



## RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year 2026 Shortlist

Celebrating and honouring the lengthy and costly endeavours of growers and nurseries to bring new cultivars of the highest quality to all types of gardeners in the UK – RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year shortlists those that have demonstrated the highest innovation.

Drought resistance, improved hardiness, increased floral vibrancy and deeper colours of foliage are all standout features from this year's selection. The plants below can all be seen at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2026 and the winner, *Hosta* RED NINJA ('Nk2021') by Siena Hosta was announced as the winner on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May at 2PM at the RHS Experience Stand in The Great Pavilion.

### **WINNER**

#### ***Hosta* RED NINJA ('Nk2021')**

**Exhibitor: Siena Hosta (Oliver Walker)**

Site Location: GPC024

Breeder: Ninja Kramer

Plant Supplier: Fairweather's Nursery

*Hosta* RED NINJA possesses shades of dark green to strong red foliage and may be the reddest *Hosta* on the market – traditionally a trait well-sought after by horticulturists. This variety keeps its vibrancy into the summer and is a full plant mutation of *Hosta* 'First Blush'.



With red petioles and a ground cover height, *Hosta* RED NINJA also benefits from stunning purple flowers from late summer to early autumn. Its low-maintenance nature makes it ideal for mixed borders, balconies and terraces.

#### ***Clematis* QUEEN'S NURSE ('Evigsy159')**

**Exhibitor: Raymond Evison Clematis (Andy Jeanes)**

Location: GPB016

Breeder: Raymond J Evison Ltd

Plant Supplier: Raymond J Evison Ltd

Compact with repeat blooming - the main differentiator for QUEEN'S NURSE is that the plant produces pale pink/lilac and dark



bar striped blooms on new growth and on more mature wood grows solid, deep pink blooms with little to no striped effect.

Not only is this a standout cultivar with two different bloom colours from one plant, but it has been named to raise awareness and funds for two very closely linked charities, The National Garden Scheme (NGS) and The Queen's Institute of Community Nurses (QICN), where initially Raymond and a group of QICN nurses started the NGS on Guernsey to raise funds for both charities.

### ***Prunus 'Sumaura Fugenzo'***

***Exhibitor: Blue Diamond Garden Centres (Jill Kerr)***

*Location: GPC033*

*Breeder: Unknown*

*Plant Supplier: Frank P Matthews Trees*



A unique Sakura cherry, also known as JAPANESE LANTERN, with spectacular flowers that open to a yellowish white/green which gradually turn shades of light and then dark pink as they age. The flowers have 30 or more petals reminiscent of Japanese paper lanterns. Two leaf-like pistils in the centre of the flower add a unique charm to a graceful spreading medium size tree.

There are no known issues with pests and in particular observations show no susceptibility to black fly aphid. There is resistance to bacterial blossom and foliage infections along with frost resistance.

### ***Pittosporum GREEN MOUND ('Jule1')***

***Exhibitor: Sparsholt College (Lucy lewis)***

*Location: GPD051*

*Breeder: Frederic Julien*

*Plant Supplier: Hillier Nurseries Ltd*



GREEN MOUND is the result of a controlled cross between two species of *Pittosporum*, the aim of which was to bring the habit and richly fragrant flowers of *P. tobira* into a hybrid with the hardiness to survive in Northern Europe reliably. This seedling exhibited a superb habit, free flowering and in trials has survived winters in both pots and gardens across France, the Netherlands and UK without signs of damage.

GREEN MOUND is hardy to -12C and creates a tight evergreen mound, with the additional benefit of sweetly scented white flowers which fade to yellow, the fragrance carries well and is a big feature. It is excellent in a border or large patio container, sun loving but happy in part shade and drought resistant, the size makes it perfect for small gardens but with enough impact to stand out in any situation.

***Anisodonteia capensis* CARNIVAL LIGHTS CANDY APPLE ('Ib201-7') (Carnival Lights Series)**

**Exhibitor: Sparsholt College (Lucy Lewis)**

Location: GPD051

Breeder: Plant Growers Australia Ltd.

Plant Supplier: Hillier Nurseries Ltd



This new selection has a truly unique flower colour of dark red, unlike the pink shades previously available in this genus. CARNIVAL LIGHTS CANDY APPLE is the result of a hybridisation programme of *Anisodonteia* in Australia which has yielded several very interesting colour breaks, highly floriferous plants with clean foliage and a neat tidy habit.

The larger flowers are perfect for modern gardening that can be used as a patio or bedding plant or as a short-lived garden shrub, flowering from May through to Christmas and beyond. Its origins also make it ideal for the changing climate with superb heat and drought tolerance.

***Hydrangea* VELVET NIGHT RED LACE**

**Exhibitor: Blue Diamond Garden Centres (Jill Kerr)**

Location: GPC033

Breeder: Botanic Experience B.V.

Plant Supplier: Van Son & Koot



This *Hydrangea* represents a significant innovation with exceptionally dark red to near-black foliage, a trait uncommon in *Hydrangea*, combined with striking red lacecap flowers. Unlike traditional varieties that feature green leaves and softer-toned blooms, this plant offers a dramatic, high-contrast aesthetic throughout the growing season. The foliage colour is stable and intense, enhancing ornamental value even when not in flower.

This *Hydrangea* thrives in moist, well-drained soil in partial shade. Regular watering is important, particularly in dry periods while the dark foliage colour develops best with good light levels while avoiding harsh midday sun, which may scorch leaves. Overall, it performs reliably with standard care, making it suitable for a wide range of domestic garden settings.

***Hydrangea paniculata* GROUNDBREAKER® RUBY ('Lc No27')**

**Exhibitor: Hare Spring Cottage Plants (Stella Exley)**

Location: GPC028

Breeder: Alex Schoemaker

Plant Supplier: Suttons



GROUNDBREAKER® RUBY is the first true groundcover form of *Hydrangea paniculata* with ruby-red flowers in late summer, redefining how this traditionally upright shrub can be used in the garden. Its naturally low, spreading habit is unlike any existing paniculata. Combined with vivid ruby-red flowers, it delivers both structural and seasonal interest in a completely new format.

Highly disease resistant, showing minimal issues with pests or diseases; being exceptionally reliable and low maintenance. GROUND BREAKER® RUBY is easy to grow and highly adaptable. Plant in sun to partial shade in well-drained soil for best flowering and colour intensity. Its naturally low, spreading habit requires little to no pruning, simply tidy lightly in early spring if needed. Compared to traditional upright *Hydrangea paniculata*, this variety reduces maintenance by eliminating the need for shaping or staking.

### ***Jamesbrittenia* 'Jammin' Coral'**

**Exhibitor: Kernock Park Plants (Bruce Harnett)**

Location: GPD052

Breeders: Proven Winners Europe

Plant Supplier: Proven Winners Europe

'Jammin' Coral' works fantastically in landscapes with good drainage as well as in containers of all kinds - making wonderful components in combinations.



The plant offers a brilliant performance on patios, troughs and planters. Repeat-flowering throughout the summer months and not requiring deadheading make 'Jammin' Coral' easy to care for with low to no maintenance. Heat and drought tolerant. Can be planted in full sun and free-draining soil/media.

### ***Antirrhinum* 'Shiryu Kiss'**

**Exhibitor: Kernock Park Plants (Bruce Harnett)**

Location: GPD052

Breeder: Peter Moore

Plant Supplier: Peter Moore

*Antirrhinum* 'Shiryu Kiss' is truly perennial in nature, and flowers over a very long season. It has proven to be significantly resistant to rust, a common disease of *Antirrhinum*, and also to powdery mildew. The non-stop flowering in season provides an essential buffet for our at-risk pollinators.



In agreement with the breeder, 100% of royalties from sales of this plant will go to Perennial, the horticultural charity (Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society) – dedicated to helping people in horticulture facing every day, or life-changing challenges.

### ***Clematis* 'Minamo-no-Yousei'**

**Exhibitor: Sparsholt College (Lucy Lewis)**

Location: GPD051

Breeder: Tetsuya Hirota

Plant Supplier: Thompson & Morgan

*Clematis* 'Minamo-no-Yousei', also known as MOCHI, offers real novelty, with brushed, spray-like blooms that change in form over a 120-plus day flowering season. Early single flowers are more accessible to visiting insects, before later blooms develop into distinctive double forms. Its



compact habit suits containers, small gardens and vertical planting. Its easy, low-maintenance nature fits modern gardens.

Pruning in early spring encourages fresh growth and supports its long flowering season of 120 days. Compared to traditional *Clematis*, its compact habit makes it easier to manage and perfect for patios and urban gardens. The continuously changing flowers provide extended interest without additional maintenance.

### ***Dicentra* 'Passion Hearts'**

**Exhibitor: Gardeners Delight Nursery (Nicholas Wade)**

Location: GPF096

Breeder: Hans Hansen from Walter Gardens

Plant Supplier: Gardeners Delight Nursery



*Dicentra* 'Passion Hearts' offers a step change for gardeners, transforming *Dicentra* from a niche, shade-loving perennial into a versatile, sun-performing garden staple. Its continuous flowering for 150+ days, high bud count, and striking bicolour blooms provide exceptional garden value across a long season. Combined with refined foliage and adaptability to well-drained, sunny sites, it meets the demand for resilient, low-maintenance plants suited to changing climates. It delivers both innovation and strong visual appeal, making it highly relevant for contemporary planting schemes.

### ***Streptocarpus* 'Sirius'**

**Exhibitor: Dibleys Nurseries (Paul Dibley)**

Location: GPD057

Breeder: Lynne Dibley

Plant Supplier: Dibleys Nurseries



This fully double variety produces vast numbers of large, inky purple flowers with deep purple veins over a pale-yellow base. Early flowering, quick growing, and exceptionally vigorous and floriferous over a very long season. 'Sirius' produces sterile flowers that last significantly longer than standard *Streptocarpus* blooms, dramatically reducing the need for deadheading. These extended flowering displays require minimal maintenance. Flower markings intensify over several days.

*Streptocarpus* 'Sirius' matches and surpasses *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'—the inaugural Chelsea Plant of the Year winner in 2010—cementing decades of excellence in British breeding.

### ***Rosa* AMIROSE ('Korhulth005')**

**Exhibitor: Hare Spring Cottage Plants (Stella Exley)**

Location: GPC028

Breeder: Kordes Roses

Plant Supplier: Hillier Nurseries Ltd



AMIROSE is a unique new variety offering a compact ground cover hybrid form of *Rosa persica* with fragrant flowers produced all summer

long. Flowers start as peach-coloured buds, opening to a beautiful pink with a purple heart. AMIROSE will flower for 175 days and is a drought tolerant and healthy species.

Easy to grow, extremely disease resistant, fragrant and drought tolerant it is ideal for containers, borders and mass landscape plantings. Prune back with shears to shape in early spring and summer to reduce size.

### ***Anthurium MICHELLE***<sup>®</sup>

***Exhibitor: Growtropicals (Jacob James)***

*Location: GPF077*

*Breeder: Dr Jeff Block*

*Plant Supplier: Growtropicals*



*Anthurium MICHELLE*<sup>®</sup> boasts striking, heart-shaped leaves with a luscious, glossy sheen that instantly adds elegance to any space. Its vibrant green foliage is adorned with intricate veins, creating a mesmerising pattern that draws the eye and invites closer inspection. In medium-filtered light, *Anthurium MICHELLE*<sup>®</sup> has an extraordinarily dark emergent leaf with purple veins that evolve into burgundy-black hues with contrasting white veins. The distinctive backside of the leaf evolves from emergent purple, lightening through lavender hues.

*Anthurium MICHELLE*<sup>®</sup> isn't just a feast for the eyes—it's also a joy to care for. With its resilient nature and low-maintenance requirements, it thrives with less humidity and watering requirements than other *Anthurium* foliage plants on the market.

### ***Rosa WATFORD FOREVER ('Harjester')***

***Exhibitor: Harkness Rose Company (Rachelle Kent)***

*Location: GPB022*

*Breeder: Philip Harkness*

*Plant Supplier: Harkness Rose Company*



WATFORD FOREVER achieves multiple incremental advances in one variety of a notoriously difficult colour range. A strong petal structure holds a beautiful shape, a pointed bud and opening with a gloriously bright bloom with access for insects. The rigid petals give form throughout, lengthening the flower life.

The plant possesses exceptional hardiness against winter damage for the colour, surviving low winter temperatures. The foliage nodes are at close intervals, giving a well-furnished plant with an abundance of leaf. WATFORD FOREVER is easy to grow and accessible to many gardeners.

***Euphorbia × martini* WALBERTON'S® LITTLE TREASURE®  
(‘Waleulitr’)**

**Exhibitor: Lee Connelly & Leigh Johnstone (Lee Connelly)**

*Location: GPF092*

*Breeder: Walberton Plants Limited*

*Plant Supplier: Walberton Plants Limited*



*Euphorbia × martini* WALBERTON'S® LITTLE TREASURE® is the world's first all yellow-leaf variety of *Euphorbia × martini*. The foliage is brightest yellow in early spring, before becoming green-yellow through the summer months. As the autumn nights turn colder, the yellow colouring returns and the tips of each stem develop a beautiful rusty-orange colour before the plant turns bright yellow again for the following spring. In addition, WALBERTON'S® LITTLE TREASURE® also produces clustered heads of yellow-green flowers with red nectaries in spring, often producing a second flush of flower in mid-summer.

It is particularly well-suited to container cultivation, perhaps in combination with other bold plants such as dark-leaf *Heuchera* varieties or an arching grass. WALBERTON'S® LITTLE TREASURE® has a very compact and branching habit, making a neat dome-shaped plant.