

Our September speaker, Jane Moore, was most entertaining, not least because of her outgoing personality. 'Painting with Plants', her subject, was a topic that displayed her plant knowledge, her flair for design and her skills as a photographer. We were treated to pictures of planting combinations that she had used in her work as Gardener in Charge at the Bath Priory Hotel and other hotels in the same group. Whether you are planting a window box, a small patch of garden or a vast estate you need ideas about what to use. For example, do the colours of the flowers you have chosen enhance each other, and, most important of all, are they actually going to come into flower together so that your scheme is not a flop from the start.

What do we mean by the phrase 'enhance each other'? Well, it depends on what you want from your garden. Very popular with Jane, and lots of people, especially since Lockdown and Covid, are colours that peacefully blend and go together and have a calming effect. White, soft pinks, (not shocking pink), blues and soft purples. You can create huge flower beds with many different varieties of plants all in this colour range if this is your goal. It gives a gentle feel good effect. Alternatively, you may think that this is a waste and that you are losing some of the detail here. The occasional orange flower amongst a sea of blue makes the whole effect more vibrant, making the blue colour stand out more boldly. A yellow flower has the same effect as an orange one. The effect on us is more stimulating and less soporific. The dabs of bright colour need to be carefully chosen, too many will look like an unplanned array of bargain plants that were bought in haste at the garden centre plant sale, rather than a touch of brilliant design. Jane summed that up by saying that she found orange and yellow flowers difficult to use. I say, just go for orange and yellow here and there, I do!

Dorothy Richards