



ULF NORDFJELL'S

100

MOST BEAUTIFUL AND
USEFUL PLANTS

WORDS ULF NORDFJELL

In my work as a landscape architect, working in different climate zones, I'm always looking for long-lasting plants that offer both natural-looking structure and soft colours – and ones that are loved by wild bees and butterflies. I don't use too many plants, preferring instead to repeat a limited number in different combinations so they offer harmony and variety throughout the year. All of this starts in my own garden, which contains many of the plants I've chosen here. Some are new species I'm trialling, others are plants I've grown for years – all are ones I love.



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Annuals

1 AMMI MAJUS ‘GRACELAND’
A pure-white umbellifer, with delicate, lacy flowers held above fern-like foliage. It normally flowers in June and July, but with successional sowing, you can keep the display going until September. AGM*. **Height (H)** 1.2-1.5m. **Spread (S)** 25cm. **Conditions (C)** Rich, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **Season of interest (SI)** July – September. **Hardiness rating (HR)** RHS H6†.

2 ANTIRRHINUM MAJUS ‘ROCKET RED’
Snapdragons are short-lived, tender perennials that are normally grown as annuals. This one has tall, upright, dark-red flowers that add rich colour to a late-season border. **H** 70-90cm. **S** 25cm. **C** Rich, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** USDA 7a-10b.

3 COSMOS BIPINNATUS ‘PIED PIPER WHITE’
Cosmos bipinnatus are easy to grow with a long flowering season. This cultivar is perhaps the most elegant with fluted, white petals around a yellow eye. **H** 80cm-1.2m. **S** 40-50cm. **C** Fertile soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H3.

4 LATHYRUS ODORATUS ‘CHATSWORTH’
An exceptionally pretty sweet pea with ruffled soft lavender blooms and a superb fragrance. **H** 1.8m. **S** 30cm. **C** Deep, fertile, moist but free-draining soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H2.

5 NICOTIANA SUAVEOLENS
A delicately scented plant with small, elegant white flowers on the end of soft-pink tubes. **H** 50cm-1.5m. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June – September. **HR** USDA 10a-11.

6 ORLAYA GRANDIFLORA ‘WHITE LACE’
This has been one of my favourite annuals for many years, with beautiful, pure-white umbellifer flowerheads. AGM. **H** 60cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June – July. **HR** RHS H7.

Bulbs

7 CAMASSIA LEICHTLINII SUBSP. SUKSDORFII
Produces clumps of erect stems of deep lavender-blue flowers, which looks wonderful grown en masse with grasses, such as *Sesleria nitida* (see picture on page 39), and ferns. **H** 70cm. **S** 35cm. **C** All soils, including heavy clay soil, full sun to part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

8 FRITILLARIA MELEAGRIS VAR. UNICOLOR SUBVAR. ALBA
A self-seeding fritillary that I know has been growing in my garden for more than 70 years. With pretty, white pendent bells that dangle like lanterns on short stems, it looks absolutely stunning when grown en masse among carpets of *Asarum europaeum*. AGM. **H** 20cm. **S** 20cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April – May. **HR** RHS H5.

9 LILIUM MARTAGON VAR. ALBUM
Another bulb that has grown in my garden, for many years. Its elegant white flowers with scrolled back petals and orange stamens look fabulous naturalised among grasses and ferns. **H** 1.6m. **S** 50cm. **C** Needs a deep, well-drained, humus-rich soil; part shade. **SI** June – July. **HR** RHS H6.

10 LILIUM ‘ORANGE MARMALADE’
This vibrant-orange Turk’s cap lily with slender arching petals is one of my favourite cultivars. Flowers shine out among green foliage. **H** 1.6m. **S** 40cm. **C** Needs a deep, rich, leafy, well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** June.

11 NARCISSUS ‘ACTAEA’
An exceptionally long-lived narcissus with an old-fashioned scent. Its pure-white flowers have an orange red ring in the centre. Best in part shade. **H** 40-50cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April – May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

12 NARCISSUS ‘THALIA’
A late-flowering cultivar that produces many pure-white flowers. Provides a delicate counterpart to early shoots of perennials, such as astilbes and epimediums. **H** 40cm. **S** 10m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April – May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

ANTIRRHINUM MAJUS ‘ROCKET RED’ HAS TALL, UPRIGHT, DARK-RED FLOWERS THAT ADD A RICH COLOUR TO A LATE-SEASON BORDER

13 TULIPA ‘MERLOT’
A late, lily-flowered tulip, in a rich shade of burgundy, that works well in combination with other bulbs and with mid-height and tall perennials. **H** 40-50cm. **S** 15cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

14 TULIPA ORPHANIDEA WHITTALLII GROUP
This bronze-red, wild tulip provides an unusual contrast to early perennial beddings. **H** 35cm. **S** 15cm. **C** Perfect in well-drained soil and gravel; full sun. **SI** April – May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

15 TULIPA ‘PINK DIAMOND’
A late-flowering, pink tulip that combines well with perennials. **H** 50-70cm. **S** 15cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

16 TULIPA UNDULATIFOLIA
An elegant wild tulip. Its tomato-red petals, which are margined with yellow, are up to 7cm long. An eye-catching addition to a gravel garden. **H** 35cm. **S** 15cm. **C** Well-drained soil and gravel; full sun. **SI** April – May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Foliage and ferns

17 ALCHEMILLA EPIPSILA
A low-growing alchemilla that is perfect for groundcover. Makes a tidy edging plant with sprays of bright lime-green flowers. Orange autumn foliage. **H** 30cm. **S** 20cm. **C** Moist soils; full sun or part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H7.

18 ANAPHALIS TRIPLINERVIS
Silvery grey foliage adds light to any border. Its pretty, papery-white flowers are a bonus to the autumn border. AGM. **H** 30cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

19 ARUNCUS ‘HORATIO’
An eye-catching plant that boasts spikes of creamy-white flowers on red stems above fresh green foliage. **H** 90cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moisture-retentive soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

20 ASARUM EUROPAEUM
This evergreen perennial with glossy, kidney-shaped green leaves creates an attractive groundcover that is the perfect backdrop for plants such as *Anticlea elegans* and lilies. AGM. **H** 10-15cm. **S** 25cm. **C** Humus-rich moist soil; part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

21 BRUNNERA MACROPHYLLA ‘BETTY BOWRING’
Sprays of tiny, pure-white flowers on bare ground are followed by large, heart-shaped, dark-green leaves. Lovely groundcover that combines beautifully with narcissi. **H** 30-40cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist soil; part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

22 CRAMBE MARITIMA
As its common name sea kale suggests, this is a plant native to coastal areas, and tolerant of salt. Its attractive leaves are large and grey-green in colour with a wavy margin. In late summer it produces huge clusters of sweetly scented flowers. Best used as a single plant at the front of a border. **H** 60cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Well-drained soil with gravel; full sun. **SI** May – June. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

23 EPIMEDIUM X RUBRUM
An evergreen groundcover with leaves that are tinted red in spring and autumn. The thin rhizomes allow other plants, such as lilies, peonies and trilliums, to thrive among it. AGM. **H** 20cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Leafy and moist soil; part shade. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

24 HEUCHERA ‘OBSIDIAN’
A striking new semi-evergreen cultivar with deep-purple, almost black leaves and sprays of small, cream flowers in late summer. Provides a real contrast plant for pale colours, and works especially well when grown alongside astrantias, lamiums and *Veronica gentianoides*. **H** 25cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Good soil; part shade. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b. ▷



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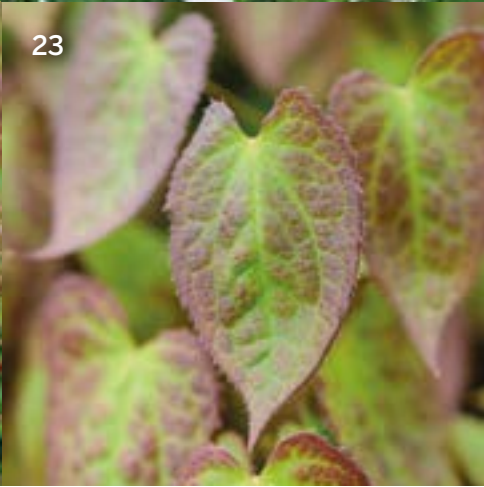
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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.
4. JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS; 5 MARIANNE MAJERUS; 8. JASON INGRAM; 9. FIONA RICE / GAP PHOTOS

10, 13, 15, 19 & 23. JASON INGRAM



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▷ **25 HOSTA 'PATRIOT'**

A very attractive and popular hosta that produces tall mounds of large and oval-shaped, dark-green leaves, which have a distinctive white margin. In late summer these are joined by spikes of lavender-blue flowers. Combines well with violets and *Euphorbia dulcis*. AGM. **H** 30-40cm. **S** 30-40cm. **C** Well-drained, humus-rich soil; moderate shade. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

26 HOSTA 'PRAYING HANDS'

Unusual hosta with upright mounds of narrow, tightly folded, olive-green leaves that have a gold margin. Use alongside ferns such as *Polypodium vulgare*. AGM. **H** 30-40cm. **S** 30-40cm. **C** Well-drained, humus-rich soil; moderate shade. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

27 HOSTA 'ROYAL STANDARD'

A clump-forming hosta with glossy, ribbed, bright-green leaves. In late summer, trumpet-shaped, pure-white flowers, which are highly scented and tinged with lilac, are held on tall spikes. **H** 60cm. **S** 1m. **C** Moist but well-drained, humus-rich, soil; part shade. **SI** July. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

28 MATTEUCCIA ORIENTALIS

Known as the Asian ostrich fern, this is more upright than *Matteuccia struthiopteris*. It is a rhizomatous, deciduous fern that is perfect for waterside planting. One of my favourites. AGM. **H** 70-80cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist, neutral soil; part to full shade. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.

29 ONOCLEA SENSIBILIS

In spring, pale-green fronds unfurl from red-green shoots. In moist conditions the creeping rhizomes will cover the ground. Combines beautifully with pulmonarias. AGM. **H** 40-60cm. **S** 40-60cm. **C** Moist soils; part to full shade. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

30 POLYPODIUM VULGARE

This evergreen fern is an upright but creeping plant with triangular leaflets. **H** 20-30cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist neutral soil; part shade to full sun. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

31 STACHYS BYZANTINA 'SILVER CARPET'

Its furry, silver-grey leaves form an excellent groundcover that works well planted en masse or as an edging plant. It rarely produces flowers. **H** 20cm. **S** 90cm. **C** Fairly fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

32 WALDSTEINIA TERNATA

A compact groundcover that produces rosettes of strawberry-like leaves. These semi-evergreen leaves contrast with the small, yellow flowers that appear in May. Happy in full sun, provided there is shade from shrubs, but best in shade. **H** 10cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Grasses

33 CALAMAGROSTIS BRACHYTRICHA

Forms a clump of glossy green, linear leaves that turn yellow in autumn. In late summer purple-tinged flower plumes, emerge which fade to create a silvery winter silhouette. AGM. **H** 1-1.5m. **S** 50cm-1m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

34 HAKONECHLOA MACRA

This clump-forming grass with bamboo-like, bright-green leaves provides a soft structure to borders. Planted en masse it creates a lush backdrop for thalictrums, irises and spring bulbs. AGM. **H** 35-70cm. **S** 50-80cm. **C** Moist, peaty soil; part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

35 MOLINIA CAERULEA 'EDITH DUDSZUS'

A structural grass with dense, narrow upright leaves that turn an orange-yellow in late autumn. In late summer it produces slender plumes of dark-purple spikelets on purple-black stems. **H** 90cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Spring to autumn. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

36 MOLINIA CAERULEA SUBSP. ARUNDINACEA 'TRANSPARENT'

Forms a cone of green foliage, with feathery, purple spikelets that create an airy feel in late summer. You only need one or two plants to add light and shimmer to the border. **H** 1.8m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June – November. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

37 SESLERIA NITIDA

My signature grass, which produces mounds of spiky, blue-green leaves, topped in late spring by attractive, white flowerheads. Good for edging borders. **H** 40-50cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** USDA 5a-8b.

Perennials

38 ACHILLEA PTARMICA 'BOULE DE NEIGE'

In summer it produces a profusion of small, white pom-pom flowers held in large clusters above dark-green leaves. It spreads easily from creeping rhizomes, forming a lush backdrop to any perennial planting. **H** 40cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Most soils; full sun. **SI** June – July. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

39 ACTAEA SIMPLEX 'BRUNETTE'

Cream-coloured flower spikes, which are held above attractive, dark foliage on slender purple stems, have a sweet perfume. Loved by bees. Likes shade but foliage colours better in full sun. AGM. **H** 1.2-2m. **S** 80cm. **C** Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** Autumn. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

40 AGASTACHE 'BLACK ADDER'

An elegant addition to the late-season garden, upright over winter. Loved by bees and butterflies. **H** 60cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June – September. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b. ▷

25, 33, 37 & 40 JASON INGRAM; 29 CLAIRE TAKACS



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SESLERIA NITIDA IS MY SIGNATURE GRASS WITH MOUNDS OF SPIKY, BLUE-GREEN LEAVES, TOPPED IN LATE SPRING BY ATTRACTIVE WHITE FLOWERHEADS



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▷ **41 AMSONIA TABERNAEMONTANA VAR. CILIATA 'BLUE ICE'**
A long-flowering plant that produces clusters of beautiful, pale-blue flowers. Leaves turn buttery gold in the autumn. Best grown in drifts in woodland areas. **H** 50-70cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Almost any soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** Early summer. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

42 ANEMONE X HYBRIDA 'HONORINE JOBERT'
A tall autumn anemone with a lovely upright structure and flowers of pure-white petals, surrounding a boss of golden stamens. Looks gorgeous grown in part shade. **H** 1.5m. **S** 60cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** August – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

43 ANEMONE NEMOROSA 'ROBINSONIANA'
A slow-growing anemone with pale-blue flowers in spring that practically glow in the shade. **H** 15cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist, humus-rich soil; part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

44 ANEMONE NEMOROSA 'VESTAL'
In my garden, this woodland anemone forms a robust white carpet beneath a hazel tree. A beautiful partner for pulmonarias and primulas. AGM. **H** 15cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist, humus-rich soil; part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

45 ANEMONE 'RUFFLED SWAN'
Tricky to grow, but one of the best new hybrids. Its white flowers with yellow stamens have a grey-purple streak along the reverse. **H** 40-60cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Well drained, humus-rich soil; best in part shade. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H5.

46 ANEMONE SYLVESTRIS
A lovely spring-flowering anemone that forms dense colonies of white flower in woodland areas. Easy to grow it looks lovely in masses. **H** 15-20cm. **S** 15-20cm. **C** Easily grown in moist, in semi shade, hardy. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

47 ANTHRISCUS SYLVESTRIS 'RAVENSWING'
A purple form of the common cow parsley, with creamy-white umbels held above black-purple leaves in late spring. Gives a natural feeling to any border. **H** 1m. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** May – June. **HR** RHS H6.

48 ANTICLEA ELEGANS
Formerly known as *Zigadenus elegans*, this is one of my favourite flowers. Its small, star-like, green-white flowers are held on tall, upright stems above grass-like foliage, but beware all parts are highly poisonous. **H** 25-60cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Humus-rich, well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H3.

49 AQUILEGIA 'HENSOL HAREBELL'
This is possibly the best blue aquilegia available with delicate-looking flowers held on strong stems. It is self-seeding but short lived. **H** 50-60cm. **S** 30-40cm. **C** Reasonable soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

50 ASTER AMELLUS 'KING GEORGE'
Covered in daisy-like violet-blue flowers, this bushy herbaceous perennial is synonymous with autumn. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** August – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

51 CAMPANULA LATIFOLIA VAR. MACRANTHA 'ALBA'
An elegant, short-flowering white cultivar, lovely in woodlands. Self seeding. **H** 1m. **S** 40cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; flowers longer in part shade. **SI** June – July. **HR** USDA 4a-8b.

52 CENTAUREA BELLA
Forms a mound of silvery-green divided leaves. Small, shaggy, pink flowers throughout summer. Good in gravel gardens and as an edging plant. **H** 25cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** All summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

53 CLEMATIS 'PAUL FARGES'
A vigorous, deciduous climber with fragrant, single, white flowers that last from midsummer to early autumn. AGM. **H** 5-6m. **S** 3m. **C** Humus-rich, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** May – September. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

WITH SMALL, GREEN-WHITE FLOWERS HELD ON TALL, UPRIGHT STEMS, ANTICLEA ELEGANS IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITES FLOWERS

54 CONVALLARIA MAJALIS
With its scented, waxy white flowers, lily of the valley is the perfect woodland plant. Needs a really leafy, moist soil to develop good mats of rhizomes. Beautiful when allowed to cover a large area. Be careful as all parts are poisonous. AGM. **H** 15-30cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist leafy soil; part to full shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

55 ECHINACEA PURPUREA 'AVALANCHE'
A pure-white form of the North American coneflower. Self-seeding but short lived, it is a favourite of pollinating insects. **H** 45cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

56 ERYNGIUM PLANUM 'BLAUKAPPE'
A useful structural plant for dry areas, forming large clumps of stems in dry places and dark-blue flowers with sticky, blue-grey bracts. **H** 80cm-1m. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

57 EUPHORBIA DULCIS 'CHAMELEON'
One of the best purple-leaved perennials for a cold climate. This self-seeding surge has stunning burgundy foliage, which gets darker in autumn, and small, yellow flowers. Looks

fabulous grown alongside violets and alchemillas. **H** 30-50cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** All summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

58 EURYBIA X HERVEYI
Michaelmas daisy with flowers in various shades of violet blue. Works best when grown alongside plants that have a strong structure, such as *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona'. **H** 60-70cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Most soils; full sun to part shade. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

59 GENTIANA MAKINOI 'ROYAL BLUE'
One of the best late-flowering plants for a cool climate, with buds and flowers in an intense blue. **H** 70cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained, heavy soil; part shade. **SI** August – September. **HR** USDA 6a-8b.

60 GEUM 'SCARLET TEMPEST'
A relatively new geum with striking, semi-double flowers that are tomato red with an apricot flush above clumping, mid-green foliage. Deadhead regularly and you will have flowers from May to first frosts. Works well against a fresh-green background. **H** 40-50cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Any good free-draining soil; full sun. **SI** May to first frost. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-7b.

61 GILLENIA TRIFOLIATA 'PINK PROFUSION'
A North American species that is great for lighting up a shady border with clouds of butterfly-like, soft-pink flowers atop purple stems. In autumn the foliage turns red. **H** 1-1.2m. **S** 50cm. **C** Any well-drained soil; sun or part shade. **SI** July. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

62 GYPSOPHILA PANICULATA 'BRISTOL FAIRY'
Old cultivar with panicles of small, white double flowers. Perfect partner for roses, nepetas, echinaceas and gentianas. **H** 80cm-1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

63 HELLEBORUS NIGER
Its large, white flowers, with a central boss of yellow, appear above dark, leathery evergreen foliage from midwinter to early spring. **H** 20-30cm. **S** 25cm. **C** Humus-rich, alkaline soil; part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

64 HEMEROCALLIS CITRINA
Robust, clump-forming daylily with beautiful grass-like foliage and large, trumpet-shaped, fragrant, yellow flowers. **H** 75cm. **S** 75cm. **C** Moist but well-drained, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** August – September. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

65 HESPERIS MATRONALIS VAR. ALBIFLORA
A biennial, but self-seeding, sweet rocket that easily naturalises. Fragrant, spring flowers are produced in large showy terminal racemes that can be 30cm tall. Can be invasive. Flowers for longer in part shade. **H** 1-1.25m. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** May. **HR** USDA 3 to 8b. ▷

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44 & 48 JASON INGRAM; 49 & 53 JOANNA KOSSAK / GAP PHOTOS; 52 ANNAICK GUITTENY

57 ANNE GILBERT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 59 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS; 61 MARYKE DERIDDER; 65 JASON INGRAM

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**PAEONIA LACTIFLORA
'SARAH BERNHARDT'** IS A
CLASSIC, STRONGLY SCENTED,
DOUBLE, PURE ROSE-PINK PEONY

▷ **66 HYLOTELEPHIUM 'MATRONA'**

Robust, sedum with broad leaves and an upright habit. Large, flat, green buds open to rose-pink flowers in late summer and early autumn, and last for several months. Dried flowerheads add a hint of colour and structure in winter. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Any well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

67 HYLOTELEPHIUM SPECTABILE 'ICEBERG'

Domed clusters of white flowers open from greenish-white buds in late summer. Remains upright throughout winter when the dried flowerheads look stunning covered in frost. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Any well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

68 IRIS 'RUFFLED VELVET'

A useful dark, purple-red iris for growing near water or in a moist, but not waterlogged, border. Best used in large groups. **H** 80cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Moist, rich soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

69 IRIS 'SILVER EDGE'

A violet-blue iris, with silvery white edges. Looks beautiful when combined with white-edged hostas. **AGM**. **H** 70-80cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Moist soil; full sun. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

70 MECONOPSIS BAILEYI

The delicate Himalayan poppy can be tricky to grow but is such a gorgeous shade of sky blue it is impossible to leave out. Prefers cool climate and part shade to develop well. **AGM**. **H** 1-1.2m. **S** 30-45cm. **C** Leafy moist acidic soil or peat bed; part shade. **SI** July. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-7b.

71 NEPETA GRANDIFLORA 'SUMMER MAGIC'

One of the best plants for bees and butterflies, with aromatic, lavender-blue flowers over greyish foliage. Cut back after the first flush and you'll have a second bloom in late summer. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June – September. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

72 PAEONIA LACTIFLORA 'DUCHESS DE NEMOURS'

An old-fashioned, scented, double, creamy-white flowering peony and a real beauty. My favourite, especially among carpets of violets. **AGM**. **H** 70cm. **S** 70cm. **C** Sandy, well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** June – July. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

73 PAEONIA LACTIFLORA 'SARAH BERNHARDT'

A classic, strongly scented, double, pure rose-pink peony and my mother's favourite. Large flowers on strong upright stems and late flowering. **AGM**. **H** 80cm. **S** 80cm. **C** Sandy, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June – July. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

74 PAEONIA LACTIFLORA 'WHITE WINGS'

Open, single, white flowers with dense clusters of yellow stamens. **H** 70cm. **S** 70cm. **C** Sandy, well-drained, humus-rich soil; part shade. **SI** June – July. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b. ▷

69



66



70



71



74



66, 69 & 73: JASON INGRAM; 70: IAN WEST / ALAMY; STOCK PHOTO; 71: JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS; 74: NOVA PHOTOGRAPHY / GAP PHOTOS



75

▷ **75 PHLOX DIVARICATA 'CLOUDS OF PERFUME'**

A beautiful, low-growing, spreading phlox with stems topped with clusters of fragrant, tubular, lavender-blue flowers, above dark-green foliage. Good edging plant. AGM. **H** 15-20cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Lightly moist but well-drained soil; part shade. **SI** May – June. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.



79

77 PRIMULA ELATIOR

Native to northern Europe, the oxlip is an excellent spring plant for woodland areas. Scented clusters of yellow flowers are held on erect stems. Combines beautifully with anemones and pulmonarias. AGM. **H** 10-15cm. **S** 15-20cm. **C** Moist soil; part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

78 PRIMULA FLORINDAE

Originally from southeast Tibet, this is one of the largest primulas with stems that can reach more than a metre in height. Each tall stem is topped by usually one umbel of beautifully scented, nodding, yellow flowers. Looks stunning above green foliage plants, such as ferns and grasses. AGM. **H** 60cm-1.2m. **S** 30-45cm. **C** Moist soil; full or part shade. **SI** June – August. **HR** RHS H7.

79 PULMONARIA 'BLUE ENSIGN'

The best bright-blue cultivar, which works beautifully in any early spring combination. Much loved by bees. **H** 20-30cm. **S** 30-45cm. **C** Sandy, clay or average moist soil; part shade. **SI** May. **HR** RHS H6.



81

80 SALVIA NEMOROSA 'CARADONNA'

With its violet-blue flowers, *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' is one of my favourite salvias but I also like the pale-blue flowers of the similar *S.* 'Crystal Blue' and the vibrant-pink flowers and dark stems of *S. x sylvestris* 'Pink Field'. All combine beautifully with peonies, roses and astrantias. Cut back after flowering for a second flush. AGM. **H** 60cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** June – August. **HR** RHS H7.

81 SANGUISORBA MENZIESII

A plant that is both tough and easy to grow, and adds form and structure to a border. Dark reddish-pink bottlebrush flowers spikes are held on strong stems above greyish-green leaves. Very attractive for insects, and dried seedheads look beautiful over winter when covered in frost. AGM. **H** 1m. **S** 40cm. **C** Free-draining soil with some moisture; full sun or part shade. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.



83

82 SANGUISORBA TENUIFOLIA VAR. ALBA

Stunning plant with tall stems, bearing slender white bottle-brush flowers, that emerge from a low fern-like foliage. Good companion for actaeas, veronicastrums and irises. **H** 1.4m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moist soil; full sun. **SI** July – September.

83 SCABIOSA CAUCASICA 'FAMA DEEP BLUE'

An elegant flower, with large, ruffled, deep-blue, flowerheads, each with an attractive silvery centre. The flowers, which are much loved by bees and butterflies, appear above mounds of deeply divided, grey-green foliage. Makes an excellent cut flower, and is perfect for a gravel garden. **H** 70cm. **S** 35cm. **C** Best in alkaline, fairly fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** July – October. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

84 THALICTRUM 'SPLENIDE'

A cultivar that lives up to its name producing clouds of small, purplish pink flowers with creamy stamens, that contrast with its dark reddish-purple stems. It's a sterile hybrid that offers a long flowering period, although this will be shorter if grown in full sun. A similar, pure-white cultivar *T.* Splendide White (= 'Fr21034') is another excellent choice. **H** 1.2-1.8m. **S** 40cm. **C** Moist, humus-rich soil; part to full shade. **SI** July – August. **HR** RHS H7.

85 THALICTRUM 'ELIN'

A Swedish cultivar that produces clouds of tiny, lilac flowers. Enormous if grown in moist soil but will turn yellow if it doesn't get enough water. A structural plant with huge, greyish pinnate leaves. AGM. **H** 2.5m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

86 TROLLIUS X CULTORUM 'ALABASTER'

A creamy-yellow cultivar of a wild species found in northern Sweden. Clump forming with rounded flowers, it is works best in meadows among wildflowers. **H** 60cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist, humus-rich soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** May. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

87 VERONICA GENTIANOIDES

A mass of upright, pale-blue spikes, rise out of a dense mat of dark, evergreen foliage. Ideal for the front of a border. I also like the similar white cultivar called 'Tissington White'. **H** 60cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Any soil, prefers a moist, well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

88 VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM 'ALBUM'

An American species that throws up slender, upright spires of elegant-looking flowers from dark-green foliage. This cultivar, with white flowers tinged with pale pink, looks especially elegant alongside sanguisorbas and phlox. AGM. **H** 1.2-1.5m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** July – August. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b. ▷

75 MAXINE ADCOCK / GAP PHOTOS; 79, 81 & 87 JASON INGRAM; 83 JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS



THE UPRIGHT, PALE-BLUE SPIKES OF VERONICA GENTIANOIDES RISE OUT OF A DENSE MAT OF DARK EVERGREEN FOLIAGE

89



VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM
'LAVENDELTURM' COMBINES WELL
WITH AMMI MAJUS 'GRACELAND'
AND OFFERS TALL SPIRES OF PALE,
LAVENDER-BLUE FLOWERS

▷ **89 VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM 'LAVENDELTURM'**
Another *V. virginicum* cultivar that combines well with *Ammi majus* 'Graceland' and offers tall spires of pale, lavender-blue flowers. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **S** 50cm. **C** Any good soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** July – August. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

90 VIOLA 'BELMONT BLUE'
Sometimes sold as 'Boughton Blue', this dainty looking groundcover is both robust and easy to grow. Its large, pretty, violet-blue flowers have a small yellow eye, a slight veining and fine dark rays on the lower petals, and are held above a dense mat of oval evergreen leaves. Deadheading can prolong the flowering until autumn. **H** 10-20cm. **S** 15-25cm. **C** Almost any soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** April – July.

91 VIOLA CORSICA
One of the most beautiful violets, with large flowers that are a rich and deep violet-blue colour with a tiny yellow centre. It is hardy throughout most of Europe. Self-seeds easily and is reliably perennial. **H** 10-15cm. **S** 15-25cm. **C** Almost any soil; full sun to part shade. **SI** June – October. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

Shrubs and trees

92 CORYLUS AVELLANA 'ROTLÄTTRIGE ZELLERNUSS'
Beautiful, large, medium strong-growing hazel perfect for a woodland setting. Juvenile leaves are blood red, later turning green. Soft pink catkins in May. Red brown nuts in brown husks in autumn. **H** 4-6m. **S** 4-6m. **C** All soils; full sun to part shade. **SI** Spring catkins, autumn nuts. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

93 CRATAEGUS X LAVALLEE 'CARRIERE'
This small, upright hawthorn is a perfect small tree, with broad and glossy dark-green leaves that turn from yellow to orange in autumn. White flowers in midsummer are followed by holly-like orange-red berries that last well into winter. **H** 6-10m. **S** 4m. **C** Medium-heavy, dry to moist soils; full sun. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

94 HYDRANGEA PANICULATA 'LE VASTERIVAL'
A medium-sized shrub, with attractive pure-white flowers that are slightly twisted like butterflies. Flowers remain white from July to September. **H** 2m. **S** 2m. **C** Prefers slightly acid soils. **SI** July – September. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

95 MALUS 'EVERESTE'
A beautiful crabapple with an open, pyramidal structure but one that also works as an espalier or fan-trained tree. Pink buds are followed by white flowers and then orange-red fruits that remain on the tree until February or until birds eat them. AGM. **H** 4-6m. **S** 8m. **C** Prefers a medium heavy acid to neutral soil; full sun. **SI** May blossom; autumn foliage and fruits. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

89, 91 & 95 JASON INGRAM; 96 HOWARD RICE / GAP; PHOTOS: 100 ARLETTA OWALINA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO
MANY THANKS TO ROSY HARDY OF HARDY'S COTTAGE GARDEN PLANTS FOR HER HELP IN COMPILING THIS FEATURE

96 ROSA MOYESII
A shrub rose from northern China with dark-red single flowers that are followed by lovely flask-shaped, red hips. Ideal as a single rose in a border. **H** 2.5m. **S** 2m. **C** Nearly all soils, but prefers heavy with well-rotted manure/garden compost; full sun. **SI** June – July. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

97 ROSA SPINOSISSIMA 'PLENA'
An old-fashioned rose, bred in Sweden, with scented, half-double flowers that are creamy-white with yellow stamens. One that has been in my garden for 50 years. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Nearly all soils, but prefers heavy with well-rotted manure/garden compost; full sun. **SI** June.

98 SORBUS ULLEUNGENSIS 'DODONG'
A rowan that can be grown as multi-stemmed large shrub or small tree, with large, white flowers and huge, glossy, dark-green leaves that turn a fabulous autumn colour from orange to fiery red. **H** 8-10m. **S** 3-4m. **C** All well-drained soils; full sun or part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H6.

VIOLA CORSICA IS ONE
OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
VIOLETS, WITH LARGE,
DEEP VIOLET-BLUE
FLOWERS THAT HAVE A
TINY YELLOW CENTRE

99 SYRINGA VULGARIS 'KRASAVITSA MOSKVY'
A lilac that works as a large shrub or small tree, with pink buds that open into highly scented, large, double, white-pink flowers. Its Russian name translates as 'Beauty of Moscow'. AGM. **H** 3-5m. **S** 4-6m. **C** Moist, sandy, humus-rich, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

100 VIBURNUM OPULUS 'ROSEUM'
Broadly upright, structured shrub, with round, white flowerheads in summer and wine-red foliage in autumn. AGM. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Moisture-retentive, rich soils, acid to alkaline, sun to part shade. **SI** June. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b. □

Reader offer
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About the author
Ulf Nordfjell is an award-winning landscape architect, who is well known for the many public and private gardens he has created in his native Sweden and around the world. He won Gold at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2007, 2009 and 2013, and his 2009 Chelsea garden was awarded Best in Show. Find out more about his work and range of garden design accessories at nordfjellcollection.se

91



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96



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