

THE BULLETIN OF THE
HARDY PLANT

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SOCIETY

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Drawing by G. R. Kingbourn

G.R.K.

ASTRANTIA MAJOR

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HARDY PLANT
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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.

A NEWLY-FORMED SOCIETY is rather like a baby—it is bound to have some teething troubles. Our quarterly bulletins are perhaps going through this stage, for, though we have been fortunate in having as our Editor Mr. H. C. Champneys to give our literary efforts a good start, he now, owing to many other commitments, has had to resign. All will, I know, wish to thank him and the Whitefriars Press for their help in the launching of the Hardy Plant Society's first two bulletins.

As we are still much in our infancy every penny has to be considered, and in view of this we have had to make certain changes in the printing of the bulletins. We believe, however, that the quality and contents of the present and future bulletins will not fall behind the standards already set. If any member has any comments to make *please* let me know, for the task of the editorial committee will not only be easier, but more satisfactory. And another thing—surely out of nearly 800 members there must be some who have something useful to say, not forgetting, of course, the right of the editor's blue pencil.

There is one word of personal thanks I must give and that is to Miss Valerie Postons who has done such splendid work for the H.P.S. in the past seven months. The success of the society's correspondence is largely due to her conscientiousness and loyalty, and I am truly sorry that, owing to promotion, I am losing her. All will I know, join with me in wishing her every success in her new job.

Hon. Secretary

Thomas Carlile

THE DEATH of Mr. Thomas Carlile of Loddon Nurseries, Twyford, Berkshire, at his home on August 13th 1957 after a long illness borne with his characteristic courage, is a severe loss to horticulture, particularly the hardy plant section. But for his illness, there is no doubt 'Tommy' as he was known to his many friends, would have played a leading part in the formation of this Society.

For over half a century he had devoted his life largely to the raising, growing and distribution of the hardy plants which he loved and of which he possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge. Commencing his career with Barr's of Taplow in 1907 he moved on to Perry's of Enfield in time to take part in the first Chelsea show in 1912. He was proud of his record that he never missed a Chelsea show, and in spite of his illness managed to attend the show this year.

Before founding his own firm in 1920, he gained more experience with Waterers; now, of course, Loddon Nurseries and the name Carlile are famous, fame accruing because of the many varieties of new plants which were sent out and for which gardeners are greatly indebted to the keen plantsman's eye of Tommy.

A walk round Loddon Nurseries in his company was a pleasurable and exciting experience, pleasurable to see the many fine plants grown, not least in his own garden, and exciting trying to keep up with the rapid, quick fire of information imparted without fear or favour. Many fine plants were introduced from Loddon, *Heliopsis* Light of Loddon, *Campanula lactiflora* Loddon Anna, *Delphinium* Wendy and *Anchusa* Loddon Royalist will, along with many others, serve as a living



Photo: O. Scheerer
Mr. Thomas Carlile in jovial mood—obviously engrossed in some hardy plant discussion!

memorial to this great plantsman.

Apart from Mr. Carlile's interests in the raising and growing of plants, he was also closely associated with the affairs of the Royal Horticultural Society and was an untiring member of many committees. He was a member of the Horticultural Trades Association and was vice-chairman of the hardy plant section. He was also a founder member of the British Delphinium Society and its Chairman in 1952-53.

Mrs. Carlile, who has always taken a great interest in her husband's work, continues to live at the nursery and Wendy, his youngest daughter, who has inherited some of her father's irrepressible courage, carries on the nursery. Her many friends in this Society, of which she is a valued Committee member, will wish her the best of good fortune.

S. M. Gault

Plants for Clay Soil Gardening

Alan Bloom

THOSE WHOSE GARDENS are of heavy soil usually complain of its intractability rather more than of its limitations. But its limitations are governed largely by how one copes with its intractability, rather than by its basic fertility which is often quite high. Clay must be treated with respect. One needs the weather as an ally in working it, and the most important factor is wintering. Clay soil turned over, no matter how lumpily in autumn, will yield a good working tilth in spring, but spring digging often results in clots all summer.

Though owners of clay soil gardens are probably aware of the more ordinary plants suitable for it, there are others less common which would be quite at home with them. *Artemisia lactiflora* is not so widely known as it should be, and does better on stiff land than where drainage is sharp. Its 5-ft. plumes of creamy-white are magnificent in late summer and autumn. *Aruncus sylvestris* (*Spiraea aruncus*) (as illustrated on the front cover) also has fine plumes, but in June, and is all the better for a little shade. Its dwarfer, ferny-leaved form—*Aruncus kneiffi* is quite beautiful and much too little known.

The curiously attractive, but now uncommon, *astrantias*, will take to clay, and so will *Baptisia australis* with its lush green bushes, set with stumpy spikes of blue pea-flowers. Most campanulas will tolerate clay, the best and showiest, apart from the well-known *C. persicifolia* types, are *C. macrantha* and its forms, *C. lactiflora*, the deepest shade of this being Prichard's Variety, *C. grandis*

and *C. glomerata*. *Coreopsis verticillata* is a grand plant, with neat 2-ft bushes studded for weeks with deep-yellow star-like flowers. *Cynoglossum nervosum* is related to anchusa, and if its blue flowers do not make the show of *A. caespitosa*, it lasts in flower a long time, and is long-lived as well.

Nearly all the erigerons take to clay, but spring planting or very early autumn is the best planting time. Geraniums, heleniums, heliopsis and most helianthus, as well as hemerocallis will do well in clay. So will hostas—(funkias) which nowadays are having such a come-back to popularity. Iris too are usually happy in all but acid clay, but lupins will only tolerate it, as long as it is acid.

If moisture is not badly lacking, and space is available, ligularias (senecios of the *S. clivorum* section) will make a fine show with handsome foliage and orange flowers. *Lychnis chalconica* is one of the few scarlet border plants tolerant of heavy soil, and *lysismachias* *LL. punctata*, *epheumerum*, *barystachys* and *clethroides* are all worth trying. The lythrums are about the most accommodating of all herbaceous plants, and will grow in the heaviest of soil.

Mertensia paniculata is not well known. It makes a spreading 2½-ft bush of glaucous foliage hung with sky-blue flowers for weeks. *Monardas* are now available in wide variety, and in clay have less tendency either to flop or run, than in rich light soil. *Nepeta mussini* and *N. Six Hills* are often short-lived in clay soils, but two which will survive are *N. Souv. d'Andre* Chaudron (its

American name of Blue Beauty ought to be adopted here), and *N. tartarica*. The former has 1½ to 2-ft spikes of mauve-blue, and the latter is nearly twice the height, though similar in growth. Oenotheras do not generally dislike clay, and the bright yellows of *O. glabra*, Yellow River, Fireworks, *O. missouriensis* and *O. linearis* are all worth growing in the front of the border.

Polemoniums, platycodons, physostegia and polygonums are subjects not seen in every garden, but amongst them are some good garden plants, not objecting to clay. Some polygonums especially are worth trying out. It is a vast, but rather obscure genus. Poteriums are sturdy, tough-rooted plants, and apart from the better known *P. obtusum*, with its fluffy pink bottle-brushes, there is its white form, *P. album*, and the taller autumn flowering *P. canadense album*. Pulmonarias are border-front plants, though they quite like a shady corner, and can be relied upon to make a show before spring merges into summer. Some are blue, others are pink, and one or two have both pink and blue flowers on the same plant. Ranunculus—nearly related to buttercups, will grow in heavy soil. The double buttons of *R. acris*

plenus, *R. speciosus plenus* and *R. bulbosus plenus* are all attractive. Rudbeckias are useful, and so of course, is *Salvia superba* and its newer dwarfer forms. The tall *S. uliginosa* is well worth growing, its sky-blue flowers being quite charming till frosts come, and if it is slow to reappear after a severe winter, left alone till June it will come again.

Given a fair start, sidalceas stand well in heavy soil, and all the solid-agos will revel in it. *Symphytum peregrinum* is an early flowering borage well worth growing, and makes stout 3-ft bushes of dangling blue flowers. Tradescantias are adaptable, and flower for longer in heavy soil than light, and so will the pretty May flowering *Veronica gentianoides*, and its variegated leaved form.

The above by no means exhaust the list of possibilities for those whose soil sticks to shoes and spades. Clay can be rendered easier working and richer, by adding peat or other humus, and this is a practice on which all who have tried it agree. The marriage of peat and clay works wonders, in fact, and those who curse clay should try it. But patience with, and respect for, clay should come first.

PLANTS FOR LIGHT SOILS

W. K. Aslet

MY GARDEN is on a sand-heap deposited ages ago by the River Wey on the edge of its flood-plain. Large trees in the vicinity suck out a good deal of what little moisture the soil holds, and for such crops as vegetables, it gives poor results without the addition of plenty of 'muck' and a liberal use of water.

Raised on the chalk, and transplanted several times on to medium loam, I have had to learn many things since being transferred to this hungry sand, and I've had several surprises. I knew, for instance, that hostas (alias funkias) made very handsome plants in damp woodland, by the lakeside, or in open borders in



Photo: Amateur Gardening

The doricum or leopard's bane, is one of our earliest hardy perennials to bloom in the spring. The one shown is *D. plantagineum excelsum*, its golden yellow daisy-like flowers are borne on 3 ft. stems in April and May.

rich soil, and to my satisfaction they have proved their wide adaptability by doing quite well here too.

Polygonum bistorta, bistort or snakeweed, is a plant of damp meadows, but flourishes and flowers in dusty exile:—would that mine were a good deep *superba* form instead of the original washy pink!

One of my great stand-bys is the group of hardy geraniums, which, from the blazing 3-ft. crimson-magenta of *G. psilostemon* (*G. armenum*) to the lowly delicate veined-pink of *G. sanguineum lancastriense*, now called *G.s. prostratum*, all do well. A favourite is a pale blue form of *G. pratense* that has a hint of rosy-mauve, and is one of the most floriferous plants I know. Interest is added by the 'shuttlecocks' of *G. reflexum*, the strange, almost black flowers of *G. phaeum*, and that useful dwarf plant *G. macrorrhizum* with its strongly-scented leaves and little fleshy trunks.

Some plants that flower early, before the full force of summer droughts can be felt, and that can

then go into semi-retirement with the aid of fleshy root-stocks, are among the most successful. The doricums and *Dicentra eximea* are well-equipped in this way. I always like to plant my doricums right at the back of a border, as they are the first of all to flower, the gap they leave is soon hidden, and they are not seriously hurt if one stands on them when clipping the hedge!

Dozens and dozens of *Dicentra eximea* brighten up for me the floor of a larch-wood that is too dry for primroses, and they last in flower longer than most hardy plants, except that old cottage favourite for a hot, dry, sunny spot, *Oxalis floribunda*.

If I were starting a new garden of this type I would look for those plants with long, strong, searching roots that can go down for their moisture, stealing a march on their surface-rooting competitors. Among them are the sea-hollies *Eryngium sp.*, globe thistles, *Echinops sp.* catananche, (blue cupidone, a dainty cut flower), gaillardia, hemerocallis (day lily), *Achillea filipendulina*, and of course the lupins which do admirably. In with these too, come the anchusas (beware, *A. sempervirens*, lovely in the wild garden, but a wretched pest in more civilized company), the oriental poppies and the verbascums, all so easily increased by cuttings of those fleshy roots that help to tide them over the dry spells that really do occur occasionally, as some of us are old enough to recall.

Then there are the real sun-lovers from warmer lands, which are actually helped by light soils. The Californian tree poppy *Romneya*

coulteri, the burning bush *Dictamnus albus* the alstroemerias, the red hot pokers (*Kniphofia sp.*) and all the German or bearded irises, in their many varieties, come in here.

Others addicted to sun and good drainage, that come to mind are allied to those plants commonly found in the herb border—all the salvias and their relatives such as lamium and stackys. Grow the less hardy salvias like *S. neurepia* and *S. grahamii* against a sunny wall, and leave them lots of room to make big bushes. The artemisias too, provide us with a number of those lovely grey-leaved plants that are such a help between the stronger colours. But, do not try *A. lactiflora*:—it does not like to be dry. We cannot omit the pyrethrums, such good cut flowers, the sidalceas, and where big spaces have to be filled, their magnificent cousin *Lavatera olbia rosea*, with its big bower of bloom. *Sedum spectabile* with its chubby paws of leaves and flat

corymbs of rosy flowers attracts the late summer butterflies.

Not often seen is *Astrantia maxima*, larger, pinker, and in my opinion better, than *A. major*, described in Bulletin No. 1. *Tradescantia virginiana* Moses-in-the-bullrushes, does well in the light soil, and is dwarfer and perhaps better for it, but it can be a nuisance with its too-prolific seedlings. This does not happen with the smaller *T. brevicaulis*, which, on the other hand, will 'run' underground to some extent.

A sunflower that does not 'run' is *Helianthus multiflorus*, and my true stock of Loddon Gold that I got from Carlile's many years ago, loves it in my Surrey garden. A plant that I always like to grow for sentimental reasons, even if I have to give it an occasional can of water during very hot times is *Monarda didyma* Croftway Pink. I saw this listed recently as a 'new plant', but it so happens that I was the individual who, back in 1932, selected it from a batch of mixed seedlings, and gave it its name!

The new *Heucherella Bridget Bloom* has done well this year and has flowered continuously undiscouraged by having its first spikes destroyed by a late spring frost. I am confidently hoping that it will be just as good when we get a hot, dry season.

If water can be used, the picture may be very different, and one can, as I do, grow lythrum, plox, *Polygonum campanulatum*, *Iris sibirica* and even astilbes, trollius and other plants intolerant of drought. In fact, readers will have seen for themselves what can be done on a light soil with the aid of manure and water.



Photo; Amateur Gardening

This attractive knot-weed, Polygonum campanulatum has spikes of pale pink bell-like flowers borne on 3 ft. stems during April and May.

Hardy Perennials for the Pond Margin

Frances Perry, F.L.S.



Photo: Amateur Gardening

The double form of the common marsh marigold Caltha palustris plena.

A MOST INTERESTING aspect of hardy plant gardening is that associated with the margins of the water garden. Here, where land and water meet, many out-of-the-way subjects may be grown. Moreover the situation can be utilised for cultivating moisture loving *common* plants *uncommonly* well.

For the gardener with a poorly drained area to contend with the problem of providing a site for a bog garden almost solves itself. Others not so fortunate, may have to conserve moisture or construct a bog to

their own specifications. Naturally the wettest area (usually in a depression) is best for the conservation of moisture and where there is a natural hollow in the ground it may be sufficient to scoop out the existing soil to a depth of 2 feet and line the bottom with clay. An alternative is to concrete the sides and base exactly as for pool making.

The bog area should be filled with a good compost made up of loam, leafmould, sand and peat with some oak leaves and rhododendron mould if possible. Many attractive water-

side perennials like to feel the influence of water without actually having their roots submerged. By raising the soil well above the naturally wet area, one conserves moisture beneath whilst allowing the plants themselves free drainage. These are the conditions which give the best results.

A useful genus for this area is *Caltha* (Kingcups); these are amongst the earliest to show colour in spring and present their bright golden flowers for weeks at a time. *Caltha palustris* is the common marsh marigold but most gardeners will prefer its double form, *C. palustris plena*. This flowers so freely that the round, double heads (about the size of a soldier's button) often completely mask the foliage in spring.

Primula japonica and its varieties are perhaps the showiest and easiest to grow of the bog primulas. The flowers, produced in whorls, on scapes 18-24 ins. high, show every variation in colour from white and pink, to red—often with several shades on the same flower. Although a poor perennial, *Primula japonica* seeds freely and should be allowed to naturalise itself without interference. The seedlings show considerable variation in form and colour and produce delightful natural colonies in the course of time.

Globe flowers (*Trollius sp.*) are other perennials, sometimes used in the border which become much finer in the moist loam at the water-side. Where happily situated they grow stoutly, the round globe flowers and buttercup-like leaves rising from underground crowns attached to very fibrous roots. The majority attain an overall height of about 2-ft with lemon, orange or golden blooms. They can be raised from seed or increased by division in spring.

The glorious crimsons of the astilbes, Amethyst, Gunther, Granat and Pink Pearl make pleasing contrast at the water's edge with the rich yellows and oranges of the day lilies, whilst scarlet lobelias add a deep touch of colour. The soft yellow of *Primula sikkimensis*, blue aconitums and waterside irises also blend happily together in such situations.

One of the most curious plants for the bog garden is the early flowering aroid, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, the skunk cabbage. The species is related to lysichitum, with which it is often confused, and thrives well when accorded similar treatment. It is perfectly hardy and grows well in any moist vegetable soil. The flowers appear in February—before the leaves—and are brilliantly mottled in purple, green and yellow.

Although the golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*) is often treated as a true aquatic and grows readily in water up to 2-ft in depth, yet it makes an excellent marginal plant. Under the latter conditions its whole character changes, for the silvery grey foliage, broad, lily of the valley shaped and about 12 ins. long and 2-4 ins. wide thrusts sturdily upwards in a dense mass. In deep water it is surface floating. The yellow finger-like blooms crowd together on narrow, rounded stems like small golden clubs. Orontiums must have good soil depth, the roots needing 18 ins. or so of soil.

A charming Japanese plant which has proved quite hardy in Britain is *Houttuynia cordata*. The bluish green leaves, emanating from bright red stems and illuminated by four snow white bracts, form a graceful background to the cones of modest white flowers. *Houttuynia* can be planted in heavy loam, covering the rootstock with 2-4 ins. of water, or



Photo; Amateur Gardening

A typical pondside colony of irises, primula and trollius.

simply grown in wet soil. Its usual height is round about 18 ins.

No pondside is complete without the waterside irises. Not *Iris laevigata* and its varieties, which likes to have its feet right in the water, but the sibiricas, kaempferis and other interesting species which thrive best where they feel its influence indirectly. Growing *Iris sibirica* is a sure investment, the flowers are good for cutting and the plants long blooming. In the vicinity of the water garden however they are at their best and planted in bold clumps make effective display. Many of the old sorts such as Ottawa, Perry's Blue and Emperor are still worth growing but there are newer varieties such as Tropic Night whose large blooms are the dark blue black of thunder clouds, and Thorpe Azure, a light form raised in the famous gardens of the late Viscountess Byng.

The incomparable *Iris hybrida*

Margot Holmes was raised from *Iris chrysographes* which possibly accounts for its peculiar profuseness when grown near water. The flowers are royal purple and gold and quite unlike any other iris; the leaves grassy in habit. Apart from *Iris kaempferi* other species which might be tried for marginal work at the pond edge are *Iris cuprea* and its form Warrenders Variety and *Iris versicolor*, the North American counterpart of our native Golden Flag (*I. pseudacorus*). There are many varieties of which perhaps Claret Cup is the most outstanding.

WHO WAS CANNON WANT
OR WENT ?

Among the contributors in the first preface of William Robinson's 'English Flower Garden' eight Reverend gentlemen are included, but no mention of Cannon Want or Went. Who was this ecclesiastic? When did he live? and which is the correct spelling of his name? After all his name is perpetuated by the pink variety of *Linaria purpurea*—who can tell us?

Midst Bricks and Mortar

"A selection of hardy herbaceous perennials for town gardens"

SALFORD, SALE, DUDLEY and now Ealing—over twenty years either in or on the fringe of industry makes it rather difficult for me to avoid transgressing on the article by Frederick Fletcher in Bulletin No. 2. I agree with him that the herbaceous plants' habit of disappearing below ground as it were, and thus hiding from the most heavily polluted season, gives town dwellers in such conditions a fairly wide range of hardy herbaceous perennials from which to choose. Without impinging too much on what has been written I will emphasize the importance of looking with a questioning eye at species with persistent foliage, especially if it be of a somewhat woolly character.

Soil preparation and general cultivation I need not dwell upon, for there is little new or specific to record, except perhaps to add a rider that it is well to bear in mind that atmospheric pollution tends to lead to soil acidity and this may be important with plants of known alkaline preferences.

In what strain do I then write? I must think in terms of average town conditions and average town gardens. My cue is obvious if I bear in mind that space is likely to be somewhat restricted, that the home gardener may have limited time at his disposal, and he who practices on a more extensive scale is almost certain to have labour difficulties. I must, therefore, turn to an appraisal

of those plants and varieties which bloom over a long season and, more important still, require little in the way of support. In any case I applaud any plant which is self supporting.

I cannot omit a small selection to extend at either end the season of the "continuous bloomers". In the spring I would not be without the dear old bleeding heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*, planted preferably in association with the blue of *Brunnera macrophylla* and the pink to carmine later flowers of *Bergenia cordifolia* amidst the solidity of its leaves, all

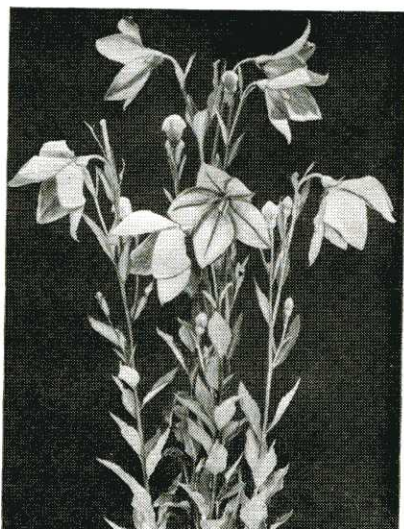


Photo: Amateur Gardening

Platycodon grandiflorum the Chinese bell-flower or balloon-flower, has distinctive blooms and unusual balloon-shaped buds.

happy in a semi-shaded part of the garden. I would include the florists' pyrethrums for they flower over a long spell and are invaluable for cutting, plus the long-spurred hybrids of aquilegia, and find joy with the burning bush, *Dictamnus albus*, *Syn. D. fraxinella*.

Heuchera sanguinea, particularly the newer varieties, along with *Veronica Shirley Blue* and *Aster yunnanensis* Knapsbury would follow; there would always be *Catananche coerulea* in white and blue, with the varieties of *Scabiosa caucasica* to turn to for house decoration. For this latter purpose *Coreopsis* Badengold, although a little sprawling in habit, is a "must". *Monarda didyma* Cambridge Scarlet would certainly be there and anyone who requires long season plants cannot afford to leave out *Nepeta Six Hills Giant*.

Some of the varieties of *Anthemis tinctoria* may not be good "keepers" but they are first rate for a long border display, in particular Grallagh Gold and Beauty of Grallagh. *Achillea filipendulina* Gold Plate and the varieties of *A. millefolium* and *A. ptarmica* give much and require little, while *Salvia superba* needs no commendation from me. *Geranium endressii* is a splendid plant for maintaining a sequence of blooms throughout the summer.

Interest there must be as well as a maximum of floral beauty. One finds *Liatris pycnostachya* and *L. callilepis*, along with *Phystostegia virginiana* Vivid, irresistible, while the varieties of *Platycodon grandiflorum* provide something a little different as well as a fair measure of bloom. Despite its woolly, persistent leaves the lamb's ear, *Stachys lanata*, or something equivalent, would be chosen to provide grey foliage at the least expense. *Campanulata glomerata*

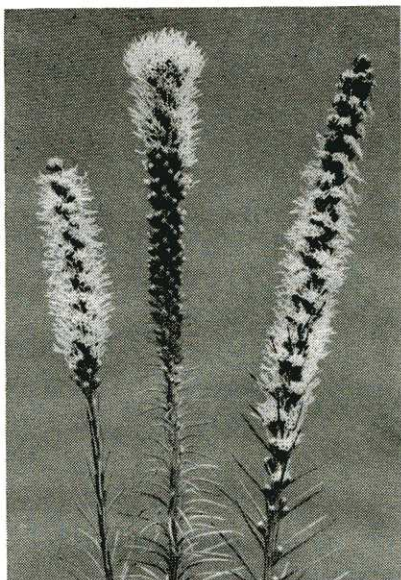


Photo: Amateur Gardening

The button snake root, *Liatris pycnostachya* differs from most plants as its rose-purple flowers open at the top first.

dahurica would be useful for the front of the border and a soft spot in my heart would be satisfied by including London pride, *Saxifraga umbrosa* in true town tradition.

Quite a deal of attention has recently been given to the introduction of new varieties of *Erigeron speciosa*. If these are as liberal of flower as the old Quakeress and Merstham Glory they would have my vote also. *Gaillardias* Ipswich Beauty, Royalty, etc. are, perhaps, a little flashy to really satisfy my somewhat discerning tastes, but there is no question of their suitability for the purpose in mind.

Malva moschata in pink or white is a splendid foil for species of rather forthright form and to give character to the border the dwarf kniphofias, whether in or out of flower play a notable part. *Veronica longifolia subsessilis* likewise would

provide that spiky habit which helps to circumvent flatness in a collection of hardy plants.

As autumn approaches *Aster frikartii* begins to get under way and is still producing its blooms when its later compatriots commence their all too brief spell of glory. *Rudbeckia sullivantii* Goldsturm, *Artemisia lactiflora*, *Anemone japonica*, *Chrysanthemum rubellum* and *Sedum spectabile*—these I would have to see me through the autumnal days.

On glancing back I find that without intent I seem to have hovered around the verge of the old English garden, today so far divorced from the aspect of the modern town. Perhaps a little softening and steady-ing is just as well in these days of hustle and bustle, bright lights and gaudy apparel. At any rate my selection, even if there is a suspicion of the old-fashioned, comprises nothing but "honest to goodness" plants—and what better when environment is apt to sort out the fittest.

A Myth of Paeonies

G. W. Hitchcock

APOLLO BEGAN as an unimportant god of one of the Greek tribes descending from the north who settled in the land called Paeonia. This is shown on my ancient Greek map as part of what we now call Macedonia. Doubtless they won battles and the vanquished adopted the god of the victor, for by the time Greece became a confederation of city-states, Apollo had been "promoted to the House of Lords" or as they might say, had "climbed Olympus", and was second only to Zeus. He had

many attributes, particularly he was the Sun God, and his emblem, the lovely wild, single paeony, was most appropriate with its brilliant yellow disc and its flaming pink-red petals like rays of the corona. He was "the Healer", using the root of the paeony for the purpose.

Doubtless the Paeonians became venturesome sailors like the rest of the Greeks who travelled around the northern shores of the Mediterranean and founded "colonies" in many places. There are remains of one such at Ampurias on the Costa Brava.

Close opposite to this on Majorca there is not a colony but there are several places where the lovely wild, single *Paeonia cambessedessii* grows freely. The place of greatest abundance I want to describe as it is obviously a most powerful natural defensive position. To get to it, you walk straight inland from the hotels of Puerto Pollensa across the Isthmus which leads to Formentor and cross the low range at a col to get at the long boulder-strewn slope which leads down to the sea on the other side of the Isthmus. Approach by sea on the other side of the slope is impossible owing to jagged rocks.

An invading force would have to approach from Puerto Pollensa along a boulder-strewn road between rock-built walls until they came to a massive defensive farm. If they got past this they would proceed up a steep stony path and have to pass between two enormous rocks which could easily be defended. The third line of defence is the col itself. The defensive farm dates probably from the middle ages, when one built inland to defend from the Corsairs, but that is not to say that it was not preceded by a sunk defensive camp and the unique merits of the site make this most probable.

I suggest that our Paeonians landed at Puerto Pollensa and cultivated the plain and took their rich produce up to their camp and probably on through the col, to secure caves along the sides of the long boulder-strewn slope. Their priests made them raise an altar on the slope. Later their priests probably said your god directs that you sail to Paeonia and bring hither in gratitude his sacred plant that it may grow around his altar, and it was so. Now the paeony has spread all over the slope.

It struck me that, phonetically, paeony and Apollo were very similar, the N replacing an L, whilst both these letters are made with the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth. This was startlingly brought home to me coming back over the col, when a fine burly man with staff

and dog joined me from a side track and was most affable. Spluttering a little Spanish, I learned he was the owner of the farm and all its lands. When I asked him what he called the lovely flowers he said at once "We call them paeollies". I made him repeat clearly paeollies three times. I suggest he was naming phonetically the original Greek. So let us all blithly call our paeonies 'paeollies' and sing praises to Apollo for such a lovely flower.

Did *Paeonia cambessedessii* come from Greece? The botanists say the Greek paeony is quite a different species. Then say I, is not 2,000 years sufficient time for these two species to differentiate under differing environments? And the botanist answers "No!" So the above remains just — *A Myth!*

HARDY PERENNIALS FOR DRY SHADE

Will Ingwersen

MENTION OF SHADE and shade-loving plants is apt to conjure visions of cool, damp places, in which ferns and candelabra primulas will riot. Very often the exact reverse is the case, and shade, especially when it is cast by tall and vigorous trees, implies a very considerable aridity of soil. Not only does the canopy of leafy branches keep off much of the rain which would otherwise fall on the ground, but the thirsty and far-spreading tree roots suck up all the available moisture from the soil. Such positions as these are too often left bare and unclothed, or planted with quite unsuitable subjects which, finding conditions little to their liking, wilt, pine and finally succumb.

It is possible, by selection of plants which will grow in very dry soil and do not object to being overhung by branches, to create a rather special type of garden beneath trees. The number of plants appropriate to such a shade garden is not large, but is greater than is generally supposed.

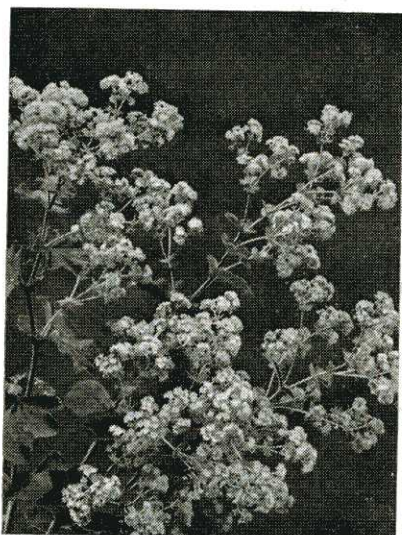
It is only right to say, before describing a few of the plants which I have proved will thrive in such conditions, that some further limitations are imposed by the type of trees beneath which the plants are to grow. It is difficult, for example, to colonise plants beneath any type of coniferous tree, and, of deciduous trees, beeches are notoriously inhospitable to plant life. Even here, however, the difficulties are far from being insuper-

able, and certain plants can be induced to carpet the ground among acid decaying pine needles, or in the dense shade of far-flung beech tree branches carrying millions of horizontally arranged leaves.

A certain amount of preparation is advisable before attempting to establish plants in the dry shade of trees, but caution is advisable before embarking upon any too ambitious scheme involving hard work and possibly not inconsiderable expense. It is of little use to dig over the whole area, attempting at the same time to free it of tree roots, and then to add rich soil in which to establish the colonists. To do so would, of course, assist the new plants to establish more rapidly, but it is questionable if they would get really settled in before their sheltering host had discovered the banquet so temptingly close to its avid feeding roots.

A certain stealth should be employed, and plants introduced with as little disturbance of the ground as possible, doing no more than to take

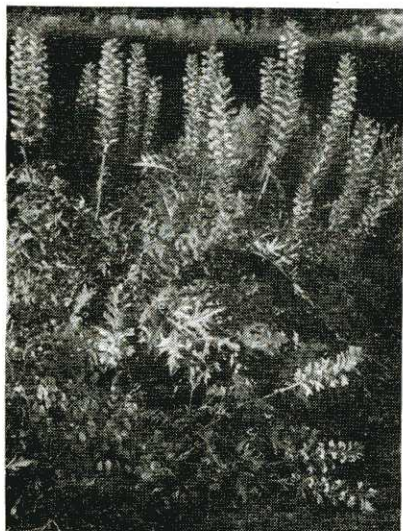
out a hole adequate to contain the roots without cramping, and adding a few handfuls of better soil just to start them off. Watering too, should be reduced to the minimum necessary to keep the newcomers alive until their own roots start to forage for themselves. Generous applications of water given too frequently would only encourage an influx of tree roots. For these reasons it is probably wisest to put in the plants at a time when deciduous trees are



Photos: Amateur Gardening

Above; *Alchemilla mollis* has small, straw-yellow flowers. It is a low growing plant and will endure both drought and shade.

Left; *Acanthus spinosus* prickly bear's breech, has outstanding foliage and dense spikes of purplish flowers.



leafless and more or less at rest, and root activity is at a minimum.

A race of plants which I have found to be particularly well adapted to growing in dry shade is the hardy geranium. It is, in any case a rather neglected family, and, although some of them are such avid sun lovers that it would be shameful to condemn them to a more or less sunless existence, there are others which will



Photo; Amateur Gardening

The cranesbills or geraniums are particularly adaptable and accommodating in dry shade. The one illustrated is *G. endressii*.

not only grow, but flower freely for months on end beneath trees. *Geranium endressii* is an excellent example. The lobed leaves are almost ever-green and the plant forms a bushy mass some twelve to eighteen inches in height. The cup-shaped, inch-wide flowers of the typical plant are rose-red in colour but there are several named garden forms with which to provide variety. One, raised by that great gardener, A. T. Johnson, in his garden in Wales, and bearing his name, bears flowers of light silvery pink. *G.e.* Rose Clair has rather larger flowers, of warm salmon-rose.

Geranium macrorrhizum, with aromatic foliage and pink flowers, is a good coloniser for dry shade, and is surpassed in beauty by a variety collected many years ago by my father, and now grown as "Ingwersen's variety", which carries very large flowers of clear light rose-pink

on fifteen inch stems. There is also a good albino, and all three dwell contentedly and prettily together. *G. sylvaticum* always seeks the shade in nature and will find a position such as we are attempting to clothe very much to its taste. It is a little taller than the preceding kinds with deeply cut, handsome leaves and showers of rather small pink flowers. This too, has a white flowered form of peculiar charm, the white flowers developing from soft pink buds.

The mourning widow geranium, *G. phaeum*, does not dazzle the passerby with flaunted beauty, but never fails to charm those who pause to examine its flowers, with curiously reflexed petals of deepest purple. The less common variety *G.p. lividum* has flowers of a lighter shade, and more luminous. *G. viscosissimum*, another shade lover, is less easy to place for the flowers are a shade of purple-red which is

not pleasing to everyone. It is not a colour which I personally like very much, but I find it so much softened in fairly dense shade that I lose my objection to it when it is so situated. The individual flowers are large, and are carried on stems up to eighteen inches high.

Alchemilla mollis will endure any amount of drought and will grow and flourish in shade. Its large, handsomely lobed leaves and great heads of small straw-yellow flowers make a brave display for many weeks. A good companion for this is *Dicentra spectabilis*, whose arching sprays of white and scarlet flowers are so striking in early summer. All kinds of acanthuses too, may be employed to clothe our dry shade, which they will do very magnificently with their beautiful foliage—foliage which has inspired designers of pottery and furniture and architects right down the ages.

I could continue for pages yet, but space forbids that I do more than mention these few more names which may be sought as occupants of dry shade: *Stipa pennata*, *Buphthalmum salicifolium*, and most of the species of *Lamium*.

BOOK REVIEW

Collins Guide to "Border Plants"

Frances Perry (Collins 25/-)

IT IS INDEED singularly significant that since the inauguration of the Hardy Plant Society, in March 1957, that Mrs. Perry's book is the second to be published on hardy, herbaceous perennials. The title 'Border Plants' might conjure up anything that is planted in a border, from an annual, biennial to a perennial, but in fact this book deals with and sets out

clearly and concisely all that one would wish to know concerning hardy herbaceous perennials.

It would have been helpful to the less knowledgeable if there had been a cross reference from *maclaya* to *bocconia*, its more familiar name in gardens, and also from *hosta* to *funkia* and from *brunnera* to *anchusa*. Nomenclature throughout is good, but *penstemon* has only one 't'.

The work is well illustrated by sixteen black and white plates from original drawings, which are readily recognizable. The thirty-two plates in colour from original paintings are both useful and pleasing and it is a pity that the remaining eight colour plates, which are photographic, could not have been similar.

It's a pity that there is no general index, though the index of English or common names and the glossary are invaluable. The alphabetical list is most comprehensive, it is easy to follow and full of all the essential information the lover of hardy plants requires.

The five introductory chapters are to the point and fully informative and deal with such matters as preparation of the border, planning and planting, and also pests and diseases, a subject too often over-looked in works of this kind or skipped over as though it was something that should not happen or be spoken of. The chapter on Plants for Special Places and Purposes will be invaluable to those who wish to know what to plant in any particular soil or position.

Not only does Frances Perry tell us about the practical side of hardy plants, but also gives many interesting historical facts about the plants. For example we are told that with phlox "The first break came when John Downie of Edinburgh raised

an 'eyed' variety" this reference makes one wonder what other plants are credited to John Downie, of crab apple fame. Other such references explain after whom *ostrowoskia* and *macleaya* were named. The true plantsman is always keen to have this kind of information.

N.J.P.

Facts and Figures

WITH AN AVERAGE of 3 or 4 members enrolled every day, the Hardy Plant Society has reached the impressive membership of 794 in its ten-month existence. News of the Society has been far-reaching and there are 28 members throughout France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, U.S.A., Canada, Australia, South Africa and Ghana. At home, the Society is repre-

sented in all but four of the counties of England and Wales, support in the north being quite as strong as in the south. Scotland and Ireland also have many members.

The fact that nearly half the members are women, demonstrates the universal appeal of gardening and indeed it is a family concern, for there are 56 joint members; and four life members. Many horticultural firms have shown great interest and 37 are advertising on the back of the bulletin. The success of the Society seems assured by the wide interest and co-operation among members, who have lost no opportunity of spreading the news of its formation. We are also most grateful to all those nurserymen who have so willingly inserted enrolment forms in their lists and catalogues, the results are most encouraging.

F.V.P.



Photo: Amateur Gardening

The society's first exhibit of plants, staged at the Flower Fair held at Marlborough House last July—when 15 members were enrolled. On the left is the hon. secretary Mr. Noel J. Prockter.

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