"We were used to strongly architectural gardens with understated planting. Seeing the romance and luxuriance of my planting schemes was new to many gardeners."

Dina Deferme's advice

Five tips that help ensure your borders look good throughout the summer

Feed the soil
Expecting plants to perform to the maximum takes a lot of energy. Dina digs lots of manure into the soil when planting and mulches every spring with a layer of well-rotted horse manure. She advises not to forget to mulch shrubs and hedges.

Plant early-flowering perennials close by late-flowering ones
There is a tendency in lots of gardens to grow plants that flower at the same time next to each other. Dina advises against this: having, for example, a spring plant next to one that flowers in autumn will mean that you have fewer gaps in the border.

Plant densely
Do not leave even the tiniest gap in your planting schemes. This may mean planting too densely the first year but it is easy to remove plants that have spread too far. Keep a notebook with you and record which plants need controlling.

Feed the soil a second time
At the end of June Dina gives the garden a second feed, this time with an organic granular fertiliser. This gives a boost to re-flowering roses and irises. It also helps plants recover from the shock of being cut back and stimulates late-flowering perennials.

Dead head and cut back
Dead heading is a daily job from spring onwards as a way of encouraging maximum flower production. As soon as a perennial has finished flowering it is cut back hard. This means that even those that do not flower a second time will have neat attractive foliage and will not take up space that could be used by flowering plants.

USEFUL INFORMATION
Boulevard 64, Stokroos (Hasselt) 3511 Belgium.
Tel: +32 (0)11 25 64 58, www.deferme.be
Open every Sunday in June, July and August and by appointment.

Dina Deferme has designed other gardens in the area, also open to the public. Details of opening times can be found at www.deferme.be

• The Adams’ garden
Wolvensastraat 27, 2370 Aremberg.
• Corry Beekx’s garden
Dingenstraat 9, 3960 Bree.
• The Vanhemelingen’s garden (De Horne) Brugstraat 30, 3870 Vlechmaal.

Tightly pruned pleached hornbeam
skirts the house and provides shade
for the adjacent border.