Cushions of colour

FOR A WINNING COMBINATION OF YEAR-ROUND FOLIAGE COLOUR AND SUMMER FLOWER-POWER, LOOK NO FURTHER THAN HEBES

Celebrated for their stunning foliage and beautiful summer flowers, hebes will add sparkle to your garden throughout the year. Leaf shades range from simple, sophisticated greens to exciting pink, purple, cream and yellow tints that shout 'look at me!'. Heads of small fluffy flowers appear in the summer and, as an added bonus, the nectar-rich blooms are great for wildlife, drawing in bees and butterflies.

Hebes are compact shrubs, ideal as single specimens in a pot or as part of a mixed display in a larger container. They also work at the front of sunny borders, where you can use them to edge a bed, or as a focal point to draw the eye.

CARING FOR HEBES

Although they are easy to grow, hebes need full sun and free-draining soil to thrive. They will cope with light shade for part of the day, but avoid cold, dark areas. If you have heavy clay soil, you can still enjoy them by potting up plants in a container filled with John Innes compost mixed with horticultural grit to improve the drainage. Feed plants annually in spring with a general purpose granular fertiliser, such as Vitax Q4. At the same time, remove old flowerheads and trim plants lightly to maintain their shape.

Hebes are hardy in mild winters. But in cold areas, or if a hard frost or snow is forecast, cover your plants with a double layer of fleece, just to be on the safe side.

NEW FOR 2013

Cry for attention
The colourful foliage tints of Hebe 'Rhubarb and Custard' make a big impression in pots and borders, while the pretty pink flowers add extra impact in summer

The best of the bunch

We have a selection of beautiful new hebes and recent introductions to make a statement in your garden

Pink Pixie
Compact, with small mid-green leaves, this pretty hebe produces masses of powder-pink flowers from late spring to the first frosts in autumn, making it a real winner for a patio pot.
Height and spread 60cm (2ft)

Magic Summer
The striking foliage is dark pink with cream edges in spring and early summer, and then turns grey-green and cream for the rest of the year. Rich purple-blue flowers appear in June.
Height 60cm (2ft)
Spread 80cm (2ft 8in)

Baby Boo
Small but perfectly formed, this hebe puts on a show all year. In spring, pink leaf shoots appear, which then turn yellow, pink and green as they mature in summer. Purple early-summer flowers add to the mix.
Height and spread 50cm (1ft 8in)

Rhubarb and Custard
The leaf colour of many hebes intensifies in winter, but these pink, cream and green leaves are vivid all year. A showstopper in a pot or border, the foliage is joined by small pink flowers in late summer.
Height and spread 60cm (2ft)