

GARDEN OF THE WEEK FACTFILE

Gardeners Pam and Chris Archbold

Address Salph End Farmhouse, Renhold, Bedfordshire MK41 0LA

Been in the garden 40 years

Soil Sandy, free-draining **Size** ¾ acre **Visited** July



Garden highlights



Acer palmatum

Every garden should have at least one Japanese maple and their love of shady corners makes them a useful planting choice for a problem area

A traditional touch

Mature trees and old-fashioned planting adds to this garden's charm



Greg Loades
Gardening editor

SALPH End Farmhouse is more than 400 years old and has an appropriately old-fashioned-style garden. If ever

a house was made for a traditional cottage garden, this is it. It is full of the charm you expect from a cottage garden, with care-free but controlled borders and its blowy abundance whets the appetite for the gardening year ahead.

It might not look obvious, but this is a garden against the odds. The whole of the garden is surrounded by mature trees, many of them willow and poplar, and every single one has a Tree

Preservation Order on it, meaning that running repairs need local authority approval. Many of the trees are very old, with falling branches a regular occurrence, so garden-owners Pam and Chris Archbold must often negotiate to carry out pruning, which can be tricky when making sure the garden doesn't get too heavily shaded.

To start with, the garden was mainly lawn, with a small veg patch outside the back door, but it gradually evolved as Pam and Chris's interest in gardening grew. "Part of gardening is 'do what you have to do', then you think 'oh that looks nice' and you take it from there," said Pam.

The farmhouse has an original 'bread oven' (which Pam says is like a pizza-oven), which makes for a quirky garden feature and the garden is sprinkled with old-fashioned bygone-day features to add to the rustic charm. There's even an authentic Second World War dog-cart, which is used to house garden hand tools.

Aside from the sometimes troublesome trees, bindweed has been the biggest problem in the garden and it has been a case of constantly digging through the borders to eradicate this perennial pest. It's now under control and the old trick of keeping borders packed to prevent weeds getting a look-in once they've been cleared is put to good use. Allowing plants such as alliums and campanulas to self-seed also helps and has created the relaxed, openly planted approach that makes the garden fit the farmhouse so splendidly. It's a look that's very hard to achieve by deliberately spacing every plant.

The garden winds itself around the house and the size totals ¾ of an acre. The emphasis is on low maintenance to keep everything manageable but with clever planting, and with no compromise

This old pump is the perfect match for the old brickwork of the farmhouse and the Second World War dog cart finishes off the display



Allium and lavender

A classic combination, perhaps even more effective when the allium flowers fade to reveal their skeletal beauty



Campanula persicifolia 'Alba'

This white variety supplies a wonderful summer freshness to the border and makes a superb backdrop for showing off the spherical heads of alliums



on colour. Alliums and lavender mingle together, both thriving on the free-draining soil, and a solid backdrop of evergreen ivy and box allows colours to stand out all the more in summer against a background of lush

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Before

Favourite plants from the garden



Euonymus 'Emerald 'n' Gold' makes an impressive evergreen wall shrub, especially grown in full sun



Complementary shades of dahlia and trailing verbena making an unusual but effective combination

foliage. *Acanthus mollis* (bear's breeches) also love the soil conditions and sunny aspect, and its bold sharp flower stems add a metallic purple to complement the allium flowerheads as they fade, although this plant does need keeping an eye on because it's a vigorous grower.

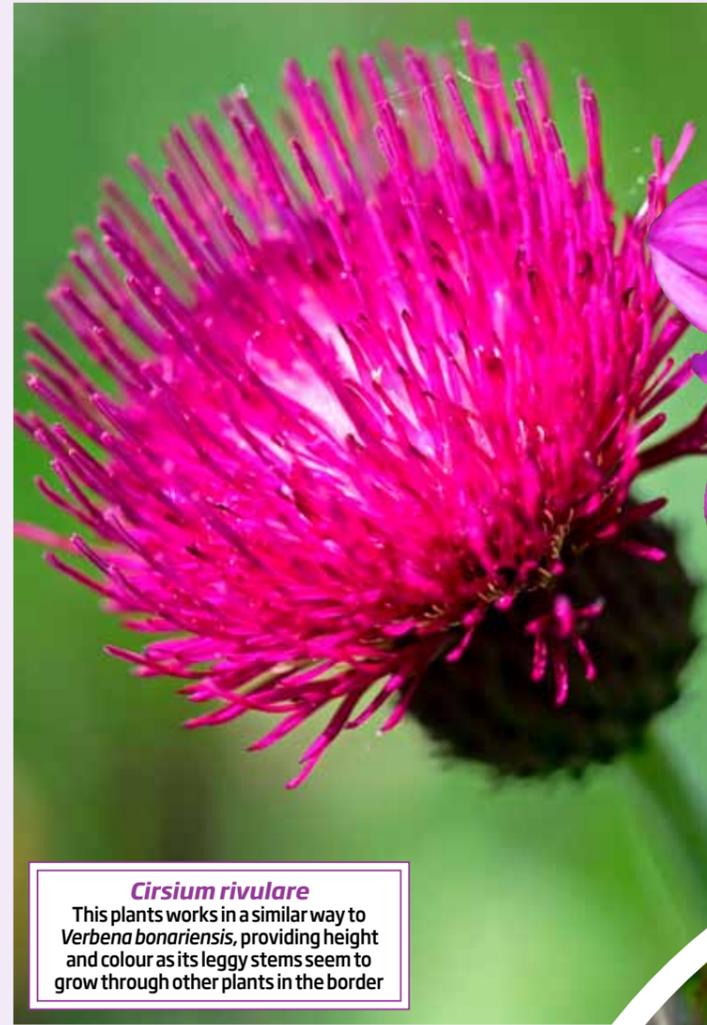
Campanula self-seeds itself through the free-draining border, making a striking display of summer colour that can tower over a sunny border without casting too much shade. It's both an unusual and inspired backbone plant that frames the house perfectly in high summer.

Another bringer of colour are the dahlias, although these are one of the few concessions to the tasteful palette of cool, cottage garden

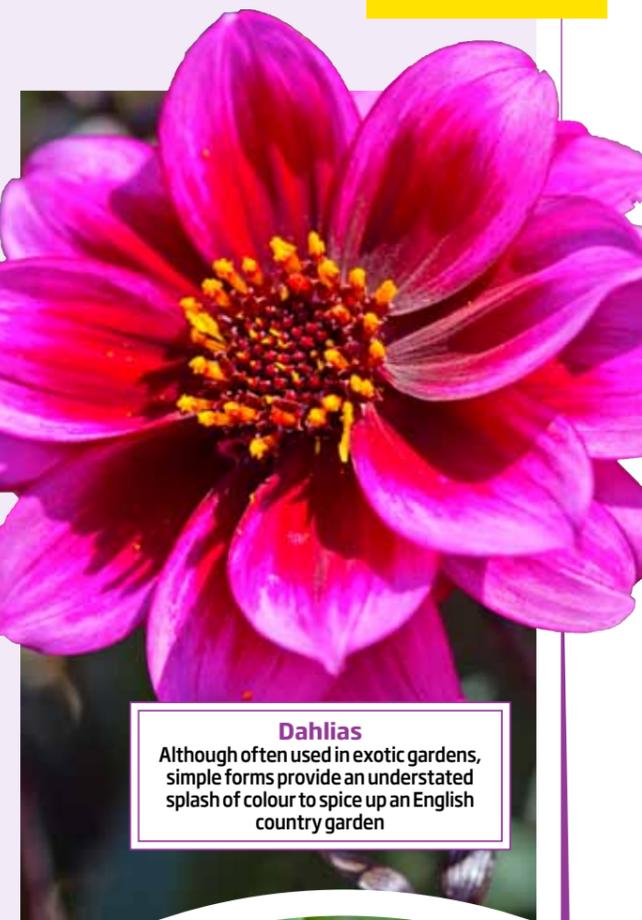
colours and the old-fashioned theme. Pam is not a big dahlia fan, but they are one of Chris's favourites so Pam lets him have his indulgence to add some louder colour, helped along with accompanying verbena and scarlet petunias to make a bold impression through the summer until the first frosts.



Borders are densely packed so weeds don't get a look-in



Cirsium rivulare
This plants works in a similar way to *Verbena bonariensis*, providing height and colour as its leggy stems seem to grow through other plants in the border



Dahlias
Although often used in exotic gardens, simple forms provide an understated splash of colour to spice up an English country garden



Campanula lactiflora
This showy bellflower may need some help to stand up, but is perfect for providing clouds of colour at the back of a flowerbed



Hydrangea macrophylla
These tough shrubs thrive in sun or part-shade and feathery fennel makes a good border partner