



# HPS

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

## Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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### February Meeting

Do not forget this meeting is our AGM. Doors open at 1.30 pm. No admittance will be permitted after 2 pm until after the AGM finishes. The talk will begin at 2.30 pm. We are delighted to welcome Helen Picton of the famous Old Court Nursery and The Picton Garden in the Malvern Hills, an RHS partner garden that has the National Collection of Michaelmas Daisies, over 430 varieties. The nursery dates back to 1906 when it was started by the famous aster nurseryman Ernest Ballard. Plantsman Percy Picton joined in 1947 and bought



it in 1959. Helen is the third generation to manage the business. They grow and love plants, not only asters. **Helen will be bringing plants to sell.** Her talk will be entitled 'Montana and beyond:

**Clematis and all their Joys'.**

### January Flower Count

If you missed the display at the January meeting you will find the results on the website.

### Plant Sale May 9<sup>th</sup> 2 30 p.m.

Our thanks to Richard and Jan Cooke, who have volunteered to organise the Plant Fayre. If you would like to help on the day, provide a cake, or book a table please contact them ASAP on [richardcooke101@btinternet.com](mailto:richardcooke101@btinternet.com). The usual terms apply, 20% of your sales go to HPS. We shall be asking for **DONATED** plants, too.

### National HPS AGM

Tickets all sold! Let Debbie know if you wish to go on the waiting list. Please also let Elaine know if you have plants that can be sold at the event. Any donated garden related raffle prizes would also be welcome if you have anything.

### Extra Trip

We are delighted to say we shall be organising a trip to Keith Wiley's amazing garden, Wildside, at Buckland Monochoram, Devon. He will be opening on 2/8/20, just for us, and may not be opening next year so be sure to put your name down. Full details not quite available yet. Keith is one of our speakers at the March Lecture day.

### Celebrity Lecture on Saturday November 28th

We shall be selling tickets for our Celebrity Speaker, **Nick Bailey**, from Gardeners World, at our February Meeting. They will cost £2.50 for members, and £8.00 for non-members (to include refreshments). Once again we would ask you not to transfer these to your friends, once bought, as I am sure we will end up with a reserve list once the tickets have all been sold.

**HPS member Jane Norris**, 10 Ryan Close Ferndown BH22 9TP will be open **Sat 15<sup>th</sup> /Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Feb between midday and 3.00 pm by donation.** Soup, tea and cake will all be available. Any money raised will go the Air Ambulance. See an impressive range of unusual and rare snowdrops packed into a small space. 01202 873176

### Open Garden, Manor Farm, Hampreston

Don't forget this event is on the morning of **Feb 22nd** (our next meeting and AGM) and will be open from 10-1 pm. Soup and hot chocolate available in aid of Lupus, and Dorset Perennials will be selling plants, so why not make a day out of it! The garden is also open **Sunday Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 12 - 4 pm**, with plants and refreshments as above.

### Dorset Alpine Garden Society Meetings

**Thursday March 5<sup>th</sup>** Corfe Mullen Village Hall 6 45 for 7 30 start. It will be a short AGM then a Members' evening. Ben Turner will talk about The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and John Semple, nurseryman of Parnham Bungalow plants. Wine and a light supper will be available.

**Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup> Local Alpine Garden Society Group Show at the Allendale Centre, Wimborne** It will be open to the public 11.30 -2.30 pm. **Prepare to be amazed.** Plants for sale.

**Seedling Swap at the April Meeting**

Now is the time to start sowing seeds so please leave a few from each batch and bring them along to the meeting. People love to swap or pick up unusual vegetables, as well as popular annuals and unusual perennials.

**Plant of the month**

It has to be **hellebores!** The last few years has seen an explosion of new hellebores varieties. Most of these are micropropagated (cloned) interspecies types are sterile, and consequently, will flower for months on end. I recommend **H x 'Madame Lemonnier'** and **H x 'Walberton's Rosemary'** both are crosses between *niger* and *hybridus*, they flower from Nov to Mar and are exceptionally vigorous with bright pink flowers. Many other hybrids are more of a genetic mix and classed as caulescent and evergreen so should only have tatty leaves removed now and again. Look out for the HGC range.



It took Rodney Davey 30 years to perfect his marbled leaf group, we all know Anna's Red and Penny's Pink. The range now extends to 10, marketed

sometimes as 'Frostkiss series'. The latest one out next year is 'Illumini Lime', a stunning green (above).

Remember all the above crosses prefer a sunny spot with just a touch of summer shade when they are dormant. Generally they are better at the front of the border.

The more familiar *Helleborus x hybridus* are now bred in a wide variety of colours with doubles and the anemone centred forms becoming popular. Try

and buy plants developed by British growers, such as Harvington Hybrids. It is best to only buy them when they are in bloom, so you can pick the best on the bench.

In my view you cannot beat the wonderful hand pollinated hellebores from **John Massey's Ashwood Nursery** at Kingswinford. They are expensive, but well worth every penny as they are really vigorous and bulk up quickly. Look at their website! They will only mail order hellebores out when the plant is in bloom and they have assessed the quality. I am currently waiting for three from their '**Evolution Series**'.

**Helleborus x hybridus** are shade tolerant but not shade lovers. They do not want a dank north facing spot, nor will they thrive in the dry soil beneath large trees, so give them the best possible position. They will enjoy the shade and company of summer perennials, such as hemerocallis, which like exactly the same conditions. The leaves must all come between early December and mid- January when they can have a light feed of bonemeal and a **generous** mulch of mushroom compost (see ad below.) All hellebores require rich, but well drained soil, preferably alkaline or neutral, but they are fine with slightly acidic soil if it is rich.

**What to do in the garden this month**

**\*Snowdrops.** Take a tip from Jane Norris, plant them into aquatic pots and then plant them all around hellebore clumps where they will be protected from trowels, by the new hellebore leaves when they emerge.

**\*Split most border plants.** Before you replant enrich the soil with garden or mushroom compost or well-rotted manure. Please pot some up for us for the Plant Fayre donation table.

**\*Seed sowing** now commences in earnest, please keep back a few from each batch to bring to the **Seedling Swap** at the April meeting.



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