

June plants

Nine elegant plants to add interest to the garden as summer finally holds sway

WORDS CHRIS MARCHANT PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



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Euphorbia oblongata

This short-lived perennial has a giant propensity to self-seed – you can hear the ‘ping’ of exploding capsules on a warm day. This generally ensures continuity of the clump, though perhaps not in exactly the same place. There is a refreshing brightness in the openly expansive flower heads. Their acid green bracts tone effectively with almost any neighbouring plant and neatly infiltrate spaces in a young border. Sarah Raven has highlighted its value for cutting, rating it her number one foliage plant and mixing stems with sweet peas, roses or dahlias. For trouble-free impact and extended vase life, it earns high marks.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 30cm.
ORIGINS Southern Europe.
SOIL Well-drained garden loams.
SEASON June to September.



Nepeta subsessilis ‘Washfield’

Originally selected by plantswoman Elizabeth Strangman of Washfield Nursery, one could be forgiven for failing to recognise this as *Nepeta* at all, but its characteristic scent removes any doubts. A plant for grouping rather than edging, with dramatic flower heads of some 15cm in length, it stands sturdy and upright on square-section stems. Even as the flowers fade and drop, the purple calyces remain entire and beautiful in their form, partnered by giant oval leaves, which acquire an attractive purple halo as the season progresses.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 70cm x 35cm.
ORIGINS *N. subsessilis* originates from damp, cooler, shady hillsides of southern Japan.
SOIL Most fertile loam soils.
SEASON Flowers June to July, with foliage display into the autumn.



Potentilla ‘Volcan’

I love the use of red in summer plantings, and this deep blood red has to be one of my favourite ways of giving a dash of excitement to a sedate and sober composition. With their velvety texture and rich deep hue, the flowers of *Potentilla* ‘Volcan’ will scramble through branches of adjacent plants in their quest for light. It is particularly good associated with *Salvia verticillata* ‘Purple Rain’ and *Nepeta racemosa* ‘Blue Wonder’ to give a rich Persian carpet combination. The display lasts longer than many of the other herbaceous potentilla and this plant requires little attention to thrive.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 45cm x 35cm.
ORIGINS A hybrid of *Potentilla atrosanguinea* from high altitude scrub between Sikkim and Afghanistan.
SOIL Most free-draining garden loams in a sunny position.
SEASON Flowers June to July.