

Cotswold Cottage Gardening These We Have Loved

Sadly, this is to be Elaine's last article for the magazine. After writing regularly for more than three years she has decided to retire from the potting shed!

We would like to thank Elaine for all her interesting and informative articles; We are now looking for someone to replace Elaine; if you would like to write a regular or even occasional gardening page for us please contact me on: 01993 831134.

Gardeners love new plants, but only a few make it into your heart and stay there. Here are some I can't do without.

Euphorbia griffithii 'Dixter'.

Any plant selected by Christopher Lloyd from seedlings raised by Elizabeth Strangman, two of the great plantspeople of our era, ought to be outstanding, and this is. From fat scarlet buds, it produces masses of red-tinted foliage, and clusters of burnt orange flowers. It spreads fairly rapidly, in any ground that is not too dry, even clay. It looks wonderful next to *Lysimachia ciliata* 'Firecracker'. The *lysimachia* can be a pretty miserable plant, much too leafy for its strident yellow flowers. 'Firecracker', however, offers gorgeous chocolate-brown leaves, flushed red near the stems, which set off the yellow flowers. It must have sun, (although miserable in a drought).

A Perennial Wallflower

Erysimum 'Bowles Mauve' is a perennial wallflower with grey leaves, which puts out rather sparse spikes of mauve flowers from May until it gets too cold; I have had it flower as late as December in mild years. Almost trouble-free, it just requires the removal of the old spikes to keep it going. The one disadvantage is its short life, maybe four years if you are very lucky, but it comes easily from sideshoots stuck into very sandy soil.

This pairs neatly with my favourite sage, *Salvia officinalis* 'Purpurascens'. The purple sage is just as useful for cooking as the plain green, but much more

ornamental. The leaves are a soft

mauve/grey; in June, the plant

produces big branches of deep

violet hooded flowers. This

plant is long-lived and

completely undemanding,

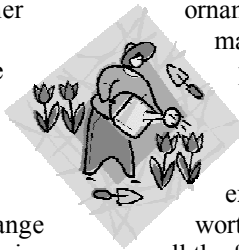
except of good drainage; it is

worth going over it and removing

all the flowered shoots once the petals

have dropped and it will reward you with

new, soft foliage, to carry you into autumn.



And the Wild Moon Daisy

My favourite hardy geranium is the sterile hybrid \times *magnificum*. Aptly named, this geranium has some of the largest leaves and flowers of the garden hybrids. The flowers are a deep blue-purple, borne in great profusion in a single flush in June; the scalloped round leaves turn bright yellow in autumn, giving a second season of interest. Nor would I be without the wild moon daisy, *Leucanthemum vulgare*. True, this makes a determined bid to take over the garden with its seedlings, but it is so tolerant, prolific and unassuming, and always ready to fill an unforeseen gap with its two-inch star-like white flowers, that you have to forgive it.

Elaine Hunt