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# GARDENS

ILLUSTRATED

DECEMBER 2013 £4.25

## Designers' secrets

How to make your garden  
look magical in winter

CHRISTMAS  
IN STYLE

Home-made  
decorations

Perfect gifts  
for gardeners

*Our favourite*  
LATE-FLOWERING ROSES

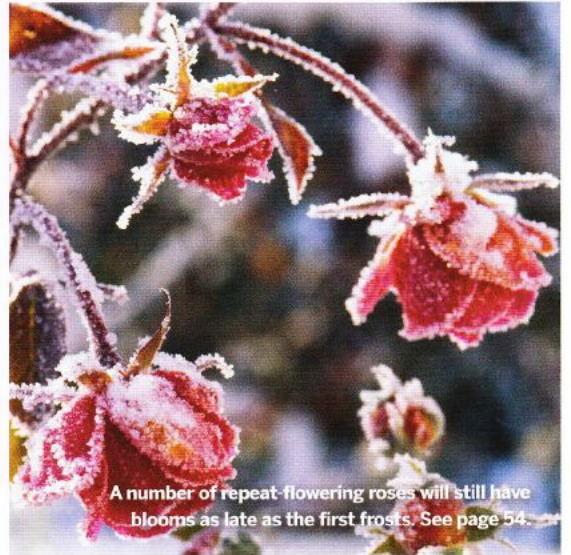


# editor's letter

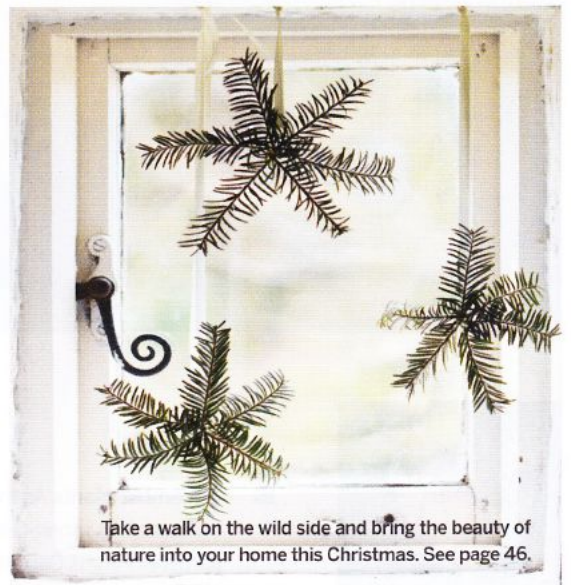


A dusting of snow can bring a bit of sparkle to even the most ordinary of gardens. But how can you guarantee your garden looks magical this late in the year even without Jack Frost's help? It is without doubt the trickiest of seasons to achieve this, so we ask four leading designers for their design advice and suggestions for plants that will do the trick. Roses are the quintessential plant of an English summer

garden yet a number of repeat-flowerers may give you a few precious blooms as late as December. I find roses irresistible whatever the season, so to find out which cultivars give the best chance of late flowers, we ask expert rosarian Charles Quest-Ritson to recommend a selection of his favourites. For further planting inspiration, we visit the Royal Horticultural Society's flagship garden at Wisley in Surrey and, in the final part of his series, Great Dixter's head gardener Fergus Garrett reveals his favourite plants for December. To celebrate the festive season in style, we feature a lovely selection of gifts for gardeners, and designer Kristy Ramage provides a step-by-step guide to creating some charming decorations using snippets from the garden. If, like me, you're missing spending time outdoors, then this is the perfect excuse for a winter walk, secateurs and a basket in hand. I hope you enjoy the issue and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful Christmas.



A number of repeat-flowering roses will still have blooms as late as the first frosts. See page 54.



Take a walk on the wild side and bring the beauty of nature into your home this Christmas. See page 46.



*Juliet*

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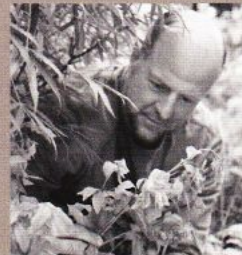
## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS



**FERGUS GARRETT**  
Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.



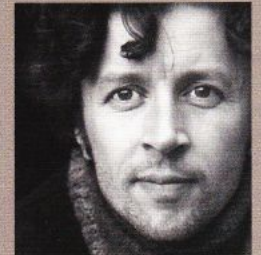
**CAROL KLEIN**  
Plantswoman and presenter of BBC *Gardeners' World*.



**DANIEL J HINKLEY**  
American plantsman, plant hunter, horticultural writer and lecturer.



**ALYS FOWLER**  
Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.



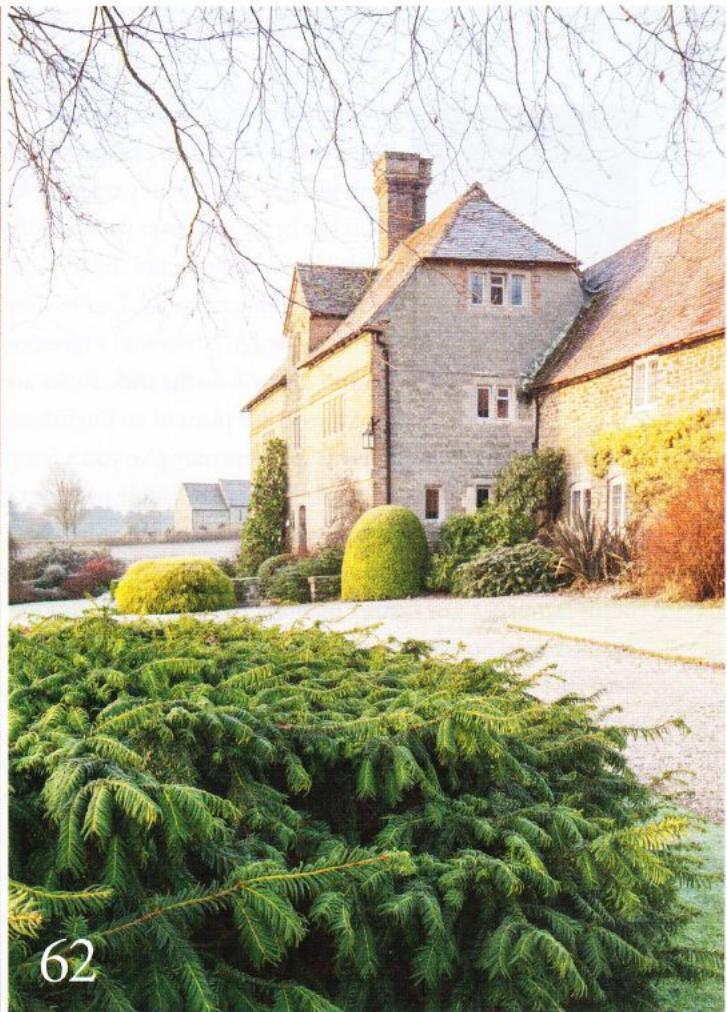
**DAN PEARSON**  
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

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COVER IMAGE  
Winter roses  
Photograph by  
Denise Grünstein

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BRITT WILLOUGHBY DIVER, CAROLE DRAKE, SHARON PEARSON, JANE SEBIRE

## Nigella studded star

The seedheads of *Nigella damascena* (love-in-a-mist) have fat spheres with a crown of wispy points. With their pale golden colour, they stand out well, against the almost polished darkness of plum twigs – like the light bulbs on a fairground star.

### Materials and tools

- Twigs x 5 – straight lengths 34cm long of pencil thickness, shiny dark *Prunus* is striking
- Florist's binding wire, hot glue gun (available at craft shops or try Fred Aldous)
- Nigella seedheads x 35 – leave about 1cm of stalk
- Dried clementine peel x 6 – roughly torn pieces about the size of a 50p coin

### To make

Join the ends of the twigs to form a five-point star using hot glue. Bind all junctions with wire. With hot glue, stick the nigella heads at roughly even spacing along the outer points, adding a little clementine piece under the seedhead at each tip. You can use the offcuts to make a little twig star like the one on the frame, which is made from three 10cm-long twigs, simply bound in the middle. Draped over the frame there is a garland of more seedheads threaded on to a ribbon.



# Garden goodwill

Bring some festive fizz to your home with these simple and beautiful decorations – all made from natural bounty gathered in the garden

STYLING KRISTY RAMAGE PHOTOGRAPHS BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

## Frosted beech wreath

Oh, for a white Christmas. I love frost on branches but rather than use silver spray paint, I opted for dipping beech twigs in white clay paint. The matt finish clings to every tiny twig and looks really dramatic against a dark background.

### Materials and tools

- White paint (I used clay paint, but chalk paints or just emulsion will do the job)
- Beech twigs dipped in the paint
- Florist's binding wire
- Poppy seedheads x 7
- Old gold chiffon ribbon swag and white ribbon for hanging (try VV Rouleaux for a good selection)

### To make

You'll need a 'former' – I used an old bicycle wheel – to give your wreath its shape. Wrap the pre-frosted twigs around its rim and wire them just to each other, not to the former. Keep wiring on layer upon layer until your wreath is thick enough to make an impact – then take out your former. Leave wispy bits to fly out and catch the light. Wire through some poppy seedheads and evenly space them on a gold chiffon ribbon to loosely wrap around the wreath. Use three little white twigs tied with yellow string, to make tiny stars for the table.





### Yew snowflakes

The needles on the tips of yew branches are so pleasing in silhouette, they look as though they are drawn on to the stem. These yew 'snowflakes', hung in the window, are quick and effective to make.

#### Materials and tools

- Florist's binding wire (straight)
- White 6mm ribbon – roughly 30cm per snowflake
- Yew branch tips x 6 per snowflake approx 8cm long
- Hot glue gun, snipe-nosed pliers (from Fred Aldous)

#### To make

Form a 2cm figure-of-eight (two loops) with the florist's wire by wrapping it around the end of the pliers. Tie the ribbon through one of the loops. Put a dab of hot glue on the other wire loop and lay the end of six pieces of yew in a snowflake formation on top of the glue. The glue sets quickly holding all the yew pieces in place. If you need to press them into the glue do it with the rim of a bottle, it presses down in a ring around the glue rather than sticking to it.

### Sprout garland and tiny box wreaths

You can use all sorts of fruit and vegetables as well as the more traditional evergreens to make decorations.

#### Materials and tools

- **Garland:** Brussels sprouts, florist's binding wire (straight) in 8cm lengths, 7mm ribbon, snipe-nosed pliers
- **Tiny wreaths:** Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) clippings approx 12cm long, flexible twigs, ribbon for hanging, hot glue gun
- **Candle pots:** waxed tissue or baking parchment, paper plant pot maker, sand, hand-dipped taper candles (good-quality candles available from Saint Edward Brotherhood)

#### To make

For the **garland**, form a 5mm wire loop around the pliers. Push the remaining end of wire through each sprout, making an end loop to hold it. Knot the 'baubles' on to the ribbon at regular intervals. For the **tiny box wreath** weave a small circle of the flexible twigs and push the box clippings into it. A dab of hot glue will hold them in place. For the **candle pots** fill seedling pots with sand and put the candle in. Wet the sand and press down firmly. Secure box clippings to pot with glue.





### Ivy star and garland

Ivy berries, green on the outside and purple black on the inside, are spectacular. On this simple star shape they steal the show, but use the glossy leaves too. Tied simply in bunches on a ribbon they make an effective garland to hang against the walls or in swags from the ceiling.

#### Materials and tools

- 5 x straight sticks, 34cm long, hot glue gun, snipe-nosed pliers
- Florist's binding wire and ribbon for hanging the star and the garland
- Ivy berries x 50 clusters with stalks approx 7cm long
- Ivy leaves wired into bunches of 4 or 5

#### To make

Join the points of the five sticks with a dab of hot glue to form a star. Wrap this in florist's binding wire, forming a mesh over the shape. Push the stalks of the berries through the mesh and weave the ends in and out to hold in place, covering the entire star. For the garland, knot the wired bunches of ivy leaves at regular intervals along a length of ribbon.





**Sage, clementine and feather wreath**

This delicate wreath, with a calm and gentle colour palette, is for indoors. Hung by a window it catches the pale winter sunlight, and persuades you to pause for a moment in the frenzy of the festive season.

**Materials and tools**

- Sage leaves x 20 (these are from *Salvia lavandulifolia*, which has wonderful whitish grey leaves all winter)
- Dried clementine peel x 14 in pieces approx 2.5cm in size
- Seedheads from *Anemone japonica*
- Red and purple leaves x 16 from *Geranium robertianum*
- White feathers
- Flexible twigs (any but these are beech)
- Florist's binding wire, hot glue gun, ribbon for hanging

**To make**

Form a twig ring, approx 17cm in diameter, and bind it tightly. Wire the stems (or make a hole in the clementine) of all your ingredients, then wire them on to the ring, working your way around from one point. Add the fluffy seedheads from the anemones at the end, placing them on a small dab of hot glue.

For all stockists details see page 102.

# Stockists



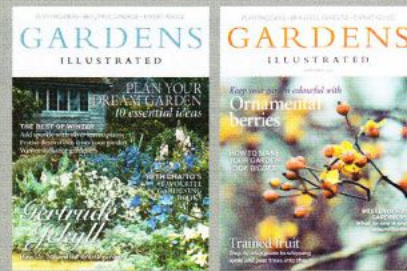
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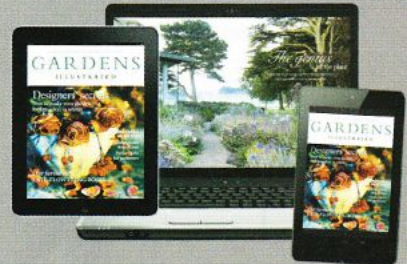
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