



March 2022

Newsletter

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Dear Members,

As I write this the sun is shining, and I wish I was working outside in the garden instead of in front of the computer typing the newsletter! Earlier I spotted a small tortoiseshell butterfly feasting on my Daphne blossom, and I shot out to look at it. Its wings looked rather washed out so no doubt it had overwintered somewhere and was now taking advantage of the sunshine and available nectar.

Quite a different day to when I stewarded at Temple Balsall's Snowdrop Sunday and returned home a bit bedraggled! Nonetheless we were pleasantly surprised by just how many visitors turned up, keen to get out in the fresh air and amongst the flowers and of course, stop for the requisite tea and cake afterwards. Three other BDHS members were helping serve the teas: Felicity & Derek Hill and Laura Eden. I know that many other people have visited Temple Balsall on other days as it has become well known locally for its spring flowers. In the walled garden, the species snowdrop border created following a donation from our society, flowered very well this year.

Our society is flourishing and currently has 131 members. Welcome to our newest three; Anne Beaumont, Jayne Tooke and Caroline Travis and all from outside Balsall Common, so our name continues to spread widely.

After having to cancel the BDHS holiday, we are planning 2 coach trips this year. The 1st is on Wednesday 25th May to Hergest Croft Gardens (AM) and Brobury House Gardens (PM), both in Herefordshire. The cost is £35 to include entrance to both gardens, a guided tour of Hergest Croft, tea & cakes at Brobury, and the coach hire + driver's tip. When you purchase your ticket(s) from Helen, our Treasurer, she will ask if you wish to have lunch at Hergest Croft as this must be booked in advance. The 2nd trip is to the new RHS Bridgewater on Sunday 25th September, so is still in the planning stage.

Our next speaker meeting is on Thursday 31st March when our speaker will be Tamsin Westhorpe of Stockton Bury Gardens, Herefordshire. This is her 2nd visit to us and this time her topic will be 'The Diary of a Modern Country Gardener'. At this meeting, don't forget to pick up your free Pelargonium plug and Begonia corm to grow on for our Annual Show in July.

See you at our Annual Dinner on March 17th,

Marion

SPEAKER REPORT

Plants of the Pyrenees – David Charlton

On 24th February, David entertained us with glorious slides of plants encountered on his travels in this mountain range between France and Spain. He has co-authored a book with Cliff Booker called 'Mountain Flowers of the Pyrenees and Picos' (ISBN 978-095716 2815). He also leads walking holidays in the Dolomites for the travel firm Colletts.

His slides captured alpine flowers blooming in the optimum months of June and July. Many of these alpine flowers are familiar to British gardeners and it was a treat to see them in their natural habitat, often at vertiginous altitudes!

David reeled off many botanical names at the various locations, but thankfully for me he left a handout listing their names, along with some of the fauna and geographical landmarks.

Cirque de Gavarnie

Map - Lourdes - Portalet-Val de Tena-Panticosa- Ordessa- Pena de Oreol

Col de Tourmalet

Cirque de Troumousse

Luz St Sauveur

Pena de Oreol

Panticosa

Pic d'Arriel

Cameron & Jesus

Val de Tena, Hermitage

Salvia pratensis Meadow clary

Saponaria ocymoides Rock soapwort

Onobrychis argentea Silvery sainfoin

Antirrhinum majus Common snapdragon

Rhinanthus species Yellow rattle

Jasione laevis Sheep's bit

Erinus alpinus Fairy foxglove

Sedum acre Yellow stonecrop

Anthyllis vulneraria ssp pyrenaica Kidney vetch

Ajuga pyramidalis Pyramidal bugle

Linum narbonense Beautiful flax

Meconopsis cambrica Welsh poppy

Eryngium bourgatii Pyrenean sea holly

Gentiana lutea Great yellow gentian

Helianthemum apenninum White rockrose

Helianthemum nummularium Common rockrose

Helianthemum nummularium ssp pyrenaicum Pyrenean rockrose

Digitalis lutea Small yellow foxglove

Moneses uniflora One flowered wintergreen

Pinguicula grandiflora Large flowered butterwort

Drosera Sundew

Trollius europeus Globeflower

Orchis mascula Early purple orchid

Dactylorhiza sambucina Elder flower orchid

Anacamptis pyramidalis Pyramidal orchid

Gymnadenia conopsea Fragrant orchid

Neotina ustulata Burnt orchid

Dactylorhiza majalis ssp alpestris Broad leaved marsh orchid

Dactylorhiza elata Robust marsh orchid

Cypripedium calceolus Lady's Slipper

Brimeura amethystina Pyrenean hyacinth

Scilla verna Spring squill

Allium moly Yellow onion

Anthericum liliago St Bernard's lily

Narcissus abscissus

Narcissus nobilis

Fritillaria pyrenaica Pyrenean fritillary

Lilium martagon Martagon lily

Lilium pyrenaicum Pyrenean lily

Iris latifolia English iris

Genista species

Echinopartum horridum

Ordessa national park

Bujuarelo river gravels

Echium vulgare Viper's bugloss

Gypsophila repens Creeping gypsophila

Carduus carlinioides Pyrenean thistle

Asperula hirta Woodruff

Euphorbia cyparissias Spurge

Teucrium montanum Mountain germander

Saxifraga longifolia Pyrenean saxifrage

Ramonda mathildae

Portalet Pass

Marmots

Swallow tail - Scarce swallow tail

Globularia nudicaulis Leafless-stemmed globularia

Androsace villosa

Dryas octopetala Mountain avens

Anemone narcissiflora Narcissus-flowered anemone

Pulsatilla alpina Alpine pasque flower

Gentiana verna Spring gentian

Gentiana alpina Southern gentian

Saxifraga exarata Mossy saxifrage

Saxifraga pubescens

Primula elatior Oxlip

Primula farinosa Bird's eye primrose

Primula hirsuta

Daphne mezereum

Daphne cneorum

Valeriana pyrenaica

Ranunculus pyrenaicus Pyrenean buttercup

Ranunculus amplexicaulis Clasped leaved buttercup

Asperula hirta

Iberis sempervirens Evergreen candytuft

Draba aizoides

Oxytropis campestris Meadow milk-vetch

Trifolium alpinum Alpine clover

Vicia pyrenaica Pyrenean vetch

Androsace vitaliana

Linaria alpina Alpine toadflax

Linaria supina Pyrenean toadflax

Globularia repens Creeping globularia

Sempervivum

Monte Oreol

Santa Cruz de la Seros

Gladiolus illyricus

Gentiana lutea ssp montserratii

Helianthemum apenninum

Reseda alba White mignonette

Paronychia kapela ssp serpyiifolia

Saponaria caespitosa

Dianthus subcaulis

Tulipa australis Southern tulip

Nuria

Gentiana pyrenaica

Pulsatilla alpina ssp apiifolia

Gentiana verna

Sempervivum arachnoideum Cobweb houseleek

Draba dedeana

Asarina procumbens Creeping snapdragon

Androsace vandellii

Saxifraga pubescens orange sepals and anthers

Ranunculus parnassifolius

TOPICAL TIPS

- Deadhead spring bulbs as they finish flowering, leaving the leaves in place for at least 8 weeks or until they die down naturally.
- Lift and divide large clumps of Snowdrops.
- Finish cutting back / splitting hardy perennials and feed, then apply mulch to beds & around trees.
- Lift and divide herbs.
- 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.
- Remove weeds from paving and gravel.
- 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.
- Keep an eye open for slugs, snails and aphids.
- Clear ponds of dead foliage and re-pot aquatic plants to extend their life.

COMPETITIONS PAGE

FEBRUARY'S SNOWDROP PUZZLE

Answers: 1.'Lady Beatrix Stanley' 2.'Wendy's Gold' 3.'Wasp' 4.'Blewbury (Blewberry) Tart'
5.'Trym' 6.'Ophelia' 7.'Comet' 8.'Merlin' 9.'Diggory' 10.'Magnet'

I received entries from Wendy Boulton, Barry Clarke, Val & David Cotterrell, Mary & Edward Cotterrell, David Felthouse, Amanda Ghent, Sandra Heard, Wendy Jenkinson and Gill Whitehead.

The winning entry pulled from the hat is Sandra Heard who will receive a copy of the RHS magazine 'The Garden' at the March meeting.

MONTHLY FLOWER SPIKE & POT PLANT COMPETITION

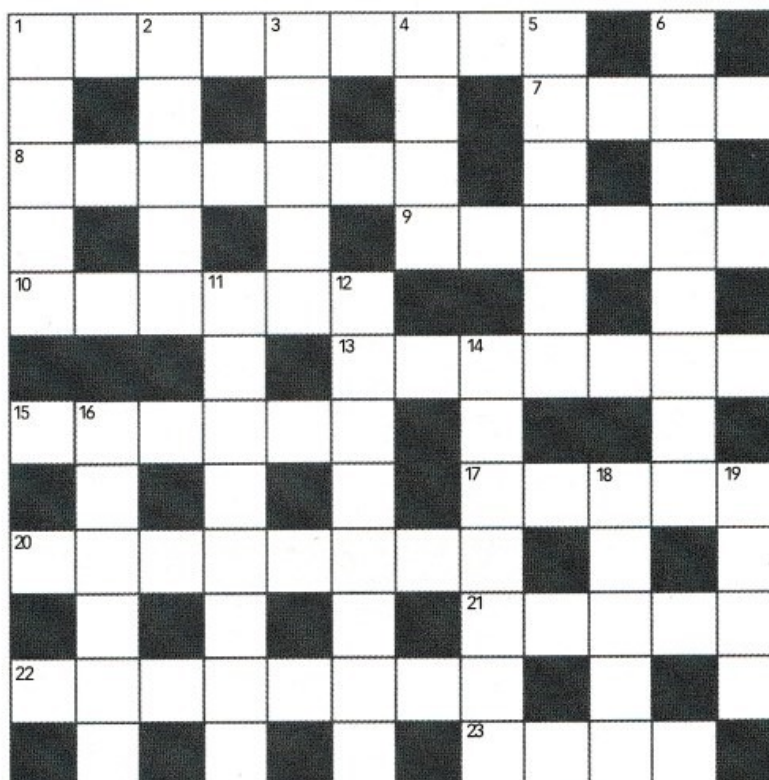
Flower Stem

1. Alison Watson (Prunus x subhirtella)
2. Marion Keeley (Iris unguicularis)
3. Felicity Hill (Camellia)

Pot Plant

1. Pet Hawley (dwarf Iris)
2. Felicity Hill (Crassula)
3. Derek Hill (Cyclamen)

A crossword this month!



ACROSS

- 1** The snowdrop genus (9)
7 Describes soil with a pH value below 7 (4)
8 Genus of perennials with open saucer or cup shaped blooms, commonly called windflower (7)
9 – stones is the common name for *Lithops* (6)
10 The 'tail' of silky threads at the end of a corn cob that turns dark brown when the cob is ripe (6)
13 Genus of shrubs with daisy-like blooms, also called the daisy bush (7)
15 Term for a type of *Iris* also known as beardless (6)
17 Unsightly swellings on woody plants (5)
20 Describes a plant from a hot, steamy climate (8)
21 *Dianthus* ' – Star' has rose-pink flowers with ruby centres and grey-green foliage (5)
22 A name for the leaves of *Brassica oleracea* var. *acephala*, also called kale (8)
23 External covering of certain fruit or seeds, such as a walnut or ear of corn (4)

DOWN

- 1** *Cardiocrinum* is also known as – lily (5)
2 Alliums grown for their white cylindrical stems, eaten as a winter vegetable (5)
3 Popular *Clematis* variety whose deep claret-red blooms start to appear in early spring (5)
4 – in, to temporarily insert a plant into soil until ready for planting (4)
5 – *officinalis* is better known as common sage (6)
6 Describes a plant that completes its lifecycle in two years (8)
11 An Asian tree such as *Caryota urens* whose trunk yields a starchy cereal (4,4)
12 The honeysuckle genus (8)
14 – oak is a common name for *Quercus robur* (7)
16 *Tulipa* 'Black – ' has fancy frilled dark-maroon blooms (6)
18 *Alchemilla* is popularly known as – mantle (5)
19 Solomon's – , a name for *Polygonatum* (4)

Answers to me by 31.03.22 (March meeting) in person, by email (marion.keeley@btinternet.com), or in the post (The Cottage, Fen End Farm, Oldwich Lane East, Fen End, Near Kenilworth, CV8 1NR) please.