

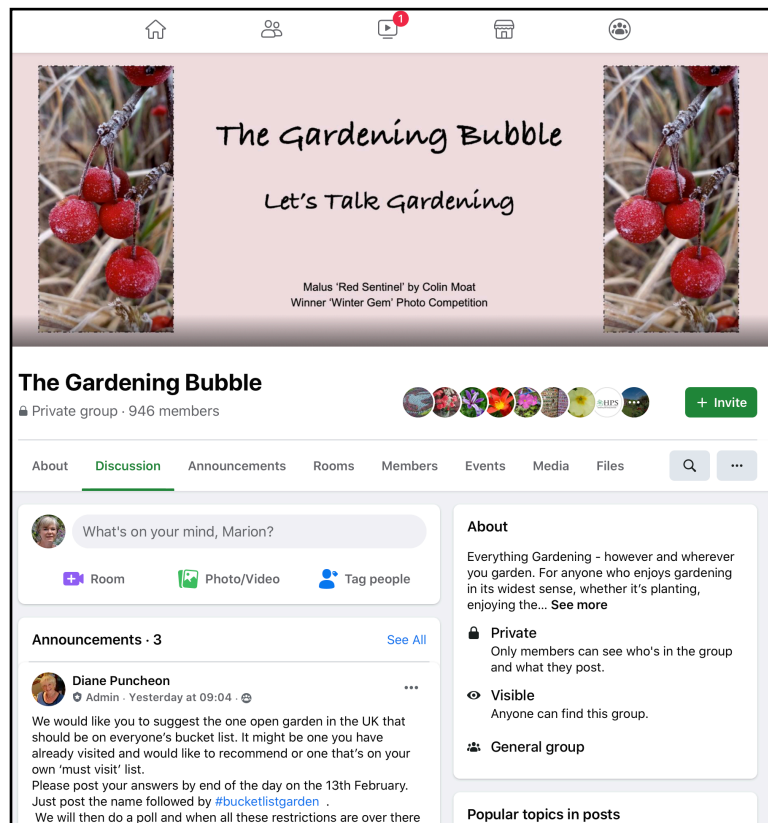
# SOCIAL MEDIA

Jane Hunt

I almost feel that I need to whisper the words in the title! I was never a fan of social media: I couldn't see the point. However, I had to be on Facebook in order to keep up to date with the HPS Group Secretaries from around the country, and to pick up work as a freelance ski instructor at my local slope. Reluctantly I joined up last year, feeling like I was signing my life away!

However, nothing awful seemed to happen as a result, unless you count the ping you get when Facebook finds someone it thinks you might know and would want to make contact with (a 'friend'), which I soon learnt to turn off. I even joined an Old Girls group from my school. I didn't do much else with it for some months.

We then discussed Instagram at an HPS Committee meeting, as a potential way to promote our events to non-members. I was sceptical... very sceptical. However I eventually signed up and found - much to my surprise - that I quite liked it. I prefer the format to Facebook, which I find a bit messy, and there are lots of very interesting plants people, nurseries and gardens (large and small) posting photos on a regular basis. I have admired, even drooled, over some of the photos posted and, to my surprise, formed minor long distance 'friendships' with some of the gardeners I follow. Even better, I have found it a great way to stay in touch with the gardening world whilst we are all in lockdown.



The Facebook page of *The Gardening Bubble*, set up by HPS members

## Some of the regular Instagram users I follow and enjoy:

- **jimiblake\_huntingbrookgardens** - Jimi Blake posts lots of photos and films of his amazingly inspirational garden and plants at Hunting Brook Gardens in Ireland
- **botanicallybonkers** - Botanically Bonkers Nursery supplies the World Garden at Lullingstone Castle in Kent
- **moliniagardens** - Polly Coupland, a garden designer in Frome, Somerset
- **dawns\_gardening** - Dawn is a private gardener based in northwest Leicestershire
- **panglobalplants** - Pan-Global Plants is a fabulous plantsman's nursery, located in the Severn Valley
- **bensbotanics** - Ben Probert is a freelance professional gardener working in the south west
- **bethchattogardens** - Beth Chatto's famous garden near Colchester

- **hestercombeheadgardener** - Claire Greenslade leads the team at the restored garden in Somerset
- **the\_botanical\_gardener** - Richard Moore, a young botanical horticulturist based at Kew

After trialling Instagram on a personal basis for a few weeks, our website man, Bill Hodgson, helped me get an HPS Somerset Group page set up, so I now post items relating to the Group on that one. We have over 200 followers to date.

Since the lockdowns started, some HPS members have set up the Hardy Plant Community Facebook group, which I joined at the outset. It is now known as *The Gardening Bubble*, and has over 900 members. The intention was to bring together HPS members and non-members to share information and garden photos of plants that interest them, and to get answers and opinions on any gardening problems. It has been a huge success and the HPS has already picked up many new members as a result.

So if you are missing your regular doses of HPS and other gardening club meetings, you might, like me, be able to get your fix of garden chat during the current period of isolation via the world of social media.

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