

We Love June

for summer's long-awaited arrival

One of the greatest joys of June is to lie on the lawn. The ground is warm enough to prevent any unfortunate chills and the grass is sufficiently thick to provide a comfortable mattress. All around, the air is rose scented, warm and lazy with the buzzing of bees. The trees resound to the frantic twittering of birds that are spending every waking hour attending to some very demanding babies (all parents will empathise with the cataclysmic effect that newborns have on a previously peaceful life!). Your borders are laden and your vegetables are swelling. Ladies and gentlemen: welcome to summer.

Words by James Alexander-Sinclair

STAR OF THE MONTH

Lupinus 'Persian Slipper'

My grandmother (and probably yours as well) always had lupins in her garden, but I must confess that my favourite ones are those that have magically (and possibly mystically) appeared on the embankments of motorways up and down the country. I like to think that some mischievous gardener wound down the window and flung out a handful of seeds as they beetled past at great speed. However, if you want a more leisurely way of viewing your lupins, then we have a pretty fabulous example, glittering in grasses, frolicking with fennel and soaring over salvias.

Slightly shorter than many lupins. Watch out for aphids. Cut back after flowering to get a second flush of flowers.
Height x Spread 75cm x 60cm



PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE, JASON INGRAM

LET THE GOOD SEED FLY

If ever there was a horticultural equivalent of the 1960s 'free love' movement, then these glorious specimens would be the poster plants. Seldom will you find more prolific self-seeders than these two, incredibly useful if you need something to colonise a corner, but be a bit wary in smaller gardens.

Hesperis matronalis

Biennial or short-lived perennial (depending on situation). A member of the brassica family, so beware of cabbage caterpillars.

H x S 90cm x 45cm

Digitalis purpurea f. albiflora

The classic foxglove: a biennial, so expect leaves only in year one, flowers in year two, and then it sets seed before dying, leaving many offspring. **H x S** 1.5m x 50cm

ICE, ICE BABY

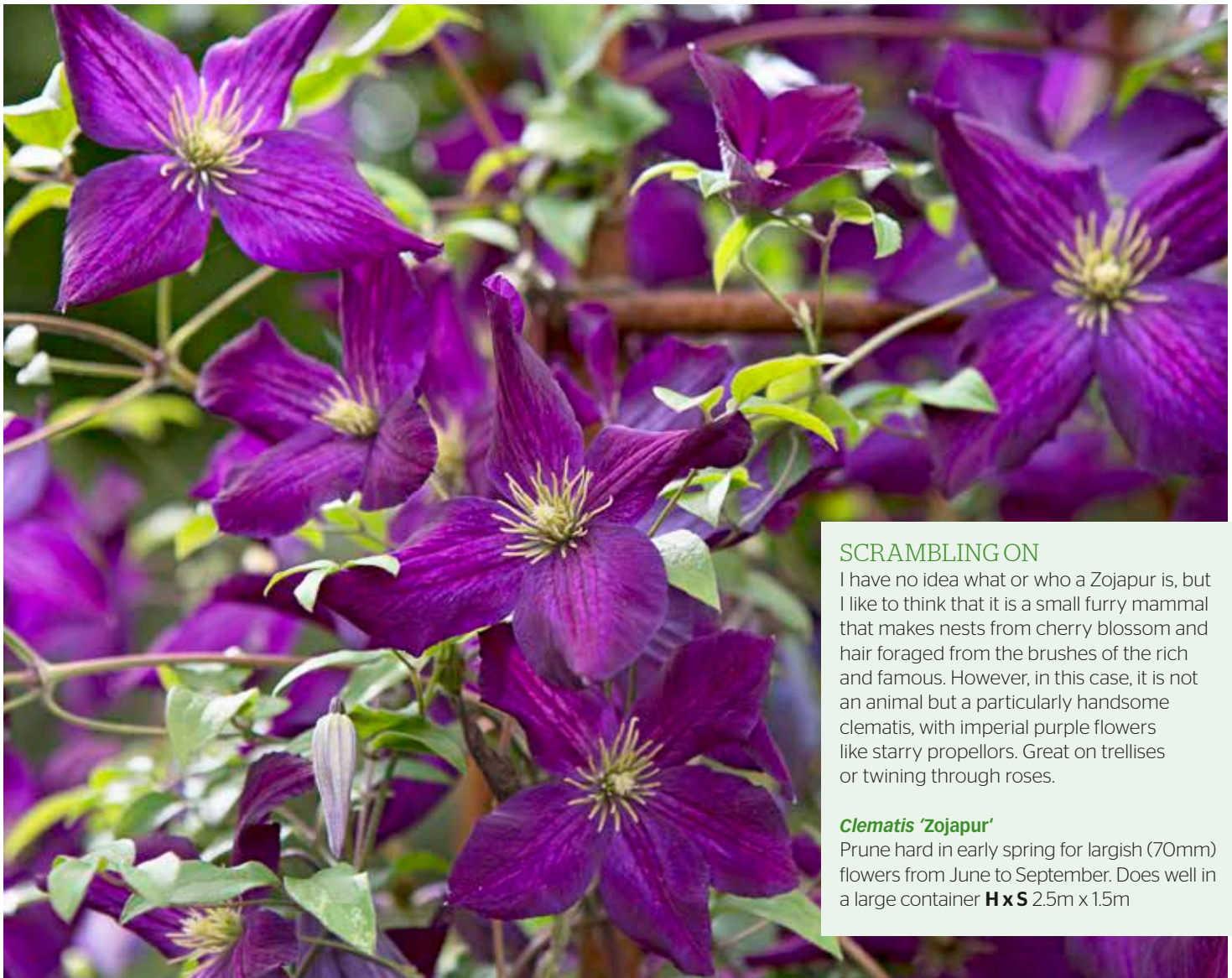
This rose is not only lovely in itself but it is also an exquisitely useful colour, with depth and majesty like the velvet lining of a khan's best cloak. It goes well with the pastelly whites, blues and pinks that are all over our gardens at this time of year. A rich and generous flowerer that can cope with a little shade, although all roses need at least five hours' sun a day.

Rosa 'Burgundy Ice'

A floribunda rose with glossy leaves and good disease resistance. Deadhead regularly to lengthen flowering period.

H x S 100cm x 80cm





SCRAMBLING ON

I have no idea what or who a Zojapur is, but I like to think that it is a small furry mammal that makes nests from cherry blossom and hair foraged from the brushes of the rich and famous. However, in this case, it is not an animal but a particularly handsome clematis, with imperial purple flowers like starry propellers. Great on trellises or twining through roses.

Clematis 'Zojapur'

Prune hard in early spring for largish (70mm) flowers from June to September. Does well in a large container **H x S** 2.5m x 1.5m

HOORAY FOR THE SCARLET AND CREAM

I see a lot of plants but only sometimes can I remember exactly where I first met them: this crimson dianthus was spectacular in Cleve West's 2011 RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden and I have had it in my garden ever since. It looks fabulous with that creamy, flat-headed achillea. I think I will try it this year. I suppose I'd better go shopping...

Dianthus cruentus

An alpine plant native to the Balkans, so make sure it has good, sharp drainage. Trim after flowering and cut back a bit harder in spring to stop sprawling. **H x S** 60cm x 15cm

Achillea 'Taygetea'

A relation of our native yarrow. Always looks good with grasses for a semi-wild look. Good winter seedheads. Short-lived, especially in wetter areas. **H x S** 60cm x 45cm



PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM