

THE BULLETIN OF THE
HARDY PLANT

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SOCIETY

1957





CAMPANULA TRACHELIUM
(see page eleven)

THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

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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 Bulletins 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.

BY THE TIME this copy of the "Bulletin" is published we will be approaching the end of another season and, with Southport behind us, we will each of us go our separate ways, revelling in that sense of delightful lethargy of which the true gardener experiences all too little.



Some of us will "take wing" and go plant hunting in a more congenial clime, some will take pen and write for the future edification of others, while most of us will revel in the glories of our autumn foliage, marvel at Nature's artistry with a cobweb and ten degrees of frost, and give thanks, to whomsoever they please, for the discovery of rum punch!

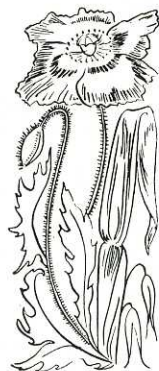
But, may I express the hope that, no matter how we choose to spend the winter, we will each of us try to instill in others a greater understanding of the beauty of plants.

And now, in the words of Thomas Mawe, Gardener to His Grace the Duke of Leeds, I should like to

"... take this opportunity to thank the Public, in general, for the very kind reception with which they have been pleased to honour this work; and, at the same time, to return our most grateful acknowledgments to those Gentlemen and Gardeners in particular, who have favoured us with hints for its improvement; they will see that we have availed ourselves, as much as possible, of their observations and instructions. And as systems like ours can never be absolutely complete, owing to the many new discoveries which are daily making in the different parts of Europe, we earnestly hope that those persons who are engaged in the cultivation of gardens, will continue to oblige us with such discoveries as may occur in the progress of their employment, which we shall most thankfully receive, and gratefully acknowledge. . . ."

H. Champneys

More Hardy Perennials Worth Seeking



Will Ingwersen

THOSE WHO ASK for nothing more than a splash of vivid colour from the plants in their garden would probably pass by the stately spires of *Gentiana lutea* without a second glance, and yet this most "un-gentian-like" plant is extremely decorative in the right setting. It is a plant of sub-alpine meadows and high plateaux in the mountains of Europe and is the plant from the roots of which medicinal gentian is obtained. The roots are deeply-delving and an old established plant defies all attempts to extricate it so that it should be planted in the form of small plants grown from seed. The leaves are as wide and handsome as those of a veratrum—for which it is sometimes mistaken until it is in flower—and the erect, leafy flower stems which reach a height of between 3 and 4 feet carry many pale yellow flowers.

The blossoms cannot compare for beauty with those of the better-known and ever-popular gentians, but the plant has architectural beauty and should be planted on the fringe between cultivation and the wild, in small groups or even as isolated specimens to be fully appreciated. Placed among other perennials in a flower border its character is submerged and lost.

Although *Rhexia virginica* was introduced into this country as long ago as 1759 from N. America, it remains a scarce plant in gardens, even though it has much to recommend it to those who enjoy plants which are out-of-the-ordinary. Given a position in soil which is rich and deep and moist, it will repay the effort required to provide such conditions in gardens not fortunate enough to possess them ready-made, with its lightly-branched, foot-high stems bearing flowers of rich rose-red in the late summer. There are at least two other species in occasional cultivation, *R. ciliosa* and *R. mariana*, but neither of them is so garden-worthy as *R. virginica*. They are not lovers of lime and vastly prefer soil which is rich in peat and verges on to being acid.

Sedum maximum atropurpureum, the giant, mahogany-leaved stonecrop, is calculated to please both the gardener and his wife, but may well be the cause of some friction between them since she is certain to wish to raze it to ground level at frequent intervals and employ the richly-hued stems and leaves in flower arrangements, whilst he will prefer to enjoy it in its association with other plants as it grows in the garden. A solution to this problem, which is growing in intensity as interest in floral arrangements increases, is to provide a special border with a duplicate collection, where my lady may cut to her heart's desire. Even so, she is apt to stray into forbidden territory in search of the odd scraps which seem so essential!

Assuming that it has been possible to secure a corner of the garden which can be planted with "untouchables", it is pleasant to associate this fine sedum with a grey-leaved artemisia and a few plants of the autumn-flowering Californian fuchsia, *Zauschneria californica splendens*. The blending of deep purple sedum, silvery artemisia and scarlet zauschneria flowers is very striking and persists over a period of several weeks in the late summer and early autumn.

I often wonder why rodgersias have become so scarce in gardens. They are so strikingly handsome that it seems impossible to imagine them ever falling out of fashion. Natives of China and Japan, several species have been in cultivation for many years. One at least, *Rodgersia podophylla*, was brought from Japan in 1880, and yet they are very seldom seen now in the gardens of any but collectors of rarities. They are stately plants, belonging to the saxifrage family, with large and very decorative leaves and large panicles of small flowers carried on tall stems. They are perhaps too majestic for a really small garden, but are supremely beautiful when it is possible to place them by a stream or pond-side, or when used as specimen plants in rich and moist soil. Of the half-dozen or so species occasionally to be discovered in nurserymen's lists, possibly the most desirable are *R. asculifolia*, *R. pinnata* and *R. podophylla*. They are well worth seeking.

The celandine poppy, *Stylophorum diphyllum*, belongs to a small genus containing only three species and is a member of the great poppy family, a group which contains so many splendid plants which have done much to add to the interest and beauty of our gardens. *S. diphyllum* is a semi-woodland plant from N. America, and it will flourish in quite poor soil and flowers freely in the shade of overhanging trees—a virtue which will endear it to



those who find it difficult to populate such positions with flowering plants.

The plant grows about a foot or 15 inches tall and has pretty, deeply cut leaves and carries loose terminal clusters of inch-wide clear yellow flowers, the petals overlapping to form very perfect and shapely flowers. It is usually at its best during May, but the flowering period may vary one way or another according to the season. It is a good perennial, perfectly hardy and may be increased either by division or from the freely produced seeds, which should be sown as soon as possible after they are ripe. Like many of the *Papaveraceae* the seeds quickly lose viability, especially if stored in dry rooms.

Violas of all kinds, whether they be rare, high-alpine species, or fat and complacent garden pansies, have won for themselves a niche in the hearts of all gardeners from which they cannot be dislodged. *Viola elatior* is a species all too seldom seen in gardens, but which is dearly loved by all who possess it. It has an unusual habit of growth for a viola, forming stiff, erect bushes some 12 inches in height, with leafy stems, from the axils of which spring innumerable pale lavender-blue violet flowers in endless succession from May onwards.

It is not a brilliant or showy plant and should not be grown with plants which would obscure its quiet beauty. It is splendid for naturalizing in semi-wild places and, like the stylophorum, will grow and flower in the shade of trees as well as when planted fully in the open. It is able to maintain itself by means of self-sown seedlings and is one of those pleasant plants which, once established, will live and grow for years with very little attention.

You may have to hunt through many a catalogue before you find *Vernonia crinita* listed—and it might be discovered under its invalid synonym, *V. arkansana*, but it is well worth bearing in mind as a very attractive, late-flowering perennial of the easiest good nature which will carry on when even michaelmas daisies are thinking of calling it a day and will flower well into November.

Vernonia is a vast family, mostly weeds, and few of the six hundred or more known species possess any real garden value, but *V. crinita* is a notable exception. If grown in the deep, rich soil which it loves, the robust, leafy stems will attain a height of 5 or 6 feet, branching near the top to bear terminal heads of closely packed, purple, composite flowers. There is also an albino variety which is as attractive as the type. It is definitely a plant to consider when seeking to extend the season during which flowers are available in the garden.

There are places in many gardens which cry out for such plants as lily of the valley and solomon's seal, and for which a collection of vastly interesting plants can be accumulated in time. *Uvularias*, which belong to the lily family, are well suited to such positions, and both *Uvularia grandiflora* and *U. perfoliata* will provide perennial pleasure once they are established in the cool, rather light soil which best pleases their rhizomatous roots. They are similar in

appearance, *U. grandiflora* being the more robust of the two, with slender leafy stems a little more than a foot in height carrying at the tips solitary or twin flowers of soft yellow, pendant between the narrow, sharply pointed leaves.

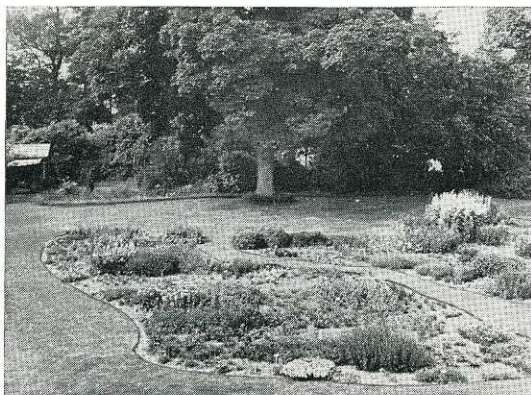
I do not want to say too much about the handsome spurges at this stage as I have an idea that they will form the subject of an invaluable future article in this bulletin, but one of them, which has for many years been a special favourite of my own, I will include in this list of desirable, but not commonly-seen plants. It is *Euphorbia sikkimensis*, a species which enjoys the distinction of being beautiful from the moment when its shoots first pierce through the soil in the spring, through all its stages of development, until it is ready to die down again in the late autumn. So many plants we patiently nurse through infancy to enjoy an all-too-brief display, but this is one of the few which are lovely all the way.

The first visible signs of *E. sikkimensis* are slender, pointed shoots which look like ruby glass. These slowly extend and become, eventually, three-foot stems adorned with elegant, narrow, pointed leaves of deepest green, with crimson midribs and veins. The inflorescence consists of small, yellowish flowers carried between large and decorative yellow and orange bracts. The colouring of stems, foliage and flower bracts intensifies as the year advances, finally playing no mean part in the brilliant pageantry of autumn.

In some gardens, where the soil is light and warm, *E. sikkimensis* spreads vigorously and, were it not so beautiful, there might be a danger of it being considered something of a nuisance. I can only say that, although it spreads itself generously in my garden, I am only too happy to give it space, and find it easy enough to prevent it from encroaching into areas where it is not required.

Alan Bloom

Island Borders



I AM A REBEL against the traditional, narrow, one-sided border and with good reason. It is that I have proved that the best site for a border—no matter what the size or shape—is in the open, away from walls, hedges or fences. I realize my good fortune in having a garden of ample space where informal borders are perfectly in keeping. Though I have a walled garden as well, my borders of perennials are separate, with grass swards between and trees as background. The site was once a large lawn in front of the house, but I have never regretted the decision to break it up, for it is now the home of nearly 800 different species and varieties of perennials under near-perfect conditions.

Though many gardens are confined to a fairly narrow rectangular plot at the back of the house, there are ways and means of introducing informality even where mainly straight lines exist. Careful planning is needed, as well as some boldness in breaking with tradition. For most people, hitherto, the obvious place for the “herbaceous border” has been alongside the boundary fence. It is seldom the best place, for the reasons given in my last article. But if shrubs and trees were planted on either side, the irregularity they achieve in course of time can provide the necessary setting for a sizeable perennial border thereabouts in the centre of the garden; they will also provide privacy. The bed’s size and shape must be at one’s own discretion and pleasure, but it should have access and be viewed from at least two sides.

To embark on such a plan must inevitably conflict with the stereotyped layout of a lawn as the centre of a garden plot. But why not? So long as sufficient grass is left to set-off the rest of the garden, to use for tea out of doors and what not, is there any reason why much space should be taken up by a lawn which often needs almost as much attention as if it were cultivated?

As a nation, we are much too hidebound by tradition, but there is no excuse for it in the garden where one has the rare chance of being able to express one’s own individuality. And there is little doubt that an island border as the centre-piece of the modern small garden could give its owner immense pleasure and satisfaction.

With readers having gardens of all shapes and sizes, suburban or rural in location, it is difficult to put over this free-form idea for borders with adequate detail. It is, however, worth remembering that groups of perennials in association with one another provide anything but a formal effect. Always they should be planted in groups to look their best. Single plants of a kind cannot be recommended except for those whose interest lies in variety rather than effect—where space is more

restricted than the variety craved for. Groups of not less than three plants each for small borders and even up to a score for those of larger dimensions are much more effective.

Such groups show great variety both of form and height, as well as of colour and time of flowering. There can, therefore, be no question of formality within the border itself whatever its shape and position. There can be no regimentation as with bedding plants, and any attempt to make colour patterns will not work. Besides, any deeper, more æsthetic interest in the plants themselves becomes submerged. It is this interest which gives the greatest of all satisfactions in gardening.

Border planning becomes a matter of marrying flowering effect with cultural interest—at least for those keen enough to become members of the Hardy Plant Society. By the same token, it is more than likely that a bolder and yet more rational approach to the rightful place of perennials in the garden will spring from our members. This approach, like the formation of the Society itself, is, if anything, overdue.

Though preferring free-form border shapes whenever environment lends itself or can be created, any island site is generally more effective than the narrow one-sided affair backed by a wall, hedge or fence. The reasons against the latter were given in my last article, but here are my points in favour of island sites.

Groups of plants will grow more strongly in the open and cut down the need for staking. Though heights should be limited, the elimination of the taller helianthus, heleniums, solidagos, asters and even delphiniums, can always be compensated by selecting shorter varieties. In some cases it is possible to reduce heights even of tall subjects merely by cutting down shoots well in advance of flowering, to make them branch outwards. This procedure is

worth experimenting with, since the range is too wide for detailed information here. To my mind any form of staking is unsightly and, with few exceptions, I would exclude anything over 4 feet high. Though tall subjects are less likely to need staking in a two-sided border, a better effect is achieved without the leggy or top-heavy kinds.

Perhaps the most important point in favour of two-sided, or island, borders is that the plants can be seen—and seen growing naturally. For most enthusiasts, the appeal comes not only from seeing groups of flowers blending for colour, but from seeing the plants themselves in all their beauty. Groups of each kind with adequate surrounding space, grow as one massive plant and, with careful planning, will ensure perfection.

Heights can be graded upwards towards the centre, but regularity is best avoided. The aim should be to place groups of spiky flowered plants next to those of a more bushy nature. And late-flowering bushy kinds, such as some michaelmas daisies, can often hide up the stems of those which have passed their best earlier in the summer.

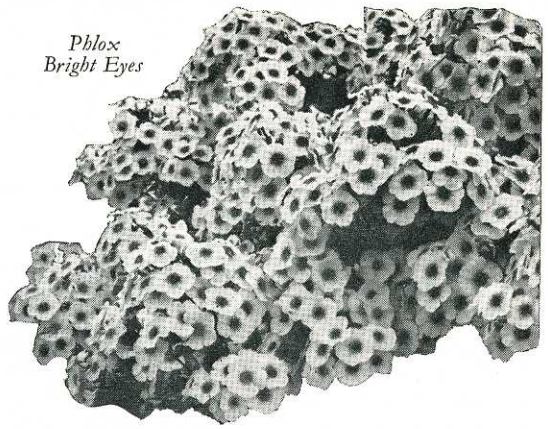
Accessibility is another point in favour of island borders, whether of formal shape or otherwise. Adequate depth or breadth is so often the determining factor in achieving border perfection, and the necessary access is therefore twice as easy. From all points the best scope of perennials seems to lie in the use of island sites.

If any who are already dissatisfied with one of the narrow one-sided affairs are tempted to break away from tradition, the idea may well take root and finally open up delights never before achieved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are indebted to the Editors of "Amateur Gardening" and "The Garden" for the illustrations in this issue.

Phlox
Bright Eyes



Hardy Plants for Bedding

S. M. Gault, A.H.R.H.S.

HARDY PERENNIAL PLANTS have been confined to the herbaceous border for so long in most gardens, that it is only now that many gardeners realize that they may be utilized in other ways. The saying "Variety is the spice of life" is probably more applicable these days than ever before, so why not introduce a little more variety in our bedding plants by using hardy perennials in suitable situations in large gardens and public parks? Few would introduce these plants in a formal bedding scheme, although even there some can be used effectively but, personally, I feel that better use of hardy plants can be made in isolated beds in more informal surroundings. In such situations one or two large, permanent beds can be planted with such subjects as pæonia, kniphofia and *Salvia superba*. All of these give increasing pleasure for several years, the plants improving with establishment. Their season of beauty can be extended by interplanting bulbs, and the salvia could have its new compact form, *lubeca* (syn. *Compacta*), as a groundwork, a combination I hope to try out in the near future.

Many gardens, public and others, are sadly lacking in colour during the period between the demise of the spring flowers and before the usual bedding plants (pelargoniums, antirrhinums, etc.) have attained their high summer beauty. This is the time to enjoy even a small bed of *Dicentra spectabilis*, a beautiful plant, familiar to many as "bleeding heart" and beloved by a former generation for conservatory and house decoration. Quite hardy, the plants are best grown in pots and can be easily accommodated in a cold frame or even in a sheltered corner, whence they may be plunged in their flowering quarters and again returned to the nursery after their zenith has passed. If planted and looked after these plants can be used again and again or, of course, may be given a permanent position elsewhere in the garden.

For a more spectacular display few plants can rival a good strain of Russell lupins, which can be grown from seed quite readily. The seedlings should be pricked off at least 12 inches apart either way and, if sown during April or May, will flower in the autumn. This flowering may not enhance the normal display but it enables one to remove the colours considered undesirable. Planting may be carried out in early spring when soil conditions allow. Generally speaking, these plants can be scrapped after flowering; being easily produced they are not worth trying to save, with the possible exception of an outstanding plant.

If a bed of mixed colours does not meet with approval one of the named varieties may be grown in pots or deep wooden boxes and plunged in the bed just before coming into flower. Lady Diana Abdy and Mrs. Micklethwaite may be oldish

CONTRIBUTIONS

I shall be very pleased to receive contributions from Members of the Hardy Plant Society with a view to ultimate publication. Illustrations of unusual and lesser-known plants, with brief accompanying notes, will also be welcomed.
H.C.

varieties of this type but I have found them useful for this particular purpose, being pleasing in colour and fairly dwarf in habit. These plants are of some value as they can be replanted in the nursery after removal from their receptacles. These remarks apply to delphiniums also, but some staking is necessary with these taller plants.

Liatris have aroused increasing interest of recent years and, I believe, are favoured as a cut flower because of the unusual pale purple colouring. They are interesting plants also because of their unusual flowering habit, starting to open at the top and working downwards. For a smallish bed the variety *Kobold* has much to recommend it, while *L. callilepis* and *L. pycnostachya* are good for large beds. *Liatris* can be easily grown in wire pots similar to those used by many commercial growers for chrysanthemums, the pots being plunged in a nursery bed when conditions permit. The plants can be potted up early in the year and placed in a sheltered position until plunging can take place.

Another plant which responds well to cultivation in wire pots and makes an ideal subject for large or small beds is the phlox, available in many varieties and colours. The white *Mia Ruys* is ideal for a small bed, but this colour is sometimes best avoided in industrial areas. Another good white for larger beds is *Rembrandt*, other favourites of mine being *Caroline Vandenburg*, lilac blue, the brilliant reddish-orange *Brigadier*, Mrs. Ethel Prichard, of soft lavender hue, *Windsor*, a more recent

introduction but very telling in cerise and carmine colouring, and *Duchess of York*, a most attractive phlox in soft salmon pink.

Few plants can brighten up a somewhat dull corner during the summer months more readily than *Anthemis tinctoria*, particularly if one of the modern varieties is used. *Beauty of Grallagh* is ideal for this purpose and grows into a lovely plant from cuttings rooted in a cold frame during autumn. Potted into 4- or 5-inch pots during early spring and kept in a cold frame until early April, this plant grows rapidly and makes a wonderful display. *Grallagh Gold* also is well worth growing and *Wargrave Variety* is a worthy plant where softer colourings are preferred, being of sulphur yellow shading.

A plant which I always welcome in the garden because of the great joy it brings through its floral display is *Sedum spectabile*; it has lovely glaucous leaves and its flowers are a great attraction for butterflies. This is a first class plant and one which can, with care, be lifted from the nursery, replanted, and which, if well watered in, will still give a fine display. Most people seem to find the carmine rose shades of such varieties as *Brilliant* and *Meteor* more attractive than the pale pink of the original plant, but it is also worthy of a place, if not in a bed, at least in front of the border.

I am now rapidly using up the space I have been allotted so must hasten to name a few suggestions to carry on the display of hardy plants during late summer and autumn.

Physostegia speciosa *Vivid* is another lovely plant for an autumn bed. Unfortunately, so far I have only succeeded with it from spring planting so that some waiting time is involved. Anyway, when it arrives how beautiful it is with its bright rosy crimson flowers, another of its attractions being that its

flowers can be moved round and will remain where placed, hence the popular name of "obedient plant".

I almost forgot *Aster frikarii*, a plant of the greatest garden value, certainly worthy of a bed but seldom seen in gardens; its blue flowers are produced over a long season and are most attractive, so much so that the plant received a First Class Certificate at Wisley in 1955, an award reserved for the best plants only and certainly deserved.

CAMPANULA TRACHELIUM

G. H. Preston, F.L.S.

To many people perhaps, *Campanula trachelium* is not such a desirable species as many others in this very large and beautiful genus. Nevertheless, if well grown, it can be a very attractive perennial and well worthy of a place in the mixed herbaceous border; while it also makes a very pleasing subject for planting in the woodland or wild garden.

Campanula trachelium has a perennial rootstock from which arise each spring strong, angular, hairy stems, bearing rough, dark green, heart-shaped leaves. During the months of July and August many large, nodding, bell-shaped, purple flowers are produced in racemes from 12 to 18 in. long. The flowers arise from the upper axils of the stem and the whole plant has a very neat and upright habit of growth which requires very little if any staking.

Over a period of years a number of other coloured forms have been produced in white, blue and mauve, and there are both single and double flowered forms.

Although it will grow in any good, well drained soil, it does prefer a cool retentive soil rather than one which is of a light, sandy nature. It can be easily increased from seed, cuttings or divisions of the rootstock, which is best done during early spring before new growth commences.

Once the plants are established they require very little attention but like many other vigorous herbaceous perennials they will need lifting and dividing every few years when the clumps have spread and become overcrowded.

Campanula trachelium is to be found growing wild in several localities of the British Isles and extends to many other parts of Europe, extending to Siberia and Japan in the East, while it is also a native of North Africa.

Our First Outing

IN SPITE OF THE RAIN, forty-two members had an interesting and enjoyable day on the occasion of the Society's first outing, to Bressingham Hall, Diss, the home of our Chairman, where we were joined by seventeen other members who had arrived (hours) beforehand. We then toured the island herbaceous beds in front of the house—undoubtedly the way to grow and show off herbaceous perennials to their best advantage.

I, personally, have never seen anything just like it before. The curved, shaped beds were full of old favourites together with new introductions. We saw such plants as *Lytbrum virgatum*, The Rocket; *Aconitum napellus bicolor*; *Linaria purpurea*, Canon J. Want, a pale pink; *Dianthus*, Casser's Pink, a double-flowered variety with carmine red blooms; *Salvia superba* and its dwarf counterpart, *S. lubeca*, and so on.

After the show beds Mr. and Mrs. Bloom showed us round the fields and nursery beds, but to see 80,000 plants of Christmas roses (*Helleborus niger*) all at once would, I think, possibly startle our members in the U.S.A. There were drifts of phlox as well as the new varieties of erigerons which all looked very colourful.

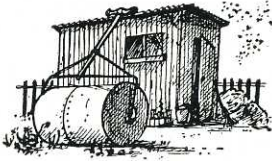
Our tour of the nursery finished, we returned to Bressingham Hall for tea—a superb spread arranged by Mrs. Bloom who had even iced a cake with "H.P.S." and, to use a schoolboy's expression, it was "smashing."

Dr. Rohan Williams thanked Mr. and Mrs. Alan Bloom for their generous hospitality and ably expressed how much we had all enjoyed our visit.

N. J. P.

FUTURE OUTINGS

Further outings are being planned by the Committee and Members will be notified as soon as all arrangements are completed.



Hardy Plants for Industrial Areas

THE USE OF hardy perennial plants gives us an economic method of providing bloom in our gardens. The display of colour can be extended over a long period in the year, and once they are established these plants require little in the way of maintenance beyond an occasional hoeing, some staking where necessary, a feed in early spring, and lifting and dividing every two or three years, according to the plant.

Here, we are considering those plants which will not only grow, but will give a good display under the polluted conditions of an industrial atmosphere. Plants which just exist but never look happy are not included. The choice is a very wide one, as hardy perennials have the advantage of dying back to ground level in late autumn. We thus have no growth in winter, that part of the year when atmospheric pollution is at its worst. Fresh growth appears each spring, and this evidence of nature's rebirth is one of the most heartening things in the grey atmosphere of our industrial towns.

We need to concentrate on the bright colours to combat this greyness. The popularity of the scarlet geranium for window boxes and beds is due to its brightness in dull surroundings. In the same way, our hardy plants must be chosen with care, avoiding pale and dull colours, which seem insipid in this context. Bright red, blue, yellow or gold, and deep pink are all good. White should be used sparingly, as it so soon gets dirty. Where it is used, have a good sweep of it to avoid a spotty effect.

Lychnis chalcedonica has brilliant, geranium-red flowers and is an excellent plant for town planting. It gives point and focus to the border, and is 2½ feet in height. *L. chalcedonica rubra-plena* is a double form. These flower from June to July, and may be raised from seed sown in late February.

The bergamot, *Monarda didyma*, is another good bright-flowered plant, and has aromatic foliage. The variety best suited for our purpose is Cambridge Scarlet. Croftway Pink is a shade too pale for town conditions.

Among the aristocrats of the hardy plants is the stately delphinium. Fortunately, it grows very well under industrial conditions, although we must not expect Chelsea Show standards. The colour range is predominantly blue, mauve and purple, but some very good whites are now appearing, and there is Pink Sensation. The tall, stately varieties belong to the "elatum" group, but the "belladonna" varieties are shorter and more branching, and can be used further forward than the elatums.

An early flowering subject that does very well in towns is the lupin. The colours of the modern hybrids range over the whole spectrum, and have good solid spikes of great depth and colour, flowering from May to June, 3 to 4½ feet in height. Disliking lime, they do well in the often-acid soil of a town.

Yellow is a colour which gives a gay and sunny effect to our gardens. Fortunately, there is a good selection of plants for us here, many of them belonging to the natural order *Compositae*. *Rudbeckia laciniata*, the coneflower, has bright yellow petals, with a central green cone. The foliage is deeply cut and adds interest to the plant. This is a tall plant, up to 6 feet in height, which can be used for a summer hedge, acting as a foil for other flowers. Golden Glow is a double variety. The flowering period is August to September. A dwarfer variety, 2 feet high, is *Rudbeckia speciosa*, with golden yellow petals and a black central cone.

The heleniums flower well and give us yellow and brown shades with dark central discs. *Heliopsis* has golden petals and a golden disc, whilst *coreopsis* has smaller flowers, but is otherwise very similar. *Gaillardia* is another composite, with definite zones of colour on the petals. The variety Firebrand, for instance, has an outer zone of yellow, a central one of red, and a dark zone on the inner edge round the central cone, which is golden-orange. This is very effective. *Gaillardias* flower June to October, and grow to 3 to 4 feet.

As a change from the daisy family, we must mention *Achillea filipendulina* (synonym *A. eupatorium*) Gold Plate. This plant has fern-like foliage and bears flat heads of golden flowers. It is, incidentally, very useful for winter decoration when cut and dried as it will retain its golden colour. Another yellow which is particularly good in towns, is the evening primrose, *Oenothera biennis*. This should have a sunny

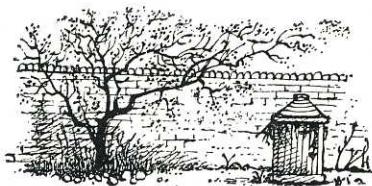
position and will sow its own seed. *Oenothera tetragona* (*O. youngii*) is smaller but very free-flowering.

One must not forget the modern varieties of solidago, or golden rod, which have entirely superseded the old drab types. They may now be obtained in heights from 2 to 5 feet and so can be used in all positions in the border or bed. They flower from August to October. The variety Leraft has flat, arching sprays, unlike the usual erect spike of most varieties.

Among the pink flowers, *Sidalcea malvaeflora* should certainly be grown. It should be left for several years to develop a good clump.

For later flowering the perennial asters, or michaelmas daisies, are indispensable and, once again, the hybridists have wrought vast improvements in recent years. Colour variations are from red, pink and white, to mauve and purple. I would like to put in a plea for two species which are not so well known, but are worth growing. The first is *Aster acris*, which has bright green foliage and bears clusters of lilac-mauve flowers with yellow centres. The second is *Aster ericoides*, with its small heather-like foliage. It bears long, branching sprays of small, star-like flowers, which are excellent for cutting. The variety Chastity is white and Blue Star is a lavender blue.

These are but a few of the hardy plants suitable for an industrial area, but it can be seen from these that there is ample choice for colourful display from May until October; let us brighten up that somewhat grey outlook of our towns.



Orchids in the Garden

Will Ingwersen

IT IS PERHAPS UNFORTUNATE that the name "orchid" has assumed a meaning as extravagant and exotic as the flowers of the cattleyas, vandas, cypripediums, odontoglossums and other tropical genera which are nurtured in heated greenhouses. The ordinary gardener is rather apt to shy away from the word, feeling that orchids are not for the likes of him.

The orchis family is a wide and miscellaneous one and includes many hardy terrestrial species which can be grown without much difficulty in the garden. That there are kinds which do not take kindly to cultivation I would be the last to deny, having struggled unavailingly on many occasions to persuade some of the curious and often beautiful wild British orchids to grow in my own garden. Careful selection of the more amenable species, however, yields a quite imposing array of orchids which add interest and beauty to many parts of the garden.

There are several Asian and American species of terrestrial cypripediums and one European, which was at one time a native of our own British flora. *Cypripedium calceolus* is very nearly extinct in Britain now ; there are just a very few plants, their locality known only to a handful of enthusiasts who regard their knowledge as an almost sacred trust, not to be lightly divulged in case these few relicts of an earlier abundance should be ruthlessly uprooted. Fortunately the species is still reasonably common in several parts of Europe, where it inhabits sub-alpine regions in lime stone alps. It is usually on the protected list and it is to be hoped that the wholesale collection of thousands of wild plants by a few professional plant collectors will be checked before there is serious danger of its extinction.

If *C. calceolus* can be provided with a cool position, either in light shade or with a northerly aspect and soil which is well drained and rich in lime and humus, it will establish without heartbreak or anxiety on the part of the enthusiast who may have paid as much as half a guinea for a small plant. Once established in conditions which it finds congenial, it will live for many years and slowly increase. I know of a colony which has been flowering every year for two decades and has only recently shown signs of deteriorating. The owner took his courage in both hands and dug up the plants, divided and replanted them in fresh soil, and they have taken on a new lease of life and show every sign of forming a vigorous new colony. The typical "lady's slipper" flowers of bronze-yellow, with a handsome pair of twisted chocolate moustaches, are very handsome.

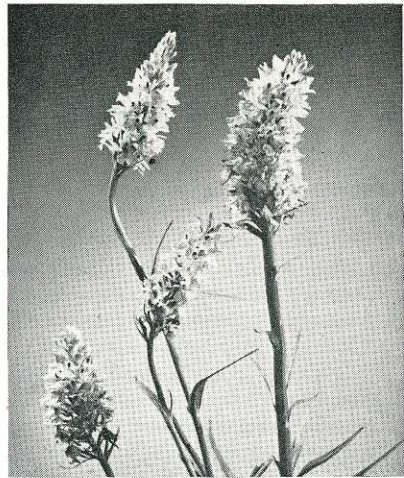
The most beautiful of all these terrestrial cypripediums is surely *C. reginae* (sometimes found under the invalid name *C. spectabile*). It is a native of the

northern United States, whence it was at one time exported in great numbers. Fortunately it is now collected with more restraint and, although it has become rare in some areas where once it was abundant, there does not seem any real danger that it will follow the dodo into extinction. If planted in deep, cool soil, rich in humus and certain never to be arid, it will, after a possible initial period of sulking, settle down and make a sturdy plant. It is apt to be a lie-abed in the spring and there is no need to become anxious if it does not appear above the ground until early or even mid-May. From the stout noses rise erect, leafy stems, topped by large-pouched flowers of pink and white.

C. pubescens and *C. parviflorum* are also from N. America, and are in many ways similar in appearance to the European *C. calceolus*. In fact, I have experienced difficulty in separating *C. parviflorum* plants which had been inadvertently included with a colony of *C. calceolus*. Neither of them, however, is very tolerant of lime and they should not be attempted in the soil which delights their "Limy" cousin.

There are several very attractive species of terrestrial cyripedium found in temperate Asia but they are, on the whole, not so easy to grow as the Europeans and Americans, nor are they at all easy to obtain, and are best avoided by those who may not have the facilities or the experience to deal with rather temperamental plants.

Among the orchis themselves are several very beautiful species which can be cultivated with no great difficulty. One of the most lovely is the stately *Orchis maderensis* (synonym *O. foliosa*) which, although it hails from Madeira, is so nearly hardy that it will grow in any but the coldest and most exposed districts, given a deep, rich, moist soil and a sheltered position. The rich-purple flowers are gathered in a dense



spike, often 9 inches in length, carried on a stout, erect stem which is capable of attaining 2 feet in height. *O. elata*, which recently gained a First Class Certificate when shown in London, is slightly less hardy, although it, too, can be grown in the open in favourable situations, and is even more handsome than *O. maderensis*, which it resembles in general appearance.

O. sambucina with flowers in many shades of both yellow and purple, tempts all gardeners who see it growing in the Alps, but it seldom shows any willingness to be transplanted to gardens, but our native species, *O. mascula* and *O. maculata* are by no means to be despised, and will often naturalize themselves very contentedly in gardens, especially if tempted by semi-wild conditions in a good loam soil.

The many insect-aping species of ophrys such as the bee, spider and fly orchises, are best left to adorn the chalk downs on which they thrive. They seldom if ever take kindly to cultivation. In fact, few of the British orchids are really garden plants, tempting though it is to attempt their cultivation. Perhaps, if we ever discover a method by which they can be raised from seed, we may train them to willing captivity. It is certain that collected plants are thoroughly unpredictable in their behaviour.

Foliage Plants

Margery Fish

A GOOD GARDEN, to my way of thinking, is one that never has its off moments. Flowers come and go, and it needs skilful planning to prevent dull patches at various times in the season.

One way to keep the garden looking furnished and attractive all the time is to use a certain number of foliage plants which are large and solid enough to give a feeling of maturity and restfulness, and enhance the beauty of the flowers planted among them. With a good backbone of foliage it doesn't matter so much if there is a bad season and some plants are thin on the ground, or if things come out at the wrong time so that carefully planned sequences of colour go awry.

One of these "backbone" plants is *Euphorbia wulfeni*. Its blue-green foliage is good all the year round, and given room to spread it makes a bold symmetrical plant. It is quite adaptable and looks just as good planted in a corner or against a wall. I believe May is the conventional time for its flowering but it seems to vary in different places. With me, the great trusses of love-bird-green flowers come very early in the year but I have seen them as late as June.

Rue is another of my standbys. Any rue is good in the garden, but for the bluest foliage the one to choose is Jackman's Blue. It makes a compact, bushy plant, about 2½ to 3 feet tall, and has small yellow flowers in late June. The variegated form has much cream in the foliage and tends to grow upright rather than rounded.

Othomopsis cheirifolia is rather low and spreading and does best in a hot, dry position. It has fleshy glaucous leaves which look just the same winter and summer, and golden daisy flowers early in the year.

It is hardly necessary to mention bergenia because I think we have all come to realize its usefulness in garden planning. Many flowers that look rather flimsy grown in the ordinary way take on a new beauty if planted with bergenia in front of them, and there is nothing better for giving strength and solidity to difficult beds, for clothing odd corners or bordering a path.

Marrubium candidissimum makes a nice hummock of woolly-grey-green which is an irresistible foil for nearly every kind of flower. The flowers are not worth worrying about and when the flower spikes get to the untidy stage of falling apart I cut them off so that the side shoots can have a chance.

Sages are evergreen and colourful and will make mounds of massive proportions in quite a short time. I think my favourite is the golden variegated version, *Salvia officinalis ictarina*. It doesn't flower and it really doesn't need to because it brings as much sunshine into the border as a clump of golden flowers. The common green sage is a wonderful foil for roses, purple sage associates well with soft blue flowers, and I grow pink flowers near the purple form that is splashed with white and cherry.

Silver foliage is perhaps the most useful and there are several hardy plants from which to choose. In Somerset I find *Cineraria maritima* and *Centaurea gymnocarpa* will weather most winters, *Senecio Blue Diamond* is all right if not too exposed, and *Senecio leuco stachys* is quite happy against a south wall, but in other parts of the country it is safer to take a few cuttings each year, or grow the cineraria from seed. The best artemisia for a vast swirl of feathery silver is *A. absinthioides*, and it is quite hardy. When it begins to look untidy it can be trimmed back drastically and very soon a good crop of new growth will cover the plant and carry it through the winter. *Artemisia pontica* has

pewter-coloured ferny foliage and is compact in growth, but loses its foliage in winter.

Santolina incana is ever-grey, hard wearing and dependable. In narrow beds the smaller version *S. incana nana* makes a neat mound, and does well in a wall, too. The lighter, more feathery *S. neapolitana* is taller and looser. In a neat garden I would plant it in a corner or against a wall. Some people do not like the rich yellow of typical santolina flowers and remove them ruthlessly. I too prefer pale colours and am lucky to have found several santolinas with sulphur flowers. The green leaved *S. viridis* makes a big cushion of bright green foliage, with flowers the greenish-yellow of lemons, which tone well with the green.

Whenever I have a problem corner to fill I use variegated apple-mint, *Mentha rotundifolia variegata*. Softest grey-green generously dappled with white, it fits in anywhere. I have seen variegated figwort, *Scrophularia nodosa variegata*, in several gardens this year. It is a most handsome plant when well grown and seems to do better with a little shade.

Hardy plants you may not know

Noël J. Prockter

Aruncus. Goat's-beard. *Rosaceae*. There are only three species of this hardy, herbaceous perennial, a close relation of the spiraea family. *Aruncus sylvester* has been known under the names of *Spiraea aruncus* and *S. humboldtii*. It is a handsome, erect-growing perennial and, to quote William Robinson from the "English Flower Garden", "in its best form it is as good in midsummer as the pampas grass in autumn." Such comment is indeed true, for its upright astilbe-like panicles 18 inches in length are carried on stately stems 5 to 7 feet tall. The height varies in relation to the soil and place in which the plant is growing. The leaves are 2 to 3 pinnate on long stalks. Its small creamy-white flowers are freely borne in the form of slightly drooping feathery plumes, and it

flowers during late May and June, or in very late seasons in early July. It grows best in a deep, moist loam, and enjoys partial shade, but thrives equally well in full sun. Propagation is by seed or division. The species *A. kneiffi* has white, dense plumes, with more finely cut foliage, borne on stems about 3 feet high. *A. astilboides* is a rare plant, its chief difference being that all its parts are smaller.

Barbarea. Wintercress. *Cruciferae*. Barbarea is named after St. Barbara, to whom this plant was dedicated; it is also known as the herb of Saint Barbara. The species *B. vulgaris*, yellow rocket, is one of our native plants and freely distributed over the British Isles. It is the double yellow rocket, *B. vulgaris flore pleno* that is cultivated in gardens. This easily grown, hardy, herbaceous perennial produces panicles of bright yellow double flowers on 18-inch stems, from May to August, though the best flowers are in May and June. It does best in a rich, moderately light loam. Propagation is by division.

Bupthalmum. Ox-eye. *Compositae*. To some, this hardy and easily cultivated herbaceous perennial might be termed another yellow daisy flower, but *B. salicifolium* is such an accommodating plant that it should be in every good collection of hardy plants. The stem-clasping, willow-like leaves (hence its descriptive name salicifolium) are a bright green. It is upright in habit with 2-foot stems, or a little more when grown in shade. The rich-yellow flowers are borne singly at the end of side and terminal shoots, often four to five or eight to the main stem. The individual flowers of disc and rays are 1½ inches across. It thrives in full sun or half-shade. It blooms from late June through to September. Propagation is by division. There is also an improved variety called *B. salicifolium superbum*.

Clematis. Virgin's Bower. *Ranunculaceae*. Not all clematis are climbing or twining plants, in fact there are several herbaceous species. *Clematis recta* (synonym *C. erecta*) is an erect species, growing from 3 to 5 feet high. When grown as a bold clump in the border it makes a handsome starry spectacle. Its wiry stems are densely furnished with glistening pinnate leaves; above this erect formation are borne sweetly scented creamy-white flowers, in large, dense terminal panicles, during June and July. There are varieties such as *grandiflora*, an improvement on the species and *purpurea* with bronzy-purple stems and leaves when young. Some support is needed.

Plants I long to have

WHEN PEOPLE DUG up their flower gardens enthusiastically and grew vegetables during the war years we must have lost more of our better herbaceous plants than we realized at the time. Now, once-in-a-while one calls to mind a plant one has not seen for a long time and which, in spite of modern development, does not appear to have been superseded.

One such plant I am thinking of is *Campanulula cistiflora* Edward Molyneux. This has a good branching habit, is a good blue and grows about 4½ to 5 feet.

Another lost friend is *Kniphofia aloides nobilis* Chilcompton, introduced by that wonderful old man, Mr. Isaac House, raised in the village of Chilcompton in Devon. This fine plant will grow 5 to 6 feet high, is bright scarlet and has extra large flowers. Alas, this has not been seen for years.

Yet another is *Aconitum napellus album magnificentum*, introduced by Barrs when they still had their nursery at Surbiton. This has lovely creamy-white flowers, with very showy foliage. This again, is a fairly tall grower, about 5 to 6 feet.

Lastly, *Anchusa Picotee*; this was a bicolour, being blue and white; not everyone's plant but very showy for those who liked such things.

Have all these plants been lost to us?—or perhaps in some small, country garden somewhere, someone still has them from Grandad's day!

Wendy V. Carlile

Xerophyllum tenax represents one of the major disappointments of my gardening life. I first made its acquaintance as a living plant in N.W. America, where I was introduced to it under its local name of "bear grass". I well remember great drifts of it growing on

the Logan Pass; huge tufts of grassy leaves and elegant stems rising to a height of fully 4 feet and terminating in racemes of densely-packed, white flowers with purple or violet stamens. It looked for all the world like some magnificent pure-white red hot poker.

My route led me far away to the west, but the *Xerophyllum* lived in my mind and I was able to so contrive my return journey many weeks later that I was able to collect quantities of ripe seed. This was brought home and eventually germinated, providing me with hundreds of sturdy little plants. Alas, as soon as these became large enough to plant out it became like the story of the ten little nigger boys, and one by one those baby xerophyllums determinedly perished. Nothing would induce them to grow and in whatever soil or situation they were planted they either died at once or sulked for a period before handing in their checks.

Will Ingwersen

Although introduced from the Continent some years ago, the dwarf form of the popular *Gaillardia grandiflora* is rarely seen in gardens. It is just as easy to grow as the ordinary sorts and appreciates a position in full sun. Ordinary well-drained soil suits it very well. A place near the front of the perennial border will show the plant to the best advantage.

The criticism often levelled at some of the taller varieties, under certain conditions, is that they become somewhat untidy and straggly towards the end of the season. Goblin overcomes the need for staking or tying in any way. It remains neat and compact throughout.

While the plant grows only 12 to 15 inches tall and as much through, it can provide plenty of stems of useful length for cutting without spoiling the effect in the border.

The flowers are not quite so large as the tall sorts but make up for this in

numbers. A plant in full bloom is a blaze of colour. Each petal is banded with crimson-scarlet and tipped with gold. If the dead seed heads are removed, the display will be considerably prolonged.

Propagation may be from seed or division. It comes very true from seed and specially desirable forms can be vegetatively propagated in autumn or spring. The plant is quite hardy provided that it is not waterlogged during the winter.

Ralph Gould

While browsing through an old gardening book that was printed in 1880, I came across a brief note about *Cassia marylandica*, otherwise known as the American Senna and, from its description, it would appear that this is a plant that should be a useful addition to the garden. Perhaps some of your readers have knowledge of this plant and would let me know where it can be obtained.

I am not requiring it for commercial purposes as I believe this is not the variety used for the medicinal purposes, that bane of childhood days, Senna Pods!

While wandering round a wonderful country garden recently with the owner, I was very impressed at a plant of a type of cheiranthus which was in full bloom. The owner told me that this flowers practically all the year round and is a real hardy perennial. Unfortunately, he was not certain as to its name or origin but believed it to be a hybrid from *Cheiranthus linifolius*.*

As it strikes freely from cuttings, I was able to bring away some in hopes of establishing it in my own garden. It grows about 2 feet 6 inches high, leaves very similar to the Siberian wallflower and the colour of the flowers is a pale-claret.

If anyone can give me any further details of this plant, I would be most interested.

J. C. Fensome

*Syn. *Erysimum linifolium*.

BOOK REVIEW

"Hardy Perennials" by Alan Bloom
Published by Faber, 30s.

IT IS A HAPPY CHANCE that the publication of Mr. Bloom's book should have so neatly coincided with the formation of the Hardy Plant Society. This is the volume which every lover of hardy plants has been seeking. Existing books on the subject are few, and out of date, and no one is better qualified to have filled the blank space on our bookshelves than this lover and grower of hardy perennials.

In a short first chapter Mr. Bloom describes the scope of hardy perennials, and follows this by a brief, but invaluable chapter devoted to choosing a site and the necessity for good drainage. This is followed by a series of chapters which will be of particular interest to those who feel the need to get away from the conventional "herbaceous border," and he offers us a midget border, a double-sided border, a one-sided border, and other specialized arrangements. Later chapters deal with moist and shady positions, with difficult soils, and with the planning and maintenance of borders and, before approaching the major part of the book, there is a chapter, which will appeal to ladies interested in floral arrangements, on perennials for cutting.

The most important part of the book is the long alphabetical list of border perennials, which is comprehensive and full of meat for the enthusiast and instruction for the novice without indulging in needlessly lengthy descriptions, or boring us with catalogue-like lists of names.

I was frankly disappointed by the index, but I am rather cranky about indices, which I regard as one of the most important parts of a book, and the one provided is adequate to enable one to find one's way about this excellent book, which is likely to remain the standard reference book for hardy perennials for some time to come.

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