





Getting the look you want in your garden takes courage – but if you’ve the heart to plant boldly, the result can be breathtaking

## To boldly grow!...

SWEEPING BOLD SWATHES of plants around the garden are, it seems, for the brave, the Americans or those with larger than large gardens.

Completely running amok with a small palette of plants but in quantities by the sackload is still considered a bit vulgar.

But I remember at college, some 10 years ago now, as I trained to become a garden designer that I was totally bowled over by the resplendent glamour of Oehme and Van Sweden’s book, *Bold Romantic Gardens*.

I could hardly turn from one page to the next, so excited was I by what I saw. You could practically feel the energy and atmosphere dripping from the print out onto the tabletop! The whole experience was entirely revelatory to me, sucking me in and holding me in the grasp of garden design for what I think will certainly be the rest of my life.

And yet, I’m still waiting to see it successfully done here in the UK. My own clients balk at the idea of having so little mixed planting in their spaces. In spite of all my promises



### Bold ideas

Combination planting – using two or three strong-coloured plants *en masse* can have an intense effect. In spring, try red tulips, yellow daffodils and early blue iris

For summer and autumn, try blue eringium with soft green grasses, bright red dahlias

with tall antirrhinums, or ferns with bright orange poppies – anything goes!

Using contrasting texture, shape or height can be as dramatic as using bold colour combinations. The trick is to be daring, of course, and to have the courage of your convictions

**“Even before it’s planted, the anticipation is too much... and I can hardly wait!”**

that the anticipation of a bold display like the rudbeckia and perovskia seen here can be as intoxicating as the arrival of successional blooms, few take the plunge.

But at last, I’ve won the trust of a client who has become the first to let me loose on his space.

I look forward to huge banks of *Rudbeckia* ‘Herbstsonne’ jostling with *Miscanthus floridulus*, *Nepeta sibirica* ‘Souvenir d’Andre Chaudron’ and *Hemerocallis fulva* ‘Flore Plena’ planted not in

threes, fives and sevens but in 20s, 30s and 40s!

Drifts of *Eupatorium purpureum* will be a backdrop to collisions between *Salvia verticillata* ‘Purple Rain’ and *Perovskia* ‘Blue Spire’, pierced here and there by the graceful *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*. Colours and forms of plants will be celebrated *en masse* as they melt like glacial streams into each other, crashing with colour at each point of contact. Believe me, even before it’s planted, the anticipation is too much. I can’t wait! 🌸



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