

# We Love June

for luscious shades of green

**As Kermit the frog** poignantly sang, “It’s not easy being green. It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things”. This month he would find it remarkably easy as June is nothing if not gloriously green. Not just the obvious – the swards of perfect grass at Lords, Wimbledon or Wembley – but in the sheer lushness of growth on all our garden plants.

Sadly, we are so captivated by June flowers that we sometimes fail to appreciate the greens: so many different shades of green, from limey to chartreuse to olive to aquamarine, sage and eau de nil. This month, let us all love green.

**Words by James Alexander-Sinclair**

## STAR OF THE MONTH

*Paeonia lactiflora* ‘Bowl of Beauty’

Who doesn’t love a full-skirted blowsy peony? But growing them can be a bit of a lottery. Get the weather absolutely right and you will have enough beautiful memories to carry you right through until the autumn. But if it rains at the wrong moment then those perfect blooms are more likely to be so waterlogged that they will look like bunched up paper tissues. But let us not be pessimistic – we are gardeners after all, not soothsayers – and assume that the sun will always shine upon our endeavours and this year our peonies will be packed with zip, pep and perk.

When planting be careful not to plant too deep. Deadhead after flowering. Foliage is quite dull after flowering so grow among some lively annuals.

**Height x Spread** 100cm x 80cm

PHOTO: JASON INGRAM



perfect  
for patio  
pots

**BARREL OF LAUGHS**

Some pelargoniums can seem a bit haughty, some might even say standoffish. Bright, self confident and full of poise and dignity. This one, on the other hand, looks as if it is convulsed with paroxysms of outrageous laughter at a slightly off-colour joke. The oxalis looks a bit shocked.

***Pelargonium* 'Captain Starlight'**

Perfect for a pot or window box. Bring indoors over winter. Easy to take cuttings in the summer. **H x S** 45cm x 30cm

***Oxalis tiangularis papilionacea***

Propagate by dividing and potting on little bulbils. Best in a cool greenhouse or bring outside for summer months only. **H x S** 20cm x 20cm

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM

**BANG, CRASH, WALLOP**

This is what you could call a drum kit combination. You start with a delicate paradiddle from the thalictrum in the middle (chikka, chikka, chikka). Add in a thudding rumble from the *Nepeta* (boom, boom, boom) and finish with a crashy cymbal clatter from the cosmos at the end.

***Thalictrum delavayi* 'Album'**

Sow seed indoors in late winter or early autumn. Divide every couple of years. Best in a little bit of shade. **H x S** 120cm x 50cm

***Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low'**

An excellent front of border plant. Make sure you cut it back immediately after flowering for a second flush of colour. **H x S** 50cm x 50cm

***Cosmos* 'Dwarf Sensation White'**

A good variety for gardeners in courtyards as does well in pots. Excellent cut flower **H x S** 45cm x 30cm



**RUNNING WILD**

A great plant for borders (or gravel gardens) but it is a bit of a roué. In its prime it has a tendency to immoderately seed itself. Then, when it gets older, it tends to look a bit raddled and world weary - probably as a direct result of its wild and misspent youth. You need to be a bit strict and pull out the older plants after a couple of years.

***Sisyrinchium striatum***

Make sure ground is free draining as it hates winter wet. Full sun. Untroubled by pests and diseases. **H x S** 80cm x 20cm

## AIRS AND GRACES

The softness of this month allows space for some very subtle and gentle combinations. Here the *Astrantia* is obviously trying to be the star, but actually the gorgeously veined leaves on the brunnera and the steely blue *Eryngium* flowers are just as eyecatching in a casually elegant and unsplashy way.

### *Astrantia major* 'Large White'

Look carefully at the beautiful green tipped petals. Divide large clumps in spring. Good in dried flower arrangements. **H x S** 90cm x 45cm

### *Eryngium bourgatii*

Do not deadhead as they are good for winter architecture. Look bold and striking in a sunny border or gravel garden. **H x S** 50cm x 50cm

### *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost'

Lift and divide in late autumn. Variegation best in a smidgeon of shade. Perfect on a woodland path. **H x S** 40cm x 60cm



### A MIDSUMMER DREAM

Sometimes plant juxtapositions are not just good for colour or texture but go a step further. Here is a mix of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ("With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine: There sleeps Titania...") and the town of Hummelo, which is the home of the great Piet Oudolf. Literature and horticulture.

#### **Rosa 'Eglantyne'**

Actually named after Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children. Scented. Needs lots of sun to flower profusely. **H x S** 120cm x 100cm

#### **Stachys officinalis 'Hummelo'**

Good groundcover and excellent for bees and other pollinators. Deadheading helps extend the flowering season. **H x S** 50cm x 60cm



### FRESH AS A DAISY

Imagine if a crowd of slightly drunk pixies invaded your garden and charged around your borders carousing and giggling in high pitched voices. They would look exactly like *E. karvinskianus* flowers: an indomitable flurry of delicious white and pink daisies guaranteed to make you smile - at least until their self seeding becomes an invasion!

#### **Erigeron karvinskianus**

Self seeds happily in most situations - particularly good in gravel. Cut back in winter, transplant seedlings in springtime.

**H x S** 30cm x 90cm