Our top plant picks for a cooling tower: tiny plants to grow in the layers

These plants are resilient and will cope with tough growing conditions. As sensory-rich plants, they are great for pollinators, the climate and us.

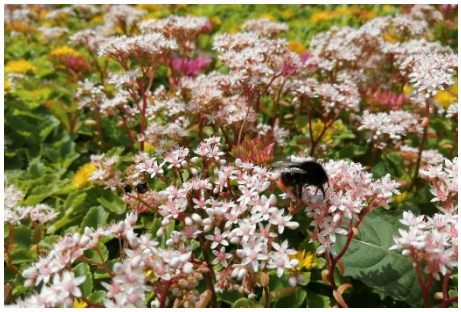
Thyme (*Thymus species)*

Thyme will cope well with dry, hot conditions. There are lots to choose from and creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) will spread especially well. They add tactile and scent interest from their aromatic oils.



Sedum (*Sedum species*)

This succulent family has many plants to choose from. The small stonecrops are especially tolerant of dry, hot conditions and will reward with fascinating tactile and colour interest. Masses of summer flowers, popular with pollinators, are followed by autumn colours.



Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*)

A low growing, spreading plant that tolerates tough conditions. It will spread to fill the space. Some species are green-leafed, some are purple, and they have stiff flower spikes in summer.



Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*)

This plant is tough and beautiful, with the softest texture and bright green hue. It is covered in tiny white flowers in summer and year-round provides a dependable green backdrop.



Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*)

A plant known for its grey downy leaves, soft to the touch. The hairs protect the leaves and help the plant tolerate touch conditions. The spikes of flowers arrive in early summer.



Key to growing options: seed young plant (plug) bulb

Our top plant picks: plants to trail down the sides

These perennial plants are resilient and will cope with tough growing conditions. As sensory-rich plants, they are great for pollinators, the climate and us.

Periwinkle (*Vinca minor cultivars*)

This plant tolerates the toughest conditions and quickly creates an attractive mat of stems and small leaves. It will happily trail down the sides of the tower. Flowers are blue, mauve or white, depending on the cultivar.



Small-leaved ivy (*Hedera helix cultivars*)

Ivy is one of the toughest plants, tolerating extremes of temperature and wet and dry soil. It is known for its attractive leaves, which range from dark green to variegated, depending on the cultivar. It readily forms a mat and is a great choice for trailing.



Alpine strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*)

This strawberry produces long trailing stems and is a good choice for covering an area. The tiny white flowers are followed by tiny red fruits which carry on through the summer.



Trailing bellflower *(Campanula porscharskyana*)

This vigourous perennial it easy to grow and it works well as a trailing plant. The trailing stems are covered with blue-mauve flowers in summer. The flowers are popular with pollinators.



Caucasian stonecrop (*Sedum spurium*)

The sedum family is one of the most tolerant of dry, hot periods. The stonecrops have fleshy green leaves fringed in red-brown, bringing an intriguing texture and appearance to the tower.



Key to growing options: seed young plant (plug) bulb