



HPS
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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The meeting on Saturday, 26th October, is our **Celebrity Event** and is by ticket only. **Fergus Garrett** will describe ‘**Designing with Plants the Great Dixter Way**’, and bringing some plants and books for sale.



We are in for a real treat this month when, once again, Fergus comes to Dorset to talk to plant lovers and ‘Dixerites’ from within our group and beyond. Fergus trained at Wye College, then worked with two of our most eminent plants women, Beth Chatto and Rosemary Alexander, and soon came to the eye of Christopher Lloyd, who appointed him as Head Gardener at Great Dixter in 1992. For the next 14 years he worked alongside Christopher, and what a formidable team they made! The garden went from strength to strength.

After Christopher died in 2006, Fergus became the Chief Executive of the Great Dixter Trust, which was formed to ensure the future of the garden. Christopher loved having visitors of all ages, from all walks of life, visiting and staying at Dixter. He saw it as a melting pot of ideas. With the founding of the Trust this philosophy developed and today students from all over the world come to Dixter on scholarships, placements, trainee schemes and as volunteers. There is always a full house and a wonderful electric atmosphere as

these enthusiastic gardeners meet, work, study and grow.

As well as working hands-on in the garden, Fergus organises events such as the fabulous twice yearly plant sales, workshops, study days, lectures and symposia led by himself and other knowledgeable tutors. Fergus also lectures all over the world. In 2017 he was the lead speaker at the famous Garden Marlborough Festival in New Zealand. He is an author and journalist too - his writing is passionate and informative.

In 2015 the RHS awarded Fergus the Veitch Memorial medal and in April 2019 he received the coveted Victoria Medal of Honour of which there are only ever 63 holders at any one time (one per year of Victoria’s reign).

Many of us have visited the garden. In fact the lucky members on the HPS holiday this July were treated to a private visit - it was joyous. It is always good to hear of the theory behind the splendid plantings at Dixter so we eagerly await a wonderful afternoon.

Diana Guy

The doors will open at 2 p.m., when the refreshments will be served, and the talk will begin at 3 p.m. There will be no halftime break. We have a special raffle but no plants stall as the Hall will be full.

Our final meeting in 2019 will be a talk by our President, **Andrew Haynes**. The date – Saturday, 23rd November, doors open at 2 p.m. His topic is **Really Useful Plants** and he says: “Some plants are useful and some are really useful! The emphasis will be on those with a long season of interest, but I will include plants to attract beneficial insects, plants for difficult locations and some that are both edible and ornamental. There will also be some really useful tools and techniques along the way.”

Brochure 2020

These will be handed out to all members at the November Meeting, and then posted to those not in attendance shortly afterwards. Details of all the exciting fixtures we have organised for you will be in it. This will include the Day Trips, the Holiday and details of the many wonderful speakers. We will then update the website afterwards with the details and booking forms. **However no one will be able to book until 2nd January 2020.**

You will see that Dorset will host the National HPS AGM in Wimborne! One of the speakers we have selected is Keith Wiley of Wildside.

Wildside is another of our Group's favourite gardens. We have been visiting since very early on in its conception and have watched it grow in splendour. Keith is the most innovative gardener in the country and he and his wife Ros have created Wildside single-handedly. Tragically Ros died in early September but Keith hopes to complete the final Canyons area of Wildside in her memory.

Garden Centres in East Dorset

East Dorset is an area very rich in garden centres but it has been all change this year! John Browns, of Three Legged Cross, is now **Hilliers** (the first in Dorset); Plowmans and Golden Acres near Hurn have become **Baskets & Blooms** and **In Excess**, and the Ferndown Wyevale now belongs to **British Garden Centres**. This gives us more variety and choice as three of the mentioned above were all owned by Wyevale until recently.

Tulip Bulbs

Had you heard that a major investigation into the 'floating flower market' tourist attraction in Amsterdam found that only 1% of the bulbs on sale actually flowered – and not a single one matched the picture on the packet? The vast majority – 92% – failed to produce any kind of

plant at all! And that's been happening for the last 20 years, easy to get away with when the purchasers are tourists. The moral - buy British!

Topical Tips from our Experts

Andrew, Felicity And Jane

- *Keep weeding!
- *Clear all fallen leaves under roses to reduce re-infection by blackspot
- *Mulch cleared ground before soil temperatures fall too low
- *Plant roses in November and use mycorrhizal inoculant (Rootgrow) to aid establishment
- *Reduce height of roses, buddleja etc. to reduce wind rock
- *Sow sweet peas
- *Visit Knoll Gardens for inspiration
- *Visit Kingston Lacy to see the acers in the magnificent Japanese garden
- *Plant wallflowers and other winter bedding and bulbs
- *Plant overwintering garlic cloves
- *Sow Aquadulce and other hardy broad bean seeds, in the ground or in pots
- *Cut back perennials which look grotty but leave those which look good for structure and bug habitat over winter
- *Compost leaves for leaf mould
- *Clean greenhouses and line them with bubble-wrap
- *Still time to plant prepared hyacinths, Paper-whites or other bulbs for house around Christmas. Keep in a dark and cool place until roots grow and bulb starts to grow
- *Take hardwood cuttings from roses & other shrubs
- *Not too late to split perennials while the soil is still warm
- *Marina Christopher advised planting seeds of *Orlaya grandiflora* in 60% sand in the autumn for good germination

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