

SEPTEMBER PLANTS

The days may be cooling down but the colours are still hot in Fleur's borders with an exotic-looking alstroemeria and a low-growing helenium, among her choices this month

WORDS FLEUR VAN ZONNEVELD PHOTOGRAPHS MAAYKE DE RIDDER



Fleur van Zonneveld runs the Dutch nursery De Kleine Plantage. dekleineplantage.nl



ALSTROEMERIA 'SUMMER BREEZE'

Dutch breeders of cut flowers are always trying to develop stronger and longer-flowering blooms. Occasionally, some of the plants they come up with are ones that also work exceptionally well in a garden setting. This alstroemeria with its slightly striped, dark bronze-coloured leaves and marbled red, orange and yellow flowers is just such a plant. In the garden it loses its regulated growth and can reach a height of around 80cm. It flowers for an exceptionally long time adding an exotic-looking touch of summer heat to September borders.

Height 80cm.
Origin Garden origin (species Chile).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; sun and part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4†.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.



PHLOX PANICULATA 'NATURAL FEELINGS'

What a bizarre-looking phlox this is. I sometimes think 'Unnatural Feelings' might have been a better name, as it's not at all what you'd expect from a *Phlox paniculata*. The panicles – which are composed of red-pink flowers with a centre of pale-green petaloid stamens – look like wrinkled little umbels, made out of small, paper pouches. Despite its unusual appearance, it is a good and healthy grower, and the panicles last for several months making it a striking and civilised addition to the border.

Height 80cm.
Origin Garden origin (species North America).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Mid to late summer.

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

SANGUISORBA CANADENSIS

Sanguisorba is a genus we love a lot. It creates a wonderful feel of airiness and looseness in naturalistic plantings, and this tall, white burnet adds a wonderful airy feel, especially when grown en masse as the late-flowering spikes tend to appear one by one – and a mix of opened and unopened flowers looks fabulous. We grow it alongside the even taller, dark-red *Sanguisorba* 'Cangshan Cranberry', which we got from Graham Gough at Marchants Hardy Plants, the dark-pink *S. menziesii* and our own selection the red *S. officinalis* 'Rock and Roll'. A winning combination.

Height 1.5m.
Origin North America.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.



PERSICARIA AMPLEXICAULIS 'BLACK ADDER'

This relatively short persicaria is characterised by its large, thick, dark-red spikes that bow deeply after a rain shower. It's a selection from the Belgian breeder and persicaria expert Chris Ghyselen, who seems to delight in creating the chunkiest possible flowers. We like to combine striking persicarias, such as this, with a spectacular phlox, such as *Phlox paniculata* 'Eva Foerster', which makes an intense and unlikely, almost kitsch, combination. So exciting and highly recommended. Definitely, one to try for yourself.

Height 70cm.
Origin Garden origin (species Himalayas).
Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.





BERBERIS THUNBERGII
F. *ATROPURPUREA*
'ROSE GLOW'

In the Netherlands, where *Berberis thunbergii* is often planted in public parks, many garden enthusiasts actively dislike these thorny bushes, considering them merely a municipal plant. But, if pruned just once early in the year, this cultivar rewards you with pronounced spotted red leaves, and when neatly pruned into a dome shape is a great addition to the border. Even in winter its filigree habit adds structure between the skeletons of spent perennials.

Height 1.5m.

Origin Garden origin (species Japan).

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

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Year round.



ALLIUM WALLICHII

Allium wallichii is something of an oddity among the extensive *Allium* genus, which includes more than 600 species. It comes from the Himalayas, where it grows from bulbils produced at the end of stolons at altitudes of more than 2,000m in relatively damp meadow. It flowers in late summer – from August to October – and doesn't start into growth until late spring, with its leaves beginning to die back at a similar time to the early blooming alliums. It's a purple-pink colour with large, round umbels, made up of fine, star-shaped flowers.

Height 45cm.

Origin Himalayas, southwest China.

Conditions Moist soil; full sun to part shade.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Late summer to autumn.



BEGONIA GRANDIS SUBSP.
EVANSIANA VAR. *ALBA*

I like begonias mainly for their asymmetrical leaves and their long flowering period, but if, like this one, they are also hardy, then all the better. Sometimes, when I've grown this particular one in a pot, I've thought that it might not have survived the winter, as often it can be hard to see if it is still there or not until June. Then all of a sudden, it comes to life in all its glory. It has delicate, white flowers and the undersides of the leaves are burgundy coloured. It even grows on dry, shady ground.

Height 50cm.

Origin China, Japan.

Conditions Well-drained soil; part shade.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.

PLACES TO VISIT

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

Grasses come to the fore in late summer and autumn and one of our favourite gardens to see them at their best is **Jakobstuin**, in the northern Netherlands. It's a good example of the new perennial planting inspired by the likes of Piet Oudolf and Cassian Schmidt and the prairie style championed by Jan Spruyt where grasses play an even more prominent

role, along with plenty of echinaceas, sanguisorbas and agastaches. The garden is part of a larger property, de Coullisse, which offers bed and breakfast accommodation. Tillewei 21, 9258 GP, Eestrum, Friesland, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)512 843667, decoullisse.nl

Around 40 miles south of Rotterdam, on the outskirts of the old

city of Dordrecht, is **Villa Augustus** a hotel and restaurant located in an old water tower overlooking the Wantij. Set in what was originally the water basin for the tower is a garden of more than 1.5 hectares that includes, a vegetable garden, an orchard, an Italian garden and a small grove. The vegetable garden where the vegetables are

combined with roses, flowers, berries and fruit trees, always looks spectacular in late summer and early autumn. You don't have to stay in the hotel to explore the garden, but you might want to try the restaurant. Oranjelaan 7, 3311 DH Dordrecht, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)78 639 3111, villa-augustus.nl
We have known Roger and Linda Bastin for a ▶

VITIS VINIFERA 'PURPUREA'

We love purple-coloured leaves – and while there is a wealth of red-leaved perennials, annuals, trees and shrubs to choose from there are fewer options when it comes to climbers. Essentially the choice is between a single *Clematis montana* and this *Vitis vinifera*, which has lobed leaves that are purple-tinted in summer and turn a richer plum colour later in autumn. The leaves are beautiful, but the grapes are not particularly worth picking – even birds reject them – but they will hang on a wall or pergola until December. AGM*.

Height 8m.

Origin Garden origin (species central and southern Europe).

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

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



VERBENA OFFICINALIS VAR. *GRANDIFLORA* 'BAMPTON'

Some people find that this verbena self-seeds as voraciously as the better-known *Verbena bonariensis*. Although this can create a lot of extra work, we think this long-flowering verbena with its loose habit and purple leaves is worth the trouble. It is the perfect filler for an empty spot with neutral, soft-lilac spikes that actually fit everywhere even in pots. In the winter it dries to a sturdy skeleton with ornamental value. Always leave the darkest coloured seedlings, otherwise the colour of the leaves becomes lighter.

Height 60cm.

Origin Garden origin (species Europe).

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

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer to winter.



HELENIUM 'LITTLE ORANGE'

Heleniums always brighten late summer. Their firmness, health and warm red-brown to yellow colour makes them highly appealing. Many grow up to 1.5m, but this warm-orange cultivar selected by the Dutch breeder Henk Jacobs in 2007 is very short. Henk found the seedling growing among grasses and calls it a 'gift from the garden'. We have to agree. It has all the characteristics you would want from a helenium and the fact it is so low-growing makes it even more attractive. Occasionally, yellow flowers pop up, adding an extra element of fun.

Height 70cm.

Origin Garden origin (species North America).

Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Summer to autumn.



▷ long time. They're passionate growers with an overriding concern for nature. Their organic nursery **Bastin**, in the southern Dutch province of Limburg, specialises in Mediterranean plants, including salvias, lavenders, rosemary and thyme, making a visit to the nursery an olfactory, as well as a visual delight. The nursery, which also

includes a vegetable garden, chickens, bees and sheep, is worth a visit at any time but its *Salvia* and *Prairie Plant* days, which this year take place on 25-26 August, are especially worth a visit. Nieuwenhuysstraat 29 6336 XV Aalbeek, Limburg, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)45 5231475, bastin.nl
Early autumn is a great time to visit the **High Line**

park in New York. Located on a 2.3km-long former train track built in the 1930s, it stands out for its planting schemes designed by the Dutch designer Piet Oudolf. You can join the park at several points between West 34th Street and Gansevoort Street, several of which can be accessed via lifts. High Line Start Point, 5861 High Line, New York, NY

10001, USA 91 Gansevoort St, New York, NY 10014, USA. Tel +1 212 500 6035, thehighline.org
The almost desolate garden created by the late film director Derek Jarman on the shingle of his home at **Prospect Cottage**, is one that many people visit in early summer garden, but I think this garden, near Dungeness nuclear power station, is best seen in early

autumn when it seems especially atmospheric. It isn't open to the public as such but you are welcome to view it from the beach. As Jarman himself wrote: 'Paradise haunts gardens, and some gardens are paradises. Mine is one of them. Others are like bad children, spoiled by their parents, over-watered and covered with noxious chemicals.' Unforgettable.