

OCTOBER  
2023

TAKE ME  
I'M FREE

# velvet\*

The  
**TURNING  
LEAVES** Issue

HOMES | FOOD | CULTURE | PEOPLE | WELLBEING | STYLE

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The Turning Leaves Issue, October 2023



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## WIN

A luxurious overnight stay for two at Oxfordshire's four-star Old Crown Coaching Inn – worth £450!

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# Perfect Planting

How to keep our gardens looking lovely all year round is a perennial question. The answer might just lie in the use of perennials themselves. Newmarket-based garden designer Melanie Taylor selects her five hero plants for autumn and winter interest, no matter what size your outdoor space



## NEW YORK ASTER SYMPHYOTRICHUM NOVI-BELGII

These sunny daisy-like flowers delight until October and sometimes even into November. Also known as Michaelmas daisies, they look lovely in pots or at the front of sunny borders and are vital food sources for insects when many other flowers have long since gone.

Happy in full sun or partial shade, these deciduous, herbaceous perennials can grow from 0.3m to 1.8m high depending on the variety. A staple of cottage gardens, they also work well in prairie planting schemes and make good cut flowers. Prune by cutting stems close to the ground in late autumn and divide clumps every three years to maintain their vigorous growth.

## BIG BLUE LILYTURF LIRIOPE MUSCARI AGM

This low-growing, shade-loving, drought-tolerant, evergreen perennial is a great all-rounder. Purple-blue flower spikes, like those of a grape hyacinth, appear from rosettes of green strap-like leaves from August to November. Liriope is ideal in the middle of a border and works well under trees and shrubs. It grows between 0.1m and 0.5m tall and can be left to create ground cover, keeping weeds down. This highly useful plant has been awarded an RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) and is propagated by dividing large clumps in spring.



## SWEET BOX

### SARCOCOCCA CONFUSA AGM

The sweet or Christmas Box, as it's commonly known, is a perfect winter-flowering, evergreen shrub for a shady border. Glossy, dark green leaves are complemented by exquisite vanilla-scented, small, white flowers from December to March and followed by ornamental black berries (not to be eaten).

It grows between 1m and 1.5m tall in sun or shade. Planted up in moist, well-drained soil in a pot by your front door, it provides an attractive, perfumed welcome. What better way to greet your guests? Especially at Christmas!



## WINTER-FLOWERING CLEMATIS

### CLEMATIS CIRRHOSA VAR. PURPURASCENS 'FRECKLES' AGM

Often thought of as summer plants, Clematis Freckles puts on a fabulous display from December to February. Its scented, cream, bell-shaped flowers are peppered with magenta freckles inside and its glossy dark green leaves are bronze tinged in winter.

Pretty scampering up a trellis, arch, or pergola, it works in any moist, well-drained soil but prefers an alkaline or neutral PH. Plant in a sheltered position in full sun. This evergreen climber with its RHS AGM attracts late season pollinators.

Within five years, it can grow up to 4m in height and 1.5m spread. Note it can irritate the skin, so wear gloves when handling it, and beware, it can be harmful to pets if eaten.

## COMMON DOGWOOD

### CORNUS SANGUINEA 'MIDWINTER FIRE'

With its vivid, fiery stems lighting up your garden in winter, this UK native dogwood stands proud, shining bright on frosty mornings, long after its autumnal display of burnished leaves has disappeared. With an eventual height and spread of 2m by 2m, plant in groups in full sun and keep watered to maximise its colourful effect. Single plants stand out well against a background of evergreen shrubs.

Give young plants a year or two to establish before cutting back 5-7cm from the ground in late March/early April (known as stooling) to get the most intense colour on new growth. Propagate easily by taking hardwood cuttings in the autumn.

Finally, don't forget to plant your spring-flowering bulbs now. Scatter across your lawn and plant wherever they land for a naturalised look or brighten up your patio with a container display. Bees and other pollinating insects will thank you for providing nectar and pollen as they awake from hibernation. Using different seasonal bulbs gives you a colourful, wildlife-friendly garden all year round.



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