

## HOUSEHOLD HORTICULTURE

Don't have a garden, balcony or allotment to tend to? Learn to love the plants in your home (and keep them alive) with *Living with Plants* (Hardie Grant, £15), a beautiful new book by Sophie Lee, founder of London gardening emporium Geo Fleur. There are chapters on picking the right plants for both your home (according to what light it receives and humidity levels) and life (how often are you home? Would you like herbs to pick or foliage to soften acoustics?). There is also information on tools



and techniques, plus step-by-step guides.

Want more inspiration? Head to the Royal Horticultural Society's headquarters on Vincent Square in London for 'Potted', an exhibition about beautiful plant pots, past and present. Until 19 May (rhs.org).

## WHERE THE PEONIES GROW

Visit the world's biggest collection of peonies in north Lazio, Italy. Centro Botanico Moutan (its name comes from 'Mu Dan', the Chinese name for the peony) houses over 650 different varieties – including rare types native to high-altitude Tibet and the *Paeonia Suffruticosa*, which has been known as 'the king of flowers' in China since the Qing Dynasty. Book now, as it's only open during April and May, when the 250,000 peony stems are in full bloom ([centrobotanicomoutan.it](http://centrobotanicomoutan.it)).



WORDS: CHARLOTTE BROOK, ELIZA HONEY. PICTURES: NAME



## CHELSEA IN BLOOM

There's no better place in the UK to discover the latest garden trends than the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Head down to see the cream of the crop of the country's best garden designers and specialist plant nurseries. Here are four not to be missed (23–27 May; [rhs.org.uk](http://rhs.org.uk)).

### 'INLAND HOMES: BENEATH A MEXICAN SKY'

Garden design newcomer Manoj Malde of Couture Gardens has created a space inspired by Mexican Pritzker Prize-winning architect Luis Barragán. With walls painted in bright pink and orange, and a bronze wire sculpture of a horse by artist Rupert Till – horses were one of the architect's great obsessions – Malde shows just how lush and vibrant drought-tolerant plants can be. There are plenty of varieties of agaves on display, along with erigeron, cosmos and cleome – many of which can survive in UK gardens.

### THE SEEDLIP GARDEN

British brand Seedlip, which distils the world's first herb-derived, calorie-free, non-alcoholic spirits, has called on seasoned designer Dr Catherine MacDonald to create a garden that evokes 17th-century apothecaries. It's filled with botanicals used in both the new aperitif and ancient medicines.



'A GARDEN FOR MAGGIE'S' Sponsored by law firm Linklaters and designed by Cornwall-based landscape gardener Darren Hawkes, this is a calm sanctuary. Inspired by the belief of Maggie Keswick – co-founder of Maggie's cancer care centres – that patients need a space to be at ease in, the garden has been designed to be soft and scented.

**GREAT PAVILION** This venue feels like a walk-in flower encyclopaedia and is a perennial joy, with pedigree plant breeds going head-to-head to win the best-in-class gongs. A highlight is the 'Delight in the Dark' display, focusing on plants that excel in shade.