

The Lady

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**HILLARY CLINTON
ALMOST MEETS**

Justin Webb

**WINTER
FASHION**
minimal chic

**DEAR MRS
WOOD...**
*your problems
solved*

ANOTHER
side of the
RIVERS

Joan on life & love

MISS READ
*return to
Thrush Green*

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Winter pansies in yellow and brown will brighten a window box or patio pot

GARDENING LETTERS

MARTINE DAVIS, owner of the Balcombe Street Window Box Company in London, answers your questions.



Send your questions for our panel of gardening experts to: Garden Questions, *The Lady*, 39-40 Bedford Street, London WC2E 9ER.

BOXING CLEVER

Can you suggest some winter flowers for my window box, other than the usual festive red?

Jennet Phillips, Swansea

MD This winter I am heading away from the usual red and white and instead opting for orange and yellow. To achieve this look, use orange Solanum berries and team with orange and yellow pansies or primroses. For extra punch trim with turquoise-dyed heather, a real show stopper. Pop in some yellow daffodil bulbs too for some extra bright blooms in the New Year. These flowers and plants would be suitable for a window box, patio pot or

flower bed and will make any outdoor space bright and colourful during those long, dark winter days. During autumn and winter you don't need to water them as frequently – for pots and boxes around three times a week should be sufficient, decreasing to once a week in mid-winter. Just make sure your soil is moist to the touch at all times.

POTS OF IDEAS

I have a very dark basement flat and want to put a colourful display in a pot next to my door. Can you suggest some ideas please?

Laura Smith, Hillingdon

MD How about a standard bay tree (lollipop)? Surround with violas in shades of purple and white and trim with some variegated ivy. Pop in some bulbs such as snowdrops, or bluebells. Flowers and plants

that you would find in a forest or woodland, such as these, work well as they are used to tolerating shady spots. If purples aren't your thing, then you may prefer cyclamen flowers which come in a variety of colours such as deep pink, bright red as well as white and pale pink hues. Either plant a block of one colour, or use two or three complementary colours such as dark and pale pinks with white. Don't forget to water your pot as basement pots rarely catch any rain, so three times a week in autumn and decrease to once a week during mid-winter.

MARTINE DAVIS has been running her Balcombe Street Window Box Company for six years. Originally inspired by her own empty window ledge in Marylebone, her company specialises in window boxes, entrance pots, hanging baskets and planters for balconies, terraces and patios. For individually-designed, ready-filled containers delivered to the door and on-site planting, call 020-7586 2614 or visit www.window-box.co.uk.

Coco's corner

Dear Readers,

Apparently I am to have a 'shoot'. No, not that sort of shoot. Mr Dawnay had hopes of that nature when I was younger. He took me to a shoot at a house in Lincolnshire called Doddington Hall. Everyone got up early and got into Land Rovers and bumped along muddy lanes, all of us squashed together so you could smell the coffee breath. All the other gun dogs were shaking with excitement. They couldn't wait to get to their pegs, they couldn't wait for the guns to get started, and most of all they couldn't wait to rush about, noses down in the soggy undergrowth, and pick up the birds. I felt very differently. Bang! Bang! Bang!

As soon as the infernal noise started up I ran away from my peg and jumped into the Land Rover where they couldn't shoot me. It was terrible. I will never recover. And now, on the noisiest night of the year, it's even worse. All the communal gardens in Notting Hill have competitive fireworks parties on different nights, each trying to be splashier than the one next door. She calls it the 'vanity of the bonfires'. I call it a total nightmare. Apparently I am going to be given canine Valium but I have to say that doesn't sound very tasty. But to return to the beginning – I am to have a shoot so that all my readers who send nice letters will get (eventually) a glorious photograph of me taken (eventually) by Tammy our picture editor. Even though I come into the office every day ready for my close-up, it never happens, like everything else in this office, people keep putting it off because there's always a magazine to publish.

Till next week,

COCO
Office Dog

