

# 20 OF THE BEST NURSERIES

Wondering where to go to buy interesting plants in the UK? Garden expert **Val Bourne** selects some of the nation's finest nurseries

ILLUSTRATIONS HANNAH McVICAR

## 1 Ashwood Nurseries

Although it masquerades as a garden centre, with an excellent restaurant and gift shop, this is an immaculate plantsman's nursery. Strengths are hellebores, hepaticas, salvias and winter-flowering shrubs.

**Mail order available (M).**

**Address (A)** Ashwood Lower Lane, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 0AE.

**Tel (T)** 01384 401996.

**Web (W)** ashwoodnurseries.com

**Open (O)** Every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

## 2 Avondale Nursery

Plant Heritage collections of wood anemone, sanguisorba and New England aster, plus a huge range of perennials. The well-labelled display garden is inspirational.

**A** Russell's Nursery, Mill Hill, Baginton, Warwickshire CV8 3AG.

**T** 07979 093096.

**W** avondalenursery.co.uk

**O** Mar-Sep inclusive.

## 3 Beeches Nursery

A plant lover's paradise packed with 3,000 interesting plants,

some very rare. Give yourself plenty of time to explore and you'll find plants that aren't available anywhere else. **M.**

**A** Ashdon, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2HB.

**T** 01799 584362.

**W** beechesnursery.co.uk

**O** Every day.

## 4 The Beth Chatto Gardens and Nursery

Beth Chatto, inspired by husband Andrew, pioneered ecological gardening by placing plants in the right location – their website usefully lists plants for specific places. Most are propagated from the garden under the care of David Ward. There's no better place to buy herbaceous plants, ferns and grasses. **M.**

**A** Elmstead Market, Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB.

**T** 01206 822007.

**W** bethchatto.co.uk

**O** Every day.

## 5 Blackmoor Nurseries

The best range of fruit trees and bushes, expertly packed and well-grown – many on the estate. Expert help available and informative website. Rootstocks

and AGMs clearly displayed. **M.**

**A** Blackmoor, Nr Liss, Hampshire GU33 6BS.

**T** 01420 477978.

**W** blackmoor.co.uk

## 6 Claire Austin Hardy Plants

Claire Austin's relocated nursery has settled down and the peonies, hemerocallis and irises have been replanted in the fields. Great easy-to-grow perennials, and around 90 cultivars of peonies (which are sold bare-root from October). **M.**

**A** White Hopton Farm, Wern Lane, Sarn, Newtown, Powys SY16 4EN.

**T** 01686 670342.

**W** claireaustin-hardyplants.co.uk

**O** Open days 4 and 16 June 2016.

## 7 Cotswold Garden Flowers

Bob Brown's nursery comes up with surprises every time. Specialities include kniphofias, crocosmias and unusual bulbous plants. Regular talks and a display garden that shines from spring until late autumn. **M.**

**A** Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ.

**T** 01386 833849.

**W** cgf.net

**O** Every day Mar-Sep; Mon-Fri, Oct-Feb.

## 8 Dove Cottage Nursery and Garden

This is a photogenic place, with display gardens to inspire. The well-grown plants have to be easy and fairly slug proof and the range of grasses and perennials is particularly suited to naturalistic, prairie style. Hellebores and hardy geraniums also excellent.

**A** Shibden Hall Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9XA.

**T** 01422 203553.

**W** dovecottagenursery.co.uk

**O** Wed-Sun, Mar-Jun; Wed-Sat, Jul-Sep.

## 9 Edulis

The name of Paul Barney's no-frills nursery is an academic way of saying edible, reflecting part of his range that includes unusual Asian plants. Umbels also feature heavily and there are plants here you won't find elsewhere. Paul also has 200 snowdrops this year. **M.**

**A** The Walled Garden, Tidmarsh Lane, Pangbourne, Berkshire RG8 8HT.

**T** 01635 578113.

**W** edulis.co.uk

**O** Every Tues, Feb-Oct, plus open days.

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### ▷ 10 Hall Farm Nursery

Christine and Nic Ffoulkes-Jones started this nursery almost 30 years ago and run it on environmental principles, using peat-free compost. Winners of 46 RHS golds, they know their plants and only grow the best. **A** Kinnerley, Nr Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 8DH. **T** 01691 682135. **W** hallfarmnursery.co.uk **O** Tues-Sat, Mar-Sep.

### 11 Harveys Garden Plants

Roger Harvey's nursery is one of the best places for named snowdrops and other woodlanders such as wood anemones, epimediums, erythroniums and trilliums. **M.** **A** Great Green, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3SJ. **T** 01359 233363. **W** harveysgardenplants.co.uk **O** Mon-Sun.

### 12 Long Acre Plants

A full range of shade-loving perennials, grasses and ferns grown by an expert plantsman. Lots of information on the website and the best packed mail order I have ever seen. **M.** **A** Charlton Musgrove, Nr Wincanton, Somerset BA9 8EX. **T** 01963 32802. **W** plantsforshade.co.uk **O** Thurs-Fri, Mar-Oct.

### 13 Marchants Hardy Plants

Graham Gough has a musical background and now creates

crescendos with grasses and perennials. His list of miscanthus and molinia is top-notch. Sanguisorbas, veronicastrums, asters and much more.

**A** 2 Marchants Cottages, Laughton, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 6AJ. **T** 01323 811737. **W** marchantshardyplants.co.uk **O** Wed-Sat early May to late Oct.

### 14 The Mead Nursery

Stephen and Emma Lewis-Dale sell a wide range of potted bulbs, alpines and perennials on their first-rate nursery. The mature garden setting is inspiring and the collection, always correctly labelled, constantly changes. **A** Brokerswood, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 4EG. **T** 01373 859990. **W** themeadnursery.co.uk **O** Wed-Sat, Feb-mid-Oct, then by appointment.

### 15 Old Court Nurseries and the Picton Garden

A family-run nursery with an emphasis on asters, late-season perennials and some alpines. The Plant Heritage collection of asters, many rescued by Paul Picton, is second to none. There's mail order but the display garden is fantastic so do visit. **M.** **A** Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6QE. **T** 01684 540416. **W** autumnasters.co.uk **O** Wed-Sat, May-Jul; Wed-Sun Aug; every day 1 Sep-18 Oct.

### 16 Pan-Global Plants

Nick Macer's nursery, Pan-Global Plants, is aptly named for this well-travelled nurseryman who turns plant hunter in the winter months, meaning he stocks plants that no one else has. His range is wide, from trees and shrubs to bamboos and bulbs, as well as plenty of exotic plants from far-flung places. **M.** **A** Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucestershire GL2 7EX. **T** 01452 741641. **W** panglobalplants.com **O** Wed-Sun, Feb-Oct, then by appointment.

### 17 The Place for Plants

Rupert Ely's nursery and 20-acre garden and arboretum carries a huge range of plants mainly bought in from top UK and Continental suppliers. Specialities include Japanese acers, magnolias and many cornus and there is a Plant Heritage collection of euonymus. **M** (Sep-Mar, then a limited service). **A** East Bergholt Place, East Bergholt, Suffolk CO7 6UP. **T** 01206 299224. **W** placeforplants.co.uk **O** Every day.

### 18 The Plant Specialist

This tip-top nursery, run by Sean Walter and Roger Pounder, combines garden landscaping with superb plants at the forefront of garden design. Sanguisorbas, lots of stylish grasses, heleniums, echinaceas

and veronicastrums (and much more) beautifully displayed. **M.** **A** Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire HP16 0BH. **T** 01494 866650. **W** theplantspecialist.co.uk **O** Wed-Sat, Apr-Oct.

### 19 Special Plants

Derry Watkins exudes energy and her nursery is packed with good plants, including tender perennials, such as pelargoniums and salvias. A good range of hardy perennials and an excellent seed list. Derry also runs courses and opens her gardens. **M.** **A** Cold Ashton, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 8LA. **T** 01225 891686. **W** specialplants.net **O** Every day, Mar-Oct, then by appointment.

### 20 Woottens of Wenhamston

Sand blows along the lanes close to this Suffolk nursery but it's perfect for irises, hardy chrysanthemums and agapanthus – just three of the specialisms. Auriculas and pelargoniums feature heavily. **M.** **A** Blackheath, Wenhamston, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9HD. **T** 01502 478258. **W** woottensplants.com **O** Every day (not 25 Dec-2 Jan).

**Val Bourne will be speaking at the Gardens Illustrated Festival, see page 8. Find a list of Val's top 50 UK nurseries at [gardensillustrated.com](http://gardensillustrated.com)**

