

SUSIE'S GARDEN



A lifelong and passionate gardener, Susie White has a free flowing planting style which owes much to herbs, wildflowers, childhood plants and unusual perennials.

Warm summer evenings are the perfect opportunity for you to savour the scents and sights of your blooming garden

With the heat of summer there's an intensity to the scents that are held in the still air of the garden. That's especially so in an enclosed space, so a walled town garden can be the perfect place for perfumed plants.

If you have a backyard or small garden, you can fill pots with scented herbs, or grow climbers, such as heady, exotic jasmine, up its walls.

I like to be able to walk round in the evening with a cup of tea enjoying the honeysuckle, which is at its best then. Its long tubular flowers are pollinated by night-flying insects as they have longer tongues than bees. Honeysuckle grows wild in British woodlands where it scrambles up trees towards the light. That



Honeysuckle

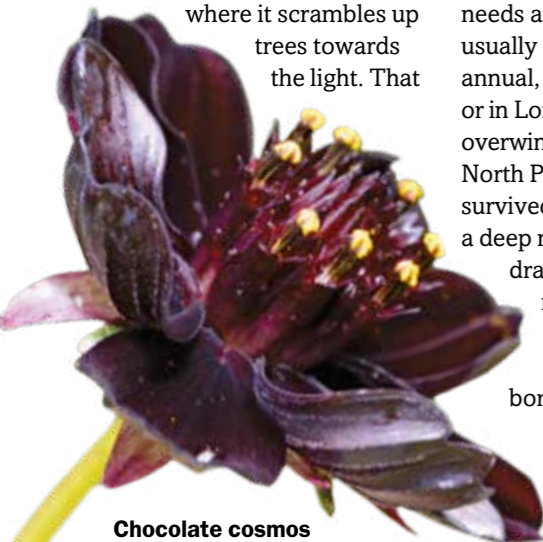
gives a clue to its favourite growing conditions and, like clematis, it likes to have cool roots. The grey-leaved honeysuckle "Graham Thomas" is particularly good.

Another for night scent is *Nicotiana sylvestris*, a tall stately tobacco plant with long white trumpet flowers. It needs a warm spot and is usually grown as a half-hardy annual, though in the south or in London it can overwinter. Amazingly for my North Pennine garden, mine survived the winter, thanks to a deep mulch and well-drained soil. I collected a mass of seed and the new plants are now growing in the flower borders.

Perfumed cottage garden flowers can trigger memories and the clove of

garden pinks takes me immediately back to my first garden. The sweetness of lilacs, the citrus tang of lily of the valley, the warmth of lavender or apple-like chamomile can remind us of people or places. The mock orange, *Philadelphus*, has a bergamot scent reminiscent of Spanish holidays. This shrub is smothered in white cupped flowers which attract bees, and it can cope with urban pollution as well as salt-laden air. There are several varieties but "Virginal" is one of the best.

A plant that has gained popularity recently is *Cosmos atrosanguineus* which has a pretty, dark burgundy flower. It does need overwintering in a warm greenhouse but is worth the trouble because it smells of chocolate!



Chocolate cosmos



Lovely lilac

In The Garden

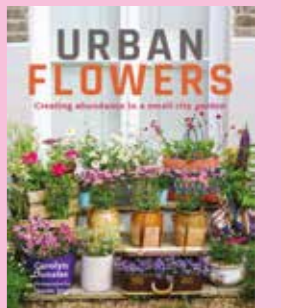
◆ Enjoy summer evenings and take a picnic to RHS Garden Harlow Carr near Harrogate, where there's live music every Thursday evening throughout July. Entry to this 68-acre valley and stream-side garden is free to RHS members, or it costs £5 after 5pm for non-members. www.rhs.org.uk



A fun occasion

Best Buys

There's a chapter on growing scented plants in *Urban Flowers*, a new book that is full of inspiring ideas for small town gardens. Subtitled "Creating abundance in a small city garden", it is written by Carolyn Dunster who lives in North London. It has craft ideas, plants for small spaces, colour, unusual containers, upcycling and much more. Published by Frances Lincoln, it costs £20.



Green People have made a deeply nourishing hand cream with an exquisite scent of damask rose to celebrate their 20th anniversary. Containing 91% organic ingredients, it costs £15 for 50ml.

Don't forget...

- * Turn the compost heap regularly to speed up composting process
- * Clip over thymes after flowering
- * Deadhead roses

Reader's Tip

I found a great way to save my poor knees. My Pilates mat was worn in the middle, so I cut it in half and used the two halves, doubled up, to make a super soft kneeling mat for weeding my borders.

Lisette A Davidson, Nairn

Email your pics and tips to: myweekly@dcthompson.co.uk



Follow Susie on Twitter @cottagegardener