



Libertia grandiflora

This plant is reliable and undemanding, while making a generous contribution to formal and informal assemblies. Even before the flowers appear, the slender sword-like foliage, arranged in fans, adds vertical definition to a scheme, provided you keep slugs and snails from decimating its precision. Arching flower stems bow down under the weight of startling white terminal flower clusters and give a lightened elegance to woodland scenes. Later, golden brown seed pods provide additional layers of interest.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 85cm x 50cm.
 ORIGINS From stream banks and open woodlands in New Zealand.
 SOIL Prefers a humus-rich, fertile soil.
 SEASON Flowers during May and June, with seed heads and foliage extending the interest much longer.



Campanula latifolia var. alba

This elegant campanula will take a range of conditions from open sun to dappled shade. Its tidy, clump-forming habit is easily managed among other plants, and upright stems rise invitingly above diminutive neighbours to take up flowering prominence once aquilegias and early geraniums have faded. Elongated flowers emerge from torpedo-like buds held in outward-facing arrangement up the stem. Out of shade, this plant makes a good companion to mid-season shrub roses.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 70cm x 30cm.
 ORIGINS Native to European woodlands and meadows.
 SOIL Most fertile garden loams with some moisture retention, preferring neutral to alkaline conditions.
 SEASON June.

Iris graminea

This plant has earned itself the common epithet the plum tart iris since the flowers exude a curious sweet smell redolent of poached plums. The scent really conjures up a summer kitchen. This is a small and charming iris with slender flowers whose colouring is a rich vignette of purples and mauve, enhanced by a characteristic metallic sheen. The falls are white, strongly veined with violet. *Iris graminea* has been awarded an RHS Award of Garden Merit.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 25cm x 15cm.
 ORIGINS Native to grassy places and open woods of southern Europe.
 SOIL Moisture-retentive soil, preferring dappled shade in order to flower and to thrive.
 SEASON Flowers May to June.



Elaeagnus 'Quicksilver'

Where a silvered shrub is required to add an air of the Mediterranean to a cooler British garden, this hardy subject is sometimes used as a stand-in for *Olea*, earning it the common name of Russian olive. Its foliage is airy and well-spaced, and plants respond well to formative pruning. The small clusters of rather insignificant yellow flowers will repay your patience when they open fully to give off their exquisite perfume. Positioning a strategic bench somewhere near this shrub will encourage people to pause and to breathe deeply – which is no bad thing in any garden.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 80cm x 30cm.
 ORIGINS Native to Western and Central Asia.
 SOIL Fertile, moisture-retentive soil.
 SEASON June.

Delphinium requienii

Visitors to the Pangbourne garden of plantsman Bill Baker seldom emerged empty handed. When we remarked on some deeply fingered and shiny foliage emerging from the leaf mulch one spring, he introduced us to this biennial delphinium with the propensity to dissipate far and wide. We have never found it a pest, but allow plants to grow up where they are happiest. It needs no staking, and seems remarkably resistant to slug damage – unlike the more fragile perennial forms. We have come to rely on it to revive a fading *Paconia* border in June.

HEIGHT 130cm to 150cm.
 ORIGINS From the Isles d'Hyères (just south of France), Corsica and possibly Sardinia.
 SOIL Suitable for most loamy soils, and copes well even in dry.
 SEASON June to July.

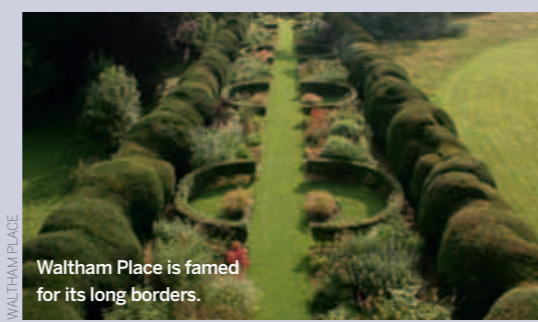


Places to visit

Chris Marchant suggests gardens and nurseries that are at their best this month

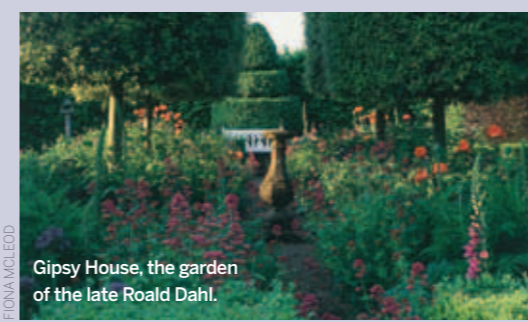
It can be good to challenge perceptions of what plants should be included in a border. The naturalistic approach of Strilli Oppenheimer, owner of Waltham Place, assisted by the late Dutch plantsman Henk Gerritsen, has achieved a very different planting balance. The 40-acre organic garden includes potager, knot garden, herbaceous

borders, woods, lake and grass maze. An organic farm supplies produce for the café and shop. Waltham Place also runs training courses. Check website for details and opening times (including the National Gardens Scheme). Waltham Place, White Waltham, Maidenhead SL6 3JH. Tel 01628 825517. www.walthamplace.com



WALTHAM PLACE

Waltham Place is famed for its long borders.



FIONA MACLEOD

Gipsy House, the garden of the late Roald Dahl.

Those familiar with the world of the late author Roald Dahl can visit the gardens of his former home, Gipsy House. An intriguing series of outdoor rooms is divided by hedges and walls. An avenue of pleached limes leads to his writing hut. Ornamental borders and a productive vegetable garden occupy the foreground, while magnificent

floral meadows take your view out to the countryside. It opens under the National Gardens Scheme on 14 June and 4 July, 2-5pm (www.ngs.org.uk). Gipsy House, Whitefield Lane, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 0BP. Nearby is a museum dedicated to Dahl (aimed at 6 to 12-year olds). 81-83 High Street, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 0AL. www.roalddahlmuseum.org.

Next door to Gipsy House garden is an excellent nursery with an extensive range of durable herbaceous plants. There are seductive display areas and knowledgeable staff to assist. See website for seasonal opening hours. The Plant Specialist, 7 Whitfield Lane, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 0BP. Tel 01494 866650. www.theplantspecialist.co.uk