

GARDEN DESIGNERS'



BEAUTIFUL AND USEFUL PLANTS

Our changing climate is already changing the way we garden. But what plants should we grow in this changed world? Must we sacrifice lushness for toughness? We asked five leading designers whose gardens have sustainability at their core for their ideas. Their choices are robust and adaptable plants that will protect soil, lock up carbon and provide food and shelter for wildlife. They range from low-maintenance groundcovers to the evergreen sub-shrubs dry gardening guru Olivier Filippi grows for their allelopathic effects. How amazing that they are all beautiful too.



Conrad Batten

Conrad's plant choices reflect the naturalistic spaces with sustainability at heart that are key to his design ethos, and offer an immersive and transportive experience. conradbattendesign.co.uk



Marian Boswall

Marian's selection includes plants that will protect soil, lock up carbon, and provide food and shelter for wildlife but, most of all, are simply very beautiful. marianboswall.com



Nigel Dunnett

Nigel's choices are all robust plants with strong character that fit nicely into the layers of naturalistic plantings, and above all have multiple seasons of interest. nigeldunnett.com



Olivier Filippi

A pioneer of drought-tolerant planting, Olivier has selected plants from his Mediterranean garden that are as ornamental as they are functional, and are already grown in UK. jardin-sec.com



Tom Massey

Tom's plant choices are all adaptable species, suitable for a range of locations and for the UK's increasingly extreme weather conditions and challenging garden spaces. tommassey.co.uk



Conrad Batten

1 ASPHODELUS ALBUS

In spring the flower spikes rise from a tight whorl of glaucous strap leaves – the essence of the Mediterranean in a bulb. **Height (H)** 1.2m. **Spread (S)** 30-50cm. **Conditions (C)** Adaptable, prefers alkaline and stony soil; full sun. **Season of interest (SI)** Early summer. **Hardiness rating (HR)** RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b†.

2 BLECHNUM SPICANT

Known as the hard fern, this tufted evergreen fern helps brighten shady areas and combines well with many other shade-loving plants. **AGM***. **H** 10-50cm. **S** 10-50cm. **C** Poorly drained, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

3 BRIZA MEDIA

Acts on the muting mauves and scumbling yellows of meadows. A short-lived, quivering, tufted clump of delight. **H** 30-75cm. **S** 10-30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

4 CORYLUS AVELLANA

A deciduous tree with yellow catkins in spring followed by hazel nuts in autumn. Leaves turn a rich yellow before they fall in October. **H** 4-8m. **S** 4-8m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; part shade to full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

5 CRATAEGUS MONOGYNA

In the spring, the cream flowers of this deciduous tree buzz with life and are followed in autumn by rich berries. When leaves fall they reveal the purple of spiny twigs; each hawthorn has a story told through twisted stem and branch. **H** 4-8m. **S** 4-8m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; part shade to full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

6 DAUCUS CAROTA

The wild carrot's white umbels, occasionally with a blush that swirls around a central purple pin, froth through high-summer plantings. Seeds sprout green in autumn's nest-like seedheads. **H** 30-75cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H7.

7 DIGITALIS CANARIENSIS

Burnt-orange, flame-flicked flowers with an apricot blush, rise from deep-green leaves on woody, stiff stems. The spires of bell-shaped flowers grow to varying heights creating candelabra-style colour. **H** 75cm-1.5m. **S** 75cm-1m. **C** Rich soil; sun and shelter, frost tender. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H2.

8 GERANIUM NODOSUM

In spring the young leaves of this knotted cranesbill unfurl like stretched hands. The pink petals, which have a metallic sheen, have a curious swaying habit. An excellent groundcover for the dappled shade of a tree. **H** 10-50cm. **S** 10-50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H5. ▷

†Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available. 2, 4, 6 & 8: JASON INGRAM, 3: RICHARD BLOOM.



Daucus carota's white umbels, occasionally blushed and swirled around a centre purple pin, froth through high summer plantings

CONRAD BATTEN



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▷ **9 HOLBOELLIA LATIFOLIA**
Known as the sausage vine for its sausage-shaped, fruits in autumn, this vigorous evergreen climber carries flowers through early spring that have the sweetest fragrance. Adaptable, but best in part shade and needs some sun for flowers. **H** 4-8m. **S** 2.5-8m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4.

10 LOTUS HIRSUTUS
Semi-evergreen shrub with soft, hairy grey foliage you can't resist brushing the back of your hands against. Clustered white and pink-tinted flowers run to chocolate seed capsules. **AGM**. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4.



14

11 LUZULA SYLVATICA
An evergreen perennial sedge that forms clumps of ribbon leaves, edged with hairs. The open flowers rise above the foliage in May and June on stiff stalks. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Moist, rich, poorly drained soil; part to full shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H7.

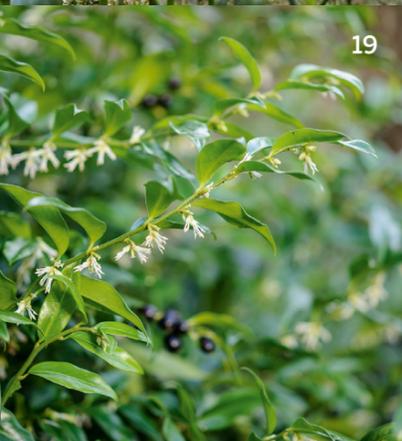
12 MALVA MOSCHATA
Known as musk mallow, this perennial creates a flutter presence in a meadow planting, or can be a shadow player on steps or by a wall. Its veined, torn-edged flowers are a middling pink. **H** 50-90cm. **S** 20-50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.



18

13 MYRTUS COMMUNIS
Brush this evergreen shrub and you'll be treated to a delicious spiced aroma. Its pointed leaves, which shimmer after the rain, contrast with puffs of fluffed cream flowers in late summer followed by dark berries. **AGM**. **H** 1.5-3m. **S** 1.5-3m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

14 PERSICARIA AMPLEXICAULIS 'BLACKFIELD'
Blood-red flowers, carried on long, ranging stalks, work brilliantly as paint flicks of colour through grasses. Loved by pollinators, this clump-forming perennial has a long flowering period, and offers interest even when not in flower, especially in autumn when the trowel-shaped leaves take on chromatographic colour. **H** 50cm-1m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Poorly drained, moist soil; full sun. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.



19

15 PRUNUS CERASIFERA
In early spring, the cherry plum offers clouds of delicate, pink-tinged white blossom, while even the hawthorn still slumbers. Followed by edible plum-like fruits in autumn. Dark-grey speckled bark, develops fissures with age. **H** 8-12m. **S** 8m. **C** Adaptable but best in moist but well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** Spring and autumn. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

16 ROSA 'NOISETTE CARNÉE'
A climbing rose that is often still flowering at the end of November. Its small clusters of warm pink

blossoms are held on mid-green leaves. The clove scent is so delicious you simply want to close your eyes and drink it in. **AGM**. **H** 2-3m. **S** 3m. **C** Rich, moisture-retentive soil; part shade to full sun. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H4.

17 ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS 'POINTE DU RAZ'
The tufted, flicked pillow hair stems of this aromatic shrub grow into a knotty, twisted mound that makes a great groundcover or trailing plant. In May and June it is topped with clear violet-blue flowers that are excellent added to a rocket salad. **H** 10-90cm. **S** 10-90cm. **C** Dry, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4.

18 RUMEX ACETOSA
The common sorrel throws up skyward wires of toasted-red flowers from mid to late summer. A low green presence, with apple-tasting leaves. Use it to stitch planting schemes together. **H** 50-75cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Well-drained soil; part shade to full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

19 SARCOCOCCA CONFUSA
Known as sweet box, this evergreen shrub is a winter enchanter, when all is quiet. A plant to linger by, and take in its sweet aroma on cold days when the temptation is to hurry on your way. The white tufted flowers hug the stem nestled in the leaf crook. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 1-2m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full to part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H5.

20 SYMPHYTUM 'HIDCOTE BLUE'
From crumpled leaves rise bell-like flowers, held in a cluster. Warm pink in bud, they open to light ink blue, bringing early delight to bees. Easily propagated by root cuttings, it is an excellent groundcover but can be tricky to dig out as any small section of root left behind can sprout a new plant. **AGM**. **H** 30-50cm. **S** 50-75cm. **C** Moist soil; sun or part shade. **SI** Spring and summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

21 THALICTRUM 'ELIN'
Leaves push from the ground in early spring, dark purple in their first flush before mellowing to a more glaucous green. The flowers rise and sway on tall stems, creating a haze of lavender-pink flower that demands to be stroked. **AGM**. **H** 1.5-2.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** July and August. **HR** RHS H7.

Marian Boswall

22 AGASTACHE 'BLACKADDER'
A member of the hyssop family, this perennial has long been used in herbal medicine as an antiseptic. This dark, giant cultivar is the most hardy and has edible flowers that go on for months and are always covered in bees. Resistant to drought and also happy in clay it makes a great vertical accent. **H** 70cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained, moderately fertile soil; full sun. **SI** June to November. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

23 ALLIUM SCHUBERTII
These enormous, lilac-coloured allium flowers look fabulously quirky in any border but are also great bee plants. The seedheads dry extremely well, creating super sustainable Christmas decorations. A perennial bulb. **H** 1m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade. **SI** April to May. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

24 ARBUTUS UNEDO
Flowering in winter this small, evergreen tree or large shrub is a useful forage plant for brave bees out on a cold sunny day. Its edible strawberry-like fruits make it a great permaculture tree to add the mid layer of a forest garden. **H** 5m. **S** 5m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** September to January. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

25 CALAMINTHA NEPETA
A bridesmaid for the front of every sunny border. A perennial from the Mediterranean, it does well on chalk and sand, and is also happy on clay. Loved by bees and caterpillars, it is deliciously aromatic so less loved by rabbits. **H** 30cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained, moderately fertile soil; full sun to partial shade. **SI** May to November. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-7b.

26 CAMASSIA QUAMASH
A brilliant perennial bulb to naturalise in a meadow setting. The dark-blue spires above narrow leaves are loved by bees and need very little attention, spreading gradually by seed if they are happy. **H** 60cm. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade. **SI** April to May. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

27 DIGITALIS LUTEA
A tall and elegant beauty to brighten up a shady spot. Nodding trumpets provide a perfect landing spot for a bee. A short-lived perennial that looks great coming up through ferns and is less promiscuous than the common foxglove *D. purpurea*. **AGM**. **H** 90cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained, moderately fertile soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** May to July. **HR** RHS H6.

28 EPIMEDIUM GRANDIFLORUM 'LILAFEE'
A key base-layer player that is ideal to cover and protect the soil to prevent erosion from heavy rain, and lock in carbon. This epimedium holds its elegant pink flowers above the foliage, just cut them back in early spring before flowering. A super easy plant for shade. **H** 25cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Humus-rich, moist well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

29 IRIS 'BENTON NIGEL'
A pop of deep-blue colour that appears just when we need it, this elegant Cedric Morris iris is from the justly famous Benton stable of irises. These are less showy than modern bearded irises, and once you're smitten with their subtle colours, I guarantee you'll find yourself wanting to collect all the colours. **H** 1m. **S** 40cm. **C** Light, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** April to June. **HR** RHS H4. ▷



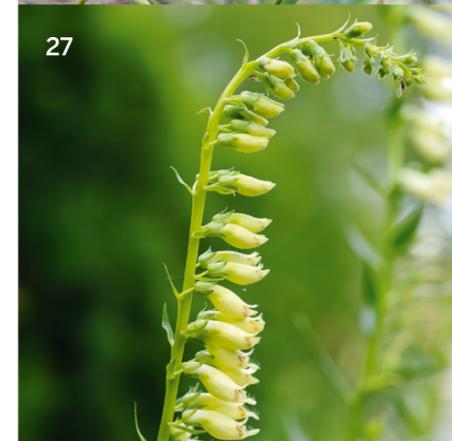
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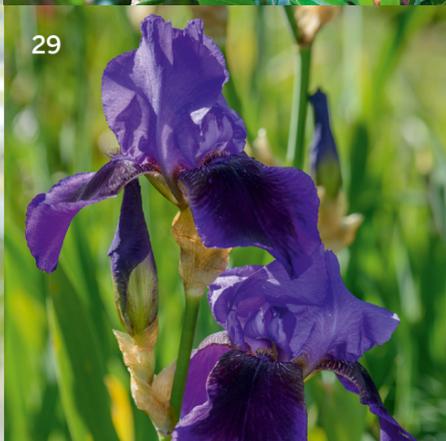
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13, 18, 19, 22, 23 & 27 JASON INGRAM; 14 TORIE CHUGG; 24 CLARE GAINES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 29 HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS; SARAH COOK; NATIONAL COLLECTION OF SIR CEDRIC MORRIS IRISES.



33

▷ **30 LINUM PERENNE**

A blue to stop you in your tracks, this lovely little perennial flax speaks of summer skies and linen frocks. Great for a gravel garden or dry front of border, it's hardy but looks so delicate with large heads on slender stems. **H** 50cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Light, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to August. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

31 MAHONIA EURYBRACTEATA SUBSP. GANPINENSIS 'SOFT CARESS'

The winter scent of a warm mahonia is such a waft of 'welcome home'. This softer version of the shrub lacks the strident architecture of the usual mahonias and is easy to fit into any scheme. Good winter bee forage. **AGM**. **H** 60cm. **S** 12m. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April to June. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



34

32 MALUS 'EVERESTE'

The humble crab apple finds a home in nearly every garden I design. In late winter the birds mob the pretty fruits when all else is gone. In spring, a daily visit to inhale the scent and listen to the bees is food for the soul. **AGM**. **H** 4-8m. **S** 4-8m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** April to May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

33 NIGELLA DAMASCENA

This hardy annual is so simple and yet so complex, with a centre like a passion flower and stunning seedheads too – a firm favourite for dry gardens especially. Great for bees, this is an annual that easily self-seeds, and the seeds are edible too. **H** 45cm. **S** 25cm. **C** Light, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to November. **HR** RHS H3, USDA 2a-11.



35

34 ORIGANUM 'KENT BEAUTY'

Very sweet nectar makes this a bee and butterfly magnet, and the unusual pink flowers drip down among bracts like hops, making it a very Kentish plant. Great for pots and window boxes where the scent can drift in when brushed. **AGM**. **H** 30cm. **S** 20cm. **C** Light, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July to September. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

35 ORLAYA GRANDIFLORA

If you have only one annual, this has to be it. The most delicate of umbels that threads up through the border or in the gravel garden, pure white and brimming with forage for pollinators right to the first frosts. A hardy annual it self-seeds in light soil. **AGM**. **H** 60cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Light, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June to October. **HR** RHS H7.



36

36 PHACELIA TANACETIFOLIA

A plant that helps feed both the soil and the bees. *Phacelia* is a pretty, green manure that you cut down while in flower to allow the nutrients to stay below. It will hum with beneficial insects all summer, a fast groundcover and prolific self-seeder. **H** 1.2m. **S** 45cm. **C** Any fertile soil; full sun. **SI** June to September. **HR** RHS H4.

37 PRUNELLA VULGARIS

An easily overlooked, but key wildflower meadow plant. Self heal is also an essential healing herb and soil-knitting stalwart in the sward. Drink it in an infusion, or leave for the bees. **H** 20cm. **S** 20cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade. **SI** April to August. **HR** RHS H5.

38 ROSA 'DUNWICH ROSE'

A shrub rose that looks just as at home in a wild garden as it does in a more polite setting. Single, creamy flowers are stunningly simple and a perfect landing spot for pollinators. In the autumn dark-blue hips provide a real talking point and food for birds too. **H** 60cm. **S** 1.2m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade. **SI** April to June. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

39 RUDBECKIA OCCIDENTALIS 'GREEN WIZARD'

A tough prairie perennial that does well in most places including heavy soils in sun. The unusual cone heads are food for butterflies and bees and the seedheads stand through the winter attracting goldfinches and look striking against a low, winter sun. **H** 1.2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Any fertile soil; sun or part shade. **SI** August to October. **HR** RHS H7.

40 SAMBUCUS NIGRA

Small tree or shrub. A beautiful addition to any sustainable garden. The pretty, spring flowers and deep-purple autumn fruits are both delicious and used medicinally. Plus great forage for wildlife. **H** 4m. **S** 3m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Spring and autumn. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

41 SELINUM WALLICHIANUM

With masses of starry parsley heads above pretty, fern-like, cut leaves, this is a delightful froth of bee fodder for any border. Its red stems look wonderful with *Sanguisorba* 'Tanna' bobbing through. A medicinal plant in the permaculture garden. **AGM**. **H** 1m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July to September. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 6b-10b.

42 VIBURNUM CARLESII

With a perfume to turn heads in early summer, this is my favourite of this useful genus. Flowers are white to pink in pom-poms with red edges, and are loved by bees. The glossy green leaves turn red edged in autumn. A fabulous mid layer shrub. **H** 1.8m. **S** 2m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun to full shade. **SI** April to July. **HR** RHS H6 USDA 4a-7b.

Nigel Dunnett

43 ACTAEA 'QUEEN OF SHEBA'

Striking, dark purple-black foliage and arching racemes of scented white flowers in late summer – a long-season plant of great value. Really special gem for shade. **H** 1.5m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moist soil; sun to part shade. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b. ▷



38

The single, creamy flowers of *Rosa* 'Dunwich Rose' are stunningly simple and a perfect landing spot for pollinators

MARIAN BOSWALL

34 JOHN MARTIN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, 34 & 35 ISAON INGRAM, 36 & 37 TIM GAINERY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO