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WORTH £600
BY DAVID
AUSTIN
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GARDENS

ILLUSTRATED

Crocus

Light up your garden with the
finest early flowering varieties

ESCAPE TO...

- A Sri Lankan paradise
- The RHS London shows
- Your stylish glasshouse



GARDEN WRITERS' GUILD MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

Listings

ONLINE

- www.bbc.co.uk/gardening

Join the interactive debate, The Ethical Gardener, and share your comments on topical issues.

- www.guerrilla gardening.org

If Canadian Gayla Trail's description of Toronto's community and guerilla gardens (see page 12) inspires you, have a look at the efforts of this London-based group.

TELEVISION

- **Gardeners' World** is back on air at the end of February with Monty Don, who this year is planning a mini

orchard at Berryfields. Fridays on BBC2.

- **Secret Gardens** with Chris Collins. A second chance to catch the series on UKTV Gardens on weekdays starting 23 January at 9pm. The series was produced by Life TV Media and is now available on DVD. Email secretgardens@lifetvmedia.com

RADIO

- **Gardeners' Question Time** BBC Radio 4 (92-95FM, or digital). Sundays at 2pm, repeated Wednesdays at 3pm. The show also visits gardens and gardeners around the country. Turn to page 98 to question the GQT team.

C Radio Scotland show *Beechgrove Potting Shed* asked for tips on a strain of cannabis called 'Northern Lights'. The presenters also offered advice on the cabbage of the same name.

nosey parker



Gayla Trail

Founder of the online gardening community www.yougrowgirl.com, which spawned a practical book of the same name, the gardener, photographer and graphic designer is based in Toronto, Canada.

Who are GrowGirl people? If you had asked six years ago I would have answered 'people like me', but now that I am meeting my audience I have discovered that the thing we all have most in common is an excited, laid-back approach to gardening.

What's the gardening attitude like in Toronto? Once-empty spaces are now being filled up with condos and there is a growing environmentalism, so people are not taking space for granted like they used to. Guerilla gardening [urban gardeners taking over abandoned or neglected areas of land] is really popular here and community gardens are springing up all over.

What's the weather like? We usually get snow by late November until early April, although we did not have a proper snow until January last year.

Summers are very hot with high humidity, often with at least a month-long drought.

What's your garden like? I have three gardens. The roof garden is my most private space. It is very hot and exposed so I grow a lot of hardy, heat-loving food in containers. The guerilla garden is my most challenging space. I have to maintain an emotional distance to deal with the heartbreak of having it constantly attacked by pedestrians and dogs. I do not grow food here as it is on a busy street and the soil is not safe. The third garden is part of a local community garden. I grow food here but am mindful that I can't be there every day.



What's your worst pest? A lot of plants disappeared mysteriously in the community garden before we sighted the culprit – a hungry groundhog (pictured left).

What's the last plant you grew? Three sundews (*Drosera*) and a butterwort (*Pinguicula*), the latter being a carnivorous plant, delicate and deadly.

What are you not going to grow again and why not? Attending springtime plant trades are a sure-fire way to destroy my already loose attempts at planning.

What would be your dream garden? An informal potager garden where there is a balance between beauty and usefulness.



Gayla recommends...

Urban gardening can really trip you up as there are microclimates inside microclimates. My joke is that if you can't grow something in one spot, turn around.

Visit Montreal Botanical Gardens, I love it.

If you're a beginner, plant attractive edible flowers and herbs such as *Calendula*, thyme and pansies. These plants are in such unusual varieties you can't claim them to be boring old beginner plants any more. On my site you will find a pansy that tastes like bubblegum!

My CobraHead Precision Weeder and Cultivator can do just about anything any of my other assorted tools can do. Definitely a desert island pick.

