



## CONTENTS

### Growing

*Practical plans and bright ideas to get your flower patch started*

- 8 GROWING NOTES** Ideas for enhancing your time at the patch.
- 10 THE PLEASURE GARDEN** Sarah Raven on the life-affirming joy of growing flowers.
- 14 PERFECT PLANTS FOR YOUR PATCH** Floret's Erin Benzakein offers advice on what to sow in time for summer.
- 28 CREATING A CUT FLOWER GARDEN** How a small space was transformed into a cutting garden enjoyed by thousands.
- 36 THIS YEAR'S LOVE: THE DAHLIA** Naomi Slade shares her obsession with this fabulously versatile flower.
- 42 A FLOWER FARMER'S DAY** From dawn to dusk, a typical day in the field and floristry workshop.
- 48 SUMMER'S UNSUNG HEROES** Discover striking bulbs to plant today.

### Arranging

*Contemporary inspiration for filling your home with flowers*

- 58 ARRANGING NOTES** Must-have floristry tools and inspiration.
- 60 LET FLOWERS TEACH YOU TO BLOOM** How floristry can inspire confidence.
- 64 SAY GOODBYE TO FLORAL FOAM** Ten planet-friendly alternatives to foam.
- 68 FOLLOWING THE DREAM** The women who ditched the office for a brand new career in floral design.
- 76 SPRING DISPLAY** A gorgeous and dramatic arrangement of tulips by Kiana Underwood.

### Giving

*Beautiful ways to share the flowers you've planted and picked*

- 82 GIVING NOTES** New ideas to help you share your blooms.
- 84 THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS** Shane Connolly's introduction to the intriguing art of floriography.
- 94 LABELLED WITH LOVE** Add a unique and personal touch to your bouquet tags with some simple calligraphy.
- 98 CREATE A ROSE CHAIR WREATH** An inspirational idea to add beautiful floral detail to special occasions.

#### YOUR GROWING SEASON

Sowing, planting and picking times stated in *The Flower Patch* refer to the average frost-free growing season in the UK, typically May to October. This corresponds to US zones 7-9. Conditions will vary according to your geographical location, so please note the date of your last spring frost and adjust your planting times accordingly.

### Flourishing

*Ideas for expanding your skills and taking your planting to the next level*

- 104 FLOURISHING NOTES** Start dreaming about what you can achieve next.
- 108 CAPTURING COLOURS** Baba Behan explains the art of dyeing fabric using plants from your garden.
- 116 INSPIRATION FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF** Our pick of the books you'll want to return to again and again.
- 119 LEARNING THE BASICS** Essential information from seed to vase.



- 107 FREE ONLINE COURSE** Enjoy a free hour-long tutorial from Young Blooms Floristry School



- 34 SEED ORGANISERS** Keep your seeds in order with our beautiful dividers and monthly planning planters.



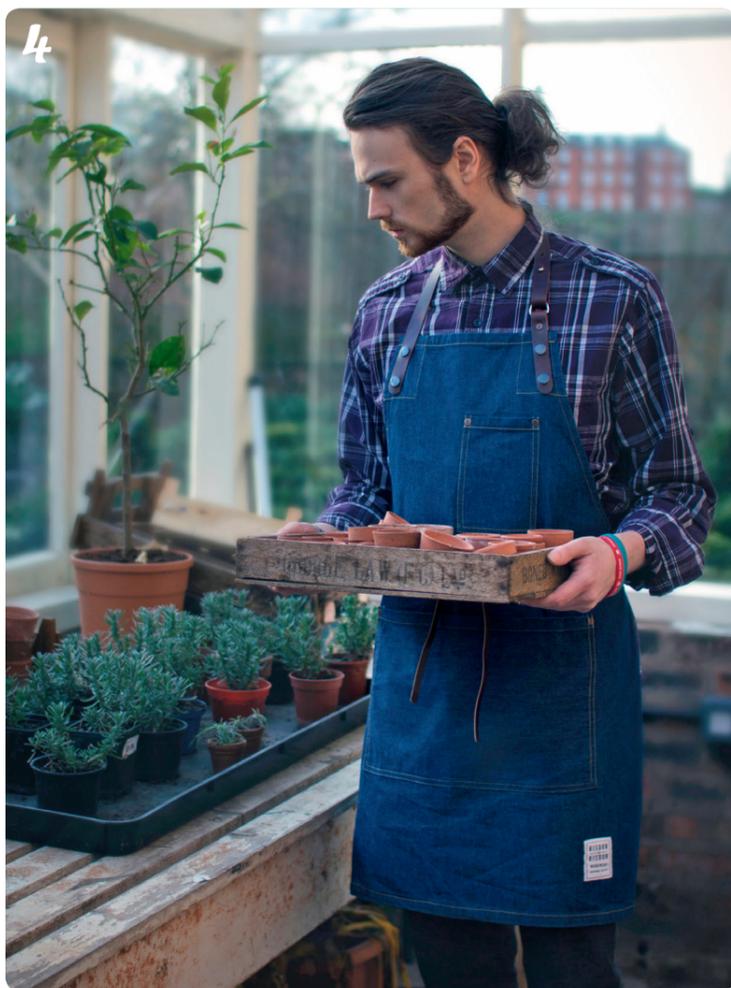
- 10 SARAH RAVEN OFFER** Get 20% off your order at Sarah Raven's online store.



- 49 FARMER GRACY OFFER** Save 15% off your order of bulbs for this summer's cut flowers



Photography: Jonathan Buckley



## GROWING NOTES

Must-have plants, accessories and expert inspiration to get you growing. And, of course, looking the part too...

### 1 HUNTING FOR COLOUR

It's time for gladioli to reclaim their rightful position as stars of the late summer. If you like to grow colours that you can't buy as cut flowers, Gladiolus 'Indian Summer' really fits the bill. Quite a statement in a vase on its own, you could also pair its coral tones with the beloved dahlia 'Café-au-Lait' for a bold display. Dutch bulb experts from Farmer Gracy say: "Just imagine: peachy flowers with a twist of lilac fading to soft cream throats. Choose a sunny spot, plant your bulbs according to the package instructions, add water, and wait for your reward. It won't be long in coming." These bulbs like to be planted 20cm apart (10cm at a push), and will grow happily in a container if you've run out of space in your cutting patch. **From £5.20 for 10 bulbs** [www.farmergracy.co.uk](http://www.farmergracy.co.uk)

### 2 WRITE ON

If, like us, you treat spring as the start of a new term, then you'll clearly need some stationery! We're rather taken with the new Inspirational Garden Journal from Floret Flowers, which is sprinkled with their dreamy trademark photos, along with inspirational quotes about the natural world. **Around £9**, [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk)

### 3 GET A HANDLE ON IT

Sarah Raven started her East Sussex cutting garden from scratch back in the 90s, transforming what was a dairy farm into the beautiful and productive garden it is today. Here, she tells us more about her favourite piece of kit, which has helped her along the way... "My long-handled bulb planter seems to come out of the tool shed most days. We use it to plant gladioli and acidenthera in spring, trying to get a few in every few weeks to give successional flowering, and then it's in continual use in autumn, planting bulbs through grass and in our borders.

"My bulb planter is well made – I've had it for years – and the main thing about it is you don't need to bend your back to do any planting. Just push down into even quite tough grass and the planter slices out a core of turf and soil. Scatter a little spent compost or grit in the bottom of the hole, drop in the bulb, then move on to the next hole to displace the soil core from the planter and tamp it back in. Quick and brilliant and no backache. I love it!"

Grab your own hand-forged bulb planter with rust-proof steel blade and fine ash handle on Sarah's website. **£89.95**, [www.sarahraven.com](http://www.sarahraven.com)

### 4 DRESSING THE PART

Finding the right apron is essential for making you feel the part while conditioning flowers or tending to your cutting patch. This sturdy denim number from Creeper & Knotweed really caught our eye. It promises the last word in practicality as the leather ties and halter neck are attached with heavy-duty poppers and can be whipped off in order to wash the apron.

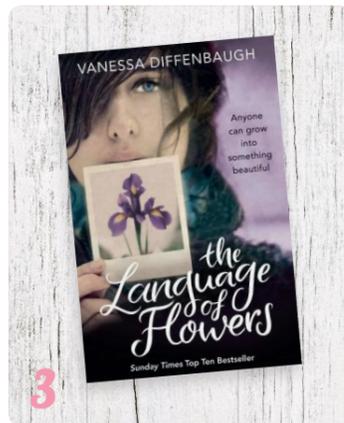
Brightly coloured versions are designed for the small people in your life, should you find yourself with a little helper on your patch. **£75**, [www.creeperandknotweed.co.uk](http://www.creeperandknotweed.co.uk)

### 5 TAKING ROOT

Even though this doesn't really fit cutting-patch criteria, we couldn't resist it when we discovered it on a trip to Holland last year. It's the adult equivalent of growing cress seeds on paper.

Lise Lefebvre at Sprout has created this nifty porcelain saucer with a hole in the centre – simply sit the saucer over a glass, place a germinating seed on top and watch it dangle its roots in the water as it grows. Saucers are sized small to suit acorns and large for avocados and bulbs. It's very therapeutic to watch your plants slowly sprout...

**From £14**, [www.designsprout.nl](http://www.designsprout.nl)



## GIVING NOTES

Thoughtful ways of gifting your flowers, with something to appeal to all the senses...

**1 ANSWERS ON A POSTCARD**  
The folk at Electric Daisy Flower Farm not only grow the most stunning blooms, they also photograph them beautifully too. Never ones to be held back by convention (see their calendar for proof), they've printed a set of six of their favourite images onto postcards – wooden postcards, that is. And if you want to test your flower identification skills, your answers should read: (top row) *Salvia patens*, Hellebore, *Crocsmia*, (bottom row) Chrysanthemum, Tulip 'Apricot Parrot' and Chrysanthemum. **£25 for a set of six**, [www.electricdaisyflowerfarm.co.uk](http://www.electricdaisyflowerfarm.co.uk)

**2 THE FINEST PERFUME**  
Hands up who remembers the childhood pastime of putting rose petals and water in a jar with the hopes of creating a perfume? The people who really know how to do this properly are Penhaligon's, the London perfumers with a royal warrant. They've been doing it for almost 150 years and have brought out many fabulous floral classics over the decades. But we keep coming back to the same scent: the purest, most wonderful rose – Elisabethan Rose, to be precise. So when you find yourself without the real

flower to hand, just dab a little of this fabulous eau de parfum on your pulse points and you'll soon be in your own rosy bower. And who can resist the fact the bottle is dressed up in its own Elizabethan ruff... **£137 for 100ml**, [www.penthaligons.com](http://www.penthaligons.com)

**3 A BUNCH AND A BOOK**  
When we read that Katie and Terri of floral design studio WORM started as a 'bunch and a book' business, we were intrigued. The service involved sending a book and bouquet of flowers especially suited to the recipient. Being sent flowers is wonderful enough but being sent a thoughtful book too is just heaven. WORM have now spread their wings with bigger projects, such as their book, *Wreath* (see page 116 for our review), but why not carry on where they left off and consider the same approach? For a flowery friend, we can recommend gifting a meaningful arrangement (see page 84) and a copy of *The Language Of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. This novel tells the story of Victoria, who discovers she has a talent for helping people by choosing flowers for them. (You should definitely treat yourself to this book too.) To get just a hint of WORM's

creativity, see their luscious summer arrangement ideas over on page 98. **£7.99 paperback**, [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

**4 FLOWERY LANGUAGE**  
Send a heartfelt message along with a bouquet on a lovely old-school notelet. Floret have just launched a beautiful boxed set of 20 small cards comprising two each of ten different dahlia designs created from images of the world's favourite flower farm. Matching envelopes seal your sentiments in style. **£12.99** [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

**5 GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT**  
How about scattering edible petal confetti (or 'flowerfetti' if you will) over a special occasion cake? This delicious idea is possible thanks to Maddocks Farm Edible Flowers. A change from the London life found Jan and Stuart working to establish a small-scale organic vegetable box business, which, in 2008, led to specialising in edible flowers and salads. The website is a treat in itself – select a month and see all the (organic) goodness available to you, along with some delicious recipes. **Options start from £15**, [www.maddocksfarmorganics.co.uk](http://www.maddocksfarmorganics.co.uk)



Zinnia - Erin's number one choice for your cutting patch. All varieties germinate easily, so great for first-time growers.

## GROWING



## Zinnia

ZINNIA

Laidback, lovely and simple to grow, versatile zinnias can transform a bouquet in many wonderful ways

A cut-flower garden wouldn't be complete without zinnias. These fast-growing, easy-to-grow flowers are a staple of high-summer bouquets. They come in so many colours and forms, from simple single flowers to more unusual quilled, crested and pompom shapes. Heights can vary wildly, depending on the cultivar you choose.

One of the easiest cut flowers to germinate, zinnias can be transplanted or sown directly, so they're great for beginners. These reliable, prolific producers do well in almost any climate and the more you cut, the more they bloom. I love all the offerings in the 'Benary's Giant', 'Oklahoma' and 'Queen' series, as well as farm favourite 'Cupcake Pink' (pictured left).

### CUT FLOWER CARE

If you find the zinnia stems bend and cause the bloom to die, you may have picked it a little too soon. Check that stems are stiff and not bendy before you cut them.

**Vase life:** 7-10 days with preservative added to the water