



Heaven SCENT

Everything smells, looks and tastes lovely
in Arne Maynard's summer garden

The summer has been a busy time in the garden at Allt-y-bela and finally we are able to see the hard work that has gone into all of the various areas. The bulbs covering the earthworks gave us a beautiful show this spring, softening the contours we created and at the end of July we cut the grass that gave the earthworks its veil of gentleness and mystery to reveal the sharp and contemporary lines of the earthworks.

All of the fields around the house have been grazed short and now that all our long grass has been cut, it blends in, feeling like a part of the landscape beyond our garden.

We left the cutting of the grass until a few weeks ago so that the seeds of the bulbs and wild flowers had a chance to ripen and fall.

The vegetable garden has been very productive and all the effort we put into improving the soil has really paid off. We've had really wonderful crops of potatoes. This year we grew Red Duke of York and from three rows have had ample supplies of tasty new potatoes. Our salad crops have also been a great success as were the broad beans. We have now replaced the areas that were growing potatoes with my favourite winter vegetable, Cavelo Nero, (black Tuscan cabbage) as well as purple sprouting broccoli.

One thing that has been so wonderful this summer is being able to actually garden rather than to spend my whole time moving soil, rocks, bracken or just rubble. It has also been nice watching the scars of construction dissolve back



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into the landscape and now it is hard to even see where work was carried out.

The topiary is all establishing well and will have its annual clip next week. This year I've been giving it plenty of feed, starting in the spring with fish, blood and bone, then liquid seaweed at regular intervals. Now they all have lush fresh healthy growth and look as if they have



been decorating my garden for years.

The other exciting element of the garden has been the herbaceous and rose areas. With all the rain and sun we've had it has all grown so well and we have had the luxury of bowlfuls of fresh roses and flowers in the house, filling the rooms with wonderful fragrance and colour.

All of the main planting has been done now, but this summer I have been making notes of all the things I need to add into the garden. These are the fun elements that layer it with even more atmosphere and character. August is always a really good month to take stock of how the garden has done so far. It's a time for observation, to see where we might be lacking in colour or scent or even where the garden needs more

weight. This can mean introducing large scale pieces of planted material such as trees and shrubs or deciding on the perfect place for a bench or maybe a beautiful piece of sculpture.

Making notes now while we are still in summer mode is so much easier than doing it in January when our memory plays funny tricks on the perfect imaginary summer we remember.

So my wish list of things to do over the next few months starts here. Roses, roses, roses! I have realised that I cannot have enough of them growing like soldiers in clean beds with no planting around them but nestled in long grass and scrambling through trees. Planted like this they become like wedding veils, soft and mysterious. There are so many to choose from but I must be careful not

to have too many varieties. One of my favourites is Paul's Himalayan musk. This will scramble 20ft high and will be perfect along with Rambling Rector and Helene, which has wonderful hips in the autumn. The delicate scent from all of these roses will fill the air, and together with honeysuckle (another plant to add to my list of autumn additions) will be worked into the hedges along the driveway so that one of the first things you notice when arriving at Allt-y-bela is their strong heady scent. Perfume is always one of the most evocative senses and the smell of honeysuckle takes me back to Cranbourne Manor where Lady Salisbury grew standard honeysuckle. These were on a 4ft clear stem with a head of about 3ft across. Growing along the herb garden path they were always at



the perfect height to plunge ones nose into the pale flowers and breathe in their summer fragrance. Perhaps I also need to grow one like this to place outside my back door. It is shady on this side of the house so will do very well in this situation. We will also add a lot of honeysuckle next to the stream where the coolness of the water will carry the scent downstream and throughout the garden.

Along the entire stream length I need to add lots of planting. Once I have tackled the brambles that run along its banks I shall plant white foxgloves, honeysuckle, hesperis and white campanulas. I will plant this limited plant list in the autumn, then next August after its first flowering see what needs to be added. Perhaps some white roses such as Madame Alfred Carrier to tumble down the bank? ■

Arne runs year-round courses at his home and garden at Usk, Monmouthshire that are popular with novice and seasoned gardeners alike. To find out more or to book a place, visit www.arne-maynard.com or tel: 020 76898100