

Press Release June 2024

We are delighted to announce the launch of the stunning *Verbena bonariensis* 'Bonnie Blue' at this year's Tatton Flower Show 2024. This spectacular new addition will be showcased alongside last year's star, *Verbena rigida* 'Dazzling Nights', a true beauty that has already won the hearts of many garden enthusiasts.

Cross your fingers, knock on wood, and sprinkle some fairy dust, it's showtime for my new green buddy, *Verbena bonariensis* Bonnie Blue! Now, let's hope this little fella doesn't pull a disappearing act before the big reveal. After all, we've got a reputation to uphold, we can't have the star of the show going MIA, now can we? So, here's to Bonnie Blue, the newest sensation in town – may your petals be perky and your roots stay grounded!

In addition to 'Bonnie Blue' and 'Dazzling Nights', we are excited to present a diverse collection featuring 7 species and 18 cultivars of verbena. This vibrant array will provide something special for every gardener and support a variety of pollinators, crucial for maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

We warmly invite you to visit us in the floral marquee at stand FM23 and discover the beauty and versatility of our verbena collection, gain expert gardening tips, and find inspiration for your own garden.

Did you know that here at Manor Farm Botanics, we're more than just a business – we're a fully-fledged family affair? As a medical herbalist, I've cultivated a garden so vast that it's practically its own ecosystem. 80% of those flourishing herbs you'll find growing right in my own back garden. Talk about a green thumb!

When it comes to choosing the stars of the garden show, I don't play favourites, but *Verbena*? Oh, she's special, not only does she bring beauty to the table, but she's also a secret medicinal powerhouse. Who knew plants could be so multi-talented? *Verbena officinalis* and *hastata* are used in tinctures and teas and act on the whole nervous system making it perfect for nervous anxiety and depression.

The juggling act of running herbal workshops, tending to plants and wrangling 11 grand kids – it's a circus, and speaking of circuses, let me introduce you to the ringmasters of my garden, my adorable, mischief-making grandchildren.

Picture this, Kairan, the 7-year-old wonder, pointing to CDs dangling from the trees, innocently questioning, "Why do I have CDs hanging in the trees?" And before I could even muster a response, Millie swoops in with the wisdom of a seasoned gardener, proclaiming, "It's because the birds like to listen to music." The sheer brilliance of childhood logic.

Yes, folks, life in my garden is a symphony of laughter, innocence, and the occasional bird chirp serenade. With these little helpers around, every day is a comedy show – and I wouldn't have it any other way!

Ah, the misunderstood verbena – hailed by the public as the butterfly magnet, when in reality, it's more of a buzzing, bustling hub for hoverflies and bees. Talk about a case of mistaken plant identity!

Sure, there are 7 species of verbena with 18 cultivars, each with its own quirks and charms, but here's the plot twist, *verbena officinalis* and *hastata* aren't just pretty faces in the garden, they're bona fide medicinal wonders!

My no 1 question is do verbena prefer hot, dry conditions? Did you know that not all verbenas are sun-loving divas? Oh no, don't go sprinkling that hot, dry love on *verbena hastata*, unless you want to send it straight to plant heaven! In the States, you'll find this beauty strutting its stuff around streams and marshy grounds, living its best soggy life.

So, next time you spot a verbena, remember it's not just a butterfly's dream date, it's a buzzing metropolis of medicinal magic and marshy mysteries!

Join us at the Tatton Flower Show 2024 and let the enchanting allure of 'Bonnie Blue' and the timeless beauty of 'Dazzling Nights' inspire your gardening journey!