

# Dorset Group

## Newsletter

September 2025

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# HPS

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

Hello everyone...

Wonderful as it has been to have a warm and sunny summer, I expect we're all feeling relieved to have seen some rain at last, and pleased to put away the garden hoses. At times it felt like a never-ending endurance test. Maybe it will make us think about the way we garden and the types of plants we grow in the future, which can only be for the good.

### Events since our last meeting

Our annual plant fair took place in May, resulting in a profit of £200 which has been added to our funds.

We've had two days of self-drive garden visits. On each day we visited two contrasting gardens. In each case one of the gardens provided a private visit. In May, 13 of us went first to the Manor House at Stratford Tony, then to Heale Garden in the Woodford Valley, where we had a guided tour from the owner, Frances Rasch. In July, 20 of us went to West Dorset, first to the Old Rectory at Litton Cheney, again with a tour given by the owner, Emily Cave, followed by a visit to Stillpoint Garden & Nursery, which is owned by our speaker from February, Charles Chesshire. Charles is a real plantsman, who has created a very interesting garden with many rare and unusual plants.

Thanks, as always, to all our volunteers, without whom our meetings just wouldn't happen.

Hope to see you all next Saturday... June Allison, Committee

### Tribute to Eric Watson - 13th November 1943 - 23rd June 2025

One of our founder members, Elaine Lofthouse, who knew Eric well, has provided the following tribute.

#### Eric Watson - 13th November 1943 - 23rd June 2025

#### Wildlife Photographer, Cyclist, Gentleman

As Chairman of the HPS Dorset Group for over 17 years Eric was the rock on which the Group was built.

Under Eric's long and steady influence the group grew and became strong and successful with monthly lectures, regular plant sales, many day trips and holidays, as well as four national events and exhibiting at a national show.

As a speaker himself he always took care of lecturers as well as dealing with audio and visual technicalities. He was usually first to arrive and the last to leave, ensuring that meetings ran smoothly. He was a keen cyclist and often cycled to meetings at Colehill from his home at Ensbury.

Eric was respected and will be greatly missed.

Elaine Lofthouse, HPS DG Founder member and former Secretary



### Dates for your Diary

2025

#### Saturday 27th September - talk

'Ferns – an Introduction and their Uses in the Garden'  
with Bob Brown

#### Saturday 25th October - talk

'The Ascension Islands' with  
Martin Young

#### Saturday 22nd November Celebrity Speaker event, Ticket only

'Grow Great Veg' with  
Pippa Greenwood

2026

#### Saturday 24th January - talk

'Woodland Gardening' with  
Saul Walker

#### Saturday 28th February – talk

TBA

#### Saturday 28th March – talk

TBA

#### Saturday 25th April – talk

'Daisy Days' with  
Helen Picton

## Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September - talk 'Ferns: An Introduction and Their Uses in the Garden' with Bob Brown

Bob Brown will be talking about Ferns, one of those groups of plants which is often overlooked but deserves more attention. Bob started his nursery, Cotswold Garden Flowers, in the early 1990s, since when it has grown into one of the UK's best known nurseries, growing a wide variety of perennial plants.

### Timings:

1.45pm - gates open, time for socialising, refreshments

Tea/Coffee £1, Cake £1, raffle tickets, plants etc

2.30pm – talk starts, followed by Q&A, Notices and raffle draw

4.15pm approx - end of meeting

*Your help to put chairs away is always much appreciated*

## Plant Sales at the Meeting – and Plant Donations

Do you have plants you've propagated which you'd like to sell, for your own profit, donating 20% of your takings to DHPS funds?

Book your table by emailing us at least 2 days before the meeting.

Alternatively, you can donate your plants to DHPS to sell for our funds, just bring and pop on to the 'Donated Plants' table.

## Recycle your Gardening Magazines

Keep bringing those gardening related magazines you've finished with - and help yourself to another one or two. The magazine table should be to the left of the kitchen hatch.

## Celebrity Speaker – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November

### 'Grow Great Veg' with Pippa Greenwood

**Prices: Members £8, non-members £14**

Book and pay for your tickets at the September and October meetings.

Pippa Greenwood, plant pathologist and previous presenter on BBC2's 'Gardener's World' and a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time. This talk is fun and informative as she offers ideas and tips on how to grow great vegetables. Pippa will provide advice on how to prolong vegetable growing over as long a season as possible, which are the best varieties to choose, how to avoid pests in a natural way and more. Discover ways to grow vegetables in your garden, allotment or even window boxes and head towards living the good life. Pippa will be bringing books for sale.

## HPS National Subscription Increase for 2026

You're probably aware of the proposal to increase the subscription rate from next year which was explained in the July edition of Seedlings. The new rates were originally proposed to be £40 single/£45 joint membership, but, following responses from members, were reduced to £27 and £33. That proposal was approved at the AGM on 13th September. Although still a significant increase, it will be 15 years since the current rate was set. Bearing that in mind, it doesn't seem so unreasonable, particularly in the light of the way other costs have risen in recent years.

Details of the proposal for this increase is on page 10 of 'Seedlings' newsletter, July issue. Confirmation of the AGM vote approval is in the email to members from Clare Powell dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

## What Happens at our Meetings

The **Membership Year** runs from January to December

**Speaker Meetings** are normally January to April, and September to November. This leaves the summer clear for our gardening ventures, trips etc

**Doors open** at 1.45pm with the talk starting promptly at 2.30pm. Giving time to look at the Plant Sales table, the Information Table and buy your raffle tickets. (**NB:** the AGM and Celebrity Speaker meetings may be slightly different so please check)

**Committee Members** can be identified easily with their red lanyards.

**Refreshments** £1 for tea/ coffee & £1 for a piece of home-made cake. To help us use less electricity, bring your own mug or travel mug.

**Raffle Tickets...** £1 for a strip of five tickets.

**Plant Sales Table** is at most speaker meetings (except the Celebrity meeting). Please donate your plants to help DHPS funds. If you are a keen propagator you can book your own table and donate 20% of your takings to go to DHPS funds.

**Volunteers...** The more volunteers we have the less often we ask for your help. If you'd like to help on the day of a meeting, and/or enjoy baking a cake, just check the Information Board table for the sign-up sheet, or email us. To show our appreciation for your help you get a strip of raffle tickets. 😊