



**HPS**  
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

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## Dorset Group *Hardy Times*

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[www.dorsethps.org.uk](http://www.dorsethps.org.uk)

Summer is over – we’ve had a fantastic HPS summer with visits to RHS Rosemoor, Gilberts Nursery and Andy McIndoe’s garden, with lovely dry days for each of them – and for our holiday in Norfolk too. Remarkable, because “This summer has been most notable across the UK for being wetter than average. Broadly speaking, June was wettest in the north and July was wettest in the south. The rainfall has not been record breaking with 2007 (357.8mm), 2009 (323.0mm) and 2012 (379.2mm) being recent years with summers where more rainfall was recorded. The UK received 320mm of rainfall over the summer, 32.8% more than the 241mm average. This makes this summer the UK’s 11<sup>th</sup> wettest on record.” (Met Office)

We kick off our new season of speakers with one of our favourites - **Marina Christopher**, owner of Phoenix Perennial Nursery at Alton, Hampshire. She grows perennials, many uncommon and hardy, selected for beneficial insects particularly pollinators. She brings plant material to illustrate her talks and she’s also bringing some Showa gloves which she sells at her nursery but which cannot be bought at normal retail outlets. They are £6.50 a pair or four pairs for £22.50 and come in all sizes. They are the best and would make an excellent Christmas present (first and last mention of Christmas!).

Our President, **Andrew Haynes**, has had his article from last year’s magazine selected for *Cornucopia* again (3<sup>rd</sup> time!). It’s always a good read and costs just £3 – you add it to your national sub. Samples on the table.

So many of the garden owners the Events Team visited while researching next year’s holiday recommended **Strulch** that we thought we would investigate. Strulch “is a mineralised straw mulch which lasts up to 2 years, makes your

plants grow healthier and stronger, retains moisture, enriches the soil and its structure and reduces weed growth by up to 95%. A 100 litre bag will cover approximately 3 square metres. It has a neutral pH and can be used throughout the garden”. Waitrose supply it: 24 x 100l bags for £199.20 free delivery; equivalent to £8.30/bag, single bag price £9.99.

### Arrangements for October Meeting

The President of the HPS, **Roy Lancaster**, will be coming to speak to us on **Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, at 2.30 pm**. His talk is entitled ‘**A Life of Plants**’. The Hall will be full – doors will open at 2 pm. There will be no plant sales or membership enrolment, we’ll just have room for a really good raffle.

This will be a ticket only event. Please book your ticket beforehand - if you haven’t got yours yet contact Debbie or Barbara via the website. The cost is £1.50 for members and £5.00 for visitors. This will include the refreshments which will be served before the meeting.

Some tickets are still available for the **dinner in the evening** at the Dudsbury Golf Club, 64 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BH22 8ST. Please contact Debbie or Barbara (as above) for details.

**[www.dorsethps.org.uk](http://www.dorsethps.org.uk)**

Do have a look at our website – it’s brilliant! All thanks to Debbie, who set it up and is keeping it up-to-date. She has created a Calendar page and would be happy to add dates of horticultural interest in your locality – contact her through the website. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month she will change the headline photo with a more topical one, so if you would like your garden or special flower to be shown, contact Debbie (via the

website) so that you can email her the photo before the end of any month.

## Topical Tips from our Experts

- \*Lift, split and move perennials and shrubs while the ground is still warm. Please pot some up for our plant sales!
- \*Prune summer flowering shrubs such as Lavatera, Buddleia, or Sambucus by a third to prevent wind rock.
- \*Plant trees and shrubs and hedges to get them off to a good start for next year.
- \*Sweep up all the fallen leaves where possible and put in plastic bags, make holes with a fork in the base of the bags and place out of sight. The worms will make light work of composting.
- \*After tidying up beds and borders add a layer of mulch to allow the worms and weather to cultivate your soil through the winter.
- \*Turn the compost heap.
- \*Sow sweet peas to over-winter in a sheltered position.
- \*October is still a good time to sow lawns and meadows.
- \*Bring your tender plants (cannas, pelargoniums, dahlias, etc.) under protection and keep them on the dry side during the winter. Cannas and dahlias are frequently left in the ground in this area but we never know how cold the winter will be, so better safe than sorry.
- \*Carry on harvesting all your fruit and vegetables.
- \*Order bulbs for spring displays.
- \*Thin out oxygenating plants in ponds.
- \*Take semi-ripe cuttings.
- \*Keep dead-heading.

## The enemy

In last September's HT I mentioned the 2-year RHS research trials into slug and snail damage being carried out at Wisley and Harlow Carr.

Initial findings from the first year have shown that organic slug pellets performed almost as well as their non-organic equivalent across a range of plants, and that when used on hostas the organic pellets out-performed their rivals. The research also found that mulch, which was one of the six control strategies being studied, actually increased slug damage on beans.

The overall findings from year one of the research were that across the plants studied: daffodils, hostas, lettuces and beans; the synthetic, non-organic slug pellet treatment was the most consistently best performing, only slightly ahead of the organic version, and that mulch performed least well across the range of plants studied.

Other initial findings were that that when used preventatively nematodes provided good levels of control for daffodils and intermediate control for lettuces, however, when combined with mulch they were less effective on hostas and beans.

'The high levels of slug and snail damage found on the plants protected by mulch was unexpected, especially as many mulches are billed as being repellent to slugs and snails. It is possible that the negative impact of the mulch affected the effectiveness of the other control treatments when they were combined and that using mulch may attract slugs and snails as they head for the continuous warm and moist conditions the treatment generates.'

## Events Team

Janet Riggs and Judy Spratley have joined the Events Team (Angela, Debbie, Elaine and Barbara) and we have already organised a four day holiday and two glorious outings for next year!! Magazine with all details will be distributed at the November meeting.



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