



HPS

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

April 2019 Issue 138
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On Saturday, 27th April, we welcome back **Katherine Crouch** with a talk entitled '**Plants That Should Be Better Known**'. Katherine was booked immediately after her talk two years ago when she delighted us with 'New Tricks for Old Gardeners'. She was the winner of BBC Gardener of the Decade. Doors open at 2 pm as usual.

We will also be having a **Seedling Swap** at this meeting. Simply bring along any surplus seedlings or cuttings and swap them for someone else's little treasures. If you have nothing to swap, come and choose something you fancy in return for a small donation to HPS funds.

The Savill Garden

Just a few seats left on our coach outing to Savill Gardens on Saturday, 18th May.
"The Savill Garden is a tranquil place to discover rare plants from around the world, arranged in stunning seasonal displays."

Our **May Plant Fayre** is on 11th May at 2.30 in the afternoon. We have been delighted with the response from members wanting to have tables to sell their plants – this year we will have no need of outside growers. So the hall will be packed with interesting plants (including vegetables) at bargain prices. With the addition of tea and home-made cakes organised by Janice – what more could anyone want? Please come and bring your friends. Perhaps you could pick up some fliers at the meeting to pass around.

An Afternoon with Fergus Garrett 'Designing with Plants the Great Dixter Way'

Saturday, 26th October, 2 pm
The tickets for this event are selling like hot cakes. Please make sure you get yours as soon as possible - they will be available at the meeting.

Mayfield Garden & Log Supplies

Our friends at Mayfields are now sponsoring the Hardy Times. I have been ordering their mulches,

gravel and woodchip for years, I particularly like their mushroom compost which is brilliant used as a mulch on my very poor acid soil. They are a family firm and deliveries are made by Lance, the son, and are free locally. And of course as a member of HPS we get a **5% discount!**

The **National Garden Scheme** season has arrived. We have copies of both the Dorset and the Hampshire books for you to pick up. I visited Chideock Manor last weekend, it only opens once a year. There's a delightful Catholic Church attached to the manor with a small museum of fascinating information. Did you know Chideock had seven matyrs? The church was built by Charles Weld in 1872 in the Italian Romanesque style as a memorial to them. These visits can produce such unexpected pleasures and it's always a treat to go to West Dorset.

Penny Slade

You will have heard the sad news that Penny has passed away peacefully at home on April 4th. I first met Penny 29 years ago when she joined the fledgling East Dorset Group of NCCPG (later to

become Plant Heritage). She joined the committee and her energy and enthusiasm played a huge part in the success of the group.

Penny was a member of Dorset HPS in the early days and rejoined the group last autumn, bringing her delicious lemon drizzle cakes to the few meetings she was able to attend and enjoy.



For 20 years Penny opened her garden for the NGS and became Assistant County Organiser. As a keen and successful propagator the plant stall at her open days was always stocked with interesting well-

grown plants that attracted regular visitors every year. In the 2017 New Year Honour's List, Penny was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the NGS and the wide range of local charities she supported.

Penny was a staunch friend with a big heart and showed tremendous courage in the way she faced her many health problems, always busy, always positive. I like to think of her now in that great garden in the sky where there are no slugs, few weeds, gentle rain and clouds of butterflies. She is greatly missed by her many friends.

Pat Haskell

Topical Tips from our Experts

- *Sow those seeds
- *Sow Hardy annuals where you want them
- *Keep the hoe moving to knock back annual weeds
- *Feed plants once they are in active growth
- *Grasses prefer a spring planting/dividing
- *Start runner beans in pots
- *Erect bean poles and position plant supports
- *Plant up hanging baskets but keep inside
- *Shrubs such as hardy fuchsias, Leycesteria, Perovskia and coloured bark types of Cornus should all be hard pruned close to old wood
- *Dig up dahlias and cannas - divide or set in warm place and take cuttings
- *Cut back shrubby salvias
- *Watch out for lily beetles - the little devils drop off the plant when the ground vibrates as you approach, then they fall on their backs and are camouflaged on the soil. As lily shoots are starting to come through, just disturb all the top of the soil around them. This will kill off 80% of the over-wintering eggs.

Vine weevils are a serious pest and Felicity recommends the use of nematodes. This is from the Nemasys website: "The Nemasys Vine Weevil Killer nematodes (*Steinernema kraussei*), seek out the vine weevil larvae and attack the pest by entering natural body openings. Once inside, they release bacteria that causes blood poisoning stopping the larvae from feeding, quickly killing it. The nematodes then reproduce inside the dead pest and release a new generation of hungry infective nematodes, which disperse and search for further prey. To keep a minor problem at bay, one autumn treatment should be adequate. However, for a serious infestation, treat in the spring and again in the autumn. When treating pots take care that soil is not left to dry out. Nemasys Vine Weevil Killer will kill larvae present in the area and protect against further larvae damage for up to four weeks. The standard pack of Vine Weevil Killer Nematodes will treat up to 12 sq.m or over 160 pots."

Some additional tips from Kevin, sent while sailing down the Nile!

- Start hardening off annuals in cold frames;
- Take first cuttings from comfrey for feed;
- Start debrachiating tomatoes;
- Sign up for the potato/tomato blight app;
- Prepare bean trench with compost/paper/kitchen compost;
- Tie up raspberries;
- Plant late flowering summer bulbs.

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The May issue of the Gardeners' World magazine (out now) has the '2-for-1 Gardens' entrance ticket – over 400 gardens to visit buy-one-get-one-free! The magazine costs £5.25 but could save you a lot and encourage you to visit extra gardens.

Keep on looking at our website – all sorts of horticultural activities are listed on the Calendar of Events www.dorsethps.org.uk