



Newsletter

March 2020

PRESIDENT: Jackie Tomnie
CHAIRMAN: Ivor Stansfield
SECRETARY: Angela Shaw 01676 534562
TREASURER: Helen Jones 01564 772645
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Marion Keeley 07973911313 Web site: www.bdhs.moonfruit.com

Dear Members,

I think we are all fed up with the rain and storms. Don't be surprised if there is a class for paddy grown rice in this year's Annual Show schedule! The 3 geese on our farm absolutely love this weather, waddling around as if they own the place, whilst the rest of the livestock, including us, head for shelter! The geese seek out the muddiest puddles on the farm drive and plonk their bottoms in them to preen and drink, despite the farm pond being only a few feet away.

Storm Dennis scuppered Snowdrop Sunday on Feb. 16th at Temple Balsall. The event was hastily re-arranged for a week later although I believe it was still rather damp. Unfortunately, I was away providing school holiday cover as a chorister at Bath Abbey, so thanks to any of you who braved Temple Balsall on the 23rd.

Please ensure that you read the 'Noticeboard' on page 3 so that you are up to date with BDHS news, and please note the change of speaker for our monthly meeting on 26th March in the 'Diary of Events'.

With best wishes, Marion

SPEAKER REPORT

MARCH 2020 – SPEAKER REPORT

On 27th February our speaker was Dr. Andrew Ward from Norwell Nurseries & Gardens in Nottinghamshire, whom we visited last June. He gave a talk on plants that excite him and those marked with an asterisk are stocked at his nursery.

He began with *good blue flowers*, a colour difficult to find amongst plants. **Delphinium Bell. Volkerfrieden*** is a short variety and doesn't need staking. If regularly dead-headed it will flower from mid May – end of Sept. It is a graceful, dark purple blue and popular as a cut flower.

Salvia Caradonna* is very hardy with an even longer flowering season. It has dark, midnight blue flowers and ebony stems.

Veronica Kapitan* is 4 – 5ins high, happy in sun & light shade and easy to propagate. It has a gentian blue spike of flowers in a rosette of leaves.

Corydalis flexuosa* is tiny at 2ins high with brilliant blue flowers. Shade is essential and it mustn't dry put. Foliage is present through the winter, sometimes dying down in the height of summer.

Corydalis elata* is taller at 12 – 14ins and a lighter kingfisher blue with lime green leaves. It requires a moist, neutral – acidic soil and a bit of shade. There is a scent of a freshly creosoted fence!

Corydalis 'Tory MP' is a hybrid of *flexuosa* & *elata*, taller and later flowering. A true blue which goes on & on!

Codonopsis clematidea* is a denim blue climber, requiring some shade. Turning over the flower reveals a kaleidoscope of colour like passion flowers. Seed is available from Chilterns and flowers appear in year 2.

Meconopsis 'Lingholm' (grandis)* This is much more robust than those stocked in garden centres. *Grandis* is the old name. It must have moist, humous rich, shady conditions. Self-seeds if happy.

March

Thurs. 19th March, 7 for 7.30pm

Our Annual Dinner in the Village Hall.

NB there is NO seating plan this year

Sat. 21ST March, 2 – 4pm

National Auricula & Primula Society,

Midlands & West Section, Primula Show

Arden School, Knowle, B93 0PT

Thurs. 26th March at 8pm

Our monthly meeting in the Village Hall

NB Change of speaker to Mike Hinton

'Conservation of the Urban Environment'

Mon. 30th March, 7.45pm

Committee Meeting in the Westlake Room

April

Sat. 11th April, 11am – 4pm

Solihull & District Orchid Society Show,

Arden School as above

www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk

Sat. 25th April 2 – 4pm

National Auricula & Primula Society,

Midlands & West Section, Auricula Show

Arden School as above

Thurs. 30th April at 8pm

Our monthly meeting in the Village Hall

'Buttercups in the Gardens' – Howard Drury

Rich red shades, also hard to find

Meconopsis punicea A very red poppy whose tissue paper – like petals flutters well in a light breeze. It flowers once then dies but is only the price of a pint at the pub!

Embothium cocc. ‘Norquince’ The Chilean Firebush is a big shrub, requiring deep acidic soil that never gets waterlogged. It must not be sited in a frost pocket.

Ribes speciosum* (previously fucoides) Unlike most Ribes this has no smell but has slightly spiky canes upto 6ft high. The tubular, pinky red flowers are fuchsia – like, appearing from March – May.

Lobelia ‘Red Compliment’* Better than L. ‘Queen Victoria’ as it is perfectly hardy and the silvery edge to its stems seems to keep slugs & snails at bay.

Lobelia tupa* Rich red spires upto 6ft from June to November and grey- green felted leaves. Roots are deep but mulch in winter and cover emerging leaves.

Achillea Red Velvet* Andrew has grown this both in pure sand and in clay.

Geum ‘Rubin’* This family are useful to provide hot colours early in the year. ‘Rubin’ & G. ‘Redwings’ flower for much longer than G. ‘Mrs Bradshaw’.

Potentilla ‘Etna’* has lovely small double flowers like ruffled rose petals and shrugs off wet.

Potentilla thurberi ‘Monarchs Velvet’* has strawberry red flowers with almost black centres. It is upright to 20ins.

Yellows and oranges

Potentilla tonguei* is a combination of peach and apricot with a yellow centre. It is a trailer of 2 -3ins and looks good in terracotta pots.

Potentilla ‘William Rollinson’* Blousy, orange flowers of over an inch across. Will grow in sun or part shade. It doesn’t set seed.

Crocasmia ‘Lucifer’* Vigorous, with architectural foliage and sprays of rich red flowers. Possibly been superseded by C. ‘Hellfire’ which is shorter, a darker red & more of a ‘clumper’.

Crocasmia ‘Jackanapes’ Bi – colours of orange and red. Diminutive at 16ins high. Needs well – drained soil and sun.

Iris ‘Fans Hals’* Oranges, old golds & purples and an excellent cut flower. An iris for sun and well – drained soil. Clumps up well.

Hemerocallis ‘Frans Hals’* Is reminiscent of C. ‘Jackanapes’ with darker red petals that have a stripe of yellowy orange down the middle. Hemerocallis cope with winter wet but need summer sun and respond to a feed of Growmore in April.

Hemerocallis ‘Corky’* is sweetly scented and bright yellow, flowering earlier than most.

Hemerocallis ‘Catherine Woodberry’* The leaves can go a bit blotchy & brown (like alliums) when it blooms. Looks good grown with Potentilla ‘Gibsons Scarlet’.

Hemerocallis ‘Mauna Loa’ is a good bright orange.

Hedychium gardnerianum* A ginger lily which will need over wintering indoors in a pot. Pale orange flowers with bright orange stamens. The flower head is the size of a large pineapple with canna – like leaves. Fragrance of citrus & honeysuckle. Needs lots of moisture and fertiliser to perform well.

Moving on to purples, pinks & whites

Iris sibirica ‘Blauweismotte’ Is a bi – colour of creamy pink and deep violet. It is 18 – 24ins high and needs some moisture at its roots.

Hemerocallis ‘Night Beacon’* has stunning purple flowers with a yellowy green throat.

Hemerocallis ‘Moonlight Masquerade’* has large, scented 5ins blooms of cream petals with a deep purple picotee & green throat. Long flowering period from end June – October. Not cheap!

Geranium phaeum The phaeum types are useful in dry shade. **‘Rose Madder’*** is pink with apple -green leaves that also show a hint of pink. **‘Samobor’*** has dark purple flowers with purple blotched leaves and flowers early. The white **‘Album’*** lightens a dry, shady corner. **‘Langthorns Blue’** is very reliable with deep blue, reflexed petalled flowers in May & June.

Geranium aristatum* is a lovely pink, about 10ins high and can be grown from seed.

Geranium pratense ‘Mrs Kendall Clarke’* is a lilac blue which looks good if backlit.

Geranium pratense ‘Roseum’* A vigorous type from Eastern Europe especially if manured well.

Geranium renardii* has a white or pale mauve flower with violet veins. Front of border plant.

Geranium ‘Phillippe Vapelle’* is violet and likes a sunny, front of border position.

Geranium ‘Ann Folkard’* has magenta pink flowers with a black eye. Spreads so needs space.

Geranium lambertii* is white with a pinky centre and stamens.

Leucanthemum ‘Phyllis Smith’* Frilly white petals and a yellow centre - looks like ‘a bad hair day’!

Dactylorhiza fuchsii* An orchid with spikes of pink spotted slippers. Does well and will self - seed.

Dactylorhiza foliosa* Stunning 2ft high spikes of magenta pink spiral slippers.

To close, Andrew revealed his favourite late winter / early spring flowers

Primula sibthorpii* Mats of 2ins high pink flowers with yellow centres.

Corydalis ‘George Baker’* Brick red flowers in February & March.

Corydalis ‘Beth Evans’ is a softer pink which will grow anywhere and self – seeds.

Narcissus ‘Golden Bells’* One of the hooped petticoat narcissi which come in a variety of colours from bright yellow like this one, to whites & creams. Purchase the named forms as they are more reliable, will self - seed and flower longer.

Leucojum ‘Gravetye Giant’* Is the best, reaches about 2ft high and is very hardy.

Erythroniums / Dog tooth violets (with reference to bulb shape) require neutral to acid soil, must not dry out and hate being disturbed. **‘Snow Flake’*** has a pinky white flower with brown stems & anthers. Blooms from 3rd week of Feb through to March. **‘Rose Queen’*** has nodding flowers of recurved rose petals with yellow throats. **‘White Beauty’*** is ivory with a flash of red. **‘Pagoda’*** is yellow with recurved petals & a coppery leaf, and clumps well.

Fritillaria michailovskyi have distinctive purplish brown bells edged with yellow. Unlike other fritillarias, this prefers well – drained, sunny sites.

Muscari paradoxum* Is two tone, being a turquoise blue before opening and an inky midnight blue afterwards.

www.norwellnurseries.co.uk Tel. 01636 636337

NOTICEBOARD

OUR ANNUAL DINNER. Still a few tickets left – contact Helen Jones on 01564 772645. Don’t forget to bring your competition daffodils with you!

DAY TRIP on Tues 2nd June. Helen has arranged a day trip to Aulden Farm (the garden of our January speakers) and Hergest Croft Gardens, both in Herefordshire. Ticket price £29 which includes coach travel, entry to both gardens plus tea & cake in the afternoon. Tickets on sale at our March monthly meeting. Minimum of 35 people required to make trip viable; non - members also welcome.

MEMBERS’ ANNUAL SHOW To be held on Sat. 18th July at St. Peters Church Hall, Balsall Common. Plans are well underway thanks to David Ashcroft, Show Secretary. Besides the 2 usual photographic classes, the theme for the 3rd class is ‘Garden Helpers’. The begonia corms for one of ‘the plug classes’ were given out at the February meeting. The Pelargonium plugs will be given out at the March meeting.

MONTHLY MEETINGS If you are physically able PLEASE stack your chair away before you leave for home. We would also welcome help to set up the hall at 7pm. Don’t forget that the hall has a hearing loop system for those members with hearing aids.

TOPICAL TIPS

- Deadhead spring bulbs as they finish flowering, leaving the leaves in place for at least 8 weeks.
- Lift and divide large clumps of Snowdrops.
- Finish cutting back / splitting hardy perennials and feed, then apply mulch to beds & around trees.
- Complete the pruning of Dogwood (Cornus) and Willow (Salix) where grown for winter colour.
- Complete the pruning of shrubs & climbers that flower on new growth such as Buddleja, Hydrangea, Lavatera, Sambucus and Hardy Fuchsias.
- Finish pruning late – summer flowering (from July onwards / Group 3) clematis.
- Plant woody shrubs so that the roots can start to grow before the demands of the foliage begins
- Mulch fruit trees and bushes; bare – rooted fruit can still be planted.
- Lawns can be mown lightly when dry, spike & feed if required, tidy up lawn edges. Grass seed may be sown & turf laid.
- Hardy annuals can be sown outdoors, but half – hardy annuals should be sown under glass to protect from frost.
- Plant Shallot / Onion sets, Asparagus, new Rhubarb crowns, Strawberry plants and early Potatoes.
- Plant out autumn sown Broad Bean seedlings.
- Start Dahlia tubers off in damp potting compost; when shoots appear these may be used for cuttings.

COMPETITIONS PAGE

PLANT PATHOLOGY - DIAGNOSIS PLEASE!

Don't let the title put you off! Here are 15 names of pests & diseases with 15 descriptions. Please match one name (the numbers) to the most appropriate description (the letters).

Example: 11 = F (Mice = Fluffy grey mould which causes plants to rot off and die wrong, but I'm sure you get my drift!)

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1) Damping off | A. Yellowish, mottled leaves with fine webbing underneath them. |
| 2) Cabbage White Butterfly larvae | B. Tubers with tunnels in them, and sometimes the offending larvae too. |
| 3) Brown rot | C. The disappearance of newly planted pea and bean seeds. |
| 4) Vine weevil | D. Sap-sucking insects which secrete sticky 'honeydew', weakening plants. |
| 5) Slugs & Snails | E. Leaves with dark blotches, often resulting in yellowing and leaf drop. |
| 6) Clubroot | F. Fluffy grey mould which causes plants to rot off and die. |
| 7) Carrot fly | G. The collapse and death of seedlings. |
| 8) Tomato & Potato blight | H. Fruit with soft brown patches, usually accompanied by white pustules. |
| 9) Wireworms | I. Brassica leaves that have been decimated. |
| 10) Rust | J. The collapse and death of an apparently healthy plant in a pot. |
| 11) Mice | K. Slime trails around 'chewed' plants, especially where there is young growth. |
| 12) Aphids | L. Swollen, distorted roots and leaves that may have a reddish, purple tint. |
| 13) Botrytis | M. Orange/brown pustules on undersides of leaves and often premature leaf drop. |
| 14) Red Spider Mite | N. Roots with tunnels eaten into them and leaves with a reddish tinge. |
| 15) Black spot | O. Dark blotches on leaves, spreading rapidly to cause plant collapse. |

ANSWERS

FEBRUARY PUZZLE ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1.Populus 7.Abelia 8.Aster 9.Offset 12.Honesty 14.Picea 15.Scabiosa 18.South 20.Pourri
21.Chinese 22.June 23.Lanata

DOWN: 1.Peaches 2.Petunia 3.Lords 4.Savoy 5.Leaf 6.Fire 10.Succulent 11.Tea 13.Tropical
14.Passion 16.Crocus 17.Border 19.Heel

Entries were received from Wendy Boulton, Barry Clarke, Mary & Edward Cotterrell, Val Cotterrell, Laura Eden, Sylvia Farley, Nancy & David Felthouse, Barbara Haynes, Chris Keddle & Mavis Stone, Sue & Doug Timmis and Gill Whitehead.

The all correct, winning entry pulled from the hat was from Nancy & David Felthouse.

MONTHLY PLANT COMPETITION

MONTHLY PLANT COMPETITION

FLOWER STEM 1st Jean Wood (Camellia) 2nd Angela Shaw (a double Hellebore) 3rd Felicity Hill (Camellia x williamsii 'Debbie') & Marion Keeley (Daphne odora 'Walberton')

POT PLANT 1st Barbara Haynes (Sarracenia) 2nd Celia Davis (Amaryllis) 3rd Angela Shaw (Orchid)