



HPS

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

November 2016 Issue 120
Ed. Barbara Gooch

Gardening with hardy perennials

It's the first time it has happened in 18 years: our Speaker last month failed to arrive. We subsequently discovered she was in London with a stand at the RHS Autumn Show and could not possibly have got to us in time, so she certainly won't be invited again! However, Salvias was obviously a hot topic as we had a great many visitors, so we shall aim to book another talk on the subject as soon as we can.

Our speaker today – and our last this year - has been many times before. **Sally Gregson** from Henley Mill Nursery will be talking on 'Ornamental Vegetable Gardening' (based on her book) – perfect for those of us without room for a potager!

We begin again next year, on 28th January, with Chris Birchall talking about 'Choice Plants for Rosemoor'. Just by coincidence, we shall be visiting there next year. Tickets will be on sale from this Meeting! **This talk will be preceded by our AGM. Doors open earlier at 1.30 pm, with the AGM starting at 2.00 pm promptly, followed by the Talk at 2.30 pm. We shall be handing out/posting the Agenda and Nomination Forms for the AGM with our annual magazine. If you are interested in getting more involved with the Group then please talk to our secretary, Sheila, see contact details below.**

Don't forget to pick up your 2016/17 HPS Dorset Group magazine this afternoon.

It gives details of next year's outings and holiday. As usual, Angela will be in charge of holiday bookings and will be accepting them from 1st January.

Please note we shall not be accepting completed holiday forms at this meeting. On 1st January Angela will then process any applications received on a first-come, first-served basis, but not before. Having said this, we expect the holiday to be oversubscribed, so get your application in early to avoid disappointment!

I'm sure you will have noticed the very smart **Dorset**



HPS aprons now being proudly worn by our Committee members. If you would like one of these for yourself, or as a gift, please let me know. We expect a

price of under £15 but are awaiting confirmation from the company who make them to order.

Providing cakes at meetings has proved a great success (and helped funds). We have a list of members willing to make them but we don't like to ask too often, so the more people who put their names on the list, the less often they will be asked for one! A clipboard will be passed round this afternoon and I'd be very grateful if you would put your name down. If a few members do, we need only ask for perhaps two a year. We give a free refreshments stick and a strip of raffle tickets to each cook! I hope I am right in thinking some members would be pleased to help in this way with the organisation of meetings. If you have offered before and we haven't asked you, we can only apologise –we hope to get the cake supplies better organised in the future.

HPS DORSET GROUP CONTACTS

President	Andrew Haynes		
Chairman	Eric Watson		
Secretary	Sheila Westgate		
Treasurer	Debbie Steel		

Plus David Burnham-Slipper (co-opted), Angela Edwards, Felicity Frost, Barbara Gooch, Roy Hole, Jane Norris, Lyn Ovens, Pat Rex and James Westgate

Last month we tried to encourage everyone to pay their National subs by Standing Order, and Debbie very efficiently gave many out. Unfortunately she didn't have the correct form, but this has been rectified and she now has the official **National Standing Order Form** so please come over to the Membership Stand, or email her, so she can give you the correct one. Many apologies!



Eric took this wonderful autumnal shot of the avenue of beech trees near Badbury Rings.

Moors Valley Country Park is always a delight at this time of year – colour in the trees and barks, interesting birds wintering on the lakes – and there will be Christmas crafts and activities during the weekends of 10/11 and 17/18 December, as well as Christmas trees for sale.

Pennard Plants' Potato Day is becoming a regular event for those of us who grow a few vegetables, in the flower beds or elsewhere, they certainly do well in pots. Once again it will be held in Pimperne Village Hall from 10 am until 1 pm, this time on Sunday, 29th January, the day after our next meeting. They will have numerous varieties of planting potato for sale by the single tuber, onion sets, shallots, garlic, Heritage seeds, fruit trees and soft fruit, and lots, lots more. Entry 50p – and soup and refreshments for sale.

One of our members, Lyn Miles runs a nursery from her home at Westcroft in Boscombe Village, Wiltshire. She specialises in snowdrops and will be open next year every Thursday from 19th January to 23rd February, see www.westcroftgarden.co.uk - one to look forward to for next year.

Jobs to do in the Garden

Cut back old hellebore leaves and mulch around the plant (don't put the leaves on the compost pile).

- Still time to plant tulips, any left in the shops are usually half price now.
- Ideal time to take hardwood cuttings. As soon as the leaves have fallen, take cuttings at pencil length and pencil thickness – make a straight cut immediately below a bud and a sloping cut above a bud to tell top from bottom. Plunge to half their depth in sandy compost or a trench in open ground, they should be rooted by spring and ready for potting up by mid-summer.
- Once the leaves are off, it's time to prune your shrubs and fruit trees.
- Reduce roses and buddleias by a third to prevent wind rock.
- Bubble-wrap your greenhouse, even if it is heated.*
- Give protection to all your tender plants, tubers like cannas and dahlias don't need light so can go in a garage.
- Rake up the leaves on a sunny windless day and store them in black bags or a wire cage, they will rot down into mineral rich leaf mould, only 2-3 years to wait!

When taking those cuttings, don't forget Ben Turner's tip last year - to use **cat litter as a cuttings compost component** as a substitute for, and so much cheaper than, Vermiculite or Perlite. Ben recommended low dust, lightweight cat litter.

*Google says it takes 18m of bubblewrap for an 8ft x 6ft greenhouse, sounds a bit excessive, and expensive. The 20mm bubblewrap too is more difficult to find than the small bubbles, but it insulates better. In Excess has it for £1.25 a metre, less than half the price of on-line.

The Committee of HPS Dorset Group wishes all its members a very Happy Christmas and New Year.



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