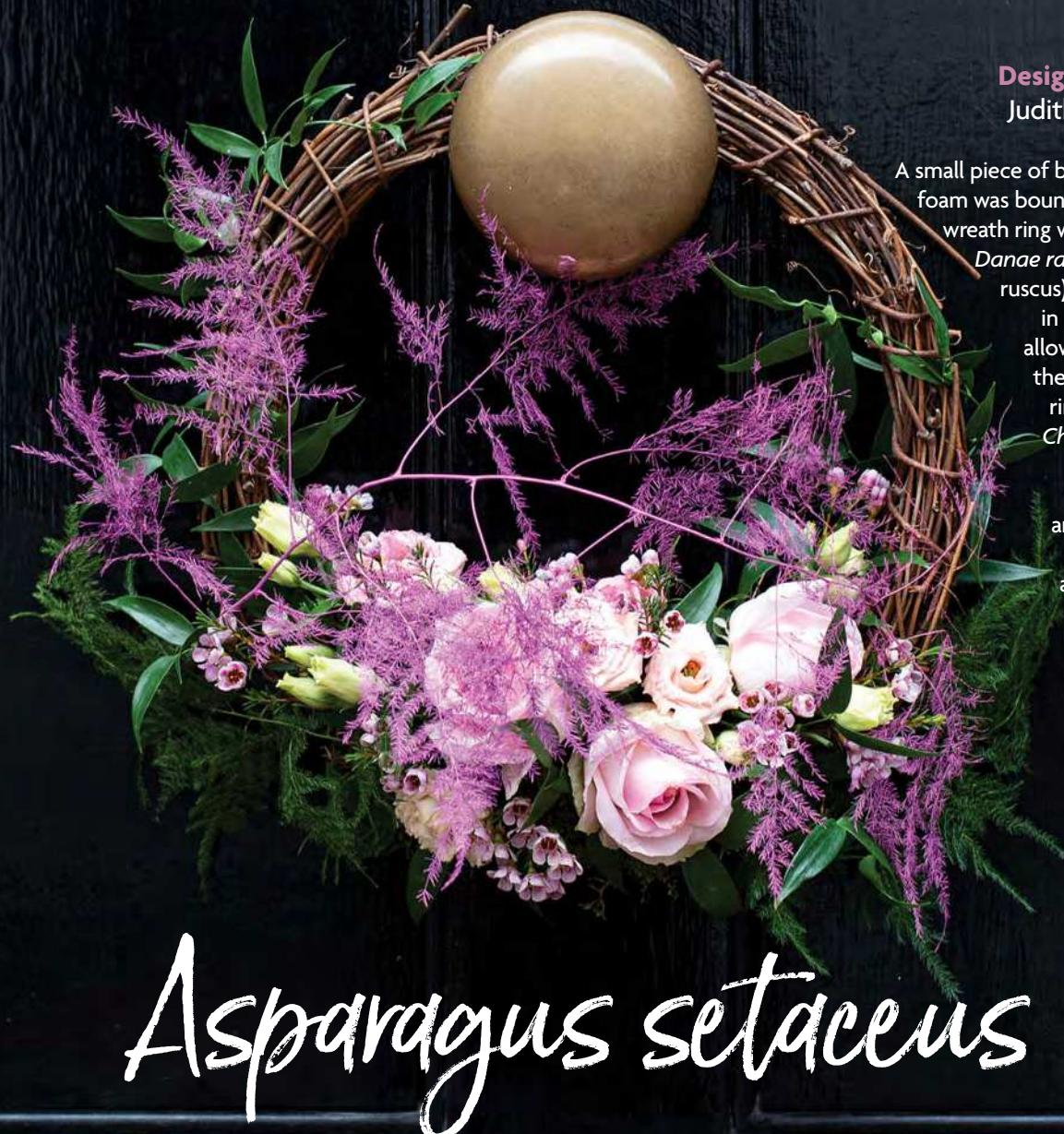
Green and Bloom

Green and Bloom usually has a corner of British flowers set aside but you need to be quick as they sell out quickly.



Design & Image:
Judith Blacklock

A small piece of biodegradable foam was bound to a natural wreath ring with Bindwire. *Danae racemosa* (soft ruscus) was inserted in each end and allowed to follow the shape of the ring. Roses and *Chamelaucium* (waxflower) were added and the design finished with a swirl of pink Asparagus.



Asparagus setaceus

Airy, soft-textured asparagus fern partners beautifully with a range of plants.

ASPARAGUS SETACEUS (asparagus fern) is one of the floral designer's best-loved plants for 2022. Light and airy, it provides a soft texture that's the perfect complement for flowers or used just on its own. Adomex (adomex.nl) sells a huge quantity of cut foliage from around the world, and Flora asked them more about this delightful foliage.

Where is *Asparagus setaceus* native to?

Asparagus setaceus originated in South America and isn't a true fern – it's a tuberous perennial. It's a climber and it has nasty spines so care needs to be taken.

Is it correct to also term it *A. plumosa*?

A. plumosa is a synonym but now rarely used.

How long does it last for and are there ways to make it last longer, such as keeping it in a cellophane wrap to retain moisture?

Keeping Asparagus cool and in water will give it a long life – about two weeks, depending on the temperature where it is placed. There is no need to wrap it in cellophane.

It's sold generally as short, medium and long – what lengths would these be?

45cm, 65cm and 85cm long.

Painted Asparagus is proving a great trend – what is the technique behind this?

We are indeed selling more and more painted Asparagus. We have them dyed by a company that dips the Asparagus in special paint.

Does painting make the stem last longer or not as long?

This depends on the colour. The darker colours do last longer.

Is it an easy houseplant to grow?

Asparagus is a strong plant and doesn't die easily as a potted plant if you keep it well watered.

Can it be grown in British gardens?

Close to the Equator it is grown as a garden plant but the climate in Europe is too cold.



Designing with Asparagus

Design: David Thomson

Image: Judith Blacklock

A composition showing a wonderful contrast of texture with bold, smooth *Aspidistra* leaves, red-painted *Asparagus setaceus* and *Alstroemeria* grouped around a bunch of upright twisted willow in a fabulous roughly-textured pottery container.



Lancing College Chapel
Lancing, West Sussex BN15 0RW

Sense of Place Flower Festival



by the Sussex Area of NAFAS
in aid of

The Friends of Lancing Chapel

18–21 August 2022

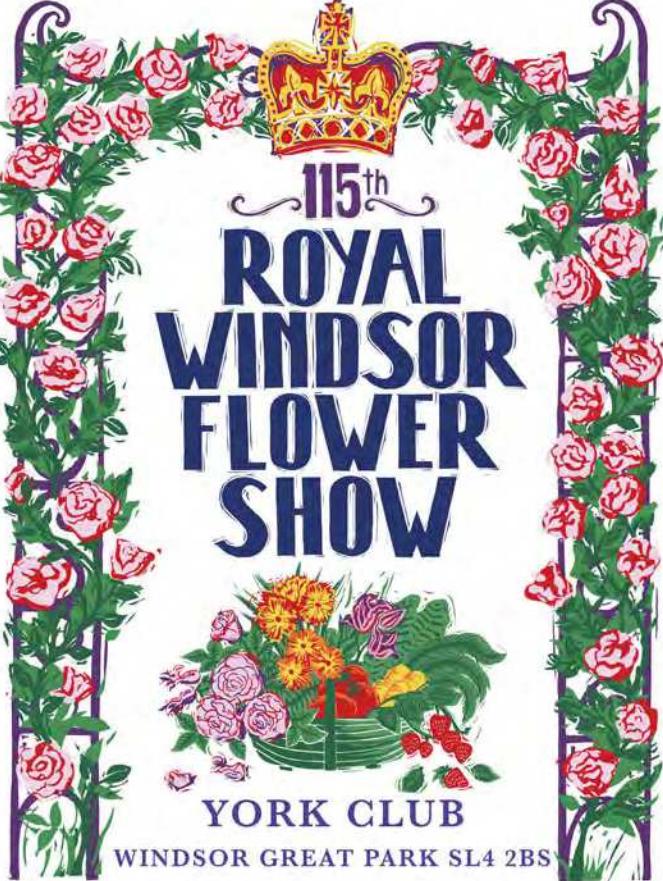
10am–5pm

TICKETS £15

Booking and information:
lancingcollege.co.uk/events



Friends of Lancing Chapel is a Registered Charity No. 241403
Sussex Area of NAFAS is a Registered Charity No. 292377



115th ROYAL WINDSOR FLOWER SHOW

YORK CLUB
WINDSOR GREAT PARK SL4 2BS

SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2022

TICKETS: WWW.RWRHS.COM

A detailed poster for the 115th Royal Windsor Flower Show. The design features a decorative border of roses and greenery framing the central text. At the top center is a large, ornate crown. Below the crown, the text "115th ROYAL WINDSOR FLOWER SHOW" is written in a bold, serif font. In the center of the poster is a vibrant illustration of a basket overflowing with various colorful flowers and greenery. The bottom of the poster includes the name "YORK CLUB" and the address "WINDSOR GREAT PARK SL4 2BS". At the very bottom, the date "SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2022" and the ticket information "TICKETS: WWW.RWRHS.COM" are provided. A small circular logo for the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is located in the bottom left corner.

Design: Adolfo Alicart
Image: Thomas de Hoghton

The pinks and greens in the flowers and foliage are set off by the textured grey pottery dish. The dramatic forms of the *Anthurium* blooms and *Ananas* (pineapple) fruits contrast beautifully with the soft, wispy, pink-painted *Asparagus setaceus*.



FLORAL CATWALK

Stunning dresses and accessories crafted from fresh and dried flowers and foliage were taken on to the catwalk by members of the Cheshire Area of NAFAS. This memorable and enjoyable event formed part of the area's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Images: Pam Mosedale

TO CELEBRATE THEIR 50th Anniversary, the Cheshire Area of NAFAS showcased some of their floral fashion creations at a fashion show and afternoon tea held at the Park Royal Hotel, Stretton, Warrington last October. An idea sparked at a committee meeting culminated in a 90-minute catwalk show of floral hats, dresses, jewellery, bags and parasols created by Cheshire Club members.

Earlier in the year, members had been able to join Zoom workshops with Mark Entwistle (hats), Instagram @The Floral Enthusiast and Jillian Page of Something Special Flowers (floral jewellery) somethingspecialflowers.co.uk to learn the necessary techniques to make the items. Another source of inspiration was a Zoom conversation with Vinita Khemka from India who showed stunning dresses and accessories she had created for the WAFA (World Association of Floral Artists) India seminar, beautifully modelled by her employees.

Here three of the designers showcase their creations.

Lymm Floral Art Group

MODEL: Janet Schofield

DESIGNERS: Pam Mosedale: cloak and crown; Gill Davies: necklace and bouquet. To celebrate the Club's Golden Anniversary, members created



gold items inspired by Gustav Klimt's portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, better known as the 'Lady in Gold'.

HAT: We gained some fabulous suggestions from Mark Entwistle about using soft wire and cable ties to form the foundation of various hat styles. The original ideas were based upon The Duchess of Cornwall's hat when she married Prince Charles (a bit similar to a Bobby Charlton comb-over!). We used dried *Strelitzia* sprayed gold but the leaves appeared to have minds of their own by the way they twisted during the drying process and seemed to morph into Medusa's slithering snakes! Best not to look directly at Janet because she might turn you into stone!

CLOAK: The Lady in Gold theme continued

with the cloak, made from a net curtain and remnant upholstery fabric. It was inspired by costumes worn by the evil Queen Ravenna played by Charlize Theron in the film *Snow White and the Huntsman*. The gold spray came out again to cover more *Strelitzia*, *Fatsia* and woven *Phormium* leaves. *Fatsia* were wired to form the large upright collar and some were stripped with the veins used to create a spider's web effect on the back of the cloak.

NECKLACE: Jillian Page's workshop inspired the creation of this contemporary necklace. The craft-based jewellery evolved into elegant simplicity – timeless with richness and grace and unadorned with flowers. However, dried or fresh flowers could be added and it's perfect for wearing with your little black dress.

BOUQUET: Dried flower designs are making a major comeback and modern dried flowers and seed heads can be artfully created into intricate shapes and designs. There's something uniquely beautiful about the texture of everlasting dried flowers in this large, bold and airy bouquet.

New Brighton Flower Arrangement Society and Lymm Floral Art Group

MODEL & DESIGNER: Debbie Davies (right)

I've always admired the avant-garde designs of John Galliano, so the initial inspiration for the silhouette of my floral fashion design came from his 1997 Collection. *Vogue* described the Collection as a spoof on Ancient Egypt, and suggested the look was 'Cleopatra meets Cyd Charisse'.

Developing the inspiration further and incorporating my love of circus arts, I introduced flamboyant colours and feathers into the design, with pampas grass plumes on the hat and around the waist. For the cascade of colour that created the 'bustle' I used wired *Aspidistra* leaves to give lots of movement attached to a ring of rattan. To introduce



Tarporley Flower Club

MODEL & DESIGNER: Carole Chia (above)

OUT OF LOCKDOWN DRESS AND HAT

During the first lockdown I included Allium 'Purple Sensation' in a new flower bed, which gave a wonderful display in May and June. Once picked, I dried the seed heads and spray-painted them silver and pink for the hat and dress decoration. The front and back bodice decoration was created from dried *Stachys* leaves and houseplant foliage was added throughout the skirt.

another texture, I created leaf forms using pliable aluminium wire and sewed sisal into the leaf shape.

To complete the look I took the vibrant colours down the arms, adhering fresh and dried flowers to the net sleeves. The fabulous pom-pom *Gerbera*, running through the design, created a sense of fun. Just what the event was all about – fun and creativity with flowers and friends.



FIND OUT MORE More information about the Cheshire Area of NAFAS and details of how to join are at nafascheshire.org.uk



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Rocket power

A beautiful burst of blue
Delphinium wrapped within a green
balloon of long-lasting *Typha*.

Design: Dawn Jennings

Image: Afsheen Navid

YOU WILL NEED

- 5–7 stems *Delphinium*
- Large bunch of long *Typha* leaves

AND

- Pin holder
- Tall vase – this was one vase with a curved bowl on top of a cylinder (see TIPS)
- Elastic band
- Bind wire

HOW TO

1 Place the pin holder in the centre of the top section of the vase. Half fill with water.

2 Tie the *Delphinium* stems together just under the flowers so they make a pleasing shape.

3 Place the end of each *Typha* blade inside the top part of the container. Billow it out around the top of the container and tie securely with an elastic band. Slide the *Typha* blades inside the elastic band to hold them in place. Add bind wire over the top of the elastic band where it meets the cylindrical part of the container and allow the ends to flair out.

* TIPS

This is an unusual container, but you could use a fish bowl and a cylinder vase of similar sizes to the one featured. Use plenty of florists' fix around the rim of the cylinder vase to make a secure connection. Take care when picking up.

Any tall linear flower such as *Consolida* (larkspur), *Liatris* or mini *Gladiolus* would work well in place of the *Delphinium*.



Dazzling DELPHINIUM

These sumptuous blooms add eye-catching structure to garden borders and cut-flower arrangements. **Judith Blacklock** chats with expert growers and designers to find out more.

THIS DELIGHTFUL FLOWER with its magnificent spikes of single and double blue, purple, pink, red and white flowers has been with us ever since the gardening revolution started. The first illustration of *Delphinium* is found in a book of the early XVII century, where it accidentally got placed within the family of the *Ranunculus*.

They flourish in a sunny spot with free-draining soil and plenty of room to grow, and benefit from staking to support their commanding towering blooms.

I always think of the wonderful AA Milne poem *The Dormouse and the Doctor*. Here is a taster:

*There once was a Dormouse who lived in a bed
Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red)
And all the day long he'd a wonderful view
Of geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue)*

If you read to the end, you'll discover that chrysanthemums didn't hold quite the same charm for the dormouse!

The name *Delphinium* is the Latin word for dolphin and, with a bit of imagination, the flower buds do indeed look like dolphins. The flower has parts that point backward, resembling a rider's spurs, hence the common name larkspur.

Flora asked **Simon Langdon** of specialist *Delphinium* growers Blackmore & Langdon and **Jo-Anne Newham** of Van Vliet for a few facts about this beautiful flower.

Delphinium as plants

Simon Langdon

What's the difference between larkspur and *Delphinium*?

There is some confusion because larkspur can be used as a common name for both *Delphinium* and *Consolida*, which are two similar but separate plant genus within the *Ranunculaceae* family. *Delphinium* has some 370 species and *Consolida* some 40. Basically, larkspur tends to refer to annual plants, while *Delphinium* are perennial.

In the garden what height do plants grow to?

We give a guide height of around 1–1.5m for most of our cultivars (excluding dwarf ones) but this can differ with *Delphinium*, depending on how happy they are in their location. If soil quality is good and the plant has everything it requires, they can reach dizzying heights – as tall as 3.5m has been recorded. You can also

manipulate the plant if you so desire. By removing early growing shoots you can reduce the number of flowering spikes, thus increasing their height.

The plants you grow are *Delphinium elatum*. Do you recommend these above the 'Pacific Giant' strain?

Delphinium elatum is a taller, stronger plant and more suited to the British climate. As the name suggests, the 'Pacific Giant' strain was initially bred for the climate found in that part of the world, with the aim of providing a smaller height of plant that performed in a warmer, drier climate. They are more commonly sold by the garden centre trade because their habit means they stay compact for longer, thus increasing shelf life. We usually refer to the *D. elatum* species looking a bit like gangly teenagers as young plants, but they soon grow through this and bulk up very quickly!

What are the ideal growing conditions for *Delphinium*?

Delphiniums need their own space, so try to leave about 30cm all around the plant as they will grow into the room you can afford to give them. They are not good at fighting for room and can easily become overwhelmed in a busy border. They also prefer a light soil

rather than heavy clay and it must drain well for them to make it through the wet winter months.

They also like colder winters because they need to go through the vernalisation process. They produce much stronger plants if they have been frozen solid in the ground during dormancy. A common mistake is to mulch over the plants to offer protection, but this has the adverse effect of keeping them too protected and can lead to rotting of the crowns setting in.

We use a very small number of pellets to keep slugs at bay, just a pinch between thumb and forefinger on each plant. A small amount on a regular basis is much more effective because a large amount just encourages slugs and snails from far and wide to come and have a taste. There's a whole range of different preventative measures – copper slug rings, nematodes, as well as anything small and sharp, such as crushed egg shells – if you'd rather not use pellets.

How long should a plant last?

A quality plant has a normal lifespan of around seven years, after which it tends to start to lose its vigour, but I have had reports of plants lasting 50 years or more.



What a pleasure it is to just pop these delightful summer flowers into a vase with few or no mechanics. These were hand-tied in a linear style with straight bound stems. With the *Delphinium* are *Alstroemeria*, *Agapanthus*, *Gladiolus*, *Dianthus 'Green Trick'*, *Fatsia japonica* and *Xerophyllum tenax*.

Design: Sarah Hills-Ingyon Image: Judith Blacklock

What should you look for in a quality plant?

A quality plant won't necessarily look good when young. The best way to ensure you get the eventual display you desire is to buy from a reputable source and attempt to select cultivars that have a proven track record, such as those that have received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

Delphinium as cut flowers

Jo-Anne Newham

In what colours are cut *delphiniums* available?

Delphinium are available in just about every shade of blue and purple and now in white, cream and pink.

When purchasing cut flower stems how many flowers at the top of the stem should be in tight bud?

About one third of the stem.

Delphinium have hollow stems, so should they be treated in any special way for example filling with water and stuffing with cottonwool?

Cut about one tenth off the stem at a slight angle and place in clean water in a vase. Tests prove that filling the stems with water has little effect on the life of the flower.

How long should *Delphinium* last when purchased from a reputable source?

They should last up to one week. To help the tall spike last longer, it's worth removing the leaves, which also makes the stem look more attractive.

There is a new spray *Delphinium* on the market. Can you tell us more about it?

Delphinium 'Sunshine' from Ball SB is a new spray form with buds opening all together at the top of the stems but *Consolida* (larkspur) flowers are generally more spray like. These are available most of the year because they are imported from South America and Africa when the Dutch season is low.



Dish of the day

A circular arrangement of manipulated *Aspidistra* leaves embellished with a few colourful spring flowers, served on a circular dish, creates a platter of delights.

Design: Trudie Easton

Image: Thomas de Hoghton



YOU WILL NEED

- About 20 small *Aspidistra* leaves
- Selection of short spring flowers such as the individual heads of *Ranunculus*, spray *Rosa*, *Viburnum opulus* 'Roseum' and *Alchemilla mollis*

AND

- 0.91mm-gauge stub wires
- Stemtex® or Parafilm
- Floral tape
- Round dish deep enough to take water – this one is 38cm in diameter

HOW TO

1 Cover each wire with Stemtex® or Parafilm.

2 Fold each leaf concertina style and thread each one onto the wire. Take the wire through the leaf 5cm from the stalk, close to the mid rib. Make sure you thread all the leaves in the same direction so that the stems fan out evenly.

3 Once you have threaded all your leaves, overlap the two ends of wire and bind tightly with tape to create a circle of threaded leaves.

4 Arrange the circle of leaves on the dish with the stems facing outwards. Neatly trim the base of the stems, making them the same length.

5 Place your flowers into the folds of the leaves so that their stems are in the water and their heads nestle between or slightly above the leaves.

6 Top your dish up with water once in position.

* TIPS

You could use leaves preserved in glycerine so they remain supple together with dried flowers to make a longer-lasting design.

This design could also be created with *Phormium* (use part of the leaf that is not unduly stiff) or *Fagus* (beech) leaves threaded, rather than folded, onto the wire.





colour revolution

Robin White explains the creative process behind his display at last year's Kent Floral Art Show, which was awarded Most Innovative Design.

Image: Pauline Pearce

MY COLOUR REVOLUTION design was based on polycarbonate roofing panels, which are available from builders' merchants and DIY stores. The panels are easy to cut with a jigsaw and Stanley knife (used with care) and, once I had the desired shape, the next stage was to fix it to a base. For this I utilised a 20mm-thick plywood disc, cut 2.5cm smaller all round than the size specified. That way, I knew I wouldn't exceed my allocated space.

To attach the panels, I utilised threaded rods with bolts, fitted to the ply, using two rods per panel to ensure stability. Once all three panels were fitted to the base, I was ready for the fun part – filling the sections with various textures, for interest. For this I used aquarium gravel, flat canes (woodband), jute sticks and canes, which are all available in assorted colours.

To link my design to the show title, Colour Revolution, I decided to follow the colours of the show poster. Once I'd filled the contents, I used end caps to prevent them spilling out in transit, especially the gravel!

No foam was permitted, so the next stage was considering how to attach the flowers. I had experience of glueing and wiring flowers for my exhibit at the Bournemouth show, when I'd experimented with various flowers. I knew that small callas (*Zantedeschia*) lasted well out of water for several days, and certainly for the duration of the show, together with *Amaranthus*, *Anthurium*, *Craspedia*, *Cymbidium* and *Dendrobium*, provided they were well conditioned.

I was delighted with my completed exhibit, which achieved a First and was also awarded Most Innovative Design.

FIND OUT MORE The theme of this year's Kent Floral Art Competition is Let's Go to the Movies, held at the Kent Showground, Detling, Maidstone from 27–29 May. See kentfloralart.co.uk for details.

Perfectly wearable

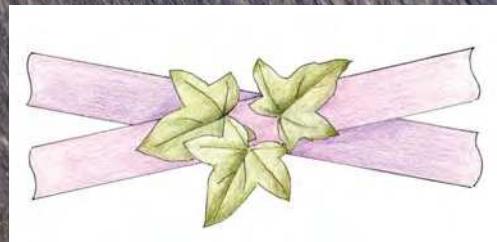
Ribbon can turn a few short-stemmed flowers into something that is a delight to wear.

Design: Sarah Hills-Ingyon Image: Judith Blacklock



HOW TO

- 1** Angle the lengths of ribbon over each other.
- 2** Secure together in the centre with florist's cold glue.
- 3** Glue flat leaves to the central part of the ribbon. This creates an easy platform on which you can adhere your flowers and foliage.
- 4** Cut the *Nigella* short, glue the back of the flower and where you wish the flowers to be placed.
- 5** Keep longer stems on the other flowers and the *Asparagus* and tuck the stems behind each other.
- 6** Remove any trails of glue.
- 7** Place on the wrist and tie with a neat bow.



* TIPS

Whenever you use florist's glue, allow time for it to become tacky before adhering ribbon, leaves or flowers. Hold together for several seconds to ensure they are secure.

Add to the centre focal flower and build up a profile as you work inwards. Alternatively, you can work from the centre outwards.

Reflect the colour of the flowers with your choice of ribbon.

YOU WILL NEED

- Flat, broad leaves (whole leaf or sections) such as *Stachys byzantina* or *Hedera helix* (ivy)
- Contrasting foliage such as feathery *Asparagus*
- Selection of flowers – *Chamelaucium* (waxflower), *Delphinium*, *Nigella* (love-in-a-mist) and spray roses have been used here

AND

- 2 x 60cm lengths of 5cm-wide satin ribbon (sufficient to take round the wrist and make a pleasing bow)
- Florist's cold glue

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