

NEWS

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letter



HPS
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

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NEWS

upfront



We have a new garden, it's on the flat and it's half the size of our last garden in Worcester – which was quite steep and had radically changed during our 23 years there. We put a lot of work into that place.

So, a new start in one of Birmingham's tree-rich suburbs, this late in life, has added a certain frisson to the last few months after 15 months of pretty tawdry times.

Getting back to face-to-face meetings at my local group has been a pleasure too since August. It's been wonderful meeting colleagues, many of whom are still behind masks. One speaker was the totally entertaining and informative Laura Willgoss from Wildegoose Nurseries – highly recommended.

It was good too, to hear our President Roy Lancaster at the end of our first virtual AGM in September. I was moved by his comments that our society is “a force for good” in the world. Coming, as his words did, after such difficult times for us all, it added to that sense of purpose that I'm sure we all appreciate.

This month, more apologies from me. The first is to Norfolk & Suffolk, whose name was abbreviated to just Norfolk a couple of times in the last issue – I will try harder – and then to Clwyd, who one contributor mistakenly thought had closed down. I'm assured, not that it was necessary, that is definitely not the case. Apologies again.

Mick Dunstan, Newsletter editor

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inside



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NEWS

update



The society's new chair, **Pamela Clark**, begins her three-year term with a few endings...

As I write this in October I find myself in a confusion of endings and beginnings.

We are told that summer has ended and winter is a long way off, not yet begun. The beauty and confusion of autumn is that we have had coffee outside this morning in glorious warmth, whereas two nights before we had our first ground frost. The hedgehogs have built their winter hideouts under the shrubs and are snoring gently during the day, whilst keeping the slug and snail population under control overnight. The end of the summer blooms elide into the warmth and colour of autumn shrubs and what we erroneously call late-flowering plants: they are not late, but arrive just at the right time to provide different hues and textures as we move towards the end of the calendar year.

We Hardy Planters know we are not at the end of the gardening year, however, but at the beginning of the next. For the first time, I have followed the advice of my gardening betters and sown seeds of hardy annuals under glass.

To my surprise and delight I have trays full of seedlings – those who know me are aware that my seed sowing has more failures than successes.

HPS members across the country are at the beginning of the autumn/winter talk

programmes. I went to my first local group in-person meeting at the beginning of October – the erudite and hilarious Timothy Walker, since you ask. It was a pleasure to see everyone again, still socially distanced but as friendly as ever. If you have the opportunity to attend a physical talk or workshop please take it – local and specialist group committees are working wonders on your behalf.

The Board of Trustees has had some endings and beginnings too. We have said farewell to Jan Vaughan, our recent Chair, who has held the board and the society together during these challenging few years. We have said goodbye to Anna Peacock, who did such sterling work on the Kenneth Black Bursary (KBB) Scheme. Both of our Events and Shows Co-ordinators, Sue Lander and Julie Harvey, are standing down and we thank them for the advice and support they offered groups during their tenure.

Just beginning her term as a new trustee is Heather Farquhar who has, additionally, taken on the role of KBB co-ordinator. Our second new trustee, Graham Farquhar, has volunteered to take on the management of the HPS national website, shadowing Colin

Doughty to ensure a smooth and seamless transition.

The whole society was saddened to learn of the death of our administrator Clare Powell's father in early October. Like the trouper she is, Clare kept on working, preferring to be busy during this sad time.

Another beginning for me was my first Group Secretaries' Meeting, chaired by Keith Scott and managed by member Jon Segar on Zoom. All I can say is that those of you who belong to local and specialist groups are lucky to have these dedicated people working, voluntarily, on your behalf.

My first Trustee meeting, as your new Chair, will have taken place by the time you read this. A key topic will be the changes in the society's membership: revenues have

fallen over the past year and a half. The trustees will be undertaking an analysis of membership to determine national changes in particular but will look at group membership, where possible. The bulk of the analysis can only be carried out once the annual renewal season is completed, so it will be a little time before we can report back to you.

Thank you for your continued support of the Hardy Plant Society and I hope to meet as many of you as possible at next year's AGM in Somerset. As our President, Roy Lancaster, said at this year's AGM, the Hardy Plant Society "is a force for good" and we can all 'do good' for plants and gardening wherever we are and whatever our horticultural passions might be.

GROWING ADVICE

Requests for help from the society Horticultural Advisory Service have risen slightly in the last year.

Emma Reece, who has been our horticultural advisor for the last five years, says 76 enquiries were received compared with 60 the previous year – a rise of just over a quarter. Most originate via the website – with a few from head office, "real" letters and phone calls.

Just over half concern herbaceous perennials, where to find suitable cultivars plus general care and maintenance. The HAS received 20 requests for plant identification and were subsequently told to contact RBG Kew, the RHS or another botanical institution with a photograph or a specimen of the plant in flower.

"I am not a taxonomist and feel strongly that misidentification of plants can lead to mass confusion in the future, particularly regarding the excellent resource that is the HPS Seed Distribution Scheme. I do hint at the genus and species if I can but very rarely for the cultivar.

"Pests and diseases are a regular query – my absolute favourite type of question!"

Emma also gets involved in sourcing plants and tries to recommend independent nurseries run by plant experts that are local to the questioner. Plant Heritage is also a helpful organisation as collection holders are usually willing to share their knowledge and expertise.

The Seed Distribution scheme leads to some regular questions about how to collect, send and store seeds.

Secretary **Helen Curtis** records the formalities and the lighter side of this year's AGM – the first online AGM held over Zoom

Minutes of the Hardy Plant Society's 64th Annual General Meeting

The 64th Annual General Meeting took place on September 29, 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

- Presenters: Roy Lancaster (Patron), Jan Vaughan (Chair), Pamela Clark (Vice Chair), Stuart Senior (Hon Treasurer), Helen Curtis (Hon Secretary)
- Webinar Host: Jon Segar



Zoom host Jon Segar

Attendees were welcomed by Jan Vaughan. This was our first online AGM. There were 74 requests received from members to attend the meeting. The voting was completed prior to the meeting by ballot. There was no open forum and no matters were submitted for the Trustees to consider.

Apologies for absence were received by Diane Puncheon, Julie Harvey, Jan Craig, Sue Lander Sue Pinsent, Eileen Heylin, Judith Thompson and Lynne and Brian Hackett

1 Approve the minutes of the last AGM 2020

The AGM last year was cancelled, as were all meetings and other events. The accounts were published in the July newsletter along with the ballot paper and the results were published in the November Newsletter.

There were no matters arising so this is considered to be a true record.

2 Annual Report of the Chair

The report was published before the meeting in the July 2021 Newsletter. However, Jan announced a few recent developments. Pamela Clark agreed to stand for election as Chair, she was a great support as Vice Chair over the last year, and she will provide a good lead for the Society.

Jan said "There are now signs of normality after the fear and confusion of the Coronavirus pandemic. Face to face meetings are gradually being added to our calendars. As gardeners we have perhaps enjoyed extra time spent in the garden but missed friendship and inspiration found in meeting with others. The benefits of gardening for our mental health and wellbeing have also been talked about.

HPS only exists because individuals are prepared to offer their time and energy to ensure that things run smoothly at National and Local level. New volunteers are always needed; volunteering gives an opportunity to join others in making the Hardy Plant Society even better.

Jan thanked the Trustees, Post holders and Clare our Administrator for her help and support during the last three years. Finally we all look forward to the next meeting in Somerset.

3 Annual Report from the Treasurer

The accounts were published in the July Newsletter. 2020 was a strange year - there was very little spent on bursaries, and nothing on shows. Subscription income was down and the trend is continuing; the reasons for this are unclear as group membership numbers have been stable. More analysis is required and this is a matter for the Trustees to consider.

No comments have been received about the accounts and they have been approved by Trustees, published in the newsletter and reported to the Charity Commission.

The accounts were duly audited.

4 Results of the Ballot

- Election of Pamela Clark as Chair, proposed by Linda Hall, seconded by Jamie Blake. Currently, there is no vice chair as this is a position previously held by Pamela Clark.
 - Re-election of Stuart Senior as Hon. Treasurer, proposed by Roy Strickland, seconded by Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald
 - Re-election of Helen Curtis as Hon. Secretary, proposed by Jan Vaughan, seconded by Catherine Part
 - Election of Graham Farquhar as Trustee, proposed by Jan Vaughan, seconded by Helen Curtis
 - Election of Heather Farquhar as Trustee, proposed by Jan Vaughan, seconded by Helen Curtis
- Both Graham and Heather Farquhar were previously co-opted by the Trustees
- Approval of James Watts as the independent examiner of the Societies Accounts
- Thanks to all members for joining in the voting process.

5 Roy Lancaster addressed the members

Roy welcomed Pamela and thanked her for accepting the role as Chair. He also thanked Jan for her work over the last three years. Roy also offered thanks to the Journal and Newsletter editors and the organisers of Local and Special Groups

HPS is a force for good and the love of gardening,



HPS President Roy Lancaster

but Roy's thoughts turned to all those people who don't have a garden or access to a park, perhaps because they live in high rise flats or inner cities. He recognised their difficulties particularly during the pandemic.

Plants can, however, be found in the most unlikely places. Roy noticed weeds growing on the verge near his house, after it had been left rough following roadworks. He surveyed what grew there over the last two years and noted 73 different species of wild flowers, including the shining cranesbill, moss mallow and fiddle dock (the leaves resemble a fiddle). Roy had enjoyed researching the folklore and stories about the plants he'd found.

Sharing plants, swapping seeds and seedlings, forging friendships all make the world a better place. Roy gave a special praise for everyone involved in the Seed Distribution Scheme.

"We welcome new members - and say farewell to past members, but they are not forgotten. Things are now improving and we look forward to a good year ahead."

6 Finally

Pamela offered thanks to Roy Lancaster, Jan Vaughan, Postholders, Clare Powell, our Administrator, Jon Segar and to members for giving up their time to attend.

PLANT TREK

Star Date 11/21, Chairman's Log – these are the ongoing adventures of the HPS Clwyd Group... its continuing mission to educate, inform and entertain; to seek out new speakers and to boldly go where no Hardy Planter has gone before, says chair Chris Price-Morris.

On its latest 18 month voyage, the HPS Clwyd and Rutland Groups have formed an alliance for a programme of Zoom talks, mostly organised by the Rutland clan – so thanks to the Group for this enterprising treaty. Clwyd have also produced colourful monthly newsletters and posted these to members not on email so nobody missed out and members knew we were still out there.

"The Clwyd Group is now to boldly go to the Stamford Gate Hotel and Restaurant in Holywell for our evening meetings from October, 2021. By the time you read, this we will have been entertained by Howard Drury, ex Ashwood Nursery, with a voyage from Autumn into Winter and Spring and awaiting another entertaining talk with Hugh Warwick from Oxford in November with Why Did the Hedgehog Cross the Road?

"Our 2022 programme and the May Plant Fair is logged on the HPS website – we really value this help from the National organisation with advertising our programme of events. Live long, prosper and plant..."

Blogger Nadine takes top title

Nadine Mitschunas – who has been writing her wildlife allotment blog on the HPS website for more than two years now – has won a top award.

She took the *BBC Gardeners World* magazine **Garden of the Year** winning garden title – and was soon on Twitter to say how excited and overwhelmed she was.

The allotment is in Wallingford, South Oxfordshire, and Nadine is a pollinator ecologist at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. And her win brings with it a holiday for two to South Carolina, worth over £8,000, which she plans to take next year with her partner. Pictures of her allotment used in the magazine were taken in July by professional photographer Jason Ingram.

In an interview with the HPS newsletter last year, she said, “My allotment gives me endless pleasure. I love just pottering around, a bit of weeding here and planting

there and checking if the newly sown seeds have germinated.

“As I don’t use any chemicals on the allotment, I get a lot of different wildlife which I love to watch and photograph. Little shrews live in the raspberry bed and wood mice under the compost, hedgehogs come for regular visits and foxes like to drink from the pond.”

On her Twitter feed, Nadine said, “I would never have thought when I took part that I would win this – or even get into the top eight. I’m pleased they have chosen a wildlife garden this time.”

One of the judges, Irish gardening star Diarmuid Gavin said, “She really has created a paradise here. And it’s not bound by conventional rules at all.”

Among the first to congratulate her was landscape designer Jack Wallington, who said, “Well deserved. Every bit deserved, that’s for sure.”



Member **Colin Moat** looks back on the first autumn Chelsea Flower Show – and how his nursery received a last-minute call to take part...

Surprise, surprise, it's Chelsea

I hadn't anticipated that taking part in Chelsea 2021 was going to feature on my fairly lengthy 'to do' list. However, I was delighted (and surprised) to receive a call from the RHS at the beginning of September asking if Pineview Plants would like to create a display using one of their Italian vintage flower carts which would form part of their Villaggio Verde feature around the Monument in the Great Pavilion.

Twelve of the 1m x 1.7m carts were allocated to specialist nurseries, with each being invited to make an individual display. I just love Chelsea and felt it was too good an opportunity to miss, despite the tight timeline. Fortunately, it wasn't a judged display, which took off some of the pressure, but I was still conscious of how many visitors would see it.

I'm lucky enough to have been involved with three Chelsea displays previously with the Kent HPS group and was the coordinator for our silver-gilt one in 2015.

With an early start on build day, I set off for Chelsea with my able assistant Lorraine, a van full of plants and an ample dose of

NEWS

insider



Colin with his finished cart at Chelsea

excitement! After unloading the van, we set about creating the display only to discover that the carts would be viewed from all sides, as opposed to just from the front as originally thought. After a bit of rejigging, which added to the tension, we got there in the end. Even with my self-critical eye, we created a display with which I was very pleased.

The display focused on, and was entitled, 'From Light to Shade' which showcased our nursery's unusual and/or interesting selection of plants that were looking particularly good at this time of year. For the shade area I included a range of ferns, mainly polypodium, a selection of *roscoea*, *Tricyrtis* 'Blue Wonder', *Anemone* 'Serenade' (which I also used in the 'Light' area), *Anemone* 'Red Riding Hood', *Persicaria virginiana* v. *filiformis*, *Actaea*

'Cheju-Do' and interspersed with *Sternbergia lutea*. The light areas were decked with *Echinacea p.* 'Virgin' and *Chrysanthemum* 'Dixter Orange' providing the height and colour, with *Geranium* 'Azure Rush' and *Nepeta* 'Summer Magic' to soften edges. Grasses such as *Pennisetum* 'Gelbsteil', *Eragrostis trichodes*, *Calamagrostis brachytricha* 'Mona' and *Carex* 'Prairie Fire' also provided softness, but with height.

It's always a treat to get a ticket for the Monday Press Day, and this was one of the perks. As an assessor on the persicaria and sanguisorba trial, I have had this in the past, and it is a luxury to see the gardens and displays at their best. I have to say I loved the M&G garden with its autumnal display of foliage, including the dead seed heads of irises and umbels, and some really unusual perennials. In the pavilion, displays by Daisy Roots and Hare Spring nursery stood out for me.

We returned on Sunday to pack up and, as is tradition on the last day, visitors have the opportunity to go on a spending spree. Standing back a suitable distance, we were overwhelmed by the comments overheard from the visitors, many not realising we, the creators, were within earshot! The majority of the stand was marked as 'sold'



before lunchtime and at 4 o'clock the clearance started. Out of the 81 plants on the cart, we headed back home with only eight unsold. What a wonderful finale to our Chelsea adventure.

Chelsea Flower Show is an iconic show like no other and is attended by so many greats in the industry, all of whom are incredibly helpful, and inclusive. I've been very lucky to have visited Chelsea for over 40 years, but visiting and showing in this one-off autumn event was even more special.

It is always gratifying and quite humbling when visitors are so complimentary, including none other than the lovely Zoe Ball who was so appreciative on Press Day. I get such a buzz without fail at every show that I've worked, but Chelsea, without doubt, is the tops.

● Colin Moat has been an HPS member for nearly 30 years, joining after taking a leaflet at a Chelsea Flower Show. After retiring from a 'proper' job in 2012, previously with Pineview Plants alongside as a 'hobby' nursery, he was able to expand this and spend more time doing what he enjoys most.



Over the last 12 years, the Hardy Plant Society has given around £65,000 to horticulturists and students in the UK from its Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme. We've been finding out a little bit more...

Kenneth's lasting legacy...

How did the Kenneth Black scheme start?

In 2009, the HPS received a generous legacy from Mr Kenneth Black. The existing 'Anniversary Bursary Scheme' was renamed in his honour, as 'The Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme'. Kenneth Black died intestate and the executors of his estate made a donation to the HPS. Records show that Mr Black was never a member!

Who was Mr Black?

He worked as a gardener for Enfield Borough Council Parks Department. Little is known about this one-room recluse, other than he particularly liked dahlias.

His estate also made a donation to The Cottage Garden Society.

What's the aim of the scheme?

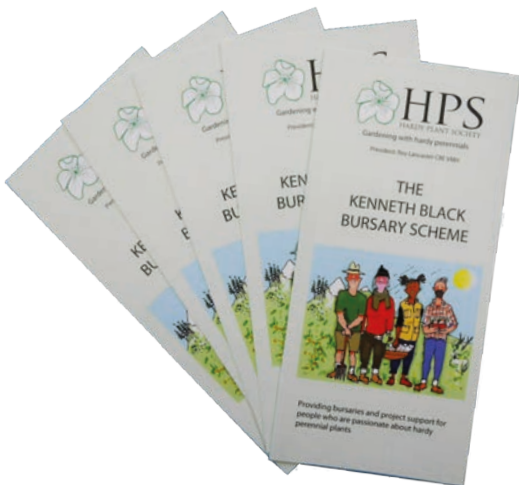
The aim is to support all those in horticulture to develop and further their knowledge of hardy plants, so it includes student horticulturalists and those employed in horticulture. Their study must relate to the growing and understanding of hardy plants, providing they fit with HPS aims and objectives.

The bursaries involved are not huge are they?

Grants are normally £500, exceptionally £700. Occasionally particular projects are awarded a larger sum as agreed by the trustees.

In normal times, how much does the society hand over in the course of a year?

It's about £20,000 a year. There are no set times for applications. This year and last have not been normal with far fewer opportunities in horticulture to explore. The scheme was not widely known before 2017 and reached an annual peak - to the value of £22,318 - in 2019 when the pandemic hit last year. Here's a round-up of recent annual awards



Year	Applications	Grants	Totals
2017	15	14 awards	£8,474
2018	33	27 awards	£12,479
2019	42	38 awards	£22,318
2020	26	24 awards	£8,960
2021	6	6 awards	£4,250 so far

I suspect things went a bit pear-shaped during lockdown. Were things badly affected?

Study trips abroad were curtailed, so seeing plants in the wild or visiting other plant collections was suddenly not possible. Gardens were closed so there was no work experience and, of course, some gardeners were furloughed. Courses and conferences were cancelled. Far fewer applications were submitted and some grants have been returned.

I understand Anna Peacock, who has run the fund for the past four years, has now retired and we now have someone new in charge?

Trevor Holmes co-ordinated the scheme before Anna took over in May 2017. She developed a new leaflet to promote the scheme to horticultural education providers and had the scheme listed on Grants for Horticulturists on the Chartered Institute of Horticulture website (horticulture.org.uk). One of our new trustees, Heather Farquhar, became co-ordinator in September, 2021. Anna, who has also stood down as a trustee, says she'll miss contact with colleagues and applicants – but adds her garden will benefit from a bit more attention.

What criteria do applicants have to meet to be considered?

Does the project or opportunity fit with HPS objectives? For instance, does the project promote the use of hardy plants,

develop and preserve hardy plants and/or, most importantly, develop the applicant's knowledge and understanding of hardy plants?

What's the process for approving the bursaries that are made?

Applicants complete a Student Form or an Employed Form – both available on the HPS website. This is returned to the KBBS Co-ordinator. Heather and two readers decide whether to approve or not.

Have many applications not made the grade? Is there a common reason they didn't make it?

A few don't make the grade because they involve working with tender plants.

I think all members will applaud what's been and being done. Can you tell us about some of the exciting work that we have supported?

There are lots of reports accessible on the HPS Website and the Journal Vol 39 no.1, Vol 40 no.1 and no.2 – and we'll look at a few of them in a bit more detail in the next issue. On the following page, we focus on one of the latest awards – to Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Is there a chance we could run out of money from the original bequest?

Currently the fund, which is ring-fenced, stands at around £190,000. It will be some years before this happens but eventually yes. However, the funds do earn interest.

Can HPS members get involved with suggesting people for bursaries?

Yes. Please direct candidates to the website – or give them a leaflet.

Where can I find out more details?

The national website has information – on the home page with Report of the Month,

where lots of reports of past candidates can be read, and About Us – The Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme, where information and application forms can be found.

The latest award – to Birmingham Botanic Garden

Most of our awards, writes Anna Peacock former fund co-ordinator, are to student and professional horticulturists who want to travel abroad to see the natural growing conditions of a particular genus of hardy plant.

It was just such a case in 2019 when Giulio Veronese, senior horticulturist at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, applied for support to travel to Norway to spend 10 days working with the team at the Arctic-Alpine Botanical Garden (BBG). Giulio was overseeing and designing a new alpine garden for BBG and wanted to give the plants a natural habitat. The alpiners in Tromsø are grown in constructed rocky outcrops which reflect those in the wild and Giulio needed to know how this had been achieved.

His full report, which includes all you need to know about constructing a rockery, is on the website, featured as November's Report of the Month.

Two years on and Giulio's design has been implemented; five rocky outcrops, each representing a European region, are in place. In the new Alan King Alpine Garden, chain barriers had just been installed to try to keep adventurous children from climbing over the rocks and, sadly, to prevent people from stealing the plants; many of the original plants had disappeared. The design needed a further upgrade with more rock and less

scree and flat surfaces, in which to plant replacement alpiners and to give a home to some of the National Collection of Cyclamen.

In August, a survey carried out by Taskforce for Lung Health revealed that BBG was the most popular place in Birmingham "to take a breath", so important during recent lockdowns. Indeed, on a visit at the end of July to BBG, I was delighted to see the gardens being used by many people of all ages.

It is little known that the Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme gives financial support to horticultural projects; the further development of the alpine garden was ideally placed for our help. A detailed plan with supporting text was submitted by Giulio and, with approval from the Board of Trustees, Birmingham Botanical Gardens was awarded £1,500, half of the project's total cost. Giulio will be letting us know about the final phase, once complete.



How the new alpine scheme looks at the Birmingham gardens



Crocosmia trial at RHS Wisley

PICTURE: JOHN FIELDING

Calls for trials help...

HPS members are being invited to take part in trials run by the Royal Horticultural Society, writes former HPS chair and RHS Herbaceous Plant Committee chair Cathy Rollinson.

The RHS has been running plant trials since it was founded in 1804 and the assessment of plants for the Award of Garden Merit provides gardeners with a reliable basis on which to select plants for their gardens.

Trials are held in RHS gardens and other venues around the country and usually continue for three years to assess how plants develop and perform. The Herbaceous Plant Committee covers a wide range and currently has 17 trials either growing or planned.

We are currently planning trials for the next five years and will be inviting people to join the trials forums which consist of 10 members with a wide range of experience and skills. They include National Collection holders, nursery owners, head gardeners, journalists, as well as keen and knowledgeable amateurs.

Forthcoming trials to be held at the new Wisley Trials Garden include Apiaceae, Athyrium, Baptisia, Delphinium (seed strains), and Salvia (hardy herbaceous types). Trials at other RHS gardens include Border Carnations and Helenium at Bridgewater.

As a trials forum member, you would contribute to the evaluation and would be expected to commit to attending regular meetings, usually 3 or 4 each year, to observe the plants during the growing seasons to ensure consistency in the assessment. Your travel expenses are paid and a simple lunch is provided.

You don't need to be an expert. We need people who know what makes a good garden plant and have experience of growing at least some of the plants in the trial and being a trials forum member will give you the opportunity of meeting other knowledgeable growers and plant lovers.

If you think you would be interested in getting involved, or would like to know more, please get in touch with me. My email is hpscmr@gmail.com

David and Christine
Howard in the Iris field



Duo takes debut award

A couple of years ago, the Royal Horticultural Society invited the Herbaceous Plant Committee to create an annual award in recognition of significant personal achievement relating to herbaceous perennials and hardy annuals.

The award was named after Alan Bloom, writes Cathy Rollinson, chair of the committee. Alan is thought of by many as the father of modern perennials and was, of course, one of the HPS founders.

Herbaceous Plant Committee members put forward nominations and voted for the inaugural award in 2020. The winner was David and Christine Howard of Howard Nurseries in Suffolk, one of the largest wholesale nurseries specialising in herbaceous perennials. It was founded in 1969 by David Howard, who had previously worked with Alan Bloom at Bressingham. The business is now being run by David's daughter Christine and is recognised not just for the quality and range of plants, but also for its environmental principles.

Sadly, David died shortly before the award was finalised, but I presented the award to Christine Howard at a committee meeting held via Zoom in July this year. We were delighted that Alan Bloom's son Adrian and two daughters, Anthea and Jenny, were also able to attend.

If HPS members have suggestions for suitable candidates for this annual award, please contact me and they can be put forward to the committee for consideration. My email is hpscmr@gmail.com



Kathryn's new Restoration border...

Brand new borders

Spare a thought for Worcestershire member Kathryn Elrick-Smith who's been through a traumatic few months in her garden.

It all started around the middle of January with a slow leak from a central heating oil tank supply pipe in the garden.

An area of about 20 x 25 metres had to be excavated to a depth of a metre, resulting in around 200 tons of material being taken away. It was mostly filled with hardcore plus the best part of 20 tons of top soil, and new gravel for paths. Work finished on April 29.

Kathryn said, "It was very upsetting to see so many plants destroyed, including a beautiful huge specimen of Iris 'Dark Aura' which thrived on the heavy wet soil - even the excavator was surprised by the extent of the roots!



and the new Stepping Stone border

“However, every cloud has a silver lining, and many problems were eradicated, for example invasive muscari and other perennial weeds, suckering lilac, ivy creeping ever more widely amongst shrubs etc. On the plus side, there were empty new borders to fill with lots of different plants, a mossy and weedy lawn re-turfed and the bonus of working on lighter friable soil which is making weeding such a joy!

“I lost a lot of plants but managed to save a few specials – including several from the HPS conservation scheme,” she said. “It’s been a bit emotional at times.” Kathryn is the conservation scheme

organiser for her local group. Insurance cover for the problem has meant she has been able to restock the area with many of the same plants – all itemised on her plant spreadsheet.

“We’ve been here for more than 30 years and there were plants galore that I really loved. But, in the end, there are a few positives. I’ve finally been able to make a small herb garden, I’ve tweaked the layout of the new borders and replaced one with a much bigger bed in a slightly different position – now named the Restoration border – and I’m excited to see everything settling back in again now.”

GROUPS’ DEMISE

Two HPS Special Interest groups will close at the end of the year.

They are the **Correspondence** and **Half Hardy Groups**, which will shut down on December 31, trustees have agreed. The **North Yorkshire** local group is also lined up for closure next July.

Groups Co-ordinator Keith Scott said, “The HPS is fortunate to have hundreds of volunteers who devote many hours to keep the society functioning. Their hard work and time is valuable and appreciated.

“However the number of volunteers sometimes dries up and a few are left to struggle. Sadly, three groups have reached that stage. They cannot attract officers or committee members so the time has arrived when dissolution has to occur.

“Both Special Interest Groups have tried without success to attract new members to their committees and also new officers. Valerie Norrington-Davies has devoted many years organising these but the time has come when neither can meet their constitutional requirements because of the lack of committee members, officers and low membership. The trustees are saddened but accept the inevitable. The society is very grateful for Valerie’s efforts over many years.

“The North Yorkshire local group covers a large geographical area and Maurice Cook and his merry band have devoted years to trying to keep it functioning. Although no future meetings are planned, this group will not formally close before July 2022.

“On behalf of the trustees, our thanks go to the group for the valiant work. In the meanwhile, if we have a group of national members who wish to rescue the group, there is still time. If anyone is interested, please contact me and we will see what can be done. My email address is groups@hardy-plant.org.uk”

It's competition time

Hardy's

Plant prizes will be coming the way of the winners of this issue's member's competition – and there's a signed reprint of a newly reprinted gardening classic book up for grabs as well.

Two £125 vouchers are first up – courtesy of Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants – and that's a lot of plants to play with. Bressingham Gardens have also kindly donated two signed copies of Bloom's Best – Perennials and Grasses, which looks at plant choices and dramatic combinations.

Founded by Rosy Hardy, winner of 24 RHS Chelsea gold medals, Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants stocks over 1200 varieties, mainly hardy perennials.

All plants are grown on site in peat-free compost at its nursery in the beautiful village of Whitchurch in the Test Valley in Hampshire. Hardy's is an RHS Master Grower – one of the leading nurseries that the RHS thinks have gone above and beyond their call of duty.

Plants will be available for collection or by mail order. Should winners choose mail order, they will need to pay additional postage and packaging costs. Vouchers are valid for 12 months.

The Bressingham book was reprinted last month, 11 years after the original, and is by Adrian Bloom, son of HPS co-founder Alan. It looks at 70 of the most indispensable plants with shorter descriptions of 400 others. He homes in on his top 12. Published by Foggy Bottom Books, it's available at £25 a copy, only from thebressinghamgardens.com. Bressingham Gardens is offering HPS members free postage on books ordered before Christmas.

HPS ambassador Matthew Wilson says, "This book is highly recommended if you're looking for solid practical advice and lots of beautiful photographic examples of perennials and grasses."

To be in with a chance of winning one of our prizes, we're asking you to write a maximum of 200 words (or less) on the subject of "My favourite garden tool..."

The deadline for receipt of entries is end of day, Monday,

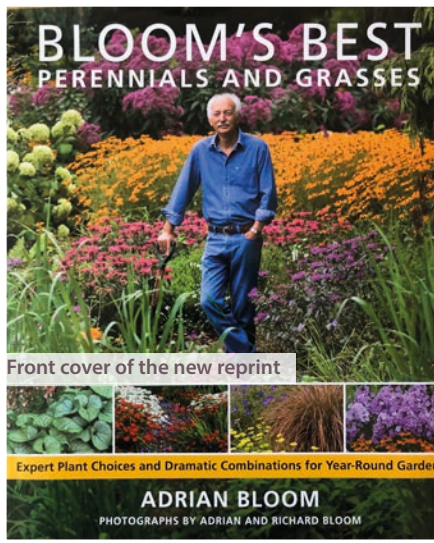


● *Gaura lindheimeri* 'Rosyjane' PBR – the star of Hardy's breeding programme with large flowers of white with pink picotee edge, the first true colour break in this plant family

● Far right: Developed on the nursery, *Anemone* 'Frisly Knickers' is a delicate plant with ruffled, semi-double petals. It won the HTA Virtual Plant Award in 2020



Rosy at the nursery



Front cover of the new reprint

December 20, and winners will be notified within days, which means you could have an extra Christmas present to look forward to. Please send your entries to newsletter@hardy-plant.org.uk - or by post to NEWSLETTER COMPETITION, The Hardy Plant Society, 3 Basepoint Business Centre, Crab Apple Way, Evesham WR11 1GP.

That's all the detail you need – so get your thoughts together on that lovely bit of garden kit. If you also want to include a photo, that's just fine. Good luck.

And here are last issue's winners...

Dozens of you sent wonderful memories of your childhoods in gardens around the world as entries in the last competition – and it was a genuine pleasure to read them.

The two people who came out winners – each receiving a bundle of Niwaki secateurs and care products – were **David Patterson** and **Lynda Shepherd**, who had such differing experiences!

Kicking off with **David**, a retired biology teacher from Morpeth, he has been a member, with his wife, of the HPS North East Group for more than 10 years. “When I saw the competition in the newsletter, I instantly knew what I wanted to say and wrote it immediately,” he says. After leaving teaching in 2005, he ran a garden maintenance business with his wife.

”It was a bit of garden design, a day a week maintaining and developing a large rural garden but primarily, looking after gardens of older people no longer able to look after their own gardens.”

He is also chairman of Morpeth and District Garden Club and has been a judge with Northumbria in Bloom for nine years. Here's his winning entry...

Think late 1950s early 1960s, think council depot, think free broken paving slabs and there you have it – crazy paving! A back garden, once replete with home grown veg, now a concrete desert with the occasional

oasis of a hybrid tea rose surrounded from early summer by African marigolds, Livingstone daisy and busy lizzies. Who knew then of



David with his prize secateurs

tagetes, mesembryanthemum and impatiens?

Sticking to the theme, the front garden was resplendent with a ring of yet more broken slabs, creating a central bed filled with pelargoniums that had over wintered on window sills together with cuttings suspended in water filled jam jars. Not all the lifted plants could be relied upon to survive the winter!

The surrounding border: a wasteland of winter twigs blossoming into a short-lived display of yet more hybrid teas. Actual gardening involved the March pruning of the roses followed by the weekly removal of any vegetation that was not rose, creating the essential backdrop of bare soil. The only exception was when the annual application of horse manure was applied! A special treat: bob-a-job week, when I was rewarded for digging out the dreaded alstroemeria that invaded from beneath next door's fence.

Lynda hails from Kildown in Kent and trained as a florist.

In 1993, she changed careers and spent 33 years as house florist and head gardener at Finchcocks Music Museum in Kent. After it closed and became a private house, she stayed on for two years, but decided to 'retire' and to concentrate on renovating her own patch – which had become the



Prize winner Lynda

equivalent of the mechanics car!

Lynda made her first entry at Kilndown Flower Show in 1959 and hasn't stopped since. Now its chairman, she is compiling a booklet on the club, which has a history going back to 1920.

"I have only been a member of the HPS and the Kent Branch for two years – I always meant to join, never got to actually do it – very remiss of me!" said Lynda. I managed to get to one HPS Plant Fair last year, with grand plans to do more – and then we were all overtaken!"

Here's her entry...

Sprout plants, tall as trees, round and pointed cabbages, not red, leeks longer than Grandad's arm, cauliflowers, curds bigger than my head, potatoes, red and white, carrots, turnips (ugh!) parsnips, and marrows the size of a piglet, not a courgette in sight.

Radishes, red, round or long, lettuce, just green, tomatoes, only the red ones, onions, shallots, peas. Beans, runners and broad, no fancy French ones in Grandad's Garden. Everything in its place and in its season.

No popping to the shop, eat what's in Grandad's Garden. Figs, pears, gooseberries, apples, rhubarb, currants, Nanny picking and pickling. Jams and jellies, salting beans, the smell of vinegar wafting through the house. No popping to the shop – eat what's in the larder.

Flowers were allowed, just a few. "Can't eat flowers" proclaimed Grandad. There was a miniscule lawn. "Can't eat grass" declared Grandad. Grandad knew everything about gardening! When to sow, to plant, to pick. All passed on to me. Apart from the love of turnips.

Now, where did I learn about eating flowers, courgettes, French beans, yellow tomatoes and all those 'exotics'? Certainly, wasn't from Grandad's Garden! Pass the mangetout please.

DEFRA seeks plant concerns

DEFRA's consultation on biosecurity – *A Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain* – will inform Great Britain's approach to plant biosecurity over the next five years', according to its website. To find this online, search for 'defra biosecurity consultation'.

Opinion is being sought from anyone with an interest in or involved in plant health, importing plants, or moving plants around the UK, says HPS chair Pamela Clark.

There is an opportunity now for individuals to comment. DEFRA is particularly interested in your opinion on the effectiveness of current regulations, how Government and industry can work together so that plants may be sourced safely, how we can use our scientific and technical skills to keep up to date with the continuing threats and how to protect plants from high-risk pests and diseases.

The online consultation closes on 30 November, 2021. If you take part, you are responding as an individual and not as The Hardy Plant Society.



Gregory, 8, sets record for HPS

Gregory with Mum Emma in their back garden

Eight-year-old Gregory Hollidge has become what is believed to be the youngest ever member of the Hardy Plant Society.

He and his Mum, Emma, who live in Lowestoft, have just joined the Norfolk and Suffolk local group. Gregory genuinely is the gardener in the family – and has just won, with Emma, the Lowestoft in Bloom best back garden prize for 2021!

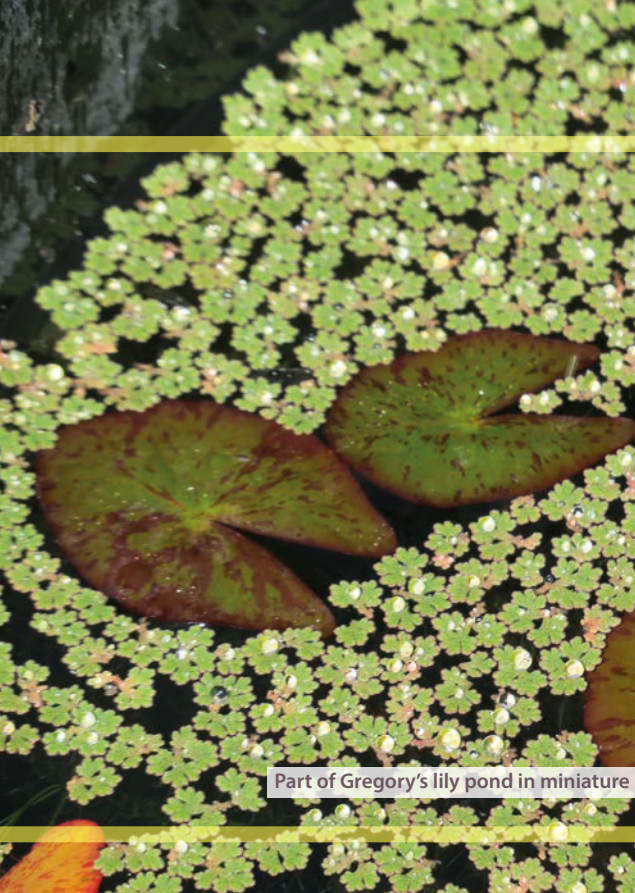
They joined the HPS after visiting Jan and Mark Oakley's gorgeous garden in Beccles, under the NGS scheme, where a PR and plant sales stand was being manned, on behalf of the HPS Norfolk & Suffolk Group, by chair Linda Hall, whose infectious enthusiasm knows no bounds, says Irene Tibbenham, the group's

newsletter editor.

Gregory has a passion for growing plants from seed and nurtures them at home, as well as at his Norwich school garden. He got into gardening for therapy, after heart operations at Great Ormond Street Hospital. With a council grant, he was able to buy a greenhouse and the first thing he grew was an apple pip from his packed lunch which he has described in his first 'how-to-grow' book.

"Since then, he has moved on to growing courgettes, sweetcorn, strawberries, tomatoes and peas," says Irene. "The Seed Distribution Scheme will no doubt further nurture this growing interest.

"A shy youngster, gardening has helped make him more confident, and aware of



Part of Gregory's lily pond in miniature



Gregory's mini greenhouse

other living creatures. Like many of us, he doesn't like creatures eating his plants and a caterpillar eating his sunflowers was relocated to the green bin to continue its meal. He does not want to kill them.

"Gregory is supported in his endeavours by the whole family," says Irene. "Together they have produced an amazing back garden whose compact size defies the huge diversity of plants and micro-climates present. As well as Gregory's dedicated area, it includes a herb wildlife garden to attract pollinators, a rose garden, a fruit garden with a Mediterranean bias, which includes lemons, olives and Ficus 'Ice Crystal', a succulent collection, a pond area and small trees. Planting of a raised bed, built

by Dad, was completed by Emma.

"Gregory particularly appreciates sensory plants and those that have texture, such as grasses, and, in terms of colours, he likes those with a metallic sheen.

"Why have Gregory and Emma joined? Because they like to meet other people who like plants," says Irene. "They want to learn from them and they want to give back. Remarkable for his age, Gregory has already opened his garden to the public and hopes to open in the future for the NGS. No mean feat, he raised £30 for charity by selling plants propagated from his greenhouse. He is also keen to join the HPS Conservation Scheme, to propagate some of the rarer plants in need of preservation."

Nearly 2,000 species of plants from 43 genera are covered by the society's Ranunculaceae Group. Group secretary **Susie Mitchell**, below, brings us up to speed...

Group where diversity reigns supreme

Hi Susie. Your group name is really hard to spell – even when you are copying it from our website! Have you got that cracked yet?

Yes, it is a mouthful and off putting if you don't like Latin names. I think I mostly get the a's and e's right! It comes from the Latin Ranu – a frog, as many of the species in the family are supposed to like a moist spot if they can get it. In this non-botanical household, we just say the Frogs.

Tell us a bit about the group.

We are a relatively young group, just 14 years old and only have a membership of just over 100, which is real mystery as most gardeners will have at least one 'Frog' in their garden. We are an active group. In 2021, we have had two newsletters, a subsidised group visit to the renowned Coton Manor Gardens, together with a nearby local gem of a nursery and garden, and four winter Zoom talks. All for £4.

We all love our plants but what's the special appeal of Ranunculaceae?

Such a wonderful diversity. It's not just



Group secretary Susie Mitchell



Thalictrum aquilegifolium and *Thalictrum aquilegifolium* 'Album'

about buttercups! It covers nearly 2,000 species in 43 genera. Everything from alpine anemones to climbing clematis, cottage garden aquilegias to stately aconitums, winter hellebores to summer delphiniums. Every colour, position and soil type and something in flower all year. There really is something to suit every gardener's taste and for every garden.

Do you have any particular favourites and anything unusual to recommend?

How to choose? I do love *Clematis* Betty Corning whose lovely bell flowers nod to me every time I pass in the summer.

Aconitum Swinesmeadow hybrid has stopped me in my tracks this year with its elegant, slate purple flowers. If you like double flowers, Ranunculaceae is the family for you as they are prone to doubling up. *Anemone nemorosa* Vestal is a stunning example.

A little birdy told me you are going to offer more free Zoom talks this winter – just to your members.

Yes, another three talks to brighten winter

evenings. They are free and just for our members. If anyone is interested in finding out more about Ranunculaceae, in November, Peter Williams, one of our members will be showing us its diversity and explaining how such different plants are all related to each other! We are especially excited to welcome our first overseas speaker, Deborah Hardwick, who will be joining us from the USA to talk about the *Myths and Truths of Growing Clematis*. She has spent more than 20 years studying and collecting clematis and grows 1000's of varieties in her Ohio garden. She promises lots of eye candy in her talk!

I suppose Covid interfered mightily with your plans. Have you non-Zoom ideas for next year?

Being a national group that meets face-to-face only once a year, we were only affected for that one occasion. Our lecture, from the excellent Timothy Walker, was transferred to Zoom and the day itself moved to an all-outdoor event, so there was no loss of plant-buying opportunities.

Fingers crossed for a 'normal' annual get

together and AGM in 2022 which will be on the Kent/Sussex border. In the morning, Colin Moat of Pineview Plants, will talk us through his Ranunculaceae year and there will be lots of plants for sale. In the afternoon, we will be having a guided tour of the newly-restored Merrimants Garden and Nursery, finishing off with tea and cake.

Your AGMs seem to be held all over the country. Does that put some people off?

As a Special Interest Group, our members are nationwide and so we try to move our lecture day to different parts of the country so it is near different people each year. Some members attend only when it's local, but others use it as an excuse for a weekend away and visits to gardens and nurseries that they don't usually get to. The quality and number of gardens and nurseries near our 2022 venue is mouthwatering.

What about the newsletters? What content can readers expect?

They are in an A5 magazine format and have articles by members and professionals on all matters Ranunculaceae, news and events, and lots of lovely colour photos!

So, in a few words, why should members also join your group?

Something of interest to everyone that will include plants and varieties that you know and that you don't. It's good value for your £4 membership whether you stay at home or like to travel to explore the country's horticultural gems. If you would like to join, details are on the national website or contact our Membership Secretary, Vivienne McGhee on v.m.mcgee@icloud.com or myself at mitchewi52@gmail.com or 01327 843426.

Highlights

When you only get together once a year, it's a highlight when you meet up with friends old and new.

The group visit to Crûg Farm nursery and its range of newly discovered plants was a definite highlight. We are fortunate to have the plant hunter and nurseryman Bleddyn Wynn-Jones as one of our patrons. The other is Dan Hinkley, another plant hunter and creator of 2 famous gardens in the USA.

The advent of Zoom meetings has been a real asset. With members across the UK, it's given the group a wonderful opportunity to give members more for their membership and to include members and speakers from overseas.



Anemone nemorosa 'Vestal'

BARGAIN TIME

North East member Chris Sibbald has been telling members about one of his plant bargains.

Three years ago, he bought a sad-looking *Magnolia dianica* 'Summer Snowflake' – since renamed *Magnolia laevifolia* – half price in the reduced section of a local nursery. The leader branch had snapped off – and it has thrived.

This small shrub has glossy, evergreen leaves through winter and in spring new buds turn a cinnamon colour before emergent white blooms spread a lemony scent around the border. In September, fruits turn a pale red. Chris collected six seeds last year – and two have made small, healthy-looking plants.



DEER OH DEER

Rabbits have all but stopped visiting the garden of Hampshire member Peter Hart now – and now he's winning the battle against the deer.

NEWS

cuttings

“The deer population has grown considerably,” he says. His back garden has been fenced against the two pests but the front garden is open, so he went instead for deer-resistant planting.

The focus was on foxgloves and delphiniums, supported by eryngiums, rosemary and lavender – later adding dahlias and penstemons. The only casualty so far, he says, was a perennial foxglove – expensive of course – *Digitalis x valinii* 'Firebird' purchased this year. “The plant was chewed to the ground but then spat out.” It has been moved to the back garden and is doing well.



FULLY BOOKED

East Yorkshire members have a full year of activities to look forward to in 2022 – including a talk in October by the newly reinstated head gardener at Sissinghurst, Troy Scott Smith.

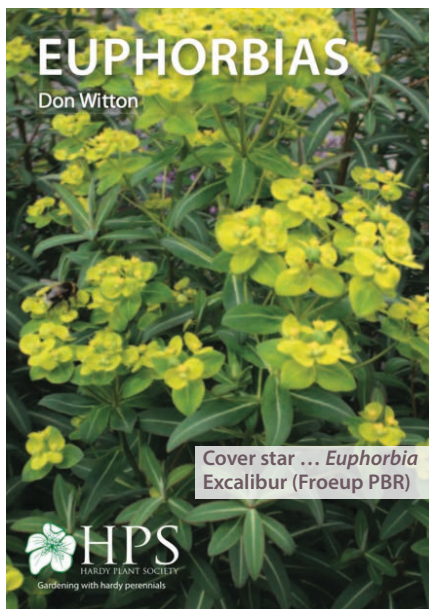
Troy will talk about the reinvigoration of Sissinghurst – which recently opened its Delos garden, designed in partnership with Dan Pearson. Other details from the group's October newsletter include Kevin Pratt, on *Woody Plants that Merit Attention* and Gail Harland on *Paeonies: Wild and Tame*.

NEW EDITION

The new edition of the HPS booklet on Euphorbias is now available.

It is written by National Collection Holder, Don Witton, and updates his 2010 edition.

Euphorbia is the second largest plant genus in the world with over 2000 species



– growing on every continent except Antarctica. They vary in size from 5cm to 2m.

The 80-page booklet is packed with information and excellent photographs to help you choose the best euphorbias for your garden and look after them successfully. Don shows us the wide range of form and colour that are available, including demonstrating that there is a plant to brighten up your garden every month of the year. Treat yourself!

To order your copy go to the Publications section of the website, price £5.50 (£7.50 for non-members)

SNOWDROP DATE

Devon's The Garden House will be opening its doors for a snowdrop spectacular early next year.

A total of 350 different species and cultivars, all labelled, will make up swathes of loveliness on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays (10.30am to 3pm) from January 14, with specialist snowdrop and early season plants from invited nurseries on set dates – beginning with Avon Bulbs on February 5.

The recently inherited Colin Mason collection has established well, including *Galanthus* 'Fieldgate Sophie', *G. woronowii*, *G. 'Elizabeth Harrison'* and so many more.

PICTURE JOHN RICHMOND



UP AND DOWN UNDER

One contributor to the Hardy Geranium Group's autumn newsletter is Kiyel Candy-Boland, one of just four group members in New Zealand.

Kiyel says the geranium he started with, at the age of 13 was *G. dalmaticum* but, now 69, his collection has grown to around 80 in his five-acre garden, which also has a flock of Gotland sheep, a flock of Polish chickens and, of course, his dog Tuppy.

Getting new varieties in New Zealand is quite a task, he says, with lots of red tape to go through and lots of money needed.

"We can bring in seed as long as it's allowed on New Zealand's Biosecurity List and the rules are followed. I have been lucky to get some seed of a few good geraniums from folk like Robin Moss, and from the Hardy Plant Society and, of course, the Hardy Geranium Group.

"I dreamed of growing *Geranium psilostemon* 'Rosefinch' from the day I first saw photos of it. Thanks to Robin I received five seeds. Three germinated. The next plant on my wish list is *G. psilostemon* 'Snowfinch'. I'm happy to do swaps of seed."

STILL ZOOMING

Monmouthshire has restarted its face-to-face talks in the Little Mill Village Hall and, says secretary Jacqui Warren, has been delighted by attendances so far, which have been higher than before the pandemic.

The programme also includes the occasional Zoom meetings, as these have proved popular, particularly with those who are unable to travel and those who've joined from around the UK. Plans have been made to resume garden visits next year and a Plant Sale is scheduled for June.

PLASTIC FREE

Advice on how to reduce the use of plastics in our garden was given by Southern Counties webmaster Diane Poole in the group's newsletter.

Among a host of tips, she suggested recycling plant pots and seed trays at your local B&Q store, make a compost bin from wood and buying a water butt made from recycled plastic. Old lollipop and ice lolly sticks make good plant labels, she says, and making your own compost rather than buying it.

In the same issue, Janet Simpson provided succinct details of making a free-standing wooden compost bin.

SEVEN YEARS LATER...

A seven-year wait has paid off for Herefordshire and Mid Wales member Chris Price-Morris.

In the group's newsletter, Chris, who is also chair of the Clwyd group, sets out the purchase of *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Chocolate Wings' at a Plant Hunters' Fair and how much she has enjoyed seven years of the large palmate leaves and their colour change through the seasons.

This year, for the first time, two flower branches appeared – and the extra point, not described on the plant label, was the flowers' sweet scent.



In flower... *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Chocolate Wings'

GALANTHUS GOODIES

After its success with two zoom webinars in February, more have been arranged by The Galanthus Group.

Membership secretary Lyn Miles says two of the extras have already taken place but three more are open to HPS members. They are...

- On Tuesday, November 30, 2022, Paddy Tobin with *My Snowdrop Garden*
- On Monday, January 31, 2022, Lyn Miles with *Glimpses of our Members' Snowdrop Gardens*
- Finally, on Monday, February 28, 2022, Brian Ellis with *A Growing Obsession*

For further details or to book a place, £3 per zoom for HPS members (free for Galanthus Group members) please contact Lyn at... galanthus@hardy-plant.org.uk

Plans are in place for the group's next Study Day, AGM and Plant Sale, for the group's 300-plus members only - the group has recruited 82 new members since February. It is hoped it will take place at The Stones Hotel, near Salisbury, on Sunday, February 13, when speakers will be Joe Sharman and Eddie Roberts. In the afternoon, there will be a visit to two nearby gardens, Avon Cottage and Lyn's own garden, Westcroft, which will end with scrummy tea!



PEONY AGM DATE SET

The Peony Group AGM 2022 and talk will be held at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, near Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 0QA on Sunday, May 29 next year.

After the AGM the speaker will be Dr Richard Gornall, Making Sense of Peonies: their biology and evolution. Dr Gornall is director of the Botanic Garden and curator of the Herbarium at the University of Leicester. His talk promises to be fascinating – encompassing the recent research into peony evolution in a way that the lay person can understand.

After lunch David Jewell, head of the Plant Collections at the gardens, will lead us on a guided tour.

- Details: £13.00 for HPS Peony Group members, £15.00 for HPS members and £16.00 for non HPS members. Doors open at 10.15am, with the AGM starting at 10.45am and Dr Gornall's talk at 11.30am. For more information and a booking form, email peony@hardy-plant.org.uk or ring 01566 785706

HOLIDAY ADVICE

Dorset member Debbie Steel has been trying to pool knowledge across the society about organising local HPS garden holidays – and has 15 ready-to-go itineraries to offer.

She says, “As you may recall, I wrote an article asking if any other groups would be interested in pooling their knowledge and experiences for organising holidays for our Hardy Plant members.

“Within 24 hours I had contact from the first group, West Yorkshire. Then I heard from Southern Counties and then Sussex. I had lengthy conversations with them all and have started to compile a list of holidays, hotels used and various gardens and nurseries visited.

“It was obvious from our conversations that we were all passionate about doing this, and felt we could help one another. Generally, we all do things slightly differently but each one of us had some new suggestion to add. Thank you everyone for getting me started. I also heard from other groups who weren’t currently actively organising holidays, but were interested in hearing more.

“So, I now have “tried and tested” itineraries for 15 holidays, ranging from Cheshire to Kent, from Norfolk to Devon. I’d like to thank Shirley, of Sussex Group, for a suggestion for a nursery for our 2022 holiday.

“In return, she has one of our itineraries from our 2018 holiday – I won’t mention the destination in case it is a secret for Sussex Group! Even if they only use one garden from the list, it has been worth it.

“So moving forwards, do you organise holidays for your Group? Would you like to share where you go, and what you do? If so, email me on debbie.steel@outlook.com or call on 01202 877390 or 07709 308002. I am heartened by the positive response I have had so far. Thank you.”

TIME TO TALK

The Pulmonaria Group annual meeting in 2022 will be held in Hallow Parish Hall near Worcester.

There will be two talks – the first by Robin Pearce, who as well as being a member of the Group, is also a member of the RHS Herbaceous Committee. Robin will give a talk entitled Spring Flowers. The second talk is by member Gordon James entitled A Short Life among Pulmonarias. In the afternoon, the visit will be to Robin Pearce’s garden.

HPS members who are not in the Pulmonaria Group are most welcome and can get an application form from secretary Barry Street whose details are in the Newsletter.

“We are all very much looking forward to meeting up with old friends and making new acquaintances after this three-year break,” he said.

LOOKING GOOD

Feedback from local groups in the society suggest numbers of members attending live meetings are averaging around 60 per cent of pre-Covid figures.

The information was provided by Groups Coordinator Keith Scott at a Zoom meeting of group secretaries last month.

“Some groups are continuing with their Zoom meetings – usually because of Covid restrictions on numbers at locations where they meet,” said Keith.

“But where face-to-face meetings have resumed the average attendance has been about 50 or 60 per cent of what they might have expected, which shows many members are still quite cautious.

“Personally, I think that level of attendance is excellent given all we have been through and augurs well for meetings from next spring when, we hope, things have eased up even more.”



Chrysanthemum 'Lindie'

Four plants added to list

The one thing you can't do on a Zoom meeting is give someone a plant, says conservation scheme co-ordinator Sally Adams.

"At the scheme annual meeting in 2020 there was lots of lively discussion, but we missed the plants," she said. "Fortunately, we made up for it at our 2021 meeting in September, where there were plenty of plants to exchange!

"Local group conservation co-ordinators were glad to meet up in person again. Some were old friends and others were new to the scheme. Their growers had been active over the lockdown months, propagating plants to pass around the exchange.

"Many of the plants on the active plant list were discussed. One in particular was *Vinca minor* 'Mrs Betty James'. Those growers who had it, said it wasn't a very special plant, and

although it grows quite easily it does not flower well. Jan Vaughan said she cuts hers back in early summer. This produces shorter foliage and more flowers. Growers were intrigued and decided to give it another go using her advice.

“Four new plants were added to the scheme at the exchange meeting. Growers took home plants of three new Chrysanthemum cultivars, generously donated by Judy Barker, an HPS member who holds a national collection of hardy Chrysanthemums. *Chrysanthemum* ‘Lindie’ has a yellow flower with quilled petals, *C.* ‘Beechcroft’ is peachy-pink with darker buds, and *C.* ‘Penny’s Yellow’ was named for HPS member Penny Hay.

“There was also a new *Phlox paniculata* ‘Victorian Lilac’ that growers were eager to try, and a few plants of *Penstemon* ‘Pensham St. James’ at last! This penstemon was a new plant in 2020, but without being able to exchange plants, only the group

who introduced it got a chance to grow it this year.”

Some of the plants on the active list now have several entries on the RHS Plant Finder pages, which is usually a signal to take a plant off the list as it becomes more widely available. Growers were afraid however, that given the disruption of 2020 and even 2021, the information might not be entirely accurate. It was agreed not to take any of the plants off the active list this year, but to review them thoroughly in 2022 to be sure plants are not retired too soon.

Sally said, “I’m pleased to say that the HPS Conservation Scheme is still going strong after nearly two years of restrictions and lockdowns. If anyone is interested in learning more about it, or wants to form a team of growers in their own local group, please contact me by email at conservation@hardy-plant.org.uk”



Chrysanthemum ‘Beechcroft’

Book review

A plant for each week of the year by Louise Sims

This may be the era of reading apps and social media, but there is still something special about a real book, especially a gardening book that I can dip into or flick back and forth, finding snippets of information and inspiration for my own garden. I was delighted when HPS member, Louise Sims sent me a copy of her book 'A plant for each week of the year', published in October last year.

The book is the result of a collaboration between Louise and three gardening friends, sisters who refer to themselves as The 3 Growbags on their website, where she contributes regular plant portraits. In the book she has collected some of her favourite pieces arranged month by month with a foreword written by

plantswoman and nursery owner Marina Christopher.

Louise writes with the authority of someone who as a keen gardener took a Diploma in Garden Design with The English Gardening School at the Chelsea Physic Garden in the late 1980s and has spent the last 30 years creating her own garden from scratch.

Each turn of the page reveals a plant chosen for the contribution it makes to the garden with a detailed description, cultural information and gorgeous colour photographs of each one. This is a very personal book, giving the feel of walking around Louise's garden with her while she points out her special plants. Some are well

known and I found myself agreeing that these are plants that I love too, but others are more unusual and several are now on my wish list.

In small paperback format this is a book I have kept by me and found myself drawn back to time and again. It would make an ideal Christmas present, but don't forget to buy a copy for yourself too.

You can buy Louise's book from the website <https://the3growbags.com> for £9.99 (including P&P).

Jan Vaughan





Ready, steady, grow

The society's annual seed distribution scheme is back on an even keel in 2021 – after last year's Covid complications.

Seed distribution manager Diane Puncheon says, "We are pleased to be able to run the scheme as normal after the difficulties of last year.

"I would like to encourage members to take a good look at the list that is distributed with this issue of the newsletter and place an order.

"I am always pleased to hear about growing successes and hope that you will donate in 2022."

Seed contributions are donated by hundreds of HPS members before around 80 people across the country – many of them members of Norfolk & Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Southern Counties, Kent and Shropshire

groups – are involved in a range of jobs from sorting, cleaning, packing and sending out the orders at the end of February.

The cost is just £5 for 20 seed packets. Closing date for orders is January 8. For more information go to www.hardy-plant.org.uk/about-plants/seed

From the Office

All enquiries concerning Hardy Plant Society matters and membership renewals should be addressed to the Administrator during office hours (Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm), please note there is only 1 telephone line into the office, therefore, if I am already on the telephone your call will go straight to answerphone, so please leave a message and I will call you back as soon as possible: 01386 710317. You can also email: clare@hardy-plant.org.uk

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due by 1st January each year, however, renewals may be sent from 1st October, the annual subscription rates are £17.00 for single membership or £19.00 for two members at one address (joint membership), with an optional charge of £10.00 for overseas members outside Western Europe, who wish their mailings to

be sent by airmail. If you wish to subscribe to Cornucopia please add £3.50 Uk, £5 Overseas. Subscriptions should be sent to The Administrator, 3 Basepoint Business Centre, Crab Apple Way, Evesham, WR11 1GP. To save on admin costs you are encouraged to pay your future subscriptions by Standing Order through your bank or building society. You can request a form from the Administrator, by email or post, or download it from the website (Join the HPS on the Home Page).

Please note as of June 2019 we are no longer able to accept telephone card payments.

HPS Booklets

please order from the web: <http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/publications/booklets> or use the order form in the newsletter.

Clare Powell, Administrator

Contact Information

For all email addresses insert hardy-plant.org.uk after @

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01386 710317 clare@ / admin@

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Hon. Treasurer: Stuart Senior, 01823 442344, treasurer@

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Worcestershire	Lyn Maile	01905 820267	worcs@



Gardening with hardy perennials

HPS MEMBERS ONLY BOOKLET ORDER FORM (POSTAL OPTION)

- Please print this form out and fill in the fields below
- Post it to the HPS Office (address below) with a cheque if appropriate

Title	Price	Number Required	TOTAL
Ferns	£5.50		£
Geraniums	£5.50		£
Peonies	£5.50		£
Chrysanthemums	£5.50		£
Pulmonarias	£5.50		£
Euphorbias	£5.50		£
Penstemons	£3.00		£
Border Phlox	£5.50		£

All booklets are available to non-members – the cost for each booklet is £7.50 except for Penstemons, which costs £4.

ORDER TOTAL £
Postage and packaging is free to members

Name _____

Membership Number (6 Digits) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel No (for queries) _____

PAYMENT VIA ONLINE BANKING

- Make payment to “The Hardy Plant Society”
- Account number: 30212407
- Sort Code: 40-11-60
- Use the first 4 letters of your surname with your 6 digit membership number as a reference
- Post this form to the office (address below) advising that payment has been made by online transfer & include the date of the transfer

The Administrator: 3, Basepoint Business Centre, Crab Apple Way, Evesham, Worcestershire. WR11 1GP.

Payment by cheque should be made out to “The Hardy Plant Society”

Queries? Please call the administrator on 01386 710317 Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm.