



PENSTEMON DIGITALIS 'JOKE'

This selection from *Penstemon digitalis* 'Huskers Red' was introduced by Hans Kramer at De Hessenhof nursery, and is named after the wife of one of his teachers. The lilac flowers stand out well against its black-red stems and dark, red-purple leaves. Penstemons are stable, hardy plants for the middle of a border, and this one not only flowers for a long time it produces decorative seedheads in autumn. It looks beautiful grown between the blue-green leaves and purple peaks of the switch grass *Panicum virgatum* 'Heiliger Hain', and is a perfect match for *Amsonia hubrichtii*, which turns a beautiful yellow in autumn.

Height 1m.
Origin North America.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7⁺.
Season of interest Summer.



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JULY PLANTS

With summer in full swing, Fleur is spoilt for choice when it comes to colourful blooms and luscious foliage, and shares one of her own new selections

WORDS FLEUR VAN ZONNEVELD PHOTOGRAPHS MAAYKE DE RIDDER



SALVIA OMEIANA 'CRÜG THUNDERCLOUD'

The combination of the large, yellow salvia flowers and deep-purple leaves is stunning – although only the back of the leaf has the deep-purple colour and you sometimes have to pull the plant apart to see the combination fully. Collected by Dan Hinkley on Mount Emei in the Sichuan Province of China, it becomes a large solid plant and preferably grows in fertile soil in the shade. You can sow the seed (it needs cold to germinate) but it might not always come back with the beautiful purple leaf colour. Far better to take cuttings or divide the clump.

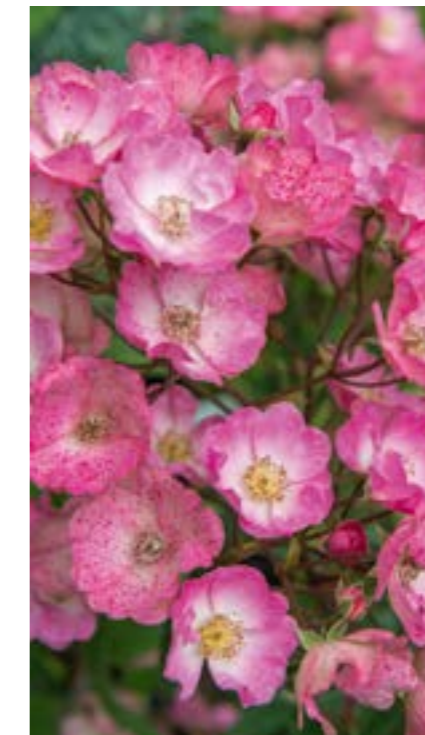
Height 70cm.
Origin China.
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

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

ROSA ALDEN BIESEN (= 'LENGRATI')

This musk rose, selected by the Louis Lens rose nursery in Belgium, has elegant, light, hanging branches with large pyramidal clusters of single, pink flowers that turn from old rose to greenish pink. As the flowers grow older – or the weather gets colder – the petals are blushed with fiery, pink-red freckles, which makes it doubly exciting. The petals fall off very slowly, staying in place even in bad weather. Although it flourishes extremely easily don't cut out too many clusters, because the oval red hips add additional interest in autumn. Can be used as a shrub or climbing rose.

Height 2m.
Origin Europe.
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.



HOSTA 'HIRAO MAJESTY'

Beneath each flower are large, soft-pink bracts that look like stars piled up on dark stems and are so spectacular they can surprise even the most seasoned hosta lover. The lavender-coloured flowers appear midsummer and stand out against a background of beautiful large, bright-green leaves with wavy edges. It is a tetraploid hosta, meaning it has four sets of chromosomes rather than the typical two. Tetraploid hostas tend to have firmer leaves with clearer markings that are more resistant to damage from slugs and can withstand the sun much better than normal diploids.

Height 70cm.
Origin Japan.
Conditions Well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Spring to summer.



HYDRANGEA MACROPHYLLA
'LOVE YOU KISS'

There are several hydrangeas with a thin red rim and disk-shaped inflorescences but this is possibly the best. The rim gets its redness from an anthocyanin called myrtillin, which usually makes the flowers of hydrangeas pink in alkaline soils and blue in acid soils, but in this case the red remains fixed and becomes more intense when there is more light or when it is colder. Over time the rim becomes less visible and eventually the flowers turn a beautiful green mixed with red. Both the young foliage and the autumn leaves are red coloured. AGM*.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Japan.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H5.

Season of interest Spring to autumn.



CICERBITA BOURGAEI

Although this Pontic blue sow thistle is originally from Turkey, it is well suited for the tall herb communities we call *hochstaudenflur* in the Netherlands. A close relative of lettuce, it is a lovely plant that produces panicles of numerous stellate flowers from June to July. These flowers look similar to chicory but their colour is a little more lilac. It's a thick-stemmed bristly perennial that has an almost wild appearance and works extremely well in natural planting schemes. Despite its Turkish origins it's also very hardy and in our garden has survived to -29°C.

Height 1m.

Origin Asia, Turkey.

Conditions Moist soil; full sun, part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



ASTRANTIA MAJOR
'HADSPEN BEST'

In the 1990s we visited the legendary Hadspen nursery of Sandra and Nori Pope in Somerset and brought back a beautiful *Astrantia* 'Hadspen Blood', which was very happy in our clay soil and produced many seedlings over the years. This one is by far the best with large, black-red flowers and purple-black solid stems. I did worry that perhaps the last thing the world needed was another red astrantia, but this one is so lovely and flourishes for such a long time I couldn't really keep it, or its sister 'Hadspen Beauty', for myself.

Height 70cm.

Origin Garden origin.

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

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Summer.

PLACES TO VISIT

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

De Carishof is a lovely garden in Limburg, the southernmost province of the Netherlands. First built in 1640, the farmhouse at its centre has undergone many changes over the years, the most significant being the addition of a traditional, Limburg double Dutch gable in 1777. The garden itself is divided into several parts by hedges and both its layout and planting

are quite formal close to the house gradually becoming more naturalistic as you move closer to the garden's edges. The flower borders, which are mainly concentrated around the house, are almost completely planted with perennials in a subtle colour palette of mostly white, pink and blue. Towards the boundaries you will also find fruit trees and bushes as

well as grape vines. Retersbekerweg 1, 6343 PK Klimmen, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)45 405 5690, decarishof.nl

For lovers of the plants associated with new perennial schemes there is possibly no better garden to visit than **Hermannshof** in the German town of Weinheim. Under the directorship of Cassian Schmidt, this public park

has become a renowned research garden looking at new directions in planting design, especially in naturalistic planting style. The combinations Cassian has created are inspired by the way plants associate in nature, and his team also carries out research into the use and maintenance of hardy perennials in the wine-growing climate. It's also a glorious park and a ▷

DIASCIA PERSONATA

This upright, eye-catching diascia is a bit of a misfit in the diascia family. Although it is covered for months with typical diascia flowers, they are of an untypical dusty mauve-pink colour that takes some by surprise. It was discovered in South Africa in 1988 by Jamie Compton, Martyn Rix and John d'Arcy and introduced to European gardeners by Hopleys in Hertfordshire. Fortunately, it is quite hardy in our Dutch climate and it is just as easy to make cuttings from this plant as it is from the more common diascias. It also makes an excellent cut flower.

Height 70cm.

Origin South Africa.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



COSMOS BIPINNATUS
'RUBENZA'

This beautiful cosmos was bred by van Hemert & Co, our regular seed supplier. Its dark, ruby-red colours dull to an old rose red over the flowering period and that shifting colour palette makes a mass planting of this cosmos extra lively. Its loose, natural structure also makes it very easy to combine with taller perennials, such as the moon carrot, *Seseli libanotis*, especially when used with a large clump of the blood-red grass *Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra' in the foreground. AGM.

Height 90cm.

Origin Garden origin.

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



GERANIUM PRATENSE
'MOONLIGHT'

It is always a wonderful surprise when a seedling accidentally gets the chance to develop into an exciting flowering plant. This geranium has dark-brown leaves and almost completely white flowers with darker veins. The flowers grow to a height of 60cm above the leaves. As with many other plants with reddish leaves, the colour becomes more intense when the plant gets a lot of light or is placed in slightly drier soil. However, you have to be careful, as the red leaves can also burn with too much sunlight.

Height 80cm.

Origin Europe.

Conditions Well-drained; full sun, part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Summer.



▷ pleasure to explore, with around 2,500 different perennials on display and numerous old trees, including some that are quite rare in Germany. Open daily. Babostraße 5, Weinheim, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Tel +49 (0)6201 13652 sichtungsgarten-hermannshof.de

In a quiet part of Normandy, just outside

Bayeux, is the wonderful **Les Jardins de Castillon**. First opened in 1985, the garden was created by Anglophiles Colette and Hubert Sainte-Beuve, and has a very English feel particularly in the long, overflowing double herbaceous border, known as L'Allée des Fleurs. The two-and-a-half acre garden has been divided up into ten separate areas, and each has its own unique feel.

The garden as a whole is a delight to visit, especially in high summer. Open until 12 October, 2-5pm, Tuesday to Saturday (and Sundays in June and July, 2.30-5.30pm), €7. Les Jardins de Castillon-Plantbessin, 14490 Castillon, France. Tel +33 (0)2 31 92 56 03, jardins.castillonplantbessin.com
Colette and Hubert say they have been influenced

by many well-known English gardens and I suspect one of those gardens may well have been the wonderful Arts and Crafts garden at **Rodmarton Manor**. Laid out by Claud and Margaret Biddulph, between 1909 and 1929, the eight-acre Cotswold garden is among the loveliest in England. There is so much to enjoy in this many faceted garden

from its quirky topiary and abundant roses to its glorious herbaceous borders that in summer burst into life, overflowing with a rich mix of planting that is constantly changing but always worth exploring. Open until the end of September, 2-5pm, £5. Rodmarton Manor, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6PF. Tel 01285 841442, rodmarton-manor.co.uk