## MUSICIAN PADDY COLE

**CC** One of my favourites is clematis. We had a handrail at the steps up to the house and we had a beautiful clematis on it for a long time. We still have beautiful clematis. There's so many different species of it, we have a lovely purple one at the back of the house.

Until recently, I never had much interest in gardening for many years because I was so busy working and travelling abroad. In latter years, I have developed a great interest — I even enjoy mowing the lawn and weeding around the flower beds. My wife Helen loves gardening and she was the one that kept a bit of colour in the house wherever we lived. She puts lots of effort into different flowers and shrubs.

We have lived all over the place. We lived in Dublin and then in Castleblayney, County Monaghan, and we had a big garden and an orchard there. My Mum had a small house in Castleblayney. I grew up there. She used to have different displays of tulips and lupins in the garden and she'd be

thrilled when people going to church would stop in and admire them. When she went anywhere she would always take a slip of a plant away. She would say: "That's from Kerry." or "That's from Dublin."

We lived in Dublin, in Taney, and everyone there was very ambitious about their gardens. I had a vegetable patch. I didn't have a lot of time for it but one thing I remember was I put in lettuce and rhubarb. At one stage the lettuce bolted four or five feet high. I then decided to put the area back in a lawn. But religiously every year, the rhubarb came up in the middle of the lawn, much to the dismay of my neighbours!

We've a house in Lahinch in County Clare and we love to walk around The Burren. The flora and fauna there is fantastic, you couldn't ask for anything better. We lived in Las Vegas for many years. You'd go out into the desert and the different plants and cacti there — it was a big contrast with Ireland. It's all desert, very dry, but there are lots of different plants.



I once led a walk to Argentina for the Irish Heart Foundation, and that was very different. We went into the pampas. It was all lush and green with different types of grass. There's a song: The English Country Garden — Nana Mouskouri recorded it and Jimmy Rogers had a big hit with it. In that song, they must have fantastic memories because they name all the different flowers and then they go on to the insects, and the birds that frequent the garden. All through that song it's like a history of a beautiful garden, and I always loved the song.

Music can transport you to different places. At the moment I do a medley of Calypso music, and anytime we do that, I can visualise people in Trinidad and countries like that. You can relate to people and places, no doubt about it, through music. If you hear someone singing The Mountains of Mourne, you can just see the Mountains of Mourne and the heather and all that. **?** 

• in conversation with Yvonne Gordon

Paddy Cole was the sax player with the Capitol Showband, which had several number one hits in the 1960s in Ireland and abroad. Later he joined the Big 8 Showband and the band spent six months each year playing in Las Vegas. Paddy now tours with his own band, The All Stars. In 1993, Paddy Cole was awarded Showbiz Personality of the Year and in 1998 the National Hall of Fame Award. He has won a PPI award for his radio show every Sunday on Sunshine 106.8fm. He plays Castleknock Hotel, 9 and 16 December (lunchtime); Royal Marine Hotel, Dún Laoghaire, 11, 16 and 17 December, and Belfast Waterfront, 28 to 30 December.