



HPS
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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Check out our website regularly to see all the up-to-date news, details of our events and other events listed by our members. Send any information you would like listed to our email address (above).

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th September at 7.30 pm, to hear Charles Dowding, the authority on 'No Dig' gardening.



He'll be giving an illustrated talk on healthy food from no dig growing, with massive time savings too. It's more about conserving the "heritage" of soil than of specific plants. He

has explored and shared new ways to garden since 1983, most notably no dig organic gardening, and since 2003 has developed ways to continuous-crop salad leaves. He'll discuss his weed-free, no-dig methods to achieve superb and time-saving results in both small and large gardens. He sells produce from Homeacres, his bio-intensive and no dig garden, has written nine books on no dig and organic gardening, writes for national and international magazines, runs a YouTube channel, appears on TV and radio including BBC Gardeners' World, and teaches extensively at home and abroad. He'll be bringing 2020 calendars and some of his books to sell.

Our October meeting is by ticket only and it's **Fergus Garrett talking on 'Designing with Plants the Great Dixter Way'**. This is our celebrity meeting, doors will open at 2 pm and tea and cake will precede the meeting. Just a very few tickets left (£2.50 for members, £8 for non members – includes refreshments). Our 2019

holiday included a private visit to Great Dixter so those members will be eager to hear some tips from the great man.

This year's holiday brochure will be given out at both this meeting and the next – a lovely memento of the holiday, text by Diana Guy and photos by Debbie.

Another wonderful summer, full of HPS activities

The annual holiday is now established at four days as we travel further to find the most spectacular and interesting gardens. This year it was Kent with Earlybird visits to both Sissinghurst and Great Dixter which meant we had the gardens to ourselves for two hours – a real treat. (Try Sissinghurst again if you haven't been for years, it's magical – vastly improved.) The hard-working Events Team have already organised next year's holiday and details will be in the 2020 brochure circulated at the November meeting.

Then there were the two outings, to Savill Gardens and to Prospect House/High Garden Nurseries.

We sold plants on NGS days at Old Down House, Horton, as well as our old favourite, Manor Farm, Hampreston, and we supported Colehill, raising funds for the Community Library at their Midsummer Market.

Colehill Memorial Hall was packed too for BBC Radio 4's **Gardeners' Question Time** in July. We were given very little notice for this but it went swimmingly and was enjoyed by all, in spite of it being on one of summer's hottest days.

The Met Office says that both June and July were wetter than usual but the rain was never regular

enough to save us from having to water so frequently, especially those of us on dry sandy soil which is so common in Dorset. I fear that I have lost some treasures as there were some very long (beautiful) dry spells.

Card Payments with HPS National

Due to escalating costs, HQ no longer have the facility to take credit or debit card payments in the Office (either over the telephone or by people sending in their card details). All to references to card payments have been removed from the national website.

National HPS AGM in Wimborne

Your Dorset Group will be hosting the National HPS AGM next March (28th) at the Allendale Centre in Wimborne. This will be an all day event, we have two exciting speakers lined up and various nurseries coming to sell plants. Numbers will be limited so make sure you read your National HPS November Newsletter which will have booking details, or check our website.

Plants can hear!

I was astonished to hear the irrepressible Chris Packham on Spring Watch announce with glee that plants could hear!! National Geographic gives more details about experiments with oenotheras (Evening Primroses). "To test the primroses in the lab, the team exposed plants to five sound treatments: silence, recordings of a honeybee from four inches away, and computer-generated sounds in low, intermediate, and high frequencies. Plants given the silent treatment—placed under vibration-blocking glass jars—had no significant increase in nectar sugar concentration. The same went for plants exposed to high-frequency and intermediate-frequency sounds. But for plants exposed to playbacks of bee sounds and similarly low-frequency sounds, the final analysis revealed an

unmistakable response. Within three minutes of exposure to these recordings, sugar concentration in the plants increased up to 20%!

A sweeter treat for pollinators, their theory goes, may draw in more insects, potentially increasing the chances of successful cross-pollination. Indeed, in field observations, researchers found that pollinators were more than nine times more common around plants another pollinator had visited within the previous six minutes."

And we're destroying this wonderful world before we fully understand it.

More doom and gloom: the National Trust has flagged up that 75% of heathers have been lost or are struggling on some slopes that it manages in the west of England and blames the climate emergency for the problem. At this time of year the slopes should be purple and stunningly beautiful. But this year the National Trust has seen up to 75% of the heather in poor health due to a combination of last year's drought and damage from the heather beetle.

The sight of the heather in the New Forest in August and September is one of the highlights of the year.

Visit RHS Gardens on Autumn Free Day

On Tuesday, 1st October, the four RHS Gardens will be open free of charge to all. Enjoy borders packed with late-flowering perennials and grasses, autumn-flowering bulbs and leaves changing colour. And all so meticulously maintained!

The **RHS 2020 Photographic Competition** is already open for entries. Our own competition proved that we have some experts. Step forward Gilly Baxter, (winner of our 2018 photographic competition), dazzle them with a Dorset entry!

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