



The HPS Hertfordshire Group Newsletter - Spring 2018



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Editorial

Happy 'New Gardening Year' to everyone.

I love this time of year - it's full of promise and good resolutions, as yet still intact. As you will read later in the Newsletter the sense of anticipation for the months ahead is particularly acute for me.

For those of you that participate, the HPS year starts off with the delivery of one's quota of beautifully labelled packets of seeds from the HPS Seed Exchange. I always place an order - they seem to be almost FOC and I really enjoy thinking that the seeds I have received are the shared 'fruits' of another HPS member's garden, of their enthusiasm and assiduous seed collection. It seems to be what the heart of the HPS is about & we do that in small part with our own local Seedling Exchange

In fact, sharing is something the committee would like to encourage, as the responsibility for keeping the HHPS Group going in the manner to which we have become accustomed falls on the shoulders of a few. So, whether it be bringing a cake or some plants to the monthly meetings or volunteering to be on the committee in a minor or major role, we would all be very grateful. If anyone would like to help with the refreshments we have a vacancy. We are also looking for a volunteer to edit the Newsletter as I am going to take over Alison King's role in 'recruiting' our future speakers. I will, of course, continue editing the Newsletter until we can find a replacement.

Let's hope we have optimum Spring weather and can all get out into our gardens very soon!

Susanna Geoghegan

Annual Seedling Swap

John Rowe is kindly hosting

Herts Group Annual Seedling Swap

on Saturday, March 31st from 10.00 - 12 noon
at Fox Meadow, Water End Road, Potten End, Berkhamsted HP4 2SH.
Tel 01442 862619 / 07816654982

Each Spring one of our group offers their garden as a venue for members to share, exchange or simply benefit from the excess seedlings that a lot of us end up with. Obviously the early Spring weather can affect the size of the seedlings but in a good year it's a very exciting event because you never know what will be on offer and it is a real treat to be able to experiment with just a few of a variety of things as opposed to sowing a whole packet of seed and worrying about what to do with the excess. There is no obligation to bring plants with you - just bring some plant labels so that you can note what you are taking away.



John's garden has a lovely display of Spring bulbs and maybe if we've had warm weather we'll be lucky enough to see his beautiful Magnolia in bloom.

Refreshments will be available.

Directions:

There are two white notices on either side of the top of the drive. These say Hollybush Glen and Fox Meadow. Fox Meadow is at the bottom of the drive, there is parking and one can turn round. In all likelihood we will be able to park on the drive of the neighbours at Hollybush Glen.

If you are coming from Berkhamsted you will pass Olivers Close and my drive is just beyond two houses. It is between 39 and 41 Water End Road. Obviously if one is coming the other way up Potten End Hill if one gets to Olivers Close you have passed the drive. Opposite the drive is a footpath with a green fingerpost.

Grand Plant Sale

The HHPS Annual Plant Sale will be held on Saturday June 2nd at Homewood Road United Reformed Church Hall, St Albans AL1 4BH from 10am to 12 noon

The preparation for the Sale, which includes sorting the donated plants & pricing them, will take place the evening before i.e. **Friday June 1st** - at the church hall. Plants can be accepted before 9 - 9.45am on the morning of the sale but we much prefer to receive them on the Friday evening.

As I am sure you all know, the receipts from the monthly meeting plant sales and from the Annual Plant Sale augment our very modest subscriptions enabling us to hire our meeting hall and pay the costs of our interesting series of speakers. The more well known the speaker obviously the higher their rates but they are often the crowd pleasers.

The revenue from the Plant Sale is completely predicated by the number, the variety and the quality of plants donated by members - some of whom do a sterling job year after year bringing beautifully labelled specimens which we can price accordingly.

The plants that sell the best are ones in flower where the plant label indicates all the essential info that a novice or experienced buyer would like to know - flower colour, height, soil likes etc so if you can put as much info as possible on the labels that helps us sell more and for higher prices.

The Plant Sale is a great team effort, mainly run by the Committee, but any members are welcome to come along to help and there's always the small incentive that you may get first dibs on one or two plants that catch your eye.

So please think about the Sale at every stage of the Spring - sowing those few extra seeds, potting on those few extra seedlings, taking those extra cuttings and potting up the remnants of divided perennials - they may all be a new owner's pride and joy later in the year.

Beryl Davis our Plant Sales Co-ordinator asked me to thank those of you that regularly make contributions to her table sale throughout the year but to also send out a rallying cry to you all to donate monthly as well as for the Plant Sale. Even those of you without greenhouses can contribute by potting up self-seeded plants or by dividing overgrown clumps.

Annual Coach Trip

Saturday 7th July 2018

Departure: 8.15am from Westminster Lodge, St Albans AL1 2DL

Our HPS coach trip this year will take us first to the romantic garden at **Stone House Cottage** created from an old walled kitchen garden in 1975, and covering 3/4 acre. Hedges divide the space, creating smaller 'rooms' in which a vast selection of beautiful shrubs and herbaceous plants are grown, some of which are not often seen. The garden has arches, towers, gazebos and other features which are covered in a multitude of the climbing plants for which the garden is renowned. There is an adjoining nursery which offers many of the plants grown in the garden. Unfortunately there will be NO refreshments available at Stone House Cottage.



Ashwood Nurseries is a traditional nursery and garden in the West Midlands, situated beside the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal. **John's Garden** is a wonderful 3 acre private garden created by nursery owner John Massey, and consists of informal borders, island beds, woodland dells, a wildlife meadow and more. There are collections of trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and conifers as well as many fine features, including a stunning pool and rock garden. We shall be given a guided tour of the garden with the opportunity to wander at leisure afterwards, or to visit the nursery.

The nursery specialises in high quality plants including hellebores, hepaticas, hardy cyclamen, hydrangeas and snowdrops, plus a good selection of shrubs and climbers.

The excellent tea room at Ashwood provides hot lunches, light meals, sandwiches and yummy cakes.

Maggie Lacey

Members' Open Gardens

Sunday 20th May 2018 2- 5pm

45, Oakridge Avenue, Radlett WD7 8EW

Leonora and her husband Edgar moved to their house in Radlett 13 years ago and, in common with Roger Trigg who is also opening his garden, she is fairly uncomplimentary about the gardening skills of the previous occupants. She says “ the plot wasn't a garden at all – it was more like a dog run really with holes and mounds here and there. 30ft of purple flowered *Rhododendron ponticum* and 10 large leylandii all in a circle which blotted out the sky”. What was not to like?

She notes that when they moved in there as one removal lorry for the interior items and another of similar size for all her plants so stock wasn't a problem

but of course the skill is in the way one combines the plants & colours.



With the eye of an artist and the plant knowledge of a nursery woman Leonora knocked her new plot into shape almost single-handed & within a couple of years she was opening for the NGS (and they take no prisoners!). Leonora's garden is on a sloping site & has three

terraced levels and each area

has its own personality and interest. She particularly likes dark leaved plants & shrubs interspersing them between vivid green foliaged plants. She says it's impossible to choose her favourite plant but day-lilies and asters bring a lot of pleasure.

In late May Leonora' is hoping that her wonderful wisteria will be at its best and that her garden will be full of early Summer colour. She looks forward to sharing her garden with HHPS members.

Directions: Oakridge Ave is just off the A5183/Watling Street if travelling south from St Albans. The road is the second turning right after the left hand B556 Harper Lane and has fake white gates either side of the road. There is plenty of parking adjacent to the house.

Members' Open Gardens

Sunday 5th August 2018 at 'Morning Light', 7 Armitage Close, Loudwater, Rickmansworth WD3 4HL

Roger and Pat Trigg moved to their spacious bungalow in 2011 to find a south-facing 90' x 50' plot dominated by three TPO-protected Douglas firs. The previous owners had been golfers, not gardeners, and had simply laid out the garden to lawn or, more accurately, to moss contaminated with a few sprouts of grass. A few shrubs had been planted on the periphery but far too close together – a tree paeony and a *Garrya elliptica* just 9" apart!

Roger decided to strip off the moss and lay out island beds served by chipped cedar bark paths. The three trees dictated the design of what has become a woodland garden featuring several raised beds near the trees, one of which encompasses the central tree and is stocked with hostas, heucheras and astilbes. The umbrella effect of the trees has necessitated leaky-pipe irrigation which allows these moisture-loving plants to thrive. The unusual U-shaped footprint of the bungalow allowed a spacious 450 ft² orangery to be easily built between the spurs. The orangery is packed with

tender plants from around the world. This space had been a crazy-paved patio, the stones from which Roger used to make a horse-shoe shaped pond.

A raised deck projects from the orangery on which a collection of sub-tropical plants is put out for the summer and beneath which is a bed of tall perennials such as *Eupatorium maculatum atropurpureum*, *Rudbeckia 'Herbstsonne'*, *Actea*

simplex, *Thalictrum*s and *Canna Wyoming*' the flowering of which can be enjoyed at knee height instead of it being a neck-craning experience.



Directions: Leave the M25 at J18, take the A404 towards Rickmansworth and turn left after ½ mile into Loudwater Lane. Follow the lane which becomes narrow and twisty for ½ mile, turn right at the T-junction and right again almost immediately into Armitage Close. They are the middle of three bungalows at the end of the cul-de-sac. They can park up to 6 cars on their drive and there is space in the road for more.

Starting from Scratch

For even the most lightweight gardener, moving house is often as much about the new plot as it is about the new dwelling. If the property is brand new, or has been subject to major renovations, the plot will have been a building site making the challenges and excitement of a new garden come in greater but equal measure.



How often do gardeners with mature gardens, jam-packed with inherited plants, years of purchases and gifted seeds and cuttings dream of a truly blank canvas and the opportunity to start afresh? I often dreamt of that possibility but the reality is unexpectedly daunting, especially when you believe this will be your 'forever' home and the last garden you'll have the opportunity to 'design'.

In planning the transformation of the 'building site' - void of any single plant - that surrounded my new-build Passivhaus the only limitations were: the size – small; the soil conditions – chalky and the fact that I wanted it to be a garden that I could sit in and enjoy & not be a slave to. As a rule I don't have many 'little' visitors and I don't have a dog, and so I decided a lawn would, for me, be poor use of the limited space and I am not a great fan of large expanses of paving, so borders, beds and paths were my focus.

The new back garden is very visible from all the rooms at the rear of the house so all-year round interest was desirable (isn't it always!) and, so it was, that my research began - my notes taking the form of a computer spreadsheet. I tried to organize the spreadsheet so it could be sorted and arranged in different ways - by season/by height/by colour/by plant type - trees, climbers, shrubs, evergreen, deciduous, bulbs, perennials and annuals. I wanted every plant to be a good 'doer' and to be the most appealing of its genus, and as you can imagine, before not too long I was completely awash with a list of 'must have' plants but without any accurate idea of how large the planting areas would actually be and therefore how many plants I would need. To be even more thorough I also asked all my keen gardening friends which plants would be their 'must have's' in a new

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Quite early on it became clear to me that what I really needed was to go on a garden design course but, sadly, there wasn't time for that.

Based on the house building schedule, I predicted that the garden would 'available' for landscaping & planting in late Autumn 2017– the period of the year when real nurseries have obviously sold out or sold off most of their stock. Bare-root roses were the only thing I could rely on obtaining at the back end of the year. I therefore made the decision to search out or order all the plants on my hit list throughout the Summer & early Autumn of 2017; pot them all on and keep them as healthy as I could until the garden was ready to be planted. At that stage I still didn't have a planting plan but, due to the help of the spreadsheet, I felt that my plant list was reasonably well balanced and would enable me to create a satisfying structure and framework.

My natural impatience and determination that my garden would be presentable during my first year in residence (Spring /Summer 2018), so I didn't need to rely on annuals and successive purchasing during the first year, meant that I also needed to get my bulbs ordered and underway - this would allow me to underplant the bulbs which is often difficult in an established garden. I planted well over 150 pots of bulbs (all labelled) which meant, by the time they could be transferred to the beds, they would be well underway.

Quite unexpectedly the scaffolding was removed, allowing the ground workers to make a start on creating beds and paths and seating areas. The plan was to have gravel paths with faux sleeper concrete stepping stones

weaving around irregular shaped island beds. I didn't want the pea shingle migrating into the beds, nor did I want the soil to migrate onto the paths making it easier for weeds to grow, so I needed a system of retaining each bed. Bendable metal edging made of flat interlocking bands with teeth that fix it into the ground created that division.



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Not unsurprisingly the soil in all the beds was compacted and very poor and contained the residue of the various building materials. Therefore each bed was dug over methodically and cleared of large quantities of poor soil along with great clods of chalk and replaced with a total of 10 bulk bags of top soil/ mushroom compost/manure and leaf mould.

With a very steep bank falling down to a stream at the end of the garden, the ground workers also managed to create a new bed supported by vertical sleepers which has a similar



visual effect to an infinity pool.

Finally, and all of a sudden, the time came to start planting within a window of (what I guessed would be) about a week before predicted freezing cold weather was due to set in. The first shock was that the garden that I had imagined would be quite small suddenly looked much larger after all the clearance and so I realized the number of plants I had gathered was probably quite inadequate. And I still hadn't got my planting plan because the shape and size of the beds 'emerged' in a matter of days – in fact I just 'drew' them with spray chalk.

Due to the weather forecast I needed to get the plants arranged and planted quickly. Knowing I had a reasonable balance of colours I took the quite rash decision to divide my long list of plants into colour groups. Having always admired monochromatic garden 'rooms' and planting schemes I decided rather impetuously to pursue a colour-themed approach - white/silver & pale pink, mauve/dark purple and ruby red, and blue and white. The irregularity of

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the bed shapes and their positions means that the vistas through the beds will cut across the monochromatic swathes so that even if the individual beds don't work as well as I hope at least the combinations seen from a long view may work! Each bed was laid out with a high central point due to either a structural climbing plant support or to the planting of tall perennials.

At the time of writing the predicted cold snap has arrived. Only a week after planting all my carefully selected & nurtured plants, snow now covers the ground and they are mostly invisible. I am holding my breath and praying that the majority will survive and hopefully flourish and that my 'forever' garden may even look good in its initial years. The jury is out and the wish that I had had the benefit of a garden design course could not be more acute. Hindsight and all that! Let's hope that a major rejigging isn't necessary next Autumn. But what is 100% sure – this isn't going to be the low maintenance garden I dreamt of! Admittedly no lawn but a 'helluva' lot of plants to love!



PS If this garden isn't mentioned again you'll know why ;)!

Susanna Geoghegan

Good for the Head & the Heart

We may think we are nurturing our garden, but of course it's our garden that is really nurturing us.
Jenny Uglow

Jenny is a well known gardener, author, historian, critic and publisher but she is not a neuroscientist – nonetheless she recognises, as do many others, the value that gardening can have for both our mental & physical health. Recent research by the NGS established that, for many of us, our sense of well-being is enhanced by being in a garden and by the activity of gardening. While this may be the perception of most gardeners, a number of scientific papers published in recent years prove, beyond doubt, the value not only of gardening but also the benefits of exposure to open green spaces for our mental health and for improved social cohesion. Now commonly accepted, this research has informed and spawned a new branch of therapy called STH – Social and Therapeutic Horticulture - which at its most basic is a way of using gardening to improve the lives of people who are living with disabilities or ill health, or are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable.

The benefits of our shared hobby may seem all too obvious to us committed gardeners who will all have felt that sense of stresses being reduced & problems cast into a new perspective after a few hours of pottering in our own green spaces. It brings out our nurturing tendencies, we feel excited by the wonder of nature, and on occasions, it lets us release pent up frustration or aggression when we take an axe to an unfortunate shrub that has outgrown its allotted space. However, for people whose equilibrium is challenged for whatever reason, the benefits can be far more calculable - restoring balance and wellbeing.

STH practitioners believe gardening can help because....

- it's great exercise which in turn boosts your mood by releasing endorphins.
- you can work at your own pace – it's not a competition
- regular gardening can bring structure to your life and give a sense of purpose
- it gives the opportunity for people to learn new skills
- it provides an easy & often peaceful environment in which to connect with new people, reducing feelings of isolation
- tending plants can engender a positive sense of responsibility and a sense of achievement

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The overall effect can be a reduction in stress, anxiety and depression and an improvement in physical health.

The fact that one in four adults will experience some kind of mental health problem in any one year (source: MIND) and that anti depressants are being dispensed at record levels means there are many people who could benefit



from STH. There are charities and organisations keen to establish centres & projects where this therapy can be best put into practice. Thrive are a national charity based in Reading & Battersea Park & they support many local initiatives. There are also a number of projects local to us – for example Lindengate which opened its service and its Wendover garden site 3 years ago has supported over 100 Gardeners – the name for

their 'clients'. The charity uses the internationally recognised *Warwick & Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale* (WEMWBS) that measures wellbeing development over time. WEMWBS data collected during the past three years strongly indicates that STH directly contributes towards wellbeing improvements and this is supported both by positive comments they receive from Gardeners and their families. In addition we have Earthworks in St Albans, Sunnyside in Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead and Bridewell in Oxfordshire.

The conundrum is why, scientifically, gardening has this beneficial effect and this subject has been researched by Sue Stuart Smith, the owner, with her gardener husband Tom, of the beautiful Barn Garden near St Albans. Sue is a prominent psychiatrist and psychotherapist and is writing an inspirational and authoritative book on mental health and physical labour to be published later this year, which teaches us how vital gardening can be as an escape for the brain and how developing green fingers can help our minds through action as well as thought.

Aptly entitled '*The Well Gardened Mind*', Sue's book investigates how immersion in gardening can affect our inner worlds, both consciously and

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unconsciously, and how it can help us to find or re-find our place in the world. Combining contemporary neuroscience and psychoanalysis with compelling real life stories, Sue shows in her book how many of the physical and mental processes involved in gardening are ones that are recognised as facilitating neural change.

She writes, “Pared back to its basics gardening is one of the quintessential nurturing activities. For many people, apart from having children and raising a family, the process of creating and then tending a plot is one of the most significant things in their lives. With the natural rituals of growth, decay and regeneration, safety and enclosure, destruction and renewal, it is as if alongside the physical activity there are natural parallels with the cycle of



human life. And yet, despite its value we understand so little about it.

In the plant world, regeneration is a matter of course, but psychological repair does not come so naturally to us. While we have an innate capacity to form strong attachments, we're less well equipped to deal with trauma and loss. In our secular and consumerist world, we have lost touch with many of the rituals that

can help us navigate our way through life. Gardening is a form of ritual; as well as creating beauty around us, it works within our minds, as a symbolic act“.

Maybe on an unconscious level we gardeners are all engaged in a journey of constant self therapy as we tend our gardens large and small, sow our seeds and nurture our seedlings, making the green spaces we inhabit as lovely as we can. The organisations mentioned are always keen to take on volunteers and this is a wonderful way to share the skills and the benefits of the hobby we all love that that we may rather take for granted.

Susanna Geoghegan

A Journey of Hard Work, Discovery and Fulfilment

We moved to our "new" (16th century) house and 2 acre garden, adjacent to farmland, in 2010. To corrupt a cliché, the garden had good bones but had grown old with the previous owners. After a couple of years sorting out the house, my wife said I could spend more time in the garden.

One of the first things we did was to use a minidigger to grub out a number of time expired substantial conifer shrubs and a weather-battered *Garrya elliptica*. This decision freed up space and potential to redevelop the area around the house.

The other part of the garden is a 1 acre field that simply contained 4 ancient, diseased and "characterful" sweet cherry trees. The aphorism that you should never plant a cherry has some validity; "it will grow 40 feet tall, 40 feet wide and serve to feed the birds." We do, in fact, manage to pick some fruit from the lower branches, however. (Unlike these trees, cherries are now frequently grafted onto dwarfing rootstock and so hopefully this may allow UK cherry farmers to reclaim some of their previous market).

The Design

Contrary to the other contributor in this Newsletter, writing about the development of a brand new garden from scratch, I have no artistic or design skills. It seemed sensible, therefore, to bite the bullet and engage a garden designer. The selection of the individual could be the subject of another article! The starting point was a dialogue with her, specifying our garden requirements, and for a detailed site survey to be performed. My greedy dendrophilia and trainspotter traits quickly became apparent. By and large, they were accommodated and have continued even after the initial framework had been achieved, hopefully not to its detriment.

I have learnt a lot working with the designer e.g. the importance of using multiple plants to avoid bittiness, plant repetition in different areas and using a "sight stopper", possibly a tree or a bench.

Prior to our house move, we had made a number of visits to see the Winter Garden at Anglesey Abbey. Like many of you I am sure, it made a big impression on us. We decided that we would like to plagiarize this, albeit on a much more modest scale. This was put on the masterplan and the other "required" elements were then incorporated. Clearly every garden must additionally include year round interest.

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The Process

The planting beds, most particularly the winter walk, were marked out and treated with weedkiller. A contractor, with his plough, visited and prepped the areas either side of a sinuous path. He advised me, very usefully, to leave the path unploughed, so that I had an area of refuge from the 2 large patches of clinging clay. The beds were then dug over by hand on 2 further occasions before planting.

Although farmyard manure is easily available in this area, it is hard work shifting and spreading it. We, therefore, applied generous amounts of woodchip on the prepared beds. This has proved reasonably effective in conditioning the soil, over the last few years.

I know it is said you plant trees for future generations but, being selfish, I am also keen to enjoy them myself. It was, therefore, a priority to get them planted as early as possible in the process. The shrubs, herbaceous and bulbs then followed.

I have acknowledged my horticultural trainspotting tendency. However, if from your reading or seeing a particular species in a garden, you spot something you really like, don't compromise with a look alike, simply because it is available in the local garden centre. A good proportion of excellent nurseries offer a mail order service. From my experience, if you chose the nursery carefully, they will not send you the poorest plant they have in stock. It will usually arrive meticulously packaged. A favourite moment of mine is opening the brown cardboard box to reveal the contained treasure. It is also a good idea to try to develop a relationship with your chosen nurseries, as aftersales advice is often invaluable.



Young trees require careful management to remove diseased or crossing branches. This allows a mature tree to have an "open" centre, which promotes health. This is most easily achieved if done early. This process is also particularly important if the tree is being grown for its bark interest. Ideally the branches removed should be no bigger than your index finger. Keeping your secateurs sharp and sterile make the ingress of pathogens much less likely.



For those of us passionate about bark, use of a pressure washer in December will save you a lot of time and also the discomfort of cold, algae-saturated water running up your right forearm.
What have I learnt ?

Protection against muntjac and rabbits is vital in a country garden.

Greater understanding/confidence in the management of young trees.

The importance of very regular inspection of plants to spot and remedy a problem ASAP.

Planting a new garden is expensive.

It is remarkable what you can see when you are on your hands and knees weeding, even in winter.

If the plant does not look right or is not thriving in its new home, move it or give it away.

Reference works are sometimes correct e.g. It will take *Chimonanthus praecox* 4-5 years to flower after planting. They do sometimes get it wrong e.g. hardiness and ultimate size.

Although we are far from achieving our perfect garden (if it is ever possible), the journey is bringing huge enjoyment.

Malcolm Stodell

Our Favourite Things

I can't believe anyone would want to contradict me when I say I believe that all gardeners love a practical tip, a plant recommendation or a solution to a gardening challenge. If that isn't the case why is Gardeners' Question Time still going strong after 70 years? It was this presumption that convinced me that our membership would be interested in some of the gardening 'favourites' of our tremendously accomplished HHPS Committee.

I set them a little challenge and asked them for the names of a couple of plants they wouldn't be without, a plant nursery they felt was worthy of recommendation, a garden they love to visit and a practical item that they rely on. I won't attribute the answers because they didn't arrive in a uniform fashion but here below is a digest of the committee's favourites which I am confident you'll find of interest.

1 Picotee Hellebores

16 Geranium 'Bill Wallis'

2 Hardy Fuschia Lottie Hobby

17 Tulipa 'Little Beauty'

3 Cyclamen coum Pewter Leaf Group

18 Cornus alternifolia 'Argentea'

4 Narcissus asturiensis

19 Abelia grandiflora 'Gold Spot'

5 Iris 'Katherine Hodgkin'

20 Tulipa sprengeri

6 Paeonia mlokosewitschii

21 The McCartney Rose

7 Cornus kousa 'Miss Satoumi'

22 Clematis' Perle D'Azur'

8 Cyclamen hederfolium

23 Dianthus 'Mrs Sinkins'

9 Clematis viticella 'Emilia Plater'

24 Phlox paniculata

10 Astrantia 'Shaggy'

25 Rosa 'Comtesse du Cayla'

11 Fuschia 'David'

26 Fuschia Mrs Popple

12 Galanthus 'Mrs Macnamara'

13 Prunus serrula

14 Daphne odora

15 Rosa x odorata 'Bengal Crimson'



Our Favourite Things

Favourite Plant Nursery

Ayletts Nursery N Orbital Rd, St Albans AL2 1DH

Daisy Roots Jenningsbury, London Rd, Hertford SG13 7NS

Bluebell Nursery Smisby, Ashby de la Zouch, Leics LE65 2TA

Chenies Manor Plant Fairs, Chenies, Bucks WD3 6ER

Avondale Nursery Mill Hill, Baginton, Coventry CV8 3AG

Swines Meadow Farm Nursery 47, Towngate East, Market Deeping PE6 8LQ

Beeches Nursery Crown Hill, Ashdon, Saffron Walden CB10 2HB.

The Plant Specialist Whitefield Lane, Great Missenden HP16 0BH

Hillers Nursery Jermyns Ln, Ampfield, Romsey SO51 0QA

Sadly Little Heath Nursery and Hopleys were on several people's lists but we gather they are both closing

Favourite Open Garden

Anglesey Abbey Garden, Cambs CB25 9EJ

Wollerton Old Hall, Shropshire TF9 3NA

Jackson's Wold, Yorkshire YO17 8QJ

Wyken Hall Suffolk IP31 2DW

Kiftsgate, Glos GL55 6LN

Hever Castle, Kent TN8 7NG

Stone House Cottage, Worcs DY10 4BG

Vale End, Albury, Surrey GU5 9BE

Coton Manor, Northants NN6 8RQ



Our Favourite Things

Useful Things We Wouldn't be Without

Showa Gardening Gloves

Felco No 2 Secateurs

Darlac long handled cut and pruner

Thick padded kneeler

Jakoti Hand Shears

Gloves

Mug of tea

Glass of Wine

Gardena Irrigation kit

Wheelbarrow

An old bread knife

The husband

Rake & Grab Leaf Picker Upper

Old Two Pronged Weeder Fork



Article by Susanna

Events Programme 2018

Saturday February 3rd

Andrew Brogan - *Hardy Exotics*

Andrew established and runs Henstead Exotic Garden near Beccles in Suffolk, as he describes it, a garden of giants! Plants for sale.

www.hensteadexoticgarden.co.uk

Saturday March 3rd

Alun and Jill Whitehead - *Iris*es for the Natural Garden

Alun and Jill created their 3 acre Aulden Farm Garden near Leominster in Herefordshire as a private garden but it is regularly open to the public who visit to see, amongst other things, their National Collection of Siberian Irises. Their talk will cover other Iris species too.

Plants for sale.

www.auldenfarm.co.uk

Saturday March 31st

Seedling Swap at John Rowe's

[Fox Meadow, Water End Road, Potten End HP4 2SH](http://www.foxmeadow.co.uk)

Saturday April 7th

Dianne Nichol-Brown - *Barking up the Wrong Tree*

Dianne and her husband David run Polemonium Plantery in County Durham where she lectures on various horticultural subjects and offers Bed and Breakfast.

This talk will demonstrate the benefit of trees in the garden and will suggest suitable ones as well as what not to plant. Plants for sale.

www.polemonium.co.uk

Sunday 20th May 2 - 5pm

Members' Open Garden - Leonora Vaughan

[45, Oakridge Avenue Radeltt WD7 8EW](http://www.leonora.co.uk)

Friday 1st June 6 - 9pm

Plant Sale Preparation

United Reformed Church, Homewood Road, St Albans AL1 4BH

Events programme 2018

Saturday 2nd June 10am - Noon

Annual Plant Sale

United Reformed Church, Homewood Road, St Albans AL1 4BH

Saturday 7th July

Annual Coach Trip to Stone House Garden & Nursery, Worcs and John's Garden & Ashwood Nursery, West Mids

Sunday 5th August

Members' Open Garden - Roger & Pat Trigg

7, Armitage Close, Loudwater, Rickmansworth WD3 4HL

Saturday October 6th

Marcus Dancer - *Scented Plants throughout the Year*

Marcus runs a nursery in Hampshire specialising in Clematis and is a lecturer at the English Gardening School. His talk will focus on shrubs, perennials and climbers that will bring scent to your garden all year round. Plants for sale www.clematisplants.co.uk

Saturday November 3rd

Peter Osborne - *St Stephens Compost-Making*

Those of you who have been to Heather and Peter Osborne's garden, which is regularly open with the NGS, will have marvelled at the system they have for producing perfect garden compost. In this talk, which will follow the AGM Peter will 'show and tell' how he does it!

Saturday December 1st

Bob Brown - *Geraniums, Restraint and Discrimination*

For our last meeting of the year we look forward to a return visit from Bob who needs little introduction. A visit to his famous Cotswold Garden Flowers Nursery is on the wish list for all perennial gardeners. Given the vast array of geraniums available it will be interesting to hear which have his seal of approval. www.cgf.net

HPS Conservation Scheme

Hopefully you'll all be aware of the HPS national Conservation Scheme which aims to identify and preserve at least some of the garden plants in danger of being lost. Volunteer members of the scheme grow the plants in a variety of places across the country and report back on how well the plants have grown for them. Unlike wild plants which receive some protection and conservation from international organisations and some governments, those plants which people have selected or bred and which we grow in our gardens don't. If we want to retain the huge range of plants that we can grow in the UK we need to try to do something about this.

Large commercial interests, sometimes on an industrial scale, increasingly control what is available. Concentration on breeding for a particular characteristic which helps sales such as larger flowers may lead to loss of others which are important to gardeners. These include reliability, how well a plant does over a long time, scent, resistance to pests and diseases and long flowering time. Fashion also plays a part. This means older cultivars which have proved their worth in the past are becoming harder to find. Even if few gardeners want to grow them at the moment, they may have role in future breeding. For all these reasons the work of the HPS Conservation Scheme is important.

Since I took over from my predecessor, Diana Garner, I have tried to persuade a number of you to adopt HPS specified plants. There is no charge for the plants and you are simply asked to look after them, just as you would any other plant in your garden. If it is possible, we would like you to propagate from them. Each year I will ask you to give me feedback on a simple proforma, as to how the plant has performed in your garden. I then share this information at the national conservation meeting.

A number of you have taken some of the plants but disappointingly, when asked for feedback, I have received very little info. Additionally in anticipation of the Conservation AGM, I have asked the Hertfordshire members if they would like me to try to access any conservation plants for them but have received few replies which is disappointing. The national HPS website lists and illustrates the plants. It describes why the plants are included and also shows the feedback form we ask you to complete so please do volunteer!

Committee members

Role	Name	Contact
Chairman	Liz Egre	
Secretary	Heather Osborne	
Treasurer	Mary Robey	
Membership Sec.	Alison Tracy	
Newsletter	Susanna Geoghegan	
Plant Sales	Beryl Davis	
Technical Manager	David Singleton	
Refreshments	Susanna Geoghegan Penny Bennetts	_____
Coach Trip	Maggie Lacey	
Conservation	Malcolm Stodell	
Website	Mike Crabb	

Please see committee website page for contact details and use the contact form if you need the password, quoting your membership number

Meetings

Indoor meetings start at 2.00pm and are held at Wheathampstead Memorial Hall on Marford Road, Wheathampstead. AL4 8AY

Visitors are very welcome and asked to contribute £5 per visit

Tea and cake costs £1 (tea only 50p). If you are able to offer help by serving tea or bringing a cake please contact Penny.

We would like to welcome our new members Carolyn Chapman, Robert Elliott, Theresa McCloskey, Sally Miles, Anna Omiotek-Tott and Ella Tucker