



Garden Plant Guide

Hill Top



March/April



Snowdrop

Galanthus nivalis

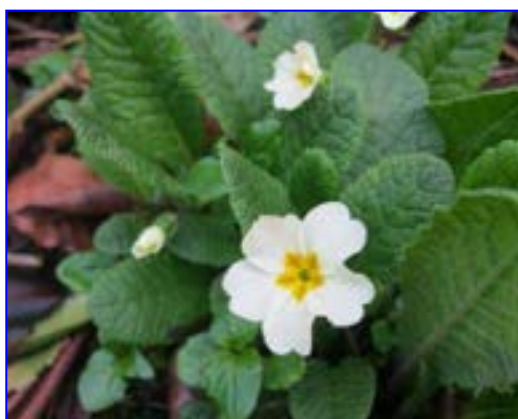
The first bulbs of the year to flower, Snowdrops seem impervious to anything the Lake District weather can throw at them. The plant has specially hardened leaf tips that can push through frozen soil. They generally bloom in February and open their petals wide when the temperature rises above 10 degrees c in the hope of attracting pollinating insects.



Laurustinus

Viburnum tinus

An evergreen shrub which has pink flowers from November to May followed by glossy black fruits. It can be grown as a hedge or even clipped for topiary.



English Primrose

Primula vulgaris

The familiar wild, pale yellow, single primrose is one of the early signs of spring, coinciding with the first early daffodils. Cultivated varieties come in a huge range of colours, and both single and double flowers but for its simple beauty, the wild version is hard to beat. Legend says that Primroses sprang from the body of Paraisos (the Primrose's ancient name) after he died of a broken heart and Victorians used to plant Primroses on the graves of children.



Drumstick primula

Primula denticulata

Originally from the Himalayas this spring-flowering relative of the English primrose is available in a multitude of colours including lavender, white, magenta crimson, lilac and rich purple blue. It will grow in any neutral or acid soil but won't tolerate drying out in the summer.





Grape hyacinth

Muscari armeniacum

Not actually a hyacinth at all but a member of the lily family originating in the Mediterranean region. This is a vigorous species with attractive bright blue flower spikes in spring. They need no special care and, once planted, will flower and spread freely, so that division may be necessary every few years.



Lesser Celandine

Ranunculus ficaria

Lesser Celandine is one of the first flowering plants to appear at the end of the winter, producing its yellow flowers in mid to late March. It is a member of the buttercup family and can spread rapidly, so think twice before adding it to your garden!

Lesser celandine has historically been used in the treatment of haemorrhoids – hence its alternative name of Pilewort. It is also reputed to have been the favourite flower of William Wordsworth.



Lungwort

Pulmonaria officinalis

A useful early-flowering perennial with pink and blue flowers and silver spotted foliage. It seeds itself readily around the garden. Once the flowers have finished a good haircut will produce a flush of new leaves.

In medieval times the plant was used as a remedy for bronchial problems, hence the genus name Pulmonaria from the latin 'pulmo' meaning lung.





Forsythia

Forsythia x intermedia

The flowers of Forsythia are produced in spring before the leaves. It is a tough and hardy shrub which requires little attention other than an annual prune after flowering.



Flowering Currant

Ribes sanguineum

Flowering currant is a reliable performer for the spring garden, blooming every year without any special care. Like all of the flowering currants, it has a pungent scent that is stronger when the foliage is rubbed or brushed against. Originally from North America, the flowering currant was introduced into Britain in 1817.



Elephant's Ears

Begonia cordifolia

Originally from Siberia, this tough perennial has broad, leathery leaves which make dense ground cover. Bergenias are low maintenance, evergreen, will grow in sun or shade and tolerate a wide range of soils, including dry soils and clay.





Japanese Quince

Chaenomeles speciosa

A tall spiny shrub with dark green, glossy leaves. The flowers are red and cup-shaped, about 3 cm diameter, comprising six petals. These are followed by small apple-like fruits which contain more vitamin C than lemons and can be used to make preserves. It can be grown as a specimen shrub or as a climber against a wall.



Fumewort

Corydalis solida

This tuberous perennial produces mauve-pink, purple, or white flower spikes in spring over deeply divided grey-green leaves. It prefers partial shade or full sun.



Cowslip

Primula veris

This British native wildflower is a cousin of the primrose but due to the loss of traditional hay meadows is far less common, although cowslip seed is often included in wildflower seed mixes used to landscape motorway embankments.

The cowslip has been used in traditional medicine as a sedative and muscle relaxant, for kidney problems, to reduce inflammation and to treat bruising. It has many folk names including Herb Peter, Paigle, Peggle, Key Flower, Key of Heaven, Fairy Cups, Petty Mulleins, Crewel, Buckles, Palsywort and Plumrocks.





Chinese Wisteria

Wisteria sinensis

The flowers of Chinese wisteria open in early summer, arising from bare stems as the foliage does not appear until the flowers are over. The species has lavender flowers, but named varieties are available in shades of violet or white. Like most wisterias, this is slow to get established and may take several years to start flowering.



Siberian Bugloss

Brunnera macrophylla

Produces a dense ground-covering layer of foliage early in the year, helping to smother weeds. The leaves, up to 15cm (6in) across and provide an attractive foil for the sprays of starry pale blue forget-me-not flowers that appear shortly after the leaves cover the ground. Flowering continues for 8-10 weeks in late spring and early summer



Bistort

Persicaria affinis

An excellent evergreen ground-cover plant, producing dense spikes of pale-pink flowers from midsummer to mid-autumn. Easy to grow in any moist soil in full sun or partial shade.

Bistort is used to make Easter-Ledge Pudding, a traditional Cumberland, Lake District and Yorkshire dish served at Easter (sometimes also known as Dock Pudding). The pudding is made using the young leaves of Bistort, cooked with onion, pearl barley, butter and eggs.





Cowslip

Primula veris

A member of the primrose family, the cowslip is becoming rare in the wild. It is a hardy perennial which grows to a height of 12 ins (30 cm) and likes a well-drained soil and a sunny aspect. Happiest in an alkaline soil but seems to tolerate the acid soil at Hill Top well enough.



Wild Garlic

Allium ursinum

A bulbous perennial woodland plant which produces flowers from April to June. Also known as Ransomes it has a strong scent of garlic when crushed. The leaves can be eaten in salads, or they can be cooked as a vegetable. Both the bulbs and the flowers are also tasty.



Bachelor's Buttons

Kerria japonica

A vigorous, deciduous spring flowering shrub. Kerria will grow almost anywhere and soon develops into a thicket of tall graceful stems with suckers growing from the creeping roots.

It is inclined to spread rapidly but can be kept in check by cutting off suckers with a spade.



Barbery

Berberis darwinii

Discovered by Charles Darwin in 1835. It works well as a single specimen or as a hedge. The orange flowers in spring are followed by purple berries in summer and sometimes a second flush of flowers in



autumn. It will grow well in light shade.



Wood Spurge

Euphorbia amygdaloides

An evergreen perennial with spreading stems. Flowers between April and June. The milky sap of the plant is toxic and it can cause irritation on contact with the skin. A good plant for a woodland setting.



Periwinkle

Vinca minor

An evergreen perennial shrub which makes an excellent ground cover under hedges and trees. Blue, single flowers are produced in the spring.



Wood Violet

Viola labradorica var. *pupurea*

Dark purplish-green leaves, mauve flowers from May onwards. Will seed itself around if happy. Excellent in a woodland garden.



Honesty

Lunaria annua

An old fashioned dual-purpose plant, grown partly for its fragrant bright flowers in spring and early summer, but also for its unique seed-heads. It is best grown as a biennial, and makes large, well-branched plants in its second year, after which it will seed itself freely around the garden.





Welsh Poppy

Meconopsis cambrica

A perennial plant which is native to Wales and the south-west of England, it is now much more widespread and is common in hedgerows throughout the Lake District. It flowers from May to August and spreads easily from the numerous small black seeds produced in the summer. It is especially well adapted to colonising gaps and crevices in rocks and stones.



Good King Henry

Chenopodium bonus-henricus

A perennial vegetable which was popular with the Romans, who used the leaves as we would use spinach. The young shoots can also be blanched and eaten like asparagus. It is thought to have been brought to Britain by Neolithic farmers more than 5,000 years ago as part of their staple diet. It is rich in iron and vitamins.



Bridal Wreath

Spiraea arguta

A handsome, late spring flowering deciduous shrub with delicate arching branches which become smothered in small white flowers held close against the stems. It will grow up to 2 metres high and can be used as an informal hedge.





Globe Flower

Trollius europaeus

A native wild flower found in damp ground in shady areas, woodland and scrub, pastures and woods. The name "globe flower" refers to the petals which are curved over the top of the flower to appear like a spherical globe.



Lilac – *Syringa vulgaris*

'Frau Dagmar Hastrup'

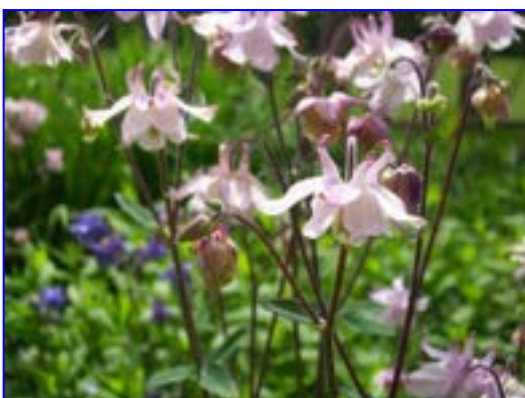
A large deciduous shrub or small tree, the Lilac was introduced from the mountains of South-Eastern Europe in the 16th century. Since then numerous varieties have been produced with fragrant flowers ranging in colour from pure white to deep purple.



Enkianthus

Enkianthus campanulatus

Enkianthus are easy, trouble free shrubs for acidic soil. They are grown for their masses of delicate bell-shaped flowers that appear from mid-spring to early summer and their fiery autumn colours. They are ideal shrubs for an open woodland garden or in a shady border. Enkianthus campanulatus has pendant, creamy yellow bells, tinged pink, from late spring to early summer.



Columbine

Aquilegia vulgaris

Also known as Granny's Bonnet, no cottage garden is complete without a selection of Aquilegias. Flowering in early summer, they fill the seasonal gap between the last

of the spring bulbs and the first of the summer flowers. *Aquilegia vulgaris* is fully hardy, not particular as to soil or position, and once established frequently self-sows in a wide range of colours.



Crimson Glory Vine

Vitis coignetiae

This ornamental vine is a magnificent climber which will grow up to 6 metres in a single season. It must be cut hard back every spring unless space is unlimited. The large rounded leaves, which can be almost 30cm (1ft) across on a large specimen, are much less lobed than those of a common grape vine and have a dimpled texture, which looks attractive throughout the summer. In autumn the leaves turn fiery red, gold and orange.



Jacob's Ladder

Polemonium caeruleum

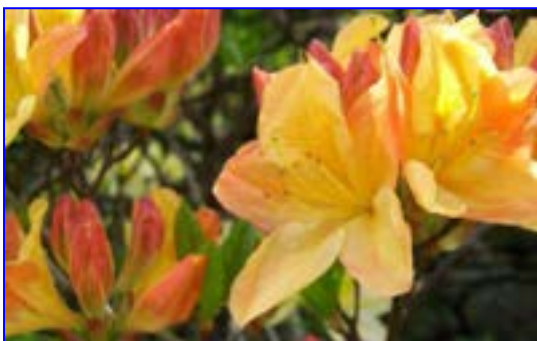
Jacob's Ladder is an easy to grow plant providing flowers throughout the summer. It forms neat spreading clumps of light green pinnate leaves, with stems around 2-3' high bearing clusters of open or bell-shaped flowers in various shades of blue or white with contrasting bright yellow stamens. It is one of the few herbaceous plants not eaten by rabbits!



Brook Thistle

Cirsium rivulare

Tall flower stems (90-120cm) with clusters of wine purple flowers in flushes throughout summer. The large leaves form a rosette spreading about 75-90cm. Good for bees but is sterile so won't self seed. Performs best in a fairly moist soil - the name *rivulare* means "from the stream side".



Deciduous Azalea

Azalea mollis

Also known as *Rhododendron mollis*, these striking shrubs produce highly fragrant blooms late in spring and colourful foliage in autumn, Flower colours range from

red through to orange and yellow. They are hardy, bushy upright plants and will grow to a height of 1.4m.

Like all members of the Azalea family, Azalea mollis grows best in an acid soil.



Quince

Cydonia oblonga

The quince is a small deciduous tree, growing 5–8m tall and 4–6m wide, related to apples and pears. The flowers, produced in spring, are white or pink, 5cm across, with five petals. Most varieties of quince are too hard and sour to eat raw. They are used to make jam, jelly and quince pudding, or they may be peeled, then roasted, baked or stewed. The flesh of the fruit turns red after a long cooking time. The very strong perfume means they can be added in small quantities to apple pies and jam to enhance the flavour.



Male Fern

Dryopteris filix-mas

The male fern has elegant but fairly robust foliage and is able to withstand a sunnier site and drier soil than most hardy ferns. In mild locations the foliage may remain standing all winter, but elsewhere it dies down.

The root was used, until recent times, to expel tapeworms. It is sometimes referred to in ancient literature as Worm Fern.



Sweet Cicely

Dryopteris filix-mas

This old cottage garden perennial was traditionally grown near the kitchen door, where its fern-like leaves were used for sweetening tart fruit. It is airy and graceful in appearance, and yet able to shrug off cold weather and start to grow right at the end of winter. The flowers open early in the year too, and are some of the first available for nectar-loving insects. Sweet Cicely prefers a sunny or partially-shady position on well-drained soil.



Barberry

Berberis thunbergii 'Atropurpurea'

A dense, rounded, deciduous shrub with dark red-purple or purplish bronze foliage, turning red in autumn. Pale yellow flowers appear in mid-spring. This plant is very prickly! It is grown mainly as a hedging plant but it is also good as a standalone specimen in the garden. Barberries are alternative hosts for wheat rust (*Puccinia graminis*) which can devastate crops and, therefore, they are banned in much of North America.



Bearded Iris

Iris Germanica

This is the classic iris, with innumerable varieties. It is often found in old gardens. It has elegant, flattened, fan-shaped foliage rising from a spreading rhizome that likes to bake in the sun and tends to sit on the surface of the soil. The flower is the classic iris shape, lavender-purple and darker on the lower petals.



Clematis

Clematis Montana 'Elizabeth'

A beautiful and fast growing clematis. Fully hardy in the UK. Blooms in late Spring bearing a mass of rosy-mauve coloured flowers. Useful as a screen or to cover a fence or railings. It requires little pruning.



Meadow Rue

Thalictrum aquilegifolium

A tall airy perennial with dainty leaves and fluffy deep lilac flowers. Grows to a meter tall and has delicate flowers throughout the summer.



Shrub Rose

Rosa rugosa 'Roseaie de l'Hay'

One of the finest rugosa roses for hedging with its dense habit and vigorous growth. It has tough, healthy, wrinkled, pea-green foliage and bears large cupped to flat, velvety, rich wine-purple double flowers which fill the air with a wonderful fragrance from June to autumn.



Virgin's Bower

Clematis 'Jackmanii Superba'

A fully hardy and easy to grow deciduous perennial clematis with large, rounded, deep purple, velvet-like flowers. It has dark green foliage and flowers between June and September each year. Prune to within 30cm of ground level each spring.



Armenian Cranesbill

Geranium psilostemon

The bright magenta, black-eyed flowers of this eye-catching cranesbill liven up the garden in late spring and early summer. Although the flowering season is fairly short, it has superb deeply divided foliage which in autumn turns a fiery red.



Cranesbill

Geranium magnificum

This cranesbill is smothered from mid-summer to autumn with lots of large, dark-veined, lavender-blue flowers that fade to pearl grey as they mature. It is an informal-looking, slightly sprawling plant that looks best allowed to make a dense patch of attractive ground cover with its masses of elegant divided leaves. If cut back hard after flowering a new flush of flowers will be produced.



French Cranesbill

Geranium endressii

The French Cranesbill is a low, clump-forming semi-evergreen perennial with lobed leaves and clear light pink flowers in summer and autumn. If cut back after flowering it will produce a second flush of leaves and flowers.





Foxglove

Digitalis purpurea

A classic cottage garden plant, the foxglove is a biennial (grows one year, flowers the next) and is often seen growing in hedgerows and woodlands. If it likes your soil it will seed itself all over your garden.

The Foxglove gets its common name from the shape of the flowers being like a finger of a glove. It was originally Folks-glove (not foxglove) - the glove of the 'good folk' or fairies who frequented the woodland places where this plant grows.

Foxgloves are the pharmaceutical source of the heart drug digitalin.



Goat's Beard

Aruncus dioicus

A hardy perennial with handsome, fern-like foliage and astilbe-like plumes of creamy-white flowers in June. It makes a graceful woodland plant that enjoys damp shade and suits permanently moist soils, such as in a bog garden or it will grow happily in a Lake District border! Good for cut flowers.



Climbing Hydrangea

Hydrangea petiolaris

A useful low-maintenance climber for a shady or north wall. In summer the white lacecap-style hydrangea flowers are huge, up to 10in (25cm) across, and can almost completely cover the stems.



Giant Knapweed

Centaurea macrocephala

A splendid border plant with large, yellow, thistle-like flower-heads up to 10cm (4in) across in summer.

Magnificent in the garden and makes a long-lasting cut flower. Rarely needs staking.





Ladies Mantle

Alchemilla mollis

Ladies Mantle is a perennial with scalloped, bright green foliage and a haze of tiny, light-green or yellow flowers in summer. It will grow in sun or partial shade and will happily seed itself all round the garden. The leaves look especially beautiful after a rain shower when the droplets cling to the leaves like jewels.



Martagon Lily

Lilium martagon

A vigorous lily with a purple-speckled stem 3' or 4' high, with whorls of stiff deep green leaves. In summer, it has long spikes of smallish pink to red flowers with maroon spots, with turned back petals and prominent stamens. Also known as the 'Turksap Lily'



London Pride

Saxifraga x urbium

A popular garden flower often seen in rockeries. The pink, star-shaped flowers are tiny, less than 1 cm across and grow on long stalks.

The leaves are dark green rosettes which grow close to the ground. It spreads quickly providing good ground cover. Its alternative common name is 'None so pretty'.



Maltese cross

Lychnis chalcedonica

A native of Russia and Siberia, the Maltese or Jerusalem Cross has been in cultivation for over 300 years. It is said to have been introduced to Europe during the time of the crusades. This variety is an intense scarlet but pink and white varieties are also available





Masterwort

Astrantia major

A charming perennial which has branched heads of neat pincushion flowers surrounded by a ruff of greenish white bracts in summer.

As well as being a useful plant for the garden, Astrantias are also good for cutting, and for dried flower arrangements.



Mock Orange

Philadelphus coronarius

A very free flowering, deciduous plant clothed with a profusion of extremely fragrant, creamy-white, cup-shaped single flowers in June and July. Thrives in dry soil, and is suitable for sun or shade. Forms a large informal hedge which will fill the air with fragrance when in flower, or, as a single specimen, will make an attractive shrub.



Musk mallow

Malva moschata

The Musk mallow is a British wildflower, usually having pink flowers and finely cut ferny leaves. It is a close cousin to the Hollyhock, but much shorter in habit. Plants form a bushy mound of deeply-cut leaves with a pleasant musky fragrance. Flowers appear during the summer, in a range of pink shades and white. Although not long-lived, this will often self seed and will grow in most conditions.



Rose

'Frau Dagmar Hastrup'

A Rugosa rose with thorny stems and wrinkled, glossy, bright-green leaves. In summer, it produces highly fragrant, pale-pink flowers, followed by large, round, red hips in autumn.





Red Valerian

Centranthus ruber

Valerian will grow on most well drained soils, especially chalky and coastal locations where it grows wild. Flower colour varies from red to shades of pink and a white form is available. It is very attractive to bees and butterflies and will self seed readily.





Japanese Anemone

Anemone x Hybrida

Japanese anemones give borders a welcome boost in late summer and early autumn. Numerous varieties are available with flower colours ranging from pure white to dark pink. It grows best in a well drained soil in sun or part shade.



Milky Bellflower

Campanula lactiflora

A perennial forming a clump of stems to 75cm in height, with narrow, pointed leaves and rounded clusters of bell-shaped violet-blue flowers. It has a tendency to collapse if not staked in late spring!



Butterfly Bush

Buddleia davidii

Buddleia davidii is a fast-growing and undemanding shrub from China. It is ideal for a wide range of positions in the garden, providing they are sunny and the soil is well-drained. The long, heavy flowering heads transform the bush and make a stunning display for four to six weeks, attracting butterflies and bees. Cut the plant right back in spring to produce fresh new growth.



Clematis

'Perle d'Azur'

'Perle d'Azur' is one of the best blue clematis, having flowers the colour of a summer sky. The flowers are 10cm (4in) across and are produced continuously between mid-summer and the middle of autumn. Cut back the stems to a pair of strong buds 15cm to 20cm (6in to 8in) above ground level before growth begins in early spring.





Shasta Daisy

Leucanthemum x Superbum

Shasta daisies bear large white, daisy flowers, some traditional varieties growing up to 90cm (3ft) tall. An easy to grow perennial which makes a good cut flower.



Evening Primrose

Oenothera biennis

The evening primrose is a biennial plant which grows to 1.5m tall and likes a sunny spot. Each scented flower lasts only one day but new ones open the next evening. The flowers unfurl suddenly going from bud to fully open in less than 2 minutes, like a speeded up time lapse film.

This plant is the source of evening primrose oil which is used medicinally and in cosmetics.



Globe Thistle

Echinops ritro

The Globe Thistle is a robust, upright herbaceous perennial, with jagged, divided, prickly dark green leaves which are whitish underneath. The rounded, violet-blue flower heads are irresistible to bees and hoverflies.



Tiger Lily

Lilium lanciflorum

The Tiger Lily is a robust, clump-forming, bulbous perennial with narrow, lance-shaped, glossy, dark green leaves, dark purple stems and nodding, turkscap, orange-red flowers with purple spots in late summer to early autumn. It will grow well in sun or part shade.





Yellow Loosestrife

Lysimachia vulgaris

This herbaceous perennial has lance-shaped mid-green leaves. Upright stems of bright yellow, star-shaped flowers are produced during summer. It spreads by means of underground stems and if left unchecked it can get out of hand. The common name, Loosestrife is a very old one, and refers to the belief that the plant would quieten savage beasts, and that in particular it had a special virtue 'in appeasing the strife and unruliness which falleth out among oxen at the plough, if it be put about their yokes.' The plant appears to be obnoxious to gnats and flies, and so, no doubt, placing it under the yoke, relieved the beasts of their tormentors, thus making them quiet and tractable.



Pot Marigold

Calendula officinalis

This easy-to-grow annual plant which flowers continuously from early July until it is killed by the first frosts. At Hill Top a few plants pop up every spring from last years fallen seeds. Calendula flowers have medicinal properties and are often used in cosmetics. The petals can be used to flavour and colour food, hence the common name 'Pot Marigold'. It is often grown as a companion plant in vegetable gardens.



Great Mullein

Verbascum thapsus

The Great Mullein is a biennial with a rosette of large, grey, hairy leaves, and a tall stem bearing pale yellow, saucer-shaped flowers in the second summer. In the days before electric lights the dried stems were soaked in animal fat then set alight to use as torches. The flowers can be used as a yellow hair dye.





Nirrhe

Eucryphia glutinosa

For a couple of weeks in early August this large shrub is covered with honey-scented white flowers which look amazing and drive the local bees crazy!

A native of Chile, it is a slow growing deciduous shrub which also provides good autumn colour. The specimen at Hill Top is probably over 50 years old.



Perennial Phlox

Phlox paniculata

A herbaceous perennial with oval or lance-shaped leaves. Clusters of flowers appear from summer to mid-autumn, from white to deep lilac. It is ideal for a moist border in sun or partial shade.



Poppy

Papaver somnifera

This annual poppy has flowers in shades of mauve, pink and red and sometimes have a fringed edge to the petals. They are very attractive to bees and other insects. The flowers are followed by 'pepperpot' seed heads which are good for dried arrangements. The small black seeds are used on poppy seed rolls.



Tansy

Tanacetum vulgare

Tansy is a perennial herbaceous plant with finely divided leaves and yellow, button-like flowers. Tansy was once widely used in medicine as well as being used to make tansy tea and tansy pudding. Its strong-smelling leaves make a good insect repellent. The Elizabethans put tansy in the straw of their bedding to keep the bedbugs away!



September/October



Perennial Flox

Phlox paniculata

There are 67 species of phlox, including annuals and shrubs. This species is a herbaceous perennial which flowers from late summer to mid-autumn. It is ideal for a moist border in sun or part shade. It is attractive to butterflies and bees.



Sneezewort

Helenium autumnale

Sneezewort is native to North America where it grows in damp fields and meadows. It comes in many different varieties in yellows, oranges and reds.



Dahlia

Dahlias provide invaluable late summer colour and will flower until the first frosts kill off the foliage. The tubers can then be stored indoors and restarted into growth the following spring.

The flowers come in an amazing variety of shapes, sizes and colours but remember to stake the taller varieties and watch out for slugs!





Red Hot Poker

Knifophia uvaria

The red hot poker, or torch lily is a native of South Africa where it's long tubular flowers are pollinated by hummingbirds. It is hardy in most areas of Britain although it dislikes very wet soil conditions.

