

We Love August

for tropical holidays *at home*

There are seats free on all the trains, the roads are little less busy and shopping seems a tad more relaxed. What is going on? I will tell you: it is August, and many people are enjoying far-off beaches and the myriad pleasures offered by the departures lounge at Luton airport. It is holiday season and many gardens have been left to their own devices. I try never to go anywhere this month so I can enjoy the sunshine (fingers crossed), the flowers, the warm evenings and the inevitable glut of courgettes. Lower your carbon footprint and stay in your garden this August!

Words by James Alexander-Sinclair

STAR OF THE MONTH
Echinacea purpurea 'Rainbow Marcella'

When I first saw this plant, I was immediately reminded of those tinned peaches in tooth-rotting syrup that I was occasionally fed when I was a schoolboy. Usually, they came with evaporated milk, but the tastebuds of an eight year old will forgive many things. Moving on from school dinners... Most of the echinaceas that you will have met previously would have been either pink or white, so this is something to get tongues wagging. Pop it in a hot summer border with lots of reds, purples and yellows, and your garden will be impossible to overlook.

Performs best in warmer, more sheltered parts of the country. Good seedheads for birds and ideal as cut flowers.

Height x Spread 50cm x 40cm

PHOTO: TORIE CHUGG

GIMME, GIMME, GIMME

Not quite pink and not really purple, but a colour that breathes passion into your ear. It is the shade of summer romances, toes dipping into fast-flowing streams, drinking wine from the bottle and dancing under the stars to Abba's greatest hits – all that wonderfully spontaneous stuff that may not seem quite so sensible in the cold light of day. It's summer, so let the good times roll.

Salvia involucrata 'Boutin'

All of the shrubby salvias are invaluable in our gardens as they flower for about five months. Take cuttings in summer. **H x S** 1.2m x 80cm



SYMPHONY IN BLUE

Never underestimate the glory of a lacecap hydrangea. Some people may sneer and say that they are dated and old fashioned, but they are doing themselves out of a treat. With big muscular leaves and trouble-free flowers (that dry beautifully), this is great in borders, a pot or as a hedge. Badda bing!

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Mariesii Perfecta'

Keep plants well hydrated (the clue is in the name!) during dry spells. For reliably blue flowers, it needs an acidic soil with a pH of 5.5. **H x S** 1.2m x 1.2m



TROPICAL FEVER

Bring a machete – it is jungle party time! The big, bold leaves of jungly plants like these are at their best this time of year, making the most of the sunshine. Fast growing with zingy flowers late in the season, they bring sub-tropical heat to suburbia.

Canna 'Panache'

Needs plenty of water and lots of goodness in the soil. Dig up and store in a frost-free shed after the first frosts. **H x S** 2m x 75cm

Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora 'George Davison'

Needs a bit of winter protection in cold areas, so mulch with compost or bark. Divide congested clumps in spring. **H x S** 90cm x 15cm



glorious
flashes
of electric
orange



FUCHSIA PROOF

This plant was named after the founder of The British Fuchsia Society. Lady Boothby was a formidable woman who lived in a Welsh Castle and was a great friend of Queen Mary. The society was formed in 1938 (this variety was bred from a Brazilian species the following year) and Lady Boothby kept it going through the war. During the 1950s, the society thrived and contributed to the great popularity of this much-loved garden plant.

Fuchsia 'Lady Boothby'

Hardy, so happy to stay outdoors. Easily grown and can be trained up a trellis or fence. Grow in full sun if possible. **H x S** 2.5m x 1m

THINK PINK

We are majoring on shades of pink this month. This is an almost accidental combination, as the calibrachoa is a great container plant while the clematis is a terrific late-flowering climber that has just dropped in to have a bit of a nose around.

Calibrachoa 'Morning Star'

Get them in early enough and they will flower for four months. Perfect for pots and borders. Feed when they start flowering. **H x S** 20cm x 40cm

Clematis 'Madame Julia Correvon'

A viticella clematis, so needs to be hard pruned (to about knee height) in winter.

H x S 3m x 1.5m



PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; PAUL DEBOIS