

# No shrinking violet

Forget pastels: bold and bright colours are back in vogue as gardeners cheer up austerity Britain. Be loud and proud, says Caroline Donald

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At last year's Chelsea Flower Show, Philippa Pearson had several visitors come up to her on the Victorian Aviary show garden she designed. "Thank goodness," they said. "We are so bored with coming to Chelsea and seeing only greens, whites and blues." Pearson had taken that classic combination, in the form of box hedging, irises, peonies and roses, but had planted in among it saturated red geums, dark purple salvias and yellow *Verbascum* 'Cotswold Queen' to contrast with a bright turquoise latticed "aviary".

Her equally cheerful garden at the Hampton Court Palace show in July won her a silver-gilt medal and the People's Award. Here she was inspired by Gertrude Jekyll, the great plantswoman of the early 20th century, whose influence still holds. "She was so good at grading borders and wasn't afraid of colour," says Pearson, who uses combinations such as red monarda and pink cleome, yellow day lilies and rich purple salvia. She recommends using white to break things up or else it gets too intense. Annuals such as gypsophila, white stock and *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Purity' can add breathing space.