

## CARDAMINE QUINQUEFOLIA

*Dawn Trenchard*

I'm stood looking out of our kitchen window, and can see lovely green foliage appearing in all the beds. I feel that spring is really on its way, as the garden is coming to life.

Although the snowdrops are just going over, the hellebores are at their peak and the lovely yellow heads of the daffodils are blowing around in the breeze. The striking, luminous yellow of the primroses are everywhere and the blue flower heads of pulmonaria and brunnera plants are bursting into flower.

Then there is *Cardamine quinquefolia*, which has lovely clusters of little mauve-pink flower heads poking up through a mass of green leaves. I bought this plant because Bob Brown, in one of his plant catalogues a few years ago, really sang its praises and said it was 'a plant that no garden should be without', and I agree. The attractive, divided leaves come through in February/early March and then, towards the middle/end of March, up pop the pretty, dainty little flowers. The leaves and flowers die back in early summer, leaving other plants to grow up through it.

In my garden, I have planted it at the front of the border and it is vigorous (I'm on clay), but in hindsight I think I should have planted it at the back of the border so that plants growing up in front of it would have hidden it dying back. Another successful way I have planted it though is in a pot with a hosta, so that as it starts to go over the large leaves of the hosta come up through and cover the pot. Bob rates this plant as '9 BD' (bomb proof and copes with dry shade).

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