



**HPS**  
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

## **Dorset Group** *Hardy Times*

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Welcome to the February Hardy Times. Do continue to send items to me at:- [Diana.kitemoor@btinternet.com](mailto:Diana.kitemoor@btinternet.com).

### **Dates for the Diary**

**Sat 26<sup>th</sup> February**, reverting back to Colehill (now known as Village Hall), we shall have our **A.G.M** at 2.00 pm, followed by our local favourite, **Neil**



**Lucas**, who will be talking about 'Using Perennials in the Modern Garden'.

Gates open at 1.15 pm. There will be plants for sale, tea and homemade cake (before the meeting and inbetween the AGM and speaker), and a raffle. As we are back at Colehill we are unfortunately unable to invite visitors, so this meeting will be for Members Only. We are aiming to finish by 4.30pm so you should be home for the rugby!

*Help to put away chairs afterwards will be appreciated.*

### **National Garden Scheme March Open Days at Manor Farm, Hampreston**

**Sat 12<sup>th</sup> 10 am – 1 pm and Sun 13<sup>th</sup> 1 - 4 pm**

Dorset Lupus group will be serving the usual teas and cakes, as well as soup and hot chocolate, to keep you warm. Meanwhile **Dorset Perennials**, helped by some of our members, will be selling spring plants and hellebores. The garden is looking brilliant at the moment so please come along and support.

The NGS year is now restarting for 2022 and Debbie has lots of the "yellow books" which you may pick up at our February speaker meeting. We are trying to source Hampshire ones too so we shall see.

### **Sat May 7<sup>th</sup> Our very own Plant Fayre at Colehill Village Hall from 2.30 pm**

Propagated plants are always required and appreciated, for every meeting and plant sale, whether you wish to donate them to the group, or wish to sell them, giving 20% of the cost to the group. We all love buying new plants to us.

You may wish to have your own table, selling the plants on a commission basis, or share a table with a friend, or we can sell them on the Group's main table.

The public like to buy a wide variety of plants including annuals, tomatoes and tender plants so not just hardy plants. It is not just members that attend the Plant Fayre – a surprising number of Colehill residents regularly come along and we always welcome everyone. Last year we even held it in the Hall car park, which worked extremely well. This leaves more room inside for refreshments, so we may well do it this way again in 2022. We like to offer well-rooted specimens, nothing recently dug up and wilting. There is just time to get your perennials split and potted up, so the plants will be nicely rooted in time for the Plant Fayre, but only just, so do it **as soon as you can!** Small vegetable plants also sell well so why not sow some extras to sell when you sow your own this year? And don't forget to pot up any extra cuttings and seedlings too.

***Please be careful to respect Plant Breeders Rights, something we regularly remind you about. If you are not sure, ask!***

### **EVENTS Reminder**

We still have some rooms available for our holiday in Suffolk, in June. Both Members and Non-Members are welcome to apply. Contact us if you are interested.

The 2 Day Trips are almost full, and again open to both Members and Non-Members, so don't leave it until the last minute as you may be disappointed.

**Farewell to Debbie.**

We have known for some time that Debbie will be leaving the committee as her five year tenure, as Chair, comes to an end. We must thank her for her tireless energy, vision and enthusiasm. I have really enjoyed working with her. As I write there have been no nominations for a new Chair. We would like to remind you that a horticultural background is not necessary - it just needs a steady hand on the tiller from someone experienced in running committee meetings, and with the confidence to stand up and give out notices at monthly meetings etc. Currently Debbie wears many 'hats' which I presume will be re-distributed. I know from personal experience what can happen when committees struggle to fill vacant posts. Remember how our local Plant Heritage group closed, despite immense efforts from the amazing remaining committee to keep it going? We have a superb Hardy Plant Society Group which can run like clockwork with so many willing hands on the rota, but we do need to fill that post of Chair.

*I am sure you will join me in thanking Debbie for her hard work and wishing the remaining committee good luck and please give this plea your serious consideration.*

**Jane's Journal - Galanthus**



February is the time for snowdrops. The battle rages do you plant in the green or not? The latest view is that planting dormant bulbs in July from a specialist grower might be the best. However, the information I received from the Hardy Plant

Galanthus Group was that if you buy one now in the pot, plant the whole thing in the ground till July when it will be resting. Snowdrop roots are very easily damaged and if broken they don't regrow

until September. Also if there are damaged spores, they could infect your bulb.

At this point in time I would like to thank everyone who came to support my garden opening. I think I have possibly raised in excess of £300 for Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

*Jane Norris*

**Don't forget Jane is still opening her garden this weekend – both Sat & Sun, midday to 4 pm, so if the weather improves, it is well worth the visit and it is for such a worthwhile charity.....**

**Streptocarpus**

I know Streptocarpus are not hardy, but they are certainly perennial. They survive the winter in our unheated greenhouse and then flower for ages.



The first picture was taken on 12th October and the second had been taken on the 30th of June. It is easy to propagate them with leaf cuttings. They like shade, rich compost and not too much watering.

**Around The World In 80 Plants, by Jonathan Drori**

I can heartily recommend a book given to me as a present. It is full of amazing facts about the plants and, in fact, you will need another person in the room when you read it, so you can say to them, for example, "Wow, did you know that bumblebees clamp themselves to a tomato flower and raise their wing beats to a middle-C buzz, which dislodges the pollen? Honey bees cannot strike the right note for Buzz Pollination. The illustrations are beautiful and if you look closely, they incorporate information about the processes through which a plant may converted to use.

*Janice Walters*

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## Tasks for the month

- So bearing in mind Jane's advice, instead of doing what we have done for decades, i.e. splitting and replanting snowdrops when they have finished flowering, wait until July to split them. I will go round and mark any clumps that will need splitting up, lest I forget.
- The big border cut down is now underway. We shred all our spent growth before it goes onto the compost heap. One school of thought is to leave the cut debris where it falls. Mulch all borders once they are weed free. Use homemade compost, well-rotted horse manure or mushroom compost (do not use the latter on acid lovers, although I must admit I do with no ill effects!
- Deciduous grasses can be cut right down but just tidy up evergreen grasses - a tedious but rewarding task.
- Complete winter pruning including roses by around mid- March. Feed and mulch them.
- Start seed sowing in the greenhouse if you are sowing just hardy annuals and you have no heat. I enjoyed receiving and sowing my HPS seed swap seeds.

## Plant of the Month

### *Hamammelis*



Debbie, Judy and I recently had a fabulous visit to Hilliers to look at the winter garden. We were knocked out by the fabulous witch-hazels. I have just learnt that the Autumn leaf colour links to the flower colour so, for example, the

lovely pale yellow *Pallida*, that really shines out on a dull day, will have buttery coloured leaves and a copper toned one such as *Jelena* (as shown above) will have russet Autumn colour.

I must confess to struggling with getting them to grow and establish well. Fifty percent I have planted over the years have died, A little shade, slightly acid, rich but well drained soil seems to suit.

I try and site them with low winter sun behind them, to show them to advantage. When I placed *Jelena* next to *Cornus* 'Midwinter Fire' it looked absolutely stunning.