

# The best of CHELSEA

We've scoured the greatest flower show in the world for the most exciting highlights and new plants of the year

## Plum is the new black!

Colour fashions are not just confined to catwalk clothes, and trends set at Chelsea soon filter through to our gardens. From the Great Pavilion to the show gardens, this season's must-have colours were moody tones of deep red, plum, purple and bronze, enlivened by burnt orange, royal blue and lime green. Faded pastels were also much in evidence, providing a perfect palette of colour blends with these deep jewel shades, while a few gardens maintained cool, crisp elegance by combining white flowers with different tones of green foliage.

The key to good colour scheming is to keep it simple, avoiding the 'bag of jelly

beans' approach, and Chelsea's crop of garden designers kept the lid on excess this year. The Gold Medal-winning Laurent Perrier Garden, designed by Luciano Giubbilei, featured luscious peonies, irises and astrantias in a tapestry of foliage woven from fennel and ornamental grasses.

The small courtyard gardens were no less inspiring, and a highlight among them was Jo Thompson's design for children's hospice charity Demelza. Purple-blue iris, claret aquilegia and plum verbascum created depths of tone and contrast for glowing orange geum, lime green alchemilla and euphorbia-like *Mathiasella bupleuroides*.



### Shady lady

One of the plants of the show, and used boldly in the QVC Garden, *Astrantia* 'Sheila's Red' is a great new Chelsea introduction. A vigorous grower with crimson-red flowers and dark green foliage, it's ideal for an herbaceous border and tolerates partial shade. 'Sheila's Red', named after Sheila Howard, the plant breeder's wife, flowers in May – prune back after the blooms have faded for a second flush in late summer.

**Flowers** May-June

**Position** Full sun or part shade

**Height/spread** 75cm x 40cm

**Price** Around £8.99 for one plant in a 2-litre pot

**From** For stockists, call Howard Nurseries on 01379 898 529 or buy direct from RHS Wisley Plant Centre, 01483 211 113

### High demand

Talk about hot cakes! This iris, named 'Broadleigh Eleanor', was so popular at Chelsea that the nursery sold out of stock, with orders taken at the show. This hybrid iris is evergreen, easy to divide and perfect for filling gaps in late-spring borders. Demand is high, so put your name down to get your hands on this gem next year.

**Flowers** Mid-late spring

**Position** Sun or shade in acid soil

**Height/spread** 45cm x 45cm

**Price** £10 for a bare-root plant, plus £4.95 p&p

**From** Broadleigh Gardens, 01823 286 231,

[www.broadleighbulbs.co.uk](http://www.broadleighbulbs.co.uk)



### GET THE LOOK

Luciano Giubbilei's jewel-like planting scheme is the height of horticultural fashion but, the good news is, it's eminently repeatable at home. Here's how:

- *Astrantia major* 'Claret' (£6.99) and 'Hadspen Blood' (£6.99)
- *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Bronzeschleier'
- Fennel 'Giant Bronze' (£5.49)
- *Iris* 'Black Swan' (£8.49)
- *Paeonia* 'Buckeye Belle' (£9.99)
- *Salvia nemerosa* 'Caradonna' (£5.99)

Crocus supplied Luciano's plants, and now they're offering readers 15 per cent off their plants, using promotion code **9043**, whether ordering by phone or online. To order, call Crocus on 0844 557 2266 or go to [www.crocus.co.uk](http://www.crocus.co.uk). Delivery is £5.99 p&p per order, to UK mainland excluding northern Scotland.