

Two or Three Plants in the Space of One – Two Tier Planting That Works Bob Brown

This is for permanent planting. It lets you cram in more plants, improve the continuity of effect in the garden and sometimes even makes it possible to grow more demanding plants. Dig the hole. Flatten the bottom. If bulbs are involved they can be placed under or besides the decanted pot plants. Decanted potted plants should be intermixed. January and February are quite good months to plant. The rub is that you have to choose the plants carefully.

They have to be plants which grow at different times. As one dies down the other starts to grow. They're not competing for light or air or water or nutrients (or barely so). Oriental poppies are a good example. They start to grow in September, are quiescent in winter, then flower in May and go dormant in June. You look for something active from November to February and then something else active from June to September. They all have to grow in the same hole so mixing shade-lovers with sun-lovers or calcifuges with calcicoles might not work.

I like the bruise-red colours of the oriental poppy 'King Kong'. *Eucomis* 'Sparkling Burgundy' has colours from the same palette. Its foliage is richly purple and the August flowers are a mixture of pale and deep purple. The deeply coloured leaf snouts are visible as the poppy begins to flower and the flowers persist, once pollinated, into October as the poppy foliage begins to carpet the soil beneath. *Galanthus elwesii* Hiemalis Group comes up through the low poppy foliage in November, flowers in November and December and gives way to poppy foliage as that takes off in early spring.

Think of the limitless possibilities. Imagine falling asleep as you think out the combinations.