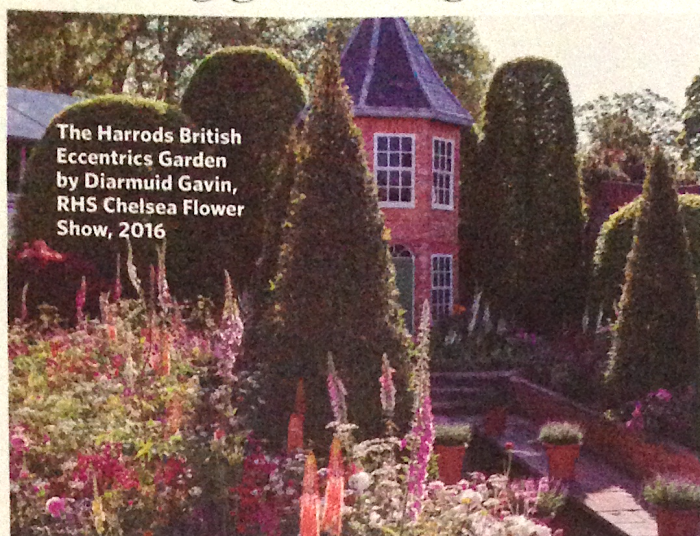


## Spring gardening



### SHOW DIARY

- The most famous – and probably the most popular – gardening show is next month: The RHS Chelsea Flower Show, London, 23-27 May; tickets from £27: [rhs.org.uk/chelsea](http://rhs.org.uk/chelsea)
- Celebrating 50 years of the BBC2 series: BBC Gardeners' World Live, Birmingham, 15-18 June; tickets from £23.50 (including free admission to BBC Good Food Show): [bbcgardenersworldlive.com](http://bbcgardenersworldlive.com)

# Time for tea

Growing your own isn't limited to fruit and veg. Try these palatable plants for brewing herbal teas – you could even grow them in teapots or cups

Edited by ADRIENNE WYPER



**Chamomile** Choose the German variety, *Matricaria recutita* (above right) with feathery foliage and daisy-like flowers, growing to about 1m tall, and readily self-seeding. Sow seeds outdoors now, and they will flower from June. Make a relaxing, muscle-soothing cuppa with one teaspoon of flowerheads per cup.

**Moroccan mint** (*Mentha spicata*), is one of the tastiest mints for tea. You can grow it from seed, but it's easier to buy young plants or take a cutting, 1cm above a leaf joint. Place the cutting in water and pot up a week after it has developed little white roots. Mint plants have a tendency to take over, so consider containing its roots in a buried pot. Serve it in authentically Moroccan style, by adding green tea and sugar to freshly picked leaves and boiling water, or use the leaves alone, for its refreshing and digestion-aiding qualities.

**Lemon balm** (*Melissa officinalis*). This herbaceous, bushy perennial is another self-seeder, and so easy to grow – rooting from a cutting in a glass of water. It's happy in full sun or partial shade, bearing tiny white flowers in late summer, as well as its lemon-scented leaves. Make citrus-scented tea by using around four leaves per cup.

**Jasmine** (*Jasminum officinale*). Plant this delicate-leaved shrub outside from the end of April in a sunny, sheltered spot. Frost-hardy in milder areas, jasmine is a strong climber that is easily trained up trellis, walls, fences and sheds; it is also laden with intensely perfumed, small white flowers in summer. Add jasmine flowers to a caddy of green or black tea to infuse it with flavour, removing them as they wilt – or add some freshly picked leaves to a pot or cup of tea.

### GREAT GARDEN BUYS



Bird box with slate roof, £18, from National Trust and online: [shop.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://shop.nationaltrust.org.uk)

These foam gardening clogs are super-comfortable, £25, from: [backdoorshoes.co.uk](http://backdoorshoes.co.uk) 01202 232357



Lovely lemons, metal watering can, £15, from Paperchase, [paperchase.co.uk](http://paperchase.co.uk)

