

storage sewn up

Vegetable gardeners are always advised to sow little and often to avoid unmanageable gluts. It's sound advice but does mean opening packets of half-used seed spilling their contents everywhere.

Now, Suttons Seeds have come up with a nifty idea to make successional sowing that bit easier.

They have put their 12 most popular varieties in handy seed tins that make storing a doddle. Each tin comes with twice the number of seeds in a standard pack but split into three packets, enough for a standard allotment row.

"It means no more ripping of packets and then rolling down the

tops, trying to keep the remaining seed safe and dry," explains spokeswoman Claire Hart.

The metal tins, around the size of a pack of cards, are designed to line up like books, making them ideal for kitchen or shed shelves.

The 12 varieties include 'Dragon's Tongue' rocket, a colourful selection of white, yellow, orange and purple carrots in 'Chef's Mix' and lettuce 'Farmers' Market Mix', which has assorted red and green lettuces.

The Successional Sowing Seed Tins are available from garden centres or online at www.suttons.co.uk priced at £4.95 each.



Right: Burgon & Ball indoor pots

Above: Brie Harrison gardening gloves
Right: Brie Harrison trowel, snips and label

Gifts for gardeners

Looking for a Christmas gift for a gardening loved one or friend? Mandy Bradshaw has some ideas for perfect presents for the green-fingered

CLIMBERS GET A COLOUR BOOST

Mention trellis and the chances are you'll think of something brown, wooden and slightly old-fashioned but a new range by Flying Monk Designs brings this garden staple right up-to-date.

Like many good ideas, it came about by chance when staff at the Malmesbury graphic design firm cut star shapes out of Perspex for Christmas cards. Not wanting to waste the left-over acrylic, company boss Janie Gath took it home and used it to support a honeysuckle. It worked so well the firm decided to launch Flying Monk Trellis.

The weatherproof trellis now comes in a range of shapes and colours from striking yellow and blue to classy black or white. There are also clear, white frost and smoke finishes while the cut-out shapes include clouds, daisies and latticework.

"Having something colourful to look out at amongst the greenery and co-ordinating plants and pots is great for colour-loving



gardeners to get creative with," says Janie. Prices start at £132 and a gift-wrapped delivery service is available. See www.flyingmonkdesign.com for more details.

Taking a break

Every gardener needs to take time to sit back and admire their plot with a cuppa. These beautiful hand-stencilled mugs from Aston Pottery will make that even more appealing. The botanical range features five designs including agapanthus, fritillary and dahlia. There are two sizes of mug: small at £11.99 and large at £14.99.

Every stage of production is carried out at the pottery at Aston near Witney and the mugs can be bought there or online at www.astonpottery.co.uk



PROTECT YOUR HANDS IN STYLE

Gardening gloves are not often known for their beauty but a new range of Gold Leaf gloves is different.

Family-run firm Jayco has teamed up with the RHS to produce The RHS Collection of women's gloves, inspired by botanical artwork from the RHS Lindley Library.

Named after RHS shows, the gloves are made of deerskin leather and have specially designed padding for extra comfort.

'Malvern' features a watercolour image of Iris 'Mrs Barnard'; the iris is the symbol of hope and wisdom. 'Hampton' has an illustration of the yellow Rosa 'Maréchal Niel' - a yellow rose symbolises friendship, while the 'Chelsea' glove shows 'The Great Scarlet Poppy', long recognised as the symbol of remembrance.

The gloves, which won a Best New Product Award, at leading trade show GLEE, are £14.99 a pair and are available from garden centres and shops, including Highgrove, and online.

Pots of style

There's nothing like a new hand tool to take the drudgery out of mundane gardening jobs and a colourful range featuring the work of designer Brie Harrison is sure to lift the spirits on even the coldest day.

The striking botanical designs have been used on Burgon & Ball's hand tools and accessories. These include a secateurs and holster gift set (£19.99), another with a trowel, snips and a plant label (£19.99), gardening gloves (£14.99) and a kneeler (£16.99).

And if your gardening is limited to houseplants, how about these indoor pots to show off your collection?

Strong, leather cords support the pots, which come in striking textures and glaze effects in muted shades. Prices start at £7.99.

Burgon & Ball products are available at stockists throughout the Cotswolds, see www.burgonandball.com for more details. ▶



Above: Brie Harrison secateurs and holster gift set

BOOKS

Sometimes the weather is too bad for even me to garden and the only thing to do is retreat indoors with a book. There are several titles that would make great gifts, offering everything from inspiration to advice.

Westonbirt Arboretum's Tree Spotter's Guide aims to take the mystery out of identifying some of the trees found in parks and gardens across Britain.

Written by tree expert Dan Crowley, it features short, easy to understand descriptions of 100 different trees ranging from larch and rowan to field maple and dawn redwood.

Both the common name – Monkey Puzzle – and Latin name – *Araucaria araucana* – are given and each section is illustrated by Louise Morgan with the outline shape of the tree and the detail of its foliage.

There's a glossary to explain terms used, such as gall, rootstock and sucker, and the chatty style extends beyond the mere botanical: black walnut wood was used to make World War One aeroplane propellers; you should never climb a silver maple as the branches are brittle.

Pocket-sized, the book would be ideal to take on country rambles or when exploring some of the Cotswolds' great gardens.

Westonbirt Arboretum's Tree Spotter's Guide by Dan Crowley is published by Ebury Press and is priced at £8.99.

Another book packed with advice is **Down to Earth by Gardeners' World presenter Monty Don**.

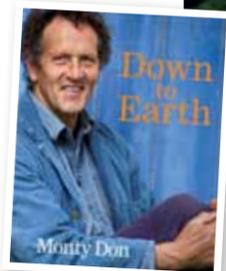
Intended not as a text book but rather a sharing of more than 50 years of experience, it touches on every aspect of gardening from the seasons, design and essential tools to when to prune, what to grow and the importance of compost.

The contents of many of the chapters are distilled into 'at a glance' summaries and recommended jobs for each month are outlined.

Written with the enthusiasm that is evident in his on-screen presenting, *Down to Earth* is a mixture of the purely practical – "All containers need drainage holes." – and the inspirational – "Anyone who starts to grow vegetables discovers that it is an enormously pleasurable, rewarding pastime."

Gardening can be daunting for the novice – "All those Latin names! Do not be intimidated." – this book would remove some of the mystery.

Down to Earth by Monty Don is published by Dorling Kindersley, priced £17.99.



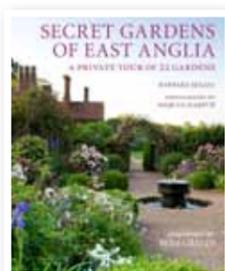
There's nothing quite like some garden visiting for getting design and planting ideas and a new book on the gardens of East Anglia is the perfect excuse to venture further afield.

Written by Suffolk-based writer and horticulturalist Barbara Segall, **Secret Gardens of East Anglia** features 22 privately-owned gardens across Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

They range from the well-known, including Pensthorpe Natural Park with its Piet Oudolf-designed Millennium Garden, and Ulting Wick, which opens regularly for the National Garden Scheme to Winterton Lighthouse, a London family's bolthole that is strictly private.

Beautifully illustrated with photographs by the late Marcus Harper, the book traces the development of the gardens and outlines the ethos behind their creation.

With details of opening hours and a useful map,



Secret gardens: Elton Hall, Cambridgeshire



Secret gardeners: Prue Leith

this book would be the ideal companion on a trip to the east of the country.

Secret Gardens of East Anglia by Barbara Segall, photographs by Marcus Harper, is published by Frances Lincoln, priced at £20.

In her latest book, Cotswold-based author Victoria Summerley is concerned not so much with the garden as the person behind it.

Those she describes as "Britain's creatives", including sculptors, musicians, entrepreneurs and actors, talk about what gardening means to them and the process behind creating their private plots.

For some, such as media personality and rock star wife Sharon Osbourne, the garden is a place of escape. Others, including Kirstie Allsopp and the Bransons, see the garden as an essential part of family life. Several reflect the primary work of their creator: Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage HQ is based on the ethos of sustainable self-sufficiency; artist Allen Jones' garden was laid out using the outline of his face as the basis of the design.

His plot is one of many from the Cotswolds to be featured, along with the Chadwick family's Lypiatt Park, the village retreat of biotech entrepreneur Christopher Evans, and former chef and now Bake Off star Prue Leith's garden of hot colours.

Most of the gardens featured are strictly private although a few do have public access, such as Glyndebourne, or have been featured before on screen or in print, including those made by Prue Leith and Cameron Mackintosh.

With plenty of illustrative photographs by Hugo Rittson Thomas, this book allows the reader through some interesting garden gates. ♦

The Secret Gardeners: Britain's Creatives Reveal Their Private Sanctuaries by Victoria Summerley, photographs by Hugo Rittson Thomas, is published by Frances Lincoln, priced at £30.

