

The Belvoir Flower and Garden Festival

Countryside Borders

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A border for a changing climate

This border is designed with an eye on future climate conditions. The plants have been selected for their ability to succeed in a warming climate and on poor, chalky soils.

Climate change opens up a new planting palette and at the same time puts pressure on native flora with the arrival of harsher weather conditions and new pests and diseases. Gardeners are on the front line of working with this change and will play an important role in selecting plants which are able to adapt to less predictable and more extreme weather patterns.

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landscapes*

Selected plants



Sporobolus heterolepis

Called prairie dropseed, it is a clump-forming, perennial grass native to North America and Canada which typically occurs in prairies, glades, and open ground. Flowers have pink and brown tints, but are perhaps most noted for their unique fragrance (hints of coriander). Tiny rounded mature seeds drop to the ground from their hulls in autumn giving rise to the descriptive common name.



Hesperaloe parviflora

Commonly known as coral yucca or hummingbird yucca, it is a yucca-like evergreen perennial succulent. It is native to the south of the USA where it is typically found growing in desert areas, prairies, rocky slopes, and mesquite groves. Surprisingly hardy tolerating temperatures down to -20°C.



Petrohargia saxifraga

Commonly called tunic flower it is a spreading, mat-forming, grass-like perennial of the pink (Dianthus) family. It is native to rocky, sandy, limey soils in the Pyrenees, southern to central Europe and Turkey. The Genus name comes from the Greek *petros* meaning rock and *rhagas* meaning narrow opening or fissure in reference to this plant's ability to live in the cracks of walls.



Sanguisorba minor

A perennial herb that is native to Europe and the Mediterranean. This long lived winter-green perennial is found mainly on dry, infertile chalk or limestone grasslands but will tolerate most soils. It is primarily grown in herb gardens for its tasty leaves reminiscent of cucumber. Although its spring growth is relatively slow it continues to grow into summer when other species have stopped or slowed down. It can do this because of its

long tap root which allows it to exploit water out of reach to many other species.



Trifolium rubens

Although it is a clover it is not invasive. The tall, compact pinkish red flowers are borne on leafy stems to form a nice mound for most of the summer. Unfortunately, rabbits are crazy about clover. In a rabbit-free garden this species will do well.



Digitalis lutea

A perennial with narrow leaves and small, pale yellow flowers that are attractive to pollinators. It likes limey soils and will self-seed happily around the garden.



Corokia virgata 'Maori Green'

Commonly known as the wire-netting bush for obvious reasons and native to Australasia. It has small silvery-grey leaves which are offset against black stems. Its branches grow into a tangled mass hence the common name for this plant.



Sophora prostrata 'Little Baby'

A small evergreen shrub native to New Zealand with zigzagging growth and small leaves. In spring it bears small yellow flowers.



Digitalis canariensis

Endemic to the Canary Islands this is an evergreen shrub with leathery leaves and spikes of tubular golden apricot flowers in summer suitable for sun or semi-shade.



Alogyne hakeifolia 'Melissa Anne'

An evergreen shrub with tulip shaped pink flowers with red centres. It heralds from the southern regions of Australia and likes well drained soil and a sunny position. The large flower, highly variable in colour, is similar to that of Hibiscus.



Calendula arvensis

A hardy annual from the Mediterranean region with yellow or orange flowers. A useful plant for the border, the flowers can be pickled and the Bedouins use the leaves as a condiment for clarified butter.



Echium russicum

Russia and Eastern Europe is the home of this uncommon and unusual plant which is probably the most attractive of all dwarf echiums. Hardy down to -20°C and reputedly perennial in a milder climate (although I've yet to witness this). A firm favourite with bees.

Designed by...

Alex Scott-Tonge trained as an ecologist and is an RHS qualified gardener based in south London. His practice follows ecological principles to introduce diversity and balance back into outdoors spaces.

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