

Garden design solutions: 5 early spring favourites



By Ian McBain

Whisper it quietly, but spring is here (horticulturally at least). Late winter is often a cold and drab affair, and many of us yearn for the brighter and warmer

(hopefully) days of early spring. March is a magical month for our gardens, with new life and fresh growth all around us. I love to see the return of so many different shades of green but, inevitably, it's the early spring flowers that tend to catch our eye.

There is a wide range of plants to choose for early spring colour and interest, but here five of my favourites:

1. Galanthus: where would we be without the humble snowdrop? One of the first signs that spring is on its way, few of us can resist the simple charms of these tiny nodding white flowers. But don't make the mistake of thinking all Galanthus are the same...there are hundreds of different varieties, each slightly different to the others.

2. Helleborus: a sometimes-forgotten star of the early spring garden (mainly because they are quite anonymous the rest of the year), Hellebores provide colour and charm in late winter and early spring. They are easy to grow in a spot with some shade, so why not see how many different varieties of these large-flowered beauties we can spot this spring?

3. Primula vulgaris: a glorious native primrose with pale yellow flower and textured leaves, Primula vulgaris form lovely low-growing clumps which can be lifted and spread around a garden for a more prominent display. Usually flowering from March to May, and preferring a little shade, they look wonderful alongside other spring favourites like snowdrops and forget-me-nots.

4. Chaenomeles (pictured): for spring-time colour and interest, few shrubs can match



Chaenomeles (Japanese quince). A naturally low-growing deciduous shrub with a 'leaning habit', it looks fantastic against a sunny or partially shaded wall or fence. My favourite is C. 'Crimson and Gold', which produces masses of gloriously simple-looking deep red flowers with golden-yellow centres.

5. Sarcococca 'Winter Gem': a wonderful evergreen shrub for the winter garden, Sarcococca is still going strong in early spring. It has glossy dark green leaves, highly fragrant tassel-like creamy white flowers, and is best in full or part shade. An attractive and useful evergreen shrub for a tricky corner of a garden.

I'm sure many of us will be familiar with the plants listed above (even if we might not know their botanical names). How many of them have you got in your garden?

www.tythorne.com



TYTHORNE
GARDEN DESIGN

Tythorne Garden Design provides professional fixed-fee garden design solutions for customers in Grantham, Stamford, Newark and surrounding areas. Book your initial garden design consultation today by calling 01529 455 355 or 07900 224 239.