



HPS

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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Welcome to our New Year newsletter. We have reverted to our old format but please do continue to send items to me at:- Diana.kitemoor@btinternet.com. Many thanks to all of you who helped to keep the 'specials' going by sending in your wonderful articles and pictures.

On Sat 29th January, at a trial venue, the **Barrington Centre, Ferndown**. We welcome your thoughts so please use the Comments Box. Doors



open at 2pm. There will be plants for sale, tea and homemade cake, and a raffle. Members free, visitors welcome. We are privileged to have **Nick Wray**, highly regarded

Curator of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden talking about **'The Evolution of Flowers'**.

In 2016 Nick was awarded the RHS Associate of Honour for his distinguished services to horticulture, recognising 30 years at the garden.

New Year Flower Count

A fabulous selection sent in by Susan Dencher



14 people, between them, counted over 349 flowers out on New Year's Day and this represented 271 **different** flowers. The most popular 'lingerers' were the roses and salvias which featured quite a lot. There were less snowdrops than last year but a reasonable number of hellebores and only two daffodils, spotted by just two members - a paperwhite flowering outside

and the fine old variety called Rjevnel'd's Early variety.

(see right-can be bought from Avon Bulbs)



I was fascinated to note the regional differences, especially in the more sheltered gardens near the coast. It made me want to visit every garden! Heather spotted a whopping 53 different flowers. The full lists, and some of your lovely photographs are now on the website.

Notes from the Chair

Suffolk Holidays bookings My warnings of holiday availability seems to have scared everyone off! There is still availability for all rooms-single/twin and double so don't delay applying if you wish to come. I need to give an indication of rooms required to the hotel by the end of January.

Subscriptions Yes it is that time of year again-the Post Box will be in operation at the next meeting for you to pay your renewals. Any queries please contact Rowena or myself, details on website.

Debbie Steel

Out and About

- I was pleased to see that **Stewarts** are now stocking the peat free **Melcourt Sylvagrow** multi purpose compost, which is recommended by many members
- Searching for hellebores, I found some lovely HGC **'Ice n' Roses'** at **The Wimborne Garden Centre**, but was knocked out at **Wolvercroft Garden Centre** near Alderholt, who had a lovely range **'Angels Kisses'**, and this includes the famous RD mottled leaf Group, **'Penny's Pink,' 'Anna's Red'.** **Molly's White'** etc. For several years now Gardening Which has named 'Anna's

Red' the best hellebore. I always say buy your hellebores when they are in flower, then you can be sure of what you are buying. I came away with some great **Helleborus x hybridus** in the aforementioned range, a lovely creamy, frilly picottee and two stunning really dark slate black ones. All were in tip top condition.

- Virtually all hellebores offered on sale are the interspecies, and Wolvercroft had some stonking great 'Pirouette' (see over) bursting with buds to come.



NGS Open Days at Manor Farm, Hampreston

Sat March 12th 10 am until 1pm and

Sun March 13th 1pm until 4 pm.

Dorset Lupus group will be serving teas, soup and hot chocolate and Dorset Perennials will be selling a lovely selection of spring plants. This is a great chance to buy fabulous hellebores in flower, grown from the last of the R.D. hellebores that we all loved and collected avidly back in the day

Plant of the Month

Coronilla valentina subsp. glauca citrina



I have always grown this in a large container against a warm sheltered wall, but there is no reason why it should not be in the ground. It

flowers throughout winter and spring, takes a breather in summer, then starts up again in the autumn. It is a bit of a 'kamikaze' plant that flowers itself to death, but on a warm day, or picked and placed in a warm room, the scent is exquisite and I would not be without it. Indeed many of you must love it too, as it featured on quite a few New Year's Day lists.

Tasks for the month

- All leaves from Helleborus X hybridus should be removed by now, and the plants mulched with mushroom compost, leaf mould or good garden compost. The interspecies can just be tidied up removing scruffy leaves only. *H.foetidus* and *H.argutifolius* are not cut back until summer as they grow in a different way.
- I recall our President, Andrew, telling me that this time of year is the ideal time to remove deep rooted weeds such as dandelions and docks, they come up much easier now, from soft winter wet soil, than in the drier conditions of summer.

Pruning time.

- Just prune late flowering shrubs such as buddleia.
- Group three clematis (the late flowering ones) can be cut hard back. Group two are just tidied up and cut back down to a healthy pair of buds, but leave the early Group one clematis, including *Caramandii*, *montana*, *alpina*, *cirrrosa* and *macropetala*. These are all pruned in late spring after they have flowered.
- Wisteria can have the (long whippy) side shoots that were shortened in the summer further reduced down to three or five buds.

Blandford Potato Day

Sadly there will be no Potato Day at Blandford this year but let's hope it returns next year.

MAYFIELD

GARDEN & LOG SUPPLIES
Prepare your garden for Spring

Mushroom Manure 10 sacks £23.50
Loads from £44 Horse Manure & Cow Manure
Woodland Mulch • Bark • Shingle
Multi Purpose Compost 60L £4.45 • 4 only £22.50
Jacks Magic 60L £6.70 • 5 only £30

WINTER FUEL
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