



Gardening with hardy perennials

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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The Hardy Plant Society, Dorset Group, is a thriving and popular gardening group, based at Colehill Memorial Hall near Wimborne, - it's affiliated to the National Hardy Plant Society which has over 7000 members.

We have 7 speaker meetings each year, at least two coach trips and a three or four day holiday. We also sell a lot of plants!

We will be at several other venues selling plants this year:

Manor Farm, Hampreston BH21 7LX

Sunday, 9th June
Sunday, 28th July
Thursday, 8th August
Sunday, 11th August
- all from 1 pm to 5 pm.

Old Down House, Horton BH21 7HL

Wednesday, 29th May
Sunday, 2nd June
Wednesday, 5th June
- all from 2 pm to 5 pm

Also at Colehill Memorial Hall on Saturday, 15th June when they are trying a new venture – a **Midsummer Market**. It'll be a coffee morning with fresh produce, cakes, eggs, honey, jams, vegetables, loads of plants and loads of books (it's fund-raising for the Community Library).

Do support us at any or all of the above events, tea and lovely home-made cakes of course at all of them, and friends to meet.

Our next meeting will be in September, on Wednesday 25th at 7.30 pm, to hear Charles

Dowding talk about his 'No Dig' philosophy. All our meetings take place in Colehill Memorial Hall on the 4th Saturday of the month (the above is an exception!).

Our October meeting is by ticket only as it's Fergus Garrett talking on 'Designing with Plants the Great Dixter Way'. This is our celebrity meeting. We are having a private visit to Great Dixter on our HPS holiday this year.

A message from our President, Andrew Haynes, Head Gardener at Edmondsham House. He has 6 acres of mature gardens, including a C12 church and a productive Victorian walled garden managed organically since 1984 using 'no dig' vegetable beds.



A very topical issue, **SLUG PELLETS**

The banning of metaldehyde slug pellets should be welcomed since these have been responsible for cases of poisoning of non-target species, including pets and children, mainly as a result of insecure storage but also incorrect use.

Newly purchased plants are less vulnerable to slug/snail damage when properly hardened

off and when potted on to grow to a good size before planting out. Puddling in, filling the planting hole with water before backfilling around the plant with dry soil, avoids the slug-attracting damp surface that occurs with overhead watering. Avoid planting sensitive plants near the cool damp places that slugs prefer, this will include the less obvious places such as turf which remains damp for most of the year - just try sitting on the grass this almost always results in a damp rear end!

To protect a border try placing roofing slates or flat boards propped at one end with pebbles to allow slug and snails access to a shady refuge from which they may easily be removed and disposed of as you see fit. Daily inspection of these refuges can have a significant effect, place the refuges close to the natural cover of dense foliage and not too close to the plants that you wish to protect.

My preferred method of execution is to snip slugs in half, snails can be crushed underfoot. If you are squeamish about this, or daily inspection is not practical, then the less harmful ferric phosphate pellets may be lightly scattered beneath the refuges, application rate is very low, less than a teaspoonful to a roofing slate will be adequate. Although safe in use these pellets must still be stored in a secure place.

All of this works for me, please give it a try.

And a useful tip from Andrew:

Cosmos plants are notorious for growing too tall and leggy, to prevent this they may be potted deeply at every stage from pricking out onwards. Roots will develop all along the buried portion of stem resulting in a sturdier plant. Allowing the plants to become rootbound at the final stage of potting before planting out (deeply) will also reduce excessive vigour.

Edmondsham Garden is open to the public every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon and Bank Holidays 2pm – 5pm until the end of October. Edmondsham is near Cranborne, BH21 5RE.

Tips from Jane Norris, our committee member in charge of Plants:

Two sorts of cuttings to take at the end of July/August.

If you grow pelargoniums now would be a good time to take some cuttings. Cut below a node preferably at an angle, small cuttings are best, remove a pair of leaves and any flower buds. Use a mixture of perlite and compost and firm. Do not cover with a plastic bag which would encourage rot.

Hardy shrubby salvia cuttings could be taken as an insurance, it is good to have a few back-up plants to keep under cover during the winter if it turns out to be over cold. Similar to pelargonium cuttings - nice short cutting, trim the leaves and pinch out any flower buds.

We all love buying plants when we go on our outings or holidays – or attend Plant Fayres - but I now find I forget where I plant them! My suggestion is write the name of the plant in your gardening book and where it is in the garden. I usually plant placing a plant pot near the root which makes for easy watering and until the plant is well established I leave a stick indicating its position. (If you have a dog who picks up all pots, sticks and labels, you'll have to rely on your notes!)

Check out our website (address in header) to see various events listed by our members.

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