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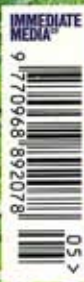
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. Journey of *discovery*

In this Cotswold garden, a network of paths leading from formal topiary to wild meadow is punctuated with a collection of sculpture designed to surprise and delight the viewer

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The formal part of the garden is enclosed by beech and has solid box squares surrounding a bronze sculpture called *Family Tree* by Mike Spellar. Low box hedging surrounds beds of *Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest' and aquilegia (followed later by roses).

Cotswold garden

In brief

WHAT A Medieval former blacksmith's house with formal gardens and meadow planting.

WHERE South Cotswolds.

SIZE Around two acres.

SOIL Limestone brash, well worked and friable.

CONDITIONS High up in the Cotswolds, the garden has cold winters and wet summers.

SPECIAL FEATURES Formal garden of strong evergreens and restrained colour palette, with sculpture collection. Meadow on a shady slope.



“A traditional mixed border surrounding the house is filled with roses – white rose of York and Winchester Cathedral – as well as philadelphus and lilac”

W

hen he was invited to visit this Cotswold garden by its owner Richard Szpiro, the designer Tim Rees was amazed to find that he had worked on it two decades ago. The design was much changed by subsequent planting of trees and Richard wanted to clear these out in order to open up the space and admit light and views into the garden. “With Richard there has been a lot of simplification,” says Tim. “We have taken trees out, the axes have been strengthened and the colour scheme is more specific.” The result is a much stronger and simpler garden, Tim believes. It is also a garden that is very much the result of a happy collaboration between the designer and the owner.

From lawn to meadow

This is a garden of contrasts, ranging from formal planting and smooth lawns to woodland and wild meadow. Starting at the beginning, by the house, shaped box is used to strong effect to create a structure that Tim calls “the grammar of the garden. Here box forms the full stops, commas and semi-colons”. Against this the seasonal bulbs and perennials perform, including a traditional mixed border, based on a blue and white colour scheme, surrounding the house. It is filled with roses – white rose of York (*Rosa x alba* ‘Alba Semiplena’), Winchester Cathedral (=‘Auscat’) and Crocus Rose (=‘Ausquest’) – as well as philadelphus and lilac.

In the most high-maintenance and striking area of the garden, low box hedging surrounds beds planted with *Allium stipitatum* ‘Mount Everest’ and white aquilegia, followed by roses ‘Penelope’, Kew Gardens (=‘Ausfence’) and ‘Yvonne Rabier’. Between the beds are four solid box ▷



The colour theme of the mixed border was chosen by the owner Richard and includes *Allium hollandicum* ‘Purple Sensation’, white lilac *Syringa vulgaris* ‘Madame Lemoine’ and the snowball tree *Viburnum opulus* ‘Roseum’.

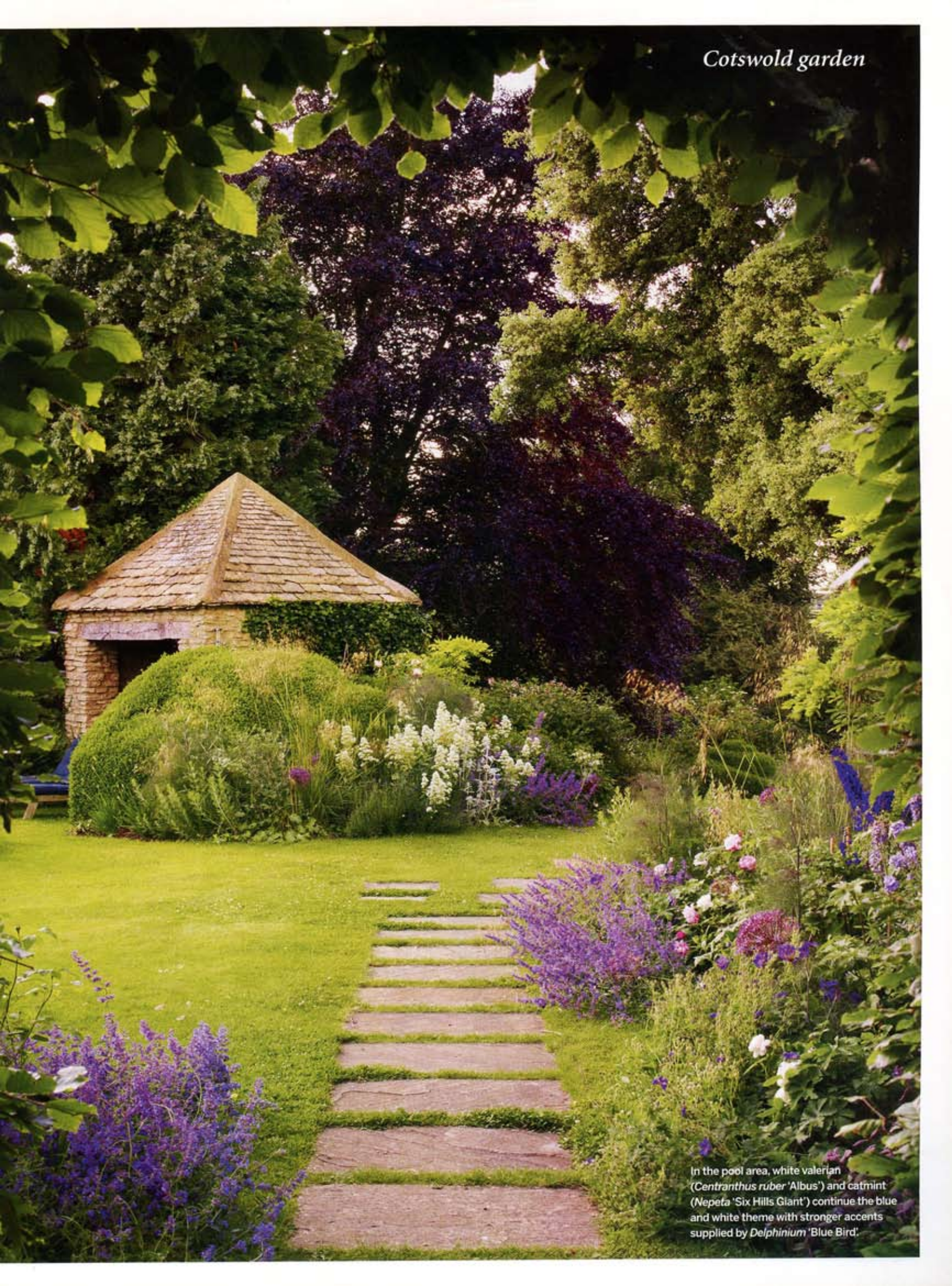


From the pool area, a gap in the trees offers a view across the Cotswold countryside. At the end, stone steps lead down to the formal lawn.



To the side of the pool area is a charming gazebo built from Cotswold stone. Colonised by ivy, it appears to nestle among a mass of green interspersed with purple alliums.

Cotswold garden



In the pool area, white valerian (*Centranthus ruber* 'Albus') and catmint (*Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant') continue the blue and white theme with stronger accents supplied by *Delphinium* 'Blue Bird'.

“There are strong, architectural sculptures in the formal areas, whereas in the meadow elemental, earthy pieces seem to emerge from the ground”



Created in stainless steel, *Allium* by Ruth Molliet forms a dramatic and pleasing contrast to the historic fabric of the house.

▷ squares. A central path points to a gap in the hedge with a view across fields to the south. It is deliberate and striking. Past a rectangular stone pond is a set of stone steps leading down to the formal lawn which features sculptures that Richard commissioned for the garden. Tim has introduced strips of annual meadow flowers along the edges of the lawn, a hint of things to come.

Sculptural discoveries

When Richard bought the house, two thirds of the garden was on a steep slope. “It was just wasted space,” says Richard. “I wanted graduated pathways so that one could work one’s way down and around the garden.” Now, what he and Tim call a “cobweb of paths” negotiates the slope, utilising the space and linking the more formal areas of the garden with the wild meadow beyond. And, as you follow a path, you turn a corner and come across a sculpture as if by accident. This is deliberate: Richard didn’t want the garden to look like an open-air art gallery: “It is important you don’t see all the pieces at once. I wanted twisting paths where one would discover an individual piece of sculpture, hidden away.”

Richard worked with each artist to determine the nature of the work and its location in the garden. The placement of the sculpture is subtle. “There are strong, architectural and bold pieces in the formal areas,” says Richard, whereas in the meadow there are “basic, elemental, earthy pieces which seem to emerge from the ground.”

It is in the furthest reaches of this Cotswold garden – away from the formality by the house, past the grand grassy ▷



Three sculptures of scorched oak by Malcolm Martin and Gaynor Dowling create a rustic focus under a small grove of trees. (L to R): *Egyptian, Stele, and Great Turn*.



The placing of *Disabled Perspective* by Sally Fawkes (glass and stainless steel) establishes a dynamic relationship between lawn and house.



4 ways to use sculpture in the garden

- 1 Carefully chosen contemporary sculpture can work well in a garden and can **act as a contrast** to traditional landscape elements.
- 2 **Tell a story** – set a theme that can be developed but whatever you choose ensure it stimulates and provides focus to an area.
- 3 A single well-placed sculpture can **transform a neglected area** giving it a character and energy previously lacking.
- 4 **Lead the visitor around the garden** by using sculpture, whether placed at the end of an avenue or in the middle of a meadow, to link the different areas of the garden.

Positioned in the meadow, *Slate Vase* by Joe Smith is tickled by native grasses and flowers including wood cranesbill (*Geranium sylvaticum* 'Album') and a pink aquilegia, an unnamed cultivar, that Tim says "has self-seeded and reappears each year".



In the meadow, a mown path flanked by cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) invites a shady stroll past a line of young rowan trees (*Sorbus aucuparia*).

9 of the plants Tim has used at Tudor House



Garden designer Tim Rees set up his own practice, Trees Associates, in 2003 after working for 10 years with Brita von Schoenaich

(www.treesassociates.com).

In the 1990s, the pair were responsible for hosting the Kew seminars on new Dutch and German planting which brought Piet Oudolf and others to the attention of the public. He has worked on many gardens in the Mediterranean, and cites its landscape and way of gardening as his greatest influence.

1 **Box (*Buxus sempervirens*)**

Used throughout the garden as a strong framework and to create anchor points.

2 ***Allium stipitatum* 'Mount Everest'**

Used in the formal part of the garden. "Big white globes of flowers," says Tim Rees.

3 ***Schizophragma hydrangeoides***

"A climber used on shady walls, with a better flower than *Hydrangea petiolaris*."

4 ***Rosa* 'Ghislainne de Féligonde'**

A rambling rose with a mix of yolk yellow and white flowers and a musky scent.

5 **Turkish hazel (*Corylus colurna*)**

A useful plant in the meadow, says Tim: "It is broadly pyramidal, and has a flaky bark."

6 ***Chamaenerion angustifolium* 'Album'**

A pure white rosebay willowherb that offers "white spires of flowers at a useful time".

7 ***Aquilegia* 'Kristall'**

A white columbine with distinctive, long spurs. Strong growing.

8 ***Rosa roxburghii***

Chestnut rose, used in the meadow. "I love the beautiful brown peeling bark in winter."

9 **Yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*)**

Essential for a meadow. "It helps control the vigour of grasses," because it is partly parasitic.

▷ terrace, down the slope – that the designer Tim Rees seems most at home. Here he has developed a romantic meadow dominated by native plants but enriched by other perennials and bulbs. It is a place to steal away to, down little winding paths, and to get lost among camassias, geraniums and native grasses. "A meadow is far more interesting than a border," Tim says. "It is interactive: you are in it, rather than looking at it".

The narrow paths wind around grasses and shrubby roses in the meadow. A few pioneer plants such as *Rosa roxburghii*, *Rosa sericea* subsp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha* and *Corylus avellana* (hazel) have been planted there. Though not native, they are the sort of plants that would naturally colonise this type

of vegetation as it makes the progression towards woodland – and they add structure. Tim calls it "enriched native flora". He speckles it with *Knautia macedonica*, cornflowers (*Centaurea montana* and *C. montana* 'Alba') and geraniums. Tim says: "There is a moral side to a meadow. You are creating a balanced community. Mostly you stand back, but you do have to edit out the thugs, and gently introduce newcomers". When Tim sees a meadow he sees competition, struggles and dynamism.

Richard offers another viewpoint: "It is paradise – peace and harmony. The house is in the middle of a village but in the garden you feel as if you are far, far away – you could be miles from anywhere." □

