



Seasonal DISPLAY

RICH-TONED BLOOMS

In spring, captivating tulip borders feature deep purple 'Scherer' and 'Recreado' planted alongside dark red lily-flowered 'Merlot'

In his book *Brilliant English Gardens*, photographer **Clive Nichols** showcases everything from stunning country estates to romantic cottage gardens. In this extract, he looks at Ulting Wick in the Essex countryside. Planted with swathes of vibrant tulips, it's guaranteed to lift the heart



COLOUR AND STRUCTURE

Striking on a bright but frosty day, box topiary adds formality amid the tulips' sheer flamboyance



CONTRASTING TEXTURES

An eye-catching border includes feathery *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', slender *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire' and showy *Dahlia* 'Grenadier'

SPRING DRIFTS

Tulip varieties including 'Sapporo', 'Infinity', 'Barcelona' and 'Merlot' steal the limelight in Ulting Wick's vegetable garden.



SUMMER FLOWERING

Verbena bonariensis and *Dahlia* 'Happy Halloween' enliven a walkway that is framed by a decorative arch

The 11-acre garden at Ulting Wick, which nestles in the conservation area of the Chelmer Valley in rural Essex, has been created over the past 25 years by Philippa Burrough and her husband Bryan.

Although the handsome 17th-century farmhouse is painted a creamy white, the main garden wraps round three listed Essex black barns, where swallows swoop in and out of the eaves and old brick paths traverse four box-edged beds, filled in spring with a colourful display of tulips. These are later replaced by an exotic display of more than 100 dahlias, bananas, sunflowers, grasses and annuals that flower in late summer.

In the vegetable garden, a Victorian-style greenhouse takes centre stage. Alongside early asparagus, oak-edged raised beds are host to colour-graded tulips planted in drifts of pink, purple and white. *Tulipa* 'Sapporo', 'Infinity', 'Barcelona' and 'Merlot' stand alongside further blocks of red and orange. *Tulipa* 'National Velvet', a deep red, and *Tulipa* 'Abu Hassan', a delicious chocolatey burgundy with yellow tips that look as though they have been dipped in golden caster sugar, are particular favourites of Philippa's.

Along one side of the barns, a long border is resplendent in late summer, with the bright red *Dahlia* 'Grenadier' highlighted in the morning sunshine by the tall, flowing golden grass *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'. From here, the garden extends to a gentle stream overhung with weeping willows, which opens out into a miniature lake, complete with photogenic rowing boat. Two further gardens are tucked behind the black wooden barns – one planted in restful white and green and surrounded by neat yew hedging, and the other, created in 2004, packed with pink and purple tulips with gorgeous little box topiary, shaped like Mr Kipling French Fancies. The garden at Ulting Wick will be open from 2-5pm on 23 and 28 April, 11 July, 28 August and 1 September in aid of the National Gardens Scheme (ngs.org.uk).



Adapted from *Brilliant English Gardens* by Clive Nichols (£60, Clearview), a photographer whose passion for flowers shows in every image.