

Three Drought Tolerant Plants

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The months of May, June and July proved to be the longest period of prolonged hot weather we have ever experienced in our garden. Most summers include a few days of baking sunshine, but 2018 was exceptional, with day after day and week after week of hot drying sunshine.

Two plants stood out as being particularly drought tolerant, and a third was unexpectedly successful in the weeks of sunshine, but had to be watered every day.

The first two are *Lavandula* 'Hidcote' and *Lotus hirsutus* (formerly *Dorycnium hirsutum*). Both are growing here in full sun, the lavender in a thin layer of soil in a narrow border between paving and a low wall, and the *Lotus* is in a hardcore drive covered in gravel. Neither was watered at all, but both have flowered so well without any stress whatsoever. Their Mediterranean provenance and ability to naturally grow in poor soil and in high temperatures is no doubt the key to their success in a hot dry situation.

My third plant is Tomato 'Maskotka', seed of which came free with a gardening magazine. I raised a number of plants for our local garden club but decided to keep three to see if a trailing outdoor bush tomato might give a better yield without all the fuss of tying up and pinching out. Each was planted in a 10 litre pot in our usual peat free nursery compost and placed outside on the sunny side of our tunnel on a low platform which would allow them to trail. Their success has been phenomenal - so far we have picked (and used) 246 tomatoes weighing in at 2.75Kg and there are at least as many still to come.



Lavandula 'Hidcote'



Lotus hirsutus



Tomato 'Maskotka'