



### 1 Down to earth

Chrysanthemums are traditional in cutting gardens for their late flowering and staying power. The earthy red flowers of cultivar *C. 'Ruby Mound'* continue from August to October. As the season progresses stems gently topple over with the weight of flowers, or they can be staked if preferred.



Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

## Cutting gardens

Plant fragrant sweet peas, some favourite cottage garden annuals and a medley of dahlias and you'll have plenty of flowers for vases and bouquets

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### 2 Sweet favourites

Every cutting garden should have room for a row or two of sweet peas, perhaps mixed among the vegetables.

*Lathyrus odoratus* 'Beaujolais' has rich maroon flowers and a heavenly scent.

### 3 Cut and keep

*Dahlia* 'Arabian Night' was part of my colour scheme last year, with burgundy pompom flowers. Once flowering is finished, lift tubers and store in a dark, dry and frost-free place for re-planting next year.

### 4 Potting up

*Dahlia* 'Tartan' has petals striped burgundy and white. Rather than planting directly in the ground, I plant dahlias in pots first. This helps bring them on, so they're further ahead once planted out, a useful way of getting small cutting gardens going.

### 5 Cartwheels and pompoms

Dahlias come in such a range of petal arrangements that it's possible to have a cutting garden composed entirely of different types. In the foreground is the cartwheel *D. 'Honka White'*, with the full velvety heads of *D. 'Mingus Alex'* seen behind.



### Gather ye dahlias

Gathering flowers from your cutting beds, choosing shapes and shades to put together, is one of the delights of summer gardening. Here, in shades of pink and lilac, are some favourites:

6 *Dahlia 'Sascha'*

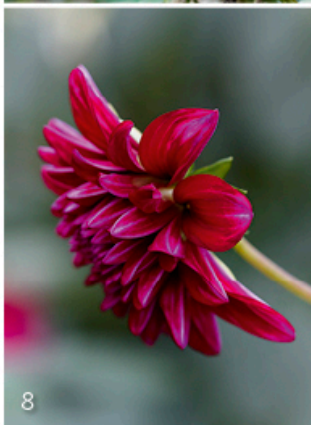
7 *Dahlia 'Merkit'*

8 *Dahlia 'Le Baron'*

9 *Dahlia 'Thomas A Edison'*

### 10 End of season

There's a particular pleasure that comes from picking the last of the late flowers. *Dahlia 'White Star'* and *D. 'Mingus Alex'* have looked wonderful in garden and vase alike, but now gradually collapse at the end of the gardening year. The season to come always has its own appeal, even when that season is winter.



In my garden at Allt-y-Bela, space for growing cutting flowers is quite limited, so I plan the year in advance from seed and bulb catalogues, selecting my palette of colours and the flowers I'm going to plant.

I grow my cutting flowers alongside the vegetables in the kitchen garden, but to vary things I like to change the position each year. Last year I grew them all together in a square 4m x 4m bed, but this year they're in two narrow beds, each 4m x 1.5m, either side of the entrance. To get to the centre of the garden, you walk through a little double border. If I've run out of

space, I'll plant between the rows of vegetables, which looks lovely and helps bring in pollinating insects and the natural predators of crop pests (such as hoverflies that feed on aphids).

I start by choosing a colour theme for the whole year, and this year everything is pale – so pale blues, cream and white. It's an intensive regime: because I'm harvesting the flowers like a crop. As soon as they've finished flowering, spring bulbs have to come up to make way for the summer flowers. Bulbs grown for cutting are generally spent after flowering, so there's little point in keeping them. On a smaller scale, I grow



some spring and summer flowers, including tulips, in big pots. This summer I'm growing dahlias and chrysanthemums. I'm even getting a taste for the chrysanthemums with big reflexed heads – something I never imagined, but they remind me of my childhood. The sweet peas and dahlias are all pinks, pale lilacs and cream. The year will end with a burst of burnt cinnamons, toffee colours and deep maroon pinks.

For earlier flowering, there are martagon lilies (*Lilium martagon*) and St Brigid's anemones (*Anemone coronaria*) in staggered rows with bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare 'Purpureum'*)

for the foliage, sweet peas and a few very deep magenta gladioli. Then there are the annual flowers: cornflowers, corn cockle, larkspur, nigella – and these are scattered in drifts among the larger flowers. Colour schemes work well where space is restricted, and I love the sense of continuity they bring. Maybe next year will just be white with acid greens. In the same area of the garden, I'll also plant scented-leaf pelargoniums in old tin buckets and pots, so that the peppermint or rose-scented leaves can be cut and added to a bunch of white sweet peas for the table. □

NEXT MONTH Earthworks

### Stockists and inspiration

The borders at **Rousham House and Garden** are always a fantastic inspiration. Rousham, Oxfordshire OX25 4QU. Tel 01869 347110, [www.rousam.org](http://www.rousam.org)

**Rose Cottage Plants** has a great website, where the dahlias are organised by colour and there is a wonderful selection. Tel 01992 573775, [www.rosecottageplants.co.uk](http://www.rosecottageplants.co.uk)

Whether you decide to tone or dash in your cutting garden, have a look at **Chrysanthemums Direct** which has a huge range of chrysanthemum colours and types to choose from. [www.chrysanthemumsdirect.co.uk](http://www.chrysanthemumsdirect.co.uk)