



HPS

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

February 2019 Issue 136
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www.dorsethps.org.uk

February 23rd speaker – Rosy Hardy

Rosy needs no introduction – two coach-loads of us visited her nursery, Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, last Spring. Her displays in Chelsea's Great Pavilion showcase some of her favourite varieties as well as her new introductions, all planted with such artistry that she has now won a record **23** RHS Chelsea Gold Medals. She'll be bringing three tables full of plants for sale!

Manor Farm

Once again, Anne and Guy Trehane of **Manor Farm**, Hampreston, are opening for the NGS on Saturday (10-1) and Sunday (1-4) 23rd & 24th February. A beautiful garden in a lovely village, full of spring flowers and masses of hellebores. Dorset Perennials will be selling plants and Lupus will be serving refreshments including home-made soup.

Book Now!



The trip to Prospect House and High Garden Nursery is now full, but seats are still available on the trip to Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park, on Saturday, 18th May. You can book at the meeting - it would help if you could bring your forms already completed (they are available on our website and in your 2019 Events Brochure) with a cheque made out to HPS Dorset Group No.2 Account.

Plant Fayre, 11th May

Please consider this year's Plant Fayre. We would be grateful if you could help us by potting up the various plants you dig up or divide in the next few

months. If you could offer help on May 11th by selling plants or making tea and coffee, please talk to Jane or Barbara. Even better, if you propagate enough plants, you could have your own table to sell them, please email Jane at the above address. This year, in addition to the Plant Fayre and our indoor meetings, we will be selling plants at eight other events. This will mean we will need plenty of plants to sell so if you can help us please talk to any committee member. We very much enjoy these events and they showcase HPS to a wider audience.

Provado

One of our experts, Felicity Frost, points out that the active ingredient in the systemic insecticide Provado, recommended in previous *Hardy Times* for dealing with vine weevil, is a neonicotinoid and as such a serious hazard to all insects, not just the vine weevils. Bees and other pollinators have been proved to be seriously harmed by neonics and the effects in the plant are long lasting. It is important our members know they could be unwittingly harming our natural insect fauna in using Provado. Felicity suggests using Nematodes, applied when the soil warms up (i.e. not now). "It's a bit tricky to time it right as they only work on the grubs, not once they reach nymph stage and they require moisture in the soil/compost to move about. Got to be worth a try though!"

Topical Tips from our Experts

It's a very busy time!

- * While the garden is still in its winter state it is easy to see troublesome weeds such as brambles, docks and tree seedlings. Seek and destroy now! After March new root growth will make them harder to remove.
- *Finish pruning Wisteria, apples and pears.
- *Climbing roses need pruning - all side shoots should be cut back to within three buds and last season's strong new stems need tying in.
- *Check through your seed collection to see what needs sowing first.
- *Chit potato tubers
- *Divide bulbs such as snowdrops and plant them 'in the green'.

- *Keep feeding the birds.
- *Tidy greenhouse, clean pots and seed boxes.
- *Dig a trench in readiness for beans and fill with kitchen refuse compost and/or manure.
- *Good candidates to prune now: Buddleja davidii, Caryopteris, Fuchsia magellanica, Hydrangea paniculata, Leycesteria formosa, Perovskia, Spiraea japonica. But not Hydrangea macrophylla, Buddleja globosa and alternifolia.
- *Remove older stems, right down to the ground or to a good new shoot, from overcrowded shrubs like Physocarpus, Philadelphus, Deutzia and Weigela.
- *Coloured stem dogwoods can be coppiced now.
- *Order Dahlias and Summer bulbs.
- *Plant bare root shrubs and trees while still available

Kevin's Krafty Corner

- 1) I hope you are all chitting your potatoes at present, those eggboxes are really useful! They can go into potato sacks in early March, or into the ground in late March.
- 2) Many of you are sowing seeds right now, either flowers or vegetables, so here are a few tips to increase your germination rate:
 - a) everyone always sows too many seeds too close together, so bulk the seeds out with sand, finely sieved compost, perlite etc before sowing
 - b) black seeds are hard to see, roll them in plain flour before to make them white, then sow them
 - c) buy potting compost, or finely sieved garden centre compost, and add sand, grit, perlite (or finely sieved leafmould if you have it). You want free-draining soil, not too high in nutrients, to promote root growth. Then pot on to richer compost later
 - d) always use tap water for seeds, not rainwater (which is better for more mature plants)
 - e) Perlite and Vermiculite are different. Use perlite added to your compost (helps the free draining), and use vermiculite to cover the soil on top (retains moisture, and prevents stem rot)
 - f) fill up your watering can the night before you are going to use it, and leave in the warm. That can often raise the temperature of the water by 10 degrees C
 - g) bring your soil/compost into the warm too before using it

h) carefully read the seed packet instructions. Some seeds need to be put on the surface of the soil, others covered with a thin layer of sieved compost (and/or vermiculite), some buried more deeply. Some need vernalisation (put in the fridge for a few days/weeks), some need bottom heat (like my tomatoes, chillies and cucumbers just planted), some need ambient heat (like many summer bedding plants), and some just kept frost free (like my overwintering sweet peas)

i) once the plants are established, they need nitrogen for growth (great from nettle feed), don't use potash/potassium/phosphate feeds (i.e. comfrey feed), until they develop flowers or fruits.

Charitable donations

The results of the vote taken at the AGM for the distribution of £1200 to charities nominated by members of our Group has been circulated, but in case you missed it, 30 people voted for Cherry Tree and Chestnut Nurseries, and the remaining four charities (Knoll Gardens Foundation, Perennial, Holton Lee and The Stable Home Farm Trust) all got 14 votes. So £400 goes to the winner and £200 each to the other four.

Survey of Members

Following Debbie's request for feedback at the last meeting, we have been pleased with your response. As the Group evolves we would like to know what you like about it, and what you don't!

We are attaching a questionnaire with this Hardy Times and would welcome all members' points of view from what you look for in a good speaker, to when you prefer to have your refreshments.

There will be a box at the Hall at the next Meeting for printed copies. Alternatively we would be grateful if you could email your response to Kevin, whose email address is on the form, as he will be collating your responses.

A Member's Paradise Plot

For a real treat, go to Hugh Miles's blog, and scroll down to his entry for Christmas Day where he describes the garden he shares with his wife (and member) Sue. Stunning.

<http://hughmiles9.blogspot.com/>


Cranborne
THE GARDEN ROOM

**TALK IN
THE GARDEN ROOM**
Tuesday 26th March 2.30pm
'Spring in Japan - travelling around
Japan to enjoy the exquisite gardens
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A brand new talk for 2019 by Rosemary
Legrand. Tickets £10, include tea/coffee
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Survey of Membership

We at Dorset HPS are very grateful for your continued support, but want to ensure that we continue to do whatever we can to keep that support. So could we ask you to complete this short questionnaire about our Speaker meetings:

Please circle the score for the importance of each of the following, on a scale of 1 (least important) to 10 (most important). Please pop it in the box on the way out or email it to Kevin at kandpsteale@btinternet.com. Thank you.

Reputation/renown of the speaker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Talk specifically about hardy plants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Talk about anything horticultural	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Structured Presentation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Quality of slides	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inclusion of 'how to' information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physical demonstrations on 'how to'	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inclusion of amusing anecdotes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Meeting/nattering with friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tea and cakes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Plants/gardening items for sale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Raffle Prizes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Refreshments before the talk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Refreshments at the break	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Refreshments at the end	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10