



Gardening with hardy perennials

## Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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## Special Edition 5 v 2

Welcome to our fifth special newsletter, please keep sending items of interest and pictures to me at: [Diana.kitemoor@btinternet.com](mailto:Diana.kitemoor@btinternet.com).

### Wildside

Sadly we are unable to proceed with our Wildside trips at the end of July. Whilst Keith Wiley would have loved to see us, the Garden House were not open when we last checked, and Laguna are not even considering Day Trips until 1/9/20. Of course you will all get a full refund. Just contact our treasurer, Richard Cooke, on [richardcooke101@btinternet.com](mailto:richardcooke101@btinternet.com), with your bank details and he will BACS your refund direct to your account. If you have already received a refund from the Encombe trip then he will refund your account over the next few days. Please bear with us as there are a lot of you. We were really hoping that this would go ahead but this year has been full of surprises.

It may well be that we will try and replicate this year's trips next year, so don't give up hope.

**West Dean** has NOT been cancelled at this stage, but we shall wait and see how things progress. This applies to all our 2020 speakers as well, including Nick Bailey.

### Seasonal pleasures and Garden Shopping

June in my garden is a time of transition which means a lot of cutting back, the removal of spent or unwanted plants and a final big push to plant out all the items waiting in the wings. In my case zinnias, endless cosmos and dahlias. Perennials include the lovely Cheddar pink raised from HPS seed exchange seed. The latter will be useful to refresh my alpine containers as will some wonderful succulents that Judy Spratley kindly

brought over, along with three special dahlias (from Gilbert's Dahlias originally) and some special salvias. As a "shielder", I am unable to go plant shopping so I was delighted when I saw **Sue Collins's** car at the gate. She had brought over a selection of plants and I am afraid I bought virtually all of them. Like Judy, she grows really special hard to source shrubby salvias, hardy even in my garden.

My next delivery included white and apricot foxgloves, to replace the ones due to be removed, and penstemons. ([sue.collins@btinternet.co](mailto:sue.collins@btinternet.co))

Do contact the other Hardy Planters with plants for sale, see below. There is a wealth of plants out there for you to choose from. **Judy Spratley (01202 477350)** who still has the special dahlias, salvias, succulents and more. If you do not live near Mudeford, she can get them to Wimborne or Ferndown for you.

**Sheila Westgate 07913 176333** (Colehill) has Bergenia – her soil is too wet, phlox, a variegated myrtle and dahlias available.

**Felicity Frost 01202 842376** (Wimborne) A selection of perennials including asters and heleniums, plus chillies.

**Jane Norris 01202 873176** (Ferndown). She has lots of 'little gems' with an honesty box.

**Debbie Steel 01202 877390** (Ferndown) with various perennials, as well as Barbara's selection of cannas that are growing so well.

**Please let us know if you have some plants for sale and we will be happy to add your name to the list.**

### In Memory of Keith Brown



We are sorry to report that our friend and fellow HPS member from Wales, Keith Brown sadly passed away in March.

Those of us lucky enough to be on the South Wales holiday

in 2013 will remember visiting his and Moira's garden, Cilgwyn Lodge in Carmarthenshire on a very hot day. It was a delight, a one acre garden with a pond, borders overflowing with colourful and unusual plants and an immaculate vegetable garden. He also had a nursery packed with little treasures for us to buy. We did! They opened their garden for the NGS for well over 25 years.

He had a website that he started in 2009 and wrote a monthly blog all about his garden successes and failures along with photos of the countryside around their house and their visits to gardens and shows.

In the following couple of years, he came down to Dorset and spoke to both Plant Heritage and HPS. He was a very good speaker, one of the few that gave out a printed list of plants that would be included in the talk. He also brought plants to sell and was delighted that he sold out! He told me that we were a lovely, enthusiastic and friendly group and we were his best plant buying customers ever. I met up with him and Moira at the Malvern Spring Show one year, a very good move as he knew quite a few of the stall holders there and bargains were to be had!

Unfortunately 4 years ago he was diagnosed with plural Mesothelioma and no treatment could be given. They closed the garden to visitors and decided to visit all the wonderful gardens in the UK that they had always meant to visit, but had never found the time. They thoroughly enjoyed their travels and took a lot of mental strength from their time in peaceful surroundings. With help from friends, they kept the garden up to a really good standard and were featured on Gardeners World in September 2018. He kept his blog going until December 2019.

In January he was told that the cancer had spread and he died peacefully at home in March. I sent condolences from all of us in the Dorset Group and Moira said he always remembered his visits to us with great joy. She hopes that she can arrange a memorial service for next year. I do hope to attend. Keith was a very knowledgeable, passionate and generous gardener. He will be missed.

### **NGS gardens, including Manor Farm**

Every Monday the NGS website publishes a list of gardens that are able to open that week. Do not be guided by the yellow book as only a small number of gardens are suitable for opening, and not necessarily on the dates in the book. You pre-book

and pay online and will be offered time slots to choose from. You must not arrive early or overstay your time slot. There will be no refreshments available nor toilets, but some owners will allow picnics. There will probably not be plants for sale. Social distancing **MUST** be applied throughout your visit.

**Manor Farm** have taken the decision not to open in June, but they will reconsider for their openings in July and August so keep an eye out on the website. If we hear anything beforehand, we shall let you know.

What we can guarantee is that all the gardens will be lovely and it will be a joy to be out visiting again.

### **The Barbara Gooch Memorial Garden**

The Library have approached us with a view to help completing a garden, on 2 sides of the Colehill Library, that had initially been designed by Barbara (Gooch) and Diana (Guy) before Barbara's illness took a hold. The ideas were on paper, but now we need to start thinking about putting them into action as it becomes safer for us to do so. The library have a team of gardeners, and some of you HPS members may well overlap between the 2 groups, so you would already know about this. The plan is that they will maintain it, whilst we can help with our plant knowledge and contacts to make the dream a reality.

We are looking at laying sleepers to hold the improved soil and plants, keeping them away from the fabric of the building. The financial side has already been sorted with a fantastic response to the GoFundMe page which was set up by Susan Cowsill, the Chair of the Colehill Community Library Trustees. It has been so successful that the initial target has been met and exceeded comfortably! **In addition Dorset HPS have added £100 to the pot (from Group funds) in memory of our friend.**

So firstly we need volunteers, but not too many due to social distancing! We shall aim to do it in 4 stages together with our library colleagues

- Prepare the proposed planting area beforehand levelling it off
- Lay the sleepers
- Fill the sleepers once compost delivered
- Planting!

If you would like to be involved please contact me, Debbie. This is going to be spread out over the next few months so there is no hurry.

Our other call for help – if you have any plant, especially a special fern suited to the conditions (as one side will primarily be made up of ferns), but is particularly appropriate for dry shade, and would like to donate it, then please let me know. We have a plant list from Barbara but it would be nice to add some personal contributions.

### Further Ideas to Commemorate Barbara

Many of you have contacted me with regard to what we can do, as a group, to remember Barbara so please get your thinking caps on and send them in to me. So far we have had Open Gardens, a Bench, a Sculpture to go in the Garden, an annual Photographic Competition and to name our annual celebrity talk, the Barbara Gooch Memorial Lecture. So let me know your thoughts and suggestions. Let's see what we can come up with. We plan to take a collection for this.

*Debbie Steel*

### Jane's Tips.



In the last Hardy Plant bulletin I explained how to assault your Aeonium Zwartkop by taking out the middle of a rosette. I hope that you can see

from the photograph that several new rosettes are forming in the centre, these will eventually make good cutting material.

The garden is so dry, despite piling on mushroom compost every year. I water sparingly, just newly planted specials.



So no wonder Echevarias, Agaves and Sempervivums are becoming so popular. Here are some of my favourites.



**Editors note: I love Jane's use of a display unit to present her pots so elegantly.**

Last year I was really pleased to buy *Lychnis 'Gardener's World'*. This is a double puce form which is sterile. I bought it from Stephen, a nursery man who sells excellent plants at the Alpine Group, and he sadly said that this was not a good plant for a professional gardener as it can only be propagated by division. Mine has got to a large size and needs splitting not sure this is too easy. It is also short lived but a lovely plant.



*Jane Norris*

### Making do

I usually grow two baskets of cherry tomatoes but this year I found I had enough plants for three but only two basket liners! Then I remembered a



throwaway\_remark on the Chelsea Question time on member's day headed up by Matthew Wilson. A lady had asked about her glut of rhubarb and one of the panel suggested the leaves could be used to line a hanging basket. No rhubarb leaves - but I do have an enormous phormium which has the toughest leaves imaginable. Cutting a dozen or so of these and weaving them together created a basket which I then lined with a bit of old compost bag - with drainage holes of course.

*Sheila Westgate*

### Greenhouse shading

Like many of us I do not like the look of greenhouse glass painted white, but on hot sunny days shading is essential. I run a length of string across the inside of the greenhouse, below the eaves, and hang horticultural fleece over it. I find it does the trick.

*Liz Underwood*

I recall our president, Andrew Haynes, telling me that damping down a greenhouse effectively reduces the temperature inside by several degrees whilst raising humidity.

### Raspberry tip

Here's a nifty trick to increase the yield from autumn fruiting raspberries which I have been using for a few years. When cutting out last year's canes in February, leave a couple on each plant to grow on alongside the new canes which will be sprouting. The 'old canes' will produce a crop in late May and early June and can then be removed to allow the new canes to start cropping. Often the two crops overlap so it is possible to get a continuous delicious harvest of fruit from May to November. You can never have too many raspberries!

*Elaine Lofthouse*

### Zoom Lectures

I thoroughly enjoyed an excellent lecture, organised by Plant Heritage, on the iris of Cedric Morris and the Langport Iris, given by two National Collection Holders. It only cost £5. Talks are open to non-members. The next one is on Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 30 pm on **'Pompous Peonies'** with Claire Austin, and on Thursday July 9<sup>th</sup> on **'Fragrant Planting - Carnations and Sweet Peas'** with Jim Marshall and Roger Parsons. More details and booking instructions will be found on the Plant Heritage website.

A recent lockdown highlight for me was buying a zoom space on Fergus Garrett's excellent presentation on using self-sown plants in layered planting. This was one of a series of lectures from Great Dixter which can now be hired. The next live talk on June 24<sup>th</sup> at 6pm and June 27<sup>th</sup> at 9am. Is on **'Biodiversity at Great Dixter'**, and other talks may come online soon. Cost £15.

### Intelligent mulching

I learnt a lot from the Dixter lecture, in particular the control of self-sown plants through 'intelligent mulching'.

Fergus advises against mulching with home-made garden compost, unless you are sure it is seed free. It is better used in other ways in the garden. He

recommends mushroom compost or well composted bark, other materials are available. The idea is you mulch heavily around shrubs and groups of perennials that need their own space, and use a much thinner layer of mulch lightly, or none at all, in the 'corridors' you have thus created where you are happy to have volunteer plants. Define how many you want and where, and thin or hoe out ruthlessly, as soon as they emerge, in order to give the volunteer plants their own space too. Less is more.

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