



*SORBUS PSEUDOHUPEHENSIS*  
'PINK PAGODA'

Its beautiful, feathered, blue-green leaves have a greyish underside, and in autumn turn a glorious rich red. In spring it is covered in white flowers, which grow in pyramidal clusters, and are followed by dark-pink berries. Unlike other rowan berries, these pretty pink ones aren't loved by birds, so the display continues until the following spring. It's a small tree that is easy to grow and is able to withstand extremes of heat, cold, strong winds and drought. AGM\*.

**Height** 8m.  
**Origin** Garden origin (species China).  
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun.  
**Hardiness** RHS H6†.  
**Season of interest** Autumn.



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# NOVEMBER PLANTS

As winter begins to bite, Fleur finds colour in unexpected places, from a late-flowering allium and long-flowering clematis to a striking fuchsia and beautiful pink rowan berries

WORDS FLEUR VAN ZONNEVELD PHOTOGRAPHS MAAYKE DE RIDDER



*NICANDRA PHYSALODES*  
'BLACK POD'

An annual that is easy to grow from seed, although its bell-shaped flowers, which are pale blue to violet with some white, last for only a few hours a day in full glory. The spectacular, black-spotted seedpods are really small lampions that are long lasting when dried. It is a monotypic genus in the potato family, and very toxic if eaten. It takes its name from the ancient Greek poet and physician Nicander of Colophon who wrote several hundred hexameters on poisons and their antidotes.

**Height** 1m.  
**Origin** Garden origin (species South America).  
**Conditions** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.  
**Hardiness** Not applicable.  
**Season of interest** Summer to autumn.



*NEPETA KUBANICA*

The large, purple-blue flowers of this nepeta rise beautifully above its large, fresh-green leaves, giving it a transparent feel. Its real strength comes to the fore after flowering when the purple spiked seedpods stand in whorls along the stem. They create a strong architectural effect in late autumn, when the upper half of the plant with the bushy seedpods turns a violet red. It looks beautiful when it is grown above a subtle grass, such as *Sporobolus heterolepis*, but can also be used to unusual and stunning effect when it's combined with late-flowering anemones.

**Height** 80cm.  
**Origin** Russian region of Kuban (Caucasus).  
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun.  
**Hardiness** RHS H7.  
**Season of interest** Summer to autumn.

*ALLIUM THUNBERGII*  
'OZAWA'

This ornamental onion flowers late, from September to November, producing clusters of bright-purple to purple-pink flowers. Its thin, hollow, grassy leaves are attractive throughout the growing season and even turn slightly orange when temperatures fall below freezing. It forms neat clumps, so it is also suitable for pots. The species was first introduced from Japan in the 18th century, but this cultivar, which is more compact and flowers richly, was selected by the nurseryman George Schenk in Washington State, USA.

**Height** 40cm.  
**Origin** Garden origin (species Japan, China, Korea).  
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun.  
**Hardiness** RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.  
**Season of interest** Autumn.



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

*DEYEUXIA EFFUSIFLORA*

At first sight this grass looks like *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, but the leaves are slightly wider and the plumes looser and more airy, attaining a soft, purple glow. It was found in 2010 by Cassian Schmidt, director of Hermannshof in Germany, on Mount Lu in central China at an altitude of 1,100m. In some winter lights, the leaves and plumes appear gold, while in others they can look silver. Its elegant, eye-catching panicles mean this is a grass that stands out as a solitary beauty in the middle of a border or in a prairie-style planting. It also works well as a contrast for the hard winter contours of hedges and buildings.

**Height** 1.2m.

**Origin** China.

**Conditions** Well-drained dry soil; full sun.

**Hardiness** RHS H7.

**Season of interest** Autumn.

*PLECTRANTHUS ARGENTATUS*

Although its foliage provides interest from spring, the plant doesn't bloom until late in the summer. But the blue spikes, when they do appear, stand out beautifully against the silver-grey leaves, making this a wonderful plant for a hot border where it provides a cooling contrast to more intense colours. In common with all *Plectranthus* species it's not hardy, but is easy to propagate from seed or cuttings and does well in pots. Some species of *Isodon*, such as *I. excisus*, have a similar look for a hardy alternative.

**Height** 80cm.

**Origin** Australia.

**Conditions** Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

**Hardiness** RHS H1C.

**Season of interest** Spring to early winter.

*FUCHSIA 'BLACKY'*

Like most fuchsias, 'Blacky' flowers non-stop from summer to late autumn, provided temperatures remain above freezing. We first came across this new cultivar, from Billy Carruthers at Binny Plants, at last year's Great Dixter Autumn Plant Fair and fell for its very large flowers in a dark, black purple and purplish red. It's an improved version of *Fuchsia* 'Roesse Blacky' with a chalice that looks like a ruffle skirt and slips that curl up. It's a large, upright plant better suited for pots than for hanging baskets, and its almost-black fruits, which are over 1cm, are also very tasty.

**Height** 70cm.

**Origin** Garden origin (species Mexico).

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

**Hardiness** RHS H2.

**Season of interest** Summer to autumn.



## PLACES TO VISIT

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

Near the small village of Wilhelminaoord in the north of the Netherlands is the well-known nursery **Kwekerij Arborealis**. It's a traditional nursery owned by Micha Wieland and Sietske Metz that offers a contemporary selection of shrubs and trees, including a wide range of viburnums and hydrangeas. Micha and Sietske are also proponents of forest

gardening – a sustainable agroforestry system that uses companion planting to build an edible woodland habitat of fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines and perennial vegetables grown in a succession of layers – and the nursery offers a huge range of plants suited to this system. Twice a year Micha and Sietske bring a selection of their favourites to the specialist

plant fairs we run at De Kleine Plantage and there's often one plant I'm surprised to discover is edible. Dirk de Ruiterspad 2, 8384 DD Wilhelminaoord, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)521 383696, arborealis.nl  
If the idea of forest gardening intrigues then you can see it in action at **Trompenburg Tuinen & Arboretum** in Rotterdam. It's a peaceful, green oasis in

the centre of this busy city, and a lovely garden to explore. It also has a very special collection of trees, perennials, bulbs and tubers, and holds the Dutch national collections of *Quercus*, *Fagus*, *Ilex* and *Hosta*. Honingerdijk 86, 3062 NX Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)10 233 0166, trompenburg.nl  
A good garden to explore in winter in the >



### SAXIFRAGA 'SHIRANAMI'

The name of this Japanese cultivar translates as 'white wave' and the abundant, pure-white, double flowers that froth above slightly hairy, apple-green leaves on short stems look like stylised sea foam. So stunning are its flowers, which without night frost will bloom until December, that it feels out of place among the often messy mix of browns in the late autumnal border and is better placed in nice pot on the terrace. This cultivar may be Japanese but the species, *Saxifraga fortunei*, is from China brought to Europe in the 19th century by the Scottish plant hunter Robert Fortune.

**Height** 30cm.

**Origin** Garden origin (species China).

**Conditions** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

**Hardiness** RHS H4.

**Season of interest** Autumn.



### CLEMATIS 'POLISH SPIRIT'

One of our favourite clematis. The medium-sized, dark-violet flowers contrast nicely with the fresh-green leaves. It is a clematis with a rich and long flowering period and one that is strong and almost never suffers from wilting disease. It is a good grower that can be easily guided through bushes and small trees such as *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver'. It also combines wonderfully with climbing roses, such as the yellow 'Golden Showers', the voluptuous pink 'Eden Rose' or the single-flowered Open Arms (= 'Chewpixcel'). AGM.

**Height** 3m.

**Origin** Hybrid of garden origin.

**Conditions** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.

**Hardiness** RHS H6.

**Season of interest** Late summer to autumn.

### ASTILBE 'BEAUTY OF ERNST'

A relatively new cultivar, introduced in 2005 by the Dutch grower Henk Holtmaat. In summer the bright-green spring leaves mature to a purple colour then in autumn these fade to a wide colour spectrum that ranges from green and purple to gold, orange and deep red, which probably accounts for its alternative selling name of 'Color Flash'. The pale-pink blooms, held on upright stems, also offer good autumn colour and, after flowering, dry to form reddish-brown silhouettes.

**Height** 60cm.

**Origin** Garden origin (species China, Japan).

**Conditions** Moist, rich soil; part to full shade.

**Hardiness** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

**Season of interest** Autumn.



▷ UK is **RHS Garden Harlow Carr** in North Yorkshire. Covering an area of around 68 acres, the gardens include woodlands that at this time of year are ablaze with the firework stems of several *Cornus* and *Salix* cultivars. Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 1QB. Tel 01423 565418, rhs.org.uk  
Described by James Alexander-Sinclair as

the 'garden makeover of the decade'. **Trentham Gardens**, near Stoke-on-Trent, are the stunning backdrop to a shopping village. Trentham was once home to the Dukes of Sutherland and the estate boasts an impressive, mile-long 'Capability' Brown-designed lake, but its main draw are the new gardens by two of Europe's finest designers. In

November, the formal structure of Tom Stuart-Smith's Italian Garden comes to the fore, and flanking this on both sides are two 120m-long borders by the Dutch designer, Piet Oudolf. Here swathes of coloured grasses look fabulous in November, and seedheads provide beautiful strong structure and texture throughout winter. Well worth a visit. The Trentham

Estate, Stone Road, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8JG. Tel 01782 646646, trentham.co.uk

Trentham is perhaps one of Piet's best known gardens, but it wasn't his first public garden in the UK. That honour goes to the **Millennium Garden** at Pensthorpe Natural Park in Norfolk. In late summer, the garden is a wonderful

tapestry of colour but is possibly at its best in early winter, when seedheads are transformed into glistening jewels by the first frosts of November. Grasses, such as *Miscanthus* and *Panicum*, take on an eerie beauty in the low winter sun. Pensthorpe Natural Park, Fakenham Road, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0LN. Tel 01328 851465, pensthorpe.com