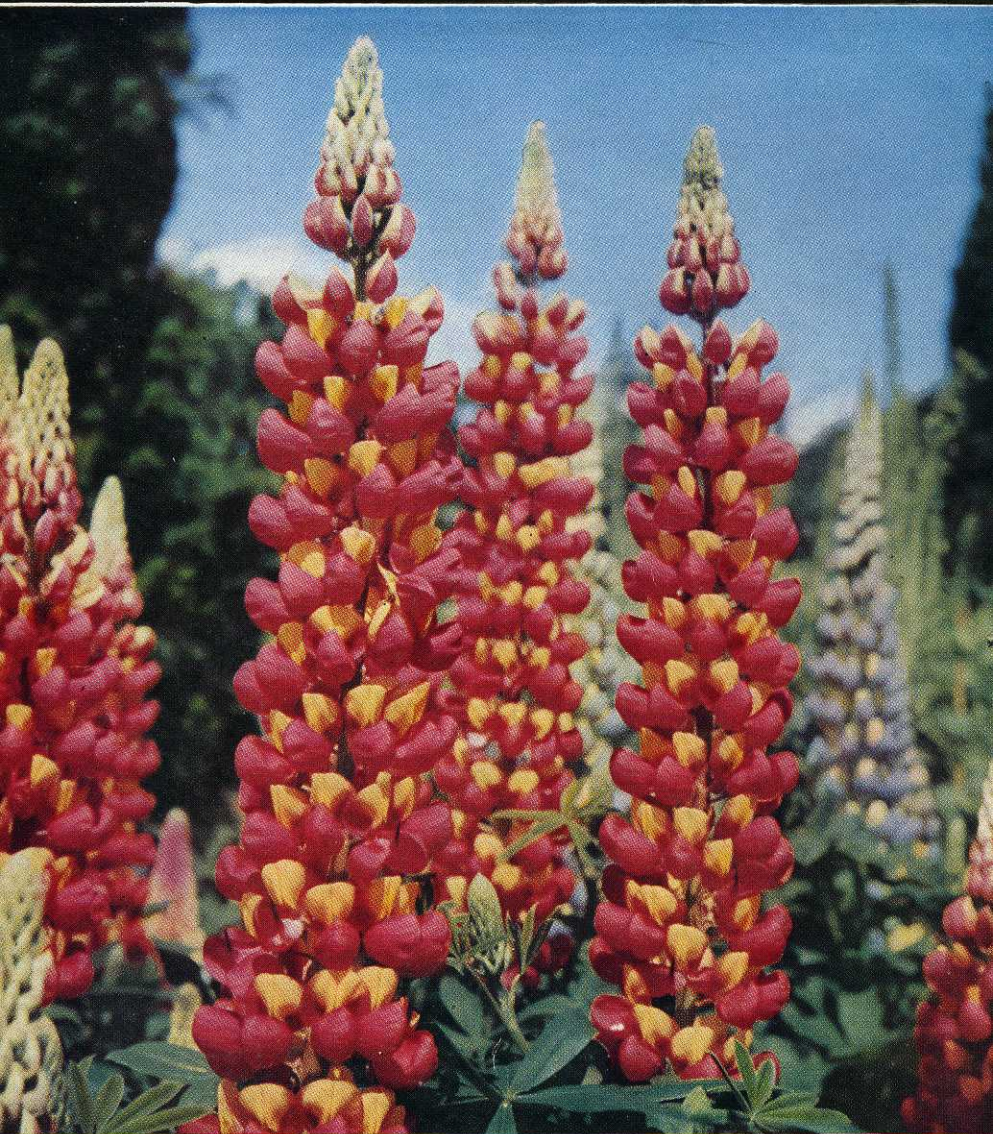


THE BULLETIN OF THE
HARDY PLANT

VOL I NO I

SOCIETY

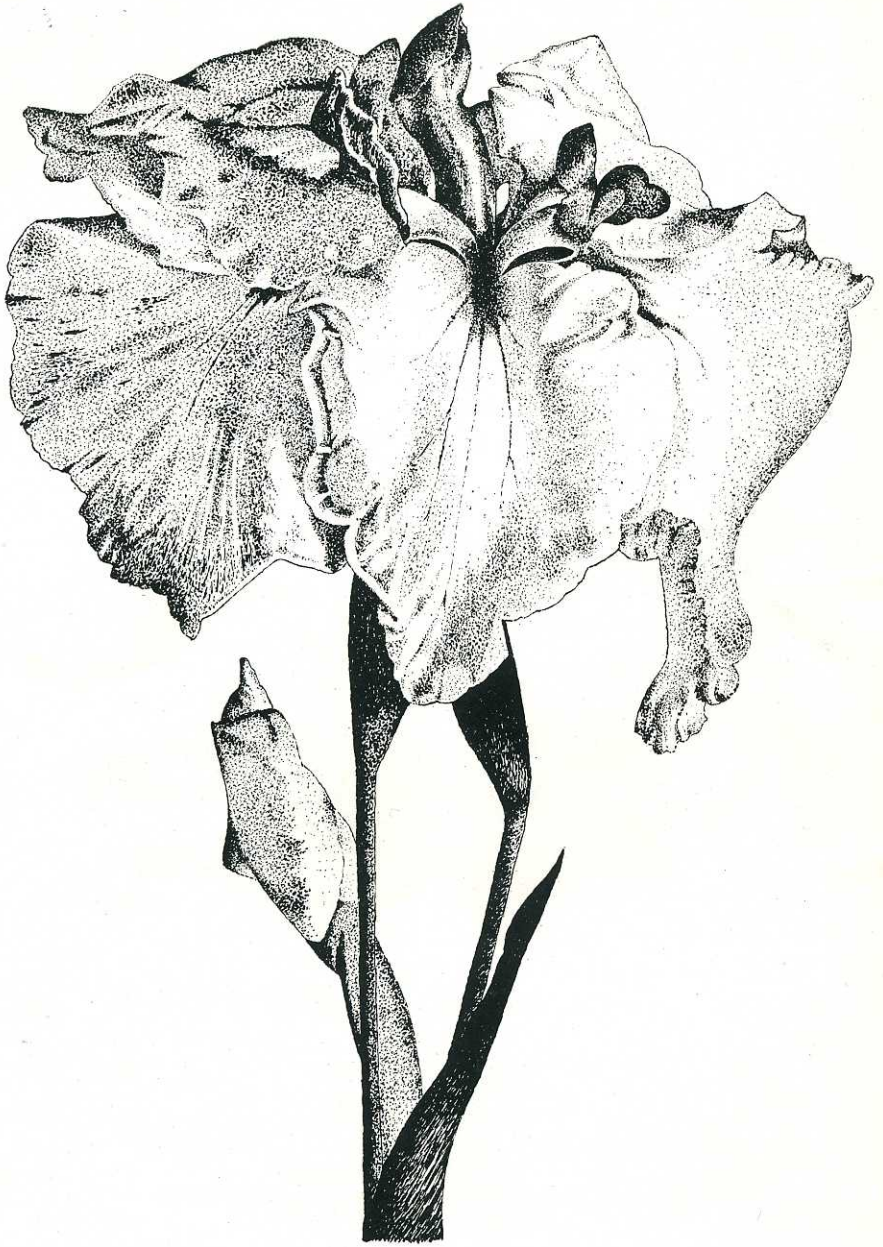
1957



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ISSUED FREE TO MEMBERS



IRIS KAEMPFERI.

(see page six)

THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY BULLETIN

VOL. I NO. I

1957

EDITORIAL

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S. M. GAULT, A H R S

Hon. Secretary

NOËL J. PROCKTER
2-10 Tavistock Street,
Covent Garden,
London, W.C.2.

Hon. Treasurer

Mrs. F. E. BLOOM
Bressingham Hall,
Diss, Norfolk.

Hon. Editor

H. P. CHAMPNEYS
26 Bloomsbury Way,
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AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

The aims of the Society are to further the culture and improvement of hardy herbaceous plants (excluding rock garden plants) and to stimulate interest in such plants both old and new.

MEMBERSHIP

The yearly subscription (which includes the Society's Bulletin as published) is 12s. 6d. per year, or £1 for joint membership of man and wife. Life membership is £10. Membership also includes free entry to any shows which the Society may hold.

IN PRODUCING A "BULLETIN" one is apt to adhere to certain well proved standards which decree that a substantial measure of editorial "stodge" adds an air of decorum to any newly founded society. I do not subscribe to this theory, and I am delighted to say that my Chairman and other co-Honoraries are of the same mind.

We have set ourselves the task of furthering the culture and improvement of hardy herbaceous plants, and this we hope to achieve in a practical manner. All the officers and committee members are practical gardeners (both professional and amateur) and those who write the features which follow do so from practical experience.

They have, doubtless, witnessed the irritability of *Mimosa pudica*, the sensitivity of *Mimosa sensitiva*, the weird luminosity of *Dictamnus albus* which excretes a volatile and inflammable oil, and the bloodthirsty tendencies of the common sundew which devours with relish any insect that alights upon it and which inspired Scribner's amusing lines:

*Alas! 't would be—sad news to me
To bear your own dear Fido pet
Had lost his breath in cruel death,
Because, one day, in thoughtless play,
He went too near a violet.*

Yes, there is a great deal to learn about plants but we, in our particular sphere, are concerned with those most rewarding and accommodating see-you-next-year plants, of which many are almost forgotten and even more practically unknown.

Will you, therefore, turn these humble pages with me and learn a little of those plants which, through no lack of beauty of face or form, are merely waiting to be rediscovered.

H. Champneys

Some Hardy Perennial Plants Worth Seeking

Will Ingwersen

MANY GOOD PLANTS are disappearing from nurserymen's catalogues, largely because they are not asked for sufficiently often to make it worth while carrying a stock of them. A few have been irretrievably lost, but many more linger here and there, either in private collections, in botanical gardens, public parks, or as isolated plants in nurserymen's stock beds. Every effort should be made to locate them and to ensure their repropagation before it is too late.

It is my earnest hope that this newly-formed society will be able to render a great service to horticulture by encouraging its members to discover some of these neglected plants and to rescue them from oblivion. Any readers who are fortunate enough to possess plants of some good old species or variety will earn the gratitude of all gardeners if they take steps to put them into circulation again. Some of the best ways to do this are to exhibit them at shows, to write about them, and, if possible, see that propagating material gets into the hands of a nurseryman willing to deal with it.

Not all the plants I shall briefly describe in this, and subsequent articles on the same theme, are "out of commerce." Quite a number of them may be found in specialists' catalogues, but it is not likely that they will be found in general catalogues of standard varieties of nursery stock. To seek for them may well encourage a most informative study of a wide range of plant-lists, a pursuit both educational and intensely interesting.

Gillenia trifoliata is a hardy herbaceous perennial which was first introduced to this country from North America in 1713. It is an extremely elegant and graceful plant, belonging to the natural order *Rosaceæ* and closely allied to the genus *Spiræa*, in which it was at one time placed. The leaves are composed of three-toothed and bronzed leaflets and the wiry flower stems, from 15 to 18 inches in height, carry during June, July and August, flights of dainty white flowers, the five narrow petals contrasting effectively with the red-brown calyx.

The plant is in no way difficult to grow, and succeeds well in any well-drained soil, in a position which is not too exposed and sunny. It will grow and flower in the shade of tall shrubs and overhanging trees, a valuable attribute as these positions are not always easy to fill.

Until *Morina longifolia* produces its tall and spectacular flower stems there is little to distinguish it from some rather outlandish thistle. It belongs to the natural order *Dipsacææ*, and is related to that other well-armed and statuesque plant, the teasel. It is found as a wild plant in Nepal, and was introduced to Britain

from there in 1839. This, and an allied species, *M. kokanica*, from Turkistan, are occasionally offered for sale and are well worth acquiring either as plants for the perennial border, or for use as specimen plants in more isolated positions.

The stems rise to a height of between 2 and 3 feet and carry crowded whorls of flowers which, in the case of *M. longifolia*, are white and pink, and lilac in *M. kokanica*. They are deep-rooting plants and should be left undisturbed when established, and require nothing more than an open, sunny position. I have grown them with complete success on soil which was heavy enough to be termed a clay, and on light sandy loam.

I may be sticking myself out on a limb by recommending a knotweed, as some of them are decidedly vigorous and are apt to become a nuisance in small gardens, but there is a polygonum, *P. filiforme*, which was introduced from Japan in 1865, which has a form known as "*variegata*", in which the rather large, hairy leaves are splashed and veined and marbled with pale-green and yellow. I am, personally, averse to most plants with variegated foliage, but can remember seeing this used very effectively in combination with other plants. I have not come across it for a long time now, but for those with space for a strong grower it might well prove an interesting acquisition.

Three hundred years ago Gerard, in his monumental "Herbal", enthused over the "English double-white Crowfoote", or batchelor's buttons, and this handsome buttercup has been cultivated since those distant days, but seems to have fallen out of popularity during recent years. Its botanical name is *Ranunculus aconitifolius flore pleno*, admittedly a mouthful, but there are many even more polysyllabic names to be learned by those who take their gardening seriously. The



Morina longifolia (above) resembles some rather outlandish thistle until the tall, spectacular flower stems appear.

Gillenia trifoliata is an extremely elegant and graceful plant, closely allied to the genus *Spiraea*.



freely-branching flower stems rise to a height of some 2 feet above the deeply-cut, shining, deep-green leaves, and carry multitudes of perfectly double pure-white flowers.

Personal tastes have a way of changing over a period of years. I can remember, when being asked to admire some leafy colony of one or other of the bergenias, being quite snuffy, and referring to them as "pickling cabbages". In those days they were named either "*Megasea*" or *Saxifraga megasea*, but have now been grouped into a genus of their own. They are easily grown, and mostly hardy, and extremely decorative both in leaf and flower. A wave of unpopularity, which I ashamedly admit to having encouraged, has led to their partial disappearance from catalogues, but there are very evident signs that they are returning to favour and are being sought by discerning gardeners. The bold foliage takes on rich autumn and winter tints of red and crimson, and the massive inflorescences, usually produced in the early spring, of pink, red or white flowers, are extremely handsome.

For the past ten years or so I have sought in vain for the true *Viola gracilis*. I have bought and been given countless violas purporting to be the graceful plant which was originally introduced from the Bithynian Olympus in Asia Minor but, alas, all were imposters, and I fear that the identity of *V. gracilis* in gardens has become submerged beneath a welter of hybrids, many of them pretty enough and good garden plants, but all and every one lacking the aristocracy and elegance of my mourned true species.

This is really a plea for anyone who has what they think to be the true plant, to propagate it, and to send material for identification to some authority, for it is shameful for gardeners to admit that so fine a plant has become lost.

Iris Kaempferi

Frances Perry, F.L.S.

A WELL-GROWN group of this iris by the water's edge presents a breathtaking picture that I venture to think no other pondside plant can rival. Under the skilful hands of Japanese hybridizers the flowers have achieved rare beauty and great size.

I have a treasured book of these Clematis Flowered Irises printed in the natural sizes and shades on Japanese rice paper. Each page shows a separate bloom; some 12-14 inches across. They come in self colours of deep violet, crimson, white, cream, pink or blue, or the flowers may be striped, striated or blotched with a miscellany of shades, the petals held high like the petticoats of a ballerina. The effect from a distance is not unlike a host of butterflies or fairy parasols at the water's edge.

But alas, it is not an easy plant to grow. It will not tolerate lime and needs a rich soil which is wet or boggy in spring and summer and comparatively dry in winter. The Japanese grow *I. kaempferi* at the edges of the paddy fields where the water is more or less under control. In this country they do best at the pond margin, amongst candelabra primulas, bogbeans, day-lilies and other moisture-loving plants. In dry weather a thorough watering and a mulch of really rotted cow manure helps the plants considerably.

Often confused with *I. lavigata*—which will grow all the time in water—*I. kaempferi* is easily distinguished by the presence of a prominent ridge running up the middle of each leaf. This is absent in *I. lavigata*.

THE COVER

This is the first of a series of plates by some of the foremost horticultural artists. Reproduced by permission of the editor of *The Garden*.



Brunnera Macrophylla

Noël J. Prockter

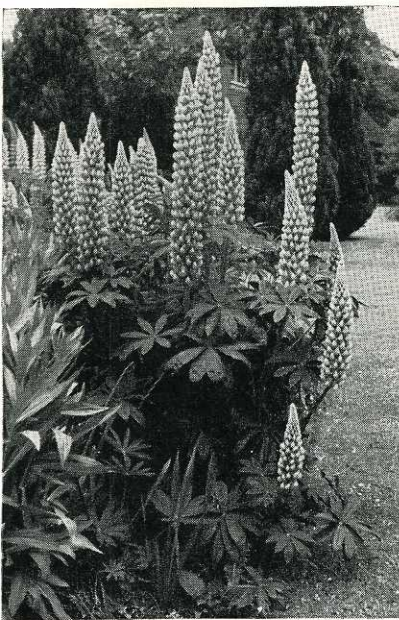
MOST GARDENERS will know *Brunnera macrophylla*, the dainty forget-me-not flowered anchusa by its more familiar name *Anchusa myosotidiflora*, under which it received an Award of Garden Merit on June 7, 1928.

This plant was first discovered in 1830 in some woods north of Tiflis, and Reginald Farrer states that it comes from copses of Caucasus and the Altai. Farrer is not very complimentary about *A. myosotidiflora*, he calls it a coarse thing; nevertheless he remarks on its showers of blossoms of a true dazzling-blue which, he says, are too small for the size of the plant. He states that ". . . it may have its place in cool, shady and undesirable corners, . . .". This, I think, is ungenerous. In Nicholson's "Illustrated Dictionary of Gardening" *Myosotis macrophylla* is given as a synonym, and its origin as from Siberia, in 1825. In the *Botanical Magazine*, t.9110, the name *Brunnera macrophylla* is used. The specific name

means "large leaves"; they are 3-6 inches across and are, indeed, quite handsome.

This front-of-the-border, hardy, herbaceous perennial thrives best in semi-shade, in moist soil; it will, however, grow in full sun provided it has sufficient moisture at its roots. The tiny, bright blue, forget-me-not flowers are borne on 12-inch high stems, the side blooms are attached to the stem in the leaf axils. Time of flowering is late March, though more often April-May. It is a bright and most accommodating hardy plant.

Propagation is by seed and, in my own garden, seedlings spring up freely in the border. Another method of increase is from root cuttings during the late autumn or winter. Cut the roots into 2-inch lengths and insert them in pots or boxes filled with a sandy cutting compost or John Innes' compost, and place the receptacles in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse.



The charm of the modern lupin is apparent from this illustration.

Advance of the Lupin

A. G. L. Hellyer

IT IS NOW SIX YEARS since George Russell died and a good many more since he ceased to take a very active part in lupin breeding. What has happened since to the plant, for which he did so much, that Russell and lupin are now names indissolubly linked?

It must be admitted that he laid the foundations so well that no further spectacular advance was to be expected. But that does not mean that all the intensive breeding of lupins which has been carried on since his death has been wasted. Advances have been made in certain directions, new combinations of colour have appeared and the vigour of the race has been maintained. That, in itself, is a very important matter with a rather short-lived perennial such as the lupin, for in time the old varieties, however good they may be, must weaken, and some will do this more quickly than others.

All the same, some of the original Russell varieties still hold their own with all comers. This is true of Mrs. Micklethwaite, a lupin that has been with us a number of years and is still as good as ever. If there is a better in its particular shade of salmon I have not seen it.

That magnificent yellow variety, Tom Reeves, is also no newcomer, but it is unsurpassed of its type; indeed, I know one good judge who considers it the best lupin ever raised.

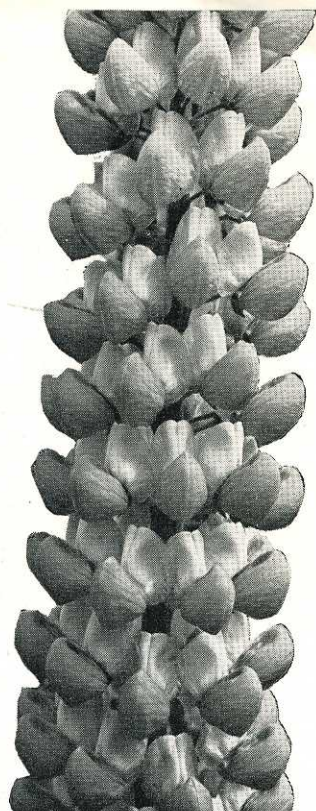
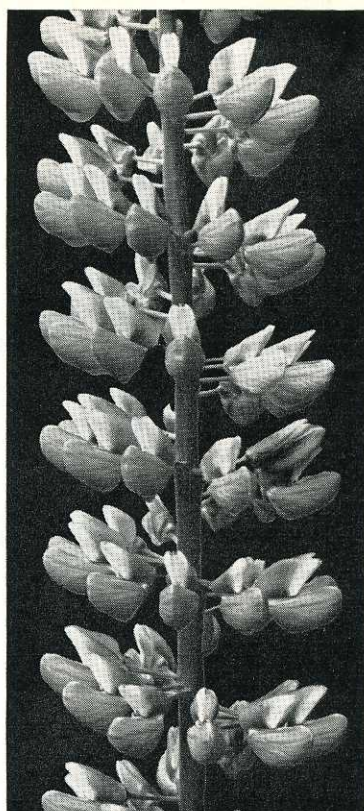
Lady Diana Abdy is still one of the best blue and white lupins, though it has been with us for a generation and has had the later competition of such excellent varieties as Bluejacket and Sailorboy.

George Russell in clear-pink and City of York which is red suffused with orange, are also old familiar names in the lupin world, but names which are unlikely to be superseded for a good many years to come.

One profitable line of development has been in the further extension of the lupin colour range already so magnificently endowed by George Russell himself. Charmaine is an example, a lupin which starts as a fine terra-cotta red, the colour deepening as the flowers expand and finally fade. It is a grand variety in every way.

Heatherglow is aptly named for it brings the typical dulled red-purple of wild heather into the lupin. It is not, perhaps, everyone's choice, as I feel sure Charmaine would be, but it is a welcome change for those who like something a bit different. The same is true of Wheatsheaf, which puts a flush of pink into a clear-yellow base.

In comparing the old and the new as depicted in these two illustrations, one should note how the standards, or bells, have been enlarged and the pinched keels expanded to a point where the stem has a well-clothed rather than a sparse appearance. The modern Russell hybrid is on the right.



In some cases the newer lupins repeat the charms of older varieties, but with improvements in detail. That, I think, is true of Rita, which is much like the old Beryl Viscountess Cowdray, but has a better constitution and will certainly be easier to keep for a number of years. It is a curious thing that these rich-red lupins have always had a tendency to be rather less robust (or perhaps it is that they are rather more subject to winter damp) than the rest, which, of course, gives one of the clues to successful lupin cultivation—good drainage. If I were asked to name a second essential it would be freedom from lime.

Two wonderful orange lupins are F. C. Puddle and Guardsman, the first with deeper colour in the standards than in the keel petals, the second almost the same shade throughout.

The violet-purple Thundercloud is the best in this colour, though I still feel that there is room for a Russell lupin with the depth and intensity of the old pre-Russell variety Happiness. As a contrast to such deep shades, nothing could be better than the light-yellow Canary Bird or cream Alicia Parrett. Both are excellent, trouble-free garden plants.

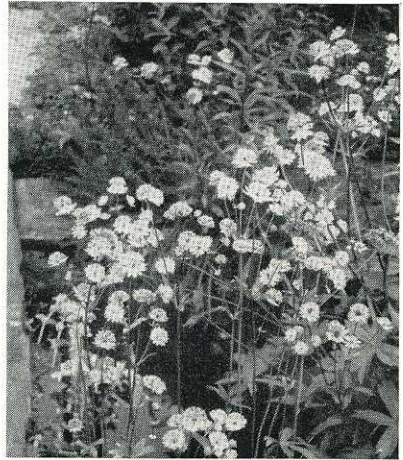
I also have a particular affection for Gaiety Girl, a lively combination of cerise and cream. It is a most cheerful plant to have in the garden. And as, ever since the days of that great pre-Russell lupin Pink Pearls, I have felt that clear, self-pink is the loveliest of all lupin colours, I would add to my collection Betty Astell as a companion to George Russell already recommended. Its only fault is that it is not as strong-growing as some.

Hardy plants you

Astrantia. Masterwort. *Umbelliferae*. The astrantias or masterworts have an unusual and interesting charm in as much as their flowers are of the everlasting nature, though not the kind one sees arranged in bowls for winter decoration. Their foliage is not unlike the leaf of a ranunculus (buttercup) and in the young stage it is a pleasant shade of green, and shiny. Perhaps *Astrantia major* is the most handsome of the genus; its pinkish, rose and white flowers are surrounded by purplish bracts, which makes them an ideal buttonhole flower. The flowers are borne on 3 foot stems in June and July. It is not a fussy plant and thrives in any soil and tolerates partial shade. Propagation is by seed or division.

Baptisia. False or Wild Indigo. *Leguminosa*. This perennial makes a branching lupin-like plant. The best known is probably *B. australis*, its pea-shaped flowers of indigo blue are borne in terminal racemes at the end of 3 foot stems; it blooms from June to July. The leaves are similar in shape to those of laburnum. It thrives best in deep loamy, well-drained soil and needs a sunny open position. Propagation is by seed or division.

Cardamine. Cuckoo-flower, Milk-maid or Ladies-smock. *Cruciferae*. Who does not know the dainty cuckoo-flower, at least those who live in the country? *Cardamine pratensis* is one of our earliest spring flowers; though frail-looking, it is by no



Astrantia major

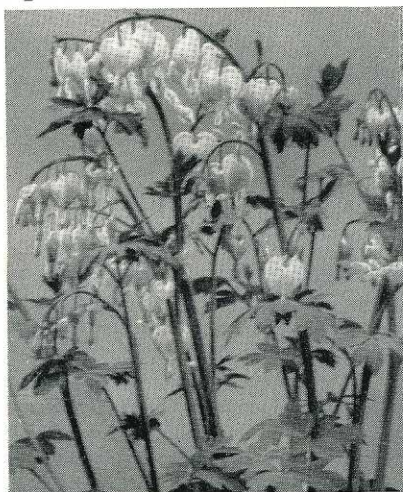
means frail in constitution, in fact it is very hardy. The double form *C. pratensis flora plena* is even more lovely; the lilac-coloured flowers are carried on grey-green stems 12-18 inches high, enhanced by entire or dissected leaves of a similar colour, and chiefly at the base. The double cuckoo-flower looks loveliest when growing naturally in short grass, mixed in with other spring beauties, such as daffodils, fritillaries, hellebores and primroses. It thrives anywhere but prefers a moist soil. Propagation is by division.

Centaurea montana



Centaurea. Cornflower. *Compositae*. This is a large family, so it is as well to consider one species at a time. A species that is not seen nearly as much as it should be is *C. montana* (Mountain Blue); its virtues are hardiness, very perennial, free-flowering and, in winters such as we have just experienced, it is almost evergreen. This perennial cornflower has also white, rose, purple and even yellow coloured flowers, though the violet-blue of *C. montana* is the most common; in fact, I have not seen the white form for some time. It usually starts flowering in May and continues throughout the early part of the summer. The foliage is a greenish-white when young, changing to a darker green as it grows older. Flowers are borne on leafy stems, some 1-2 feet high. It spreads itself by seed easily; it is also readily

may not know



Dicentra spectabilis

increased by division in autumn or spring.

Corydalis. Fumitory. *Fumariaceae*. The best-known species of this family is undoubtedly the yellow fumitory, *Corydalis lutea* (syn. *Fumaria lutea*). On account of its ease of reproduction, it is sometimes regarded as a weed, and probably in many parts it has become sufficiently established to be looked upon as a native plant. It is one of those front of the border plants that always attracts attention, because of its graceful fern-like, pale green glaucous foliage, which is, as William Robinson says in "The English Flower Garden", ". . . profusely dotted over with spurred yellow flowers. . . ." It normally grows about 12 inches high; if grown in shade it is a little taller. It thrives in sun or shade and grows well in any soil, stony, sandy or clay. Propagation is by seed or division in early spring.

Crambe. Seakale. *Cruciferae*. All will know of the common sea-kale, *C. maritima*, which we use as a vegetable, but the giant sea-kale, *C. cordifolia*, is a much larger and more handsome plant. This ideal back of the border plant reaches 5-7 feet high. For this plant to give of its best it needs to be grown in fairly rich soil, then it will grace the border with magnificent panicles of small white flowers, giving a display similar to that of gypsophila. The flowers are borne on much-branched stems in

June and July. The green foliage is large and cordate in shape. Propagation is by seed sown in spring or division at planting time, also in spring. As to soil, it is not fussy and will grow anywhere.

Dicentra. Bleeding Heart. *Fumariaceae*. Here is another plant with foliage very similar in outline to the corydalis, but much larger. The best known of this family is *D. spectabilis* (syn. *Diehytra spectabilis*), a native of Japan. Other favourite common names are Dutchman's breeches and Lady-in-the-bath. Like many common names, one has to use one's imagination to realize their significance. The heart-shaped flowers are a deep rosy-red, and are the largest of the genus; they hang down gracefully among the much-divided glaucous-green fern-like foliage. It reaches a height of 2 feet. Flowers are produced in the spring and early summer. This is a favourite plant for forcing. Propagation is by division in February, March and April, or root cuttings in March and April, placed in a cold frame. They like a cool leafy soil and are best in partial shade. Others worthy of planting are *D. eximia*, the plummy dicentra, it has rose-pink flowers on 1 to 1½ foot stems, and has fern-like foliage. *D. formosa*, with rose-purple blooms, is daintier, both in flower and foliage. A recent introduction is the variety of *D. formosa* called Bountiful, with deep-pink flowers borne on branching stems 15 inches high.

Crambe cordifolia



A Hardy Perennial Border from Seed

R. J. Huntley

IT HAS ALWAYS been a wonder to me why more people do not grow perennials and other hardy subjects from seed. I know that one cannot often get "named" varieties from seed, but it does not matter to me whether a delphinium is "Miss somebody or other", or what may be described as a "mongrel", so long as it is beautiful; and some really beautiful flowers of perennials *can* be raised from seed.

There is another point, too. In these days of economic necessity, if one is prepared to be patient, the door is open to stock borders and beds with perennials, and good ones at that, at a very reasonable cost.

The seed merchants to-day take the utmost care with their stocks, and certainly if one goes to a high-class seed house one need never feel nervous about the results.

In the case of Hardy Perennials the best time to tackle the job is during the first fortnight of June. Seed should be sown in the open ground, preferably in partial shade. An effort should be made to obtain a fine tilth in which to sow many of these very small seeded subjects, and great care should be taken to see that the soil is in a sufficiently moist condition. Usually, at this time of the year, the weather is hot and dry and artificial watering is necessary. The best method of doing this is to soak thoroughly the piece of ground where the seeds are to be sown, *the previous day*. It

will then be found that the surface soil will have dried sufficiently to be worked, and there will also be plenty of moisture immediately beneath.

Here will be found the advantage of choosing a partially shaded position, as the ground will not become baked and dry from the sun, which must be avoided as baking tends to exclude the air from the young seed, thus seriously affecting germination.

The seed should be sown in drills approximately 7 or 8 inches apart and should never be sown too deeply. Sowing depth is usually governed by the size of the seed, the smaller seed being sown approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch down, and the larger seeds as much as 1 inch.

Sow thinly.

It is extremely important to *sow thinly* as many growers sow their seed too thickly, which results in spindly seedlings and, very often, to "damping off" even before it is appreciated that germination is taking place. Where difficulty is experienced in sowing thinly enough, it is an excellent scheme to mix the seed with sand, thus enabling a thinner and more even distribution in the drills. Do not forget to label everything with subject and variety, as it may be extremely difficult to identify the former and almost impossible to distinguish the latter in the early stages.

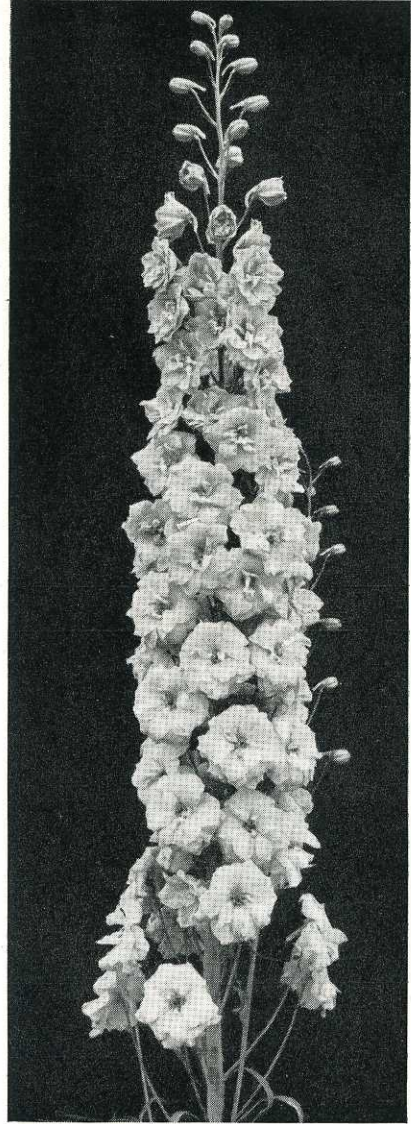
When the seedlings are approximately 2 inches high they should be pricked out into a nursery bed, which should be of a richer nature than the seed bed.

Old, well-rotted manure should be thoroughly dug into the ground which should be a good open site. Partial shade, which was so desirable for the germinating seed, would now be detrimental to the young seedlings, as it would cause them to become drawn.

When lifting the seedlings ensure that as little damage as possible is done to the roots and, when planting out, use a trowel and allow sufficient room for the roots to be spread out. Plant firmly, approximately 9 inches apart, and give sufficient room between the rows for the use of the hoe. This will prove to be an extremely valuable tool in the weeks that follow, as the continual movement of the surface soil tends to keep down the weeds and prevent a drying out of the soil. As in the case of the preparation of the seed bed, the nursery bed should be well watered prior to planting if there is any possibility of it being dry. This will prove a much better method than planting the young seedlings into dry soil and then having to water afterwards.

Planting into permanent quarters can be done in the autumn and spring months, but subjects such as scabious, pyrethrums, delphiniums, *Aster amellus* and Lupins are better if left in the nursery bed and planted out the following March. When planting out the various seedlings, it is advisable to make small clumps of each kind rather than to dot individual plants about the border. It will give a much more impressive display.

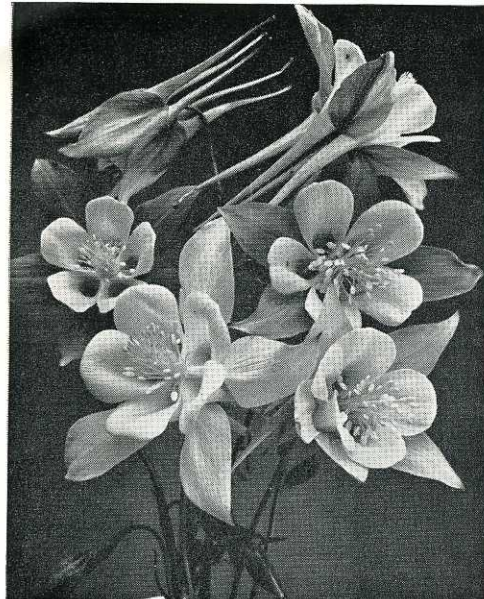
Don't expect much from these youngsters next summer, and don't be disappointed if, even then, they do not give you what you expected by way of bloom. Look after them, and the next year you will have your reward, for they will throw bloom quite



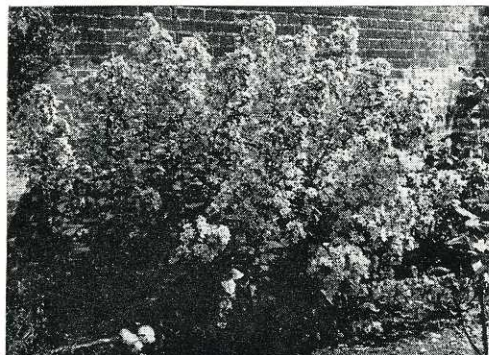
as good as many of the named varieties.

It is a fascinating business growing perennials from seed, as satisfying to one's gardening instincts as it is to one's purse.

Now for subjects, and some of the best varieties to grow, with a brief description of each, which will, I think, give some idea of the scope and wonderful range in hardy Perennials.



Aquilegia : selected long-spurred hybrids



Above : *Campanula*
Below : *Gaillardia*



Achillea, The Pearl (Double-flowered).

A very popular hardy perennial with pure white flowers, which are particularly suitable for cutting. Height 2 feet.

A. filipendula (A. eupatorium)

Golden Cloth. *A very greatly improved form of this hardy plant, with bright yellow flowers. Slightly taller than the preceding variety.*

Agrostemma coronaria (Crimson).

This is the well-known rose campion; a good rich crimson with silvery-white foliage.

Aquilegia

(Selected Long-spurred Hybrids). *An excellent subject for semi-shaded positions. The refined beauty of the various shades of the Long-spurred Aquilegia make this a most charming subject for garden and table decoration.*

Available in: Pure White, Yellow, Pink, Strawberry Red, Azure Fairy and Blue. Also: Aquilegia: Crimson and Gold.

Armeria. *The variety known as Giant Pink has been selected to a true rose-pink colour. A particularly robust border plant.*

Campanula. *A delightful subject both for beds and borders, and the dwarf kinds such as C. muralis make fine plants for the rock garden.*

Coreopsis grandiflora. *Another grand plant for the border, remaining in bloom throughout the whole of the summer. The variety, Duplex, is a semi-double form of this subject with bright yellow flowers.*

Delphinium Hybridum (Improved Mixed Shades). *These are very easily grown from seed, Colours: Light Blue and White, from which it is possible to produce the best colours and shades, with flowers quite equal to the named varieties. A very interesting variety in this subject, which is in the novelty class of this year, is Hybridum Lavender Pink, which is a delicate, misty lavender pink shade. A lovely variety.*

Gaillardia. *A very colourful perennial, particularly valuable for garden decoration. The Large-Flowered Single Mixed include golden yellow selfs, brilliant crimson edged flowers, also gold banded.*

Geum. *The variety Mrs. Bradshaw, with its large, double, crimson-scarlet blooms, comes quite true from seed and is extremely useful for cutting.*

Heuchera sanguinea. *Excellent for rock gardens and borders; foliage dwarf, compact; easily grown from seed; a vivid red colour; invaluable for cutting.*

Hollyhock. *Seedling Hollyhocks bloom freely, and are much less susceptible to the deadly*

fungus which attacks the plants raised from cuttings or by grafting. Should be planted in their permanent quarters in the spring.

Kniphofia (Early Flowering Hybrids.)

This is another hardy perennial which can be flowered in the same year from an early sowing in gentle heat in the spring. Contains a very wide range of bright and unusual colours, including pale and deep yellows, and shades of orange, salmon, pink and deep red.

Lupinus polyphyllus. *This subject offers a grand opportunity to obtain a really fine show with very little outlay.*

Available in: White, Yellow, Salmon and Buff Shades, Pink, Crimson Beauty, Bright Blue, Purple Prince, Hybrids, Special Mixture. Also: Lupinus, Russell Strain.

Nepeta mussinii. *An excellent plant for edging, and one which comes quite satisfactorily from seed.*

Papaver Nudicaule

(Akarana Scarlet). *A very useful subject, particularly on account of the very bright colours which comes into flower between the spring and summer flowering subjects. Plants may be placed in their permanent quarters either in the autumn or spring.*

Available in: Large-flowered Strain, Lemon Yellow, Orange, Pink Shades.

Papaver Orientale

(Hybrid Art Shades). *Particularly suitable for making a really early-flowering display in the herbaceous border, and consists of an extremely attractive mixture.*

Penstemon barbata. *An extremely easy subject to grow from seed in all gardens.*

Penstemon (mixed colours). *The large-flowered strains of this very popular perennial have been greatly improved and come perfectly true from seed.*

Pink

(Dianthus plumarius). *A good old English flower, which should be more widely grown. Single Hybrids Mixed have a wide range of extremely attractive shades. Height 12 inches.*

Pyrethrums (Large-Flowered Special Hybrids). *A very handsome herbaceous perennial.*

Golden Feather. *An excellent dwarf foliage plant. The variety Golden Ball requires no pinching during the summer and each plant forms a charming ball of golden yellow. Height 4 inches.*

Rudbeckia (Hybrids). *A selected strain of Hybrid Rudbeckia producing vigorous plants growing 3 to 4 feet high, carrying enormous*

flowers on long stems during late summer and autumn.

Rudbeckia purpurea. *A handsome flower with dark centres and deep purplish-rose petals. A plant well worthy of a place in the perennial border.*

Scabiosa caucasica. *An extremely decorative hardy perennial. If sown in heat during March, and the plants put out early, it will bloom the same season; contains attractive shades of mauve as well as white. Height 2 feet.*

Valerian. *This is an admirable subject for the wild garden and border. Height 2 feet.*

If you are still not convinced and feel this takes too long, just choose one or two kinds and try those. Particular subjects which might be tried first, and which are favourites of mine are: Aquilegia, Selected Long-spurred Hybrids; *Delphinium hybridum*, Improved Mixed Shades; Lupins, Russell Strain and Hybridum, Special Mixture; Hollyhock, Double Mixed and Brilliant Mixture. You will be amazed how soon the time passes before you see the plants in full bloom. Whatever you do don't coddle the little plants. Give them fair treatment and see that the soil is in good heart for their final quarters and they will be perfectly happy. One of the great advantages of seedlings is that they are full of vigour and make strong plants quite quickly. In this they compare favourably with plants of some named varieties, which have been in cultivation for years and are propagated vegetatively.

Another great use for perennials from seed is for spring gardens. Subjects such as *Arabis albida*, double daisies, myosotis, polyanthus, primroses, violas and pansies, can all be raised from seed; and many of those named, if sown in June, will give a good account of themselves the following spring, and without the aid of heated glass, since they are all very hardy.

Yes, do try and grow hardy plants from seed. It will not only pay you, but will give you endless pleasure.

Ideas for Border Variations

Alan Bloom

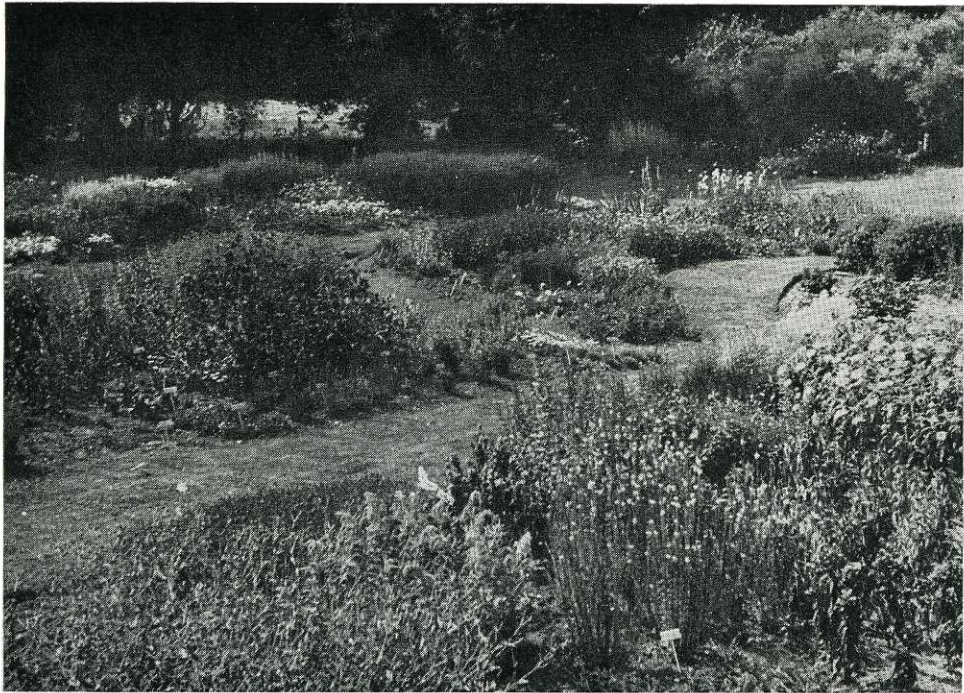
THE NEW TREND, so far only just beginning, is towards less rigid formality in borders, avoiding the backing hedge or fence and including some trees and shrubs amongst well-spaced groups of hardy plants, the border being of irregular outline. I greatly favour this trend, whenever it is in keeping with the surroundings, though I certainly do not condemn all one-sided borders, nor do I wish to infer that island beds or borders of formal shape are not to be recommended. On the contrary, the latter, seen and approached from two or more sides, offer the greatest scope in fairly small gardens.

The modern house in its rectangular plot (carved from a field in company with many similar plots) is, of necessity, compassed by straight boundaries. Few such gardens have even a mature tree to break up the uniformity. Most are laid out in the traditional manner, with a centre lawn, rose beds and such like, and the "herbaceous border" automatically placed alongside a boundary hedge or fence. Often a few shrubs or flowering trees compete for space in the border, and the narrower the border the less satisfactory it is, from all points of view.

In this article I wish to emphasize the greater opportunities afforded by island sites. At some future date I shall suggest ways and means of improving traditional one-sided borders for anyone dissatisfied with those they possess. The scope for perennials is so wide that it would need a whole series of articles to cover it and, here, I can only touch upon its outlines. Generally speaking, however, the smaller the garden the less likelihood there is of informal beds and borders of perennials fitting in.

For many gardens, the midget border is the answer, some of its inhabitants being in the category of rock plants as far as height is concerned. Few so-called rock plants need the company of rocks, and hosts of plants growing only a few inches high will show up well in a midget border, backed by subjects mostly used in the front of a larger lay-out. Because it contains plants of lowly stature a midget border can be planted densely, and with a wide variety of subjects, and a garden, too small for a full-scale border, is seldom too small for one or more of these narrow borders. Though best sited in the open and, perhaps, raised a little with a path or grass on at least two sides, there is, nevertheless, a range of suitable perennials to fill a shaded border close to a wall. The shade and root competition of large trees is a more difficult obstacle to overcome.

In the medium- to small-sized gardens, so often found in the older suburban districts, midget borders are still a good proposition. But perennial borders are capable of almost infinite gradation, especially where an open island site is used. No matter what the shape, the border which contains its tallest subjects near the centre, can be anything from 4 to 40 feet wide. The heights should be from the centre to the edges. Many existing borders contain too many tall subjects. The narrower the border, the more ungainly, incongruous, untidy and trouble-



The delightful, but carefully planned, informality of the perennial borders in the author's garden.

some these tall plants are, especially if backed by a wall, hedge or fence. But, in open island sites, where heights are limited in proportion to width, anything inclined to legginess will grow more sturdily and be seen to advantage, instead of lolling over lowlier neighbours or propped up with unsightly stakes.

Though ways and means can often be found to accommodate quite tall subjects in small gardens, I would strongly recommend that height be limited in relation to width in a planned mixed border. For those who wish to prove how effective this can be, there is a fairly general rule which can be followed. Limit the height of the tallest subjects to approximately half the width of the border. In a one-sided border, it could be a little more

than this, but only a little—say 3 feet for a 5 feet border. In such a border, tall delphiniums, heleniums, etc., would be out of place, chiefly because their massive spikes or heads must be supported and, also, because they show too much bare stem.

The idea of a number of one kind of plant forming a group in a border is well accepted—though, unfortunately, by no means generally a feature of border planning. Yet it is the only way to plan a border successfully. Also greater space should be allowed between these groups than between the individual plants comprising each group. This allows sun and air to reach the plants and is beneficial to their health and strength. It enables the members of each group to grow together with massed effect, and the



Another charming example of the carefully planned air of careless confusion in the borders at Bressingham.

weeds between them stand less chance, whilst between the groups adequate space allows for easier hoeing and cultivation. As an example, if the space between a group of, say, five plants of moderate height is roughly 12 inches each way, the space between the group and those adjoining it should be a good 18 inches.

Lastly, a few words on informal borders. Wherever a site can be chosen with irregular outlines as background, be it trees, shrubs or anything else, a border of informal design will fit the situation. An irregularly shaped sweep of lawn will enhance the whole, whether the border is one-sided or not. Indeed, with a background of trees and shrubs, a bed of wide dimensions viewed only from the front, may be much the best plan.

Adequate width is the key to all successful borders and, with careful selection of plants, borders can be scaled down to suit gardens of all sizes. There is no real limit to the possibilities with a border occupying an island site, and the only shapes to be avoided are those of fancy, geometric design.

The ideas I have briefly mentioned do not exhaust the potentialities of perennials. Moisture and shade borders, natural or artificial, are within the reach of many gardeners. Borders comprised of aromatic subjects, or designed for specific genera or colour, for foliage effect, for bees, or for seasonal flowering, are all possibilities for the enthusiastic grower of hardy plants.

Plants

I Long to Have

A. V. Pike, N.D.H.

FOR MANY YEARS before the war, I tried to obtain a plant of *Chamalirium carolinianum*, and I am still unsuccessful. This is a lovely liliaceous subject, with plantain-like foliage, overtopped by exquisite, pure white eremurus-like flowers—I am afraid I shall never see this plant in the flesh.

Another liliaceous plant I long for is *Stenanthium robustum*, a bulbous subject with light, elegant, semi-pendulous plumes of white flowers up to 6 feet high. This, apparently, is another plant that has joined the limbo of the lost.

Lastly, a plant that I have not seen for years—an especial favourite of mine for embellishing a border for October flowering, is *Boltonia asteroides*. Up to 6 feet high, this subject resembles a michaelmas daisy; during October it is literally smothered with 1-inch wide, flesh-pink, single daisies. Apart from providing a splash of colour in the border, it is quite effective as a cut flower.

A further species of *Boltonia* that is also quite effective is *B. latisquamata*.

PLANTS I LONG TO HAVE

No doubt readers will sense the loss which many contributors to this issue feel at the passing of so many lovely plants.

Will you, therefore, if you have, or know of, any of these unusually lovely old plants, drop me a line about them as we, in the Society, are very keen to rescue them from unwarranted oblivion.

I shall also be glad to see any short features (as Mr. Pike's above) on Plants I Long to Have. - Editor.

BOOK REVIEW

"Herbaceous Garden Flora"

by F. K. Makins, M.A., F.L.S. (Dent 35s.)

AT PRESENT there are too few works of reference dealing with herbaceous plants, and this new guide to the identification of more than 1,000 species of herbaceous perennials, biennials and annuals cultivated in British gardens for ornament, with 224 pages of excellent line drawings, will be welcomed by all hardy plant enthusiasts, as well as those who have a liking for some of the less hardy plants.

It is sad that Mr. Makins never lived to see his book published, but those who know of, or have used, his former book "The Identification of Trees and Shrubs" will find this present work equally helpful and interesting.

A book such as this is the result of much time and labour, both by the author and the artist, Miss Pamela R. Lane; the latter is too often forgotten.

The range of plants dealt with includes 96 families, 668 genera, and 991 species of herbaceous perennials, biennials and annuals, of which 238 species are native or naturalized in Britain.

There is a very full glossary, particularly useful to the gardener who has perhaps little or no botanical knowledge, and also a helpful key to the families. In addition to these facilities, there is a section giving brief descriptions. By using the glossary key and descriptions, interested gardeners will be able to track down the name of the plant they wish to identify. And for those who abhor botanical names the more popular common ones are also given, though without the correct botanical nomenclature a work such as this would be of little general use. This is primarily a work of reference and many happy hours could be spent by flapping over the pages and admiring the line drawings and discovering many plants not normally seen.

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