

Plant Heritage

National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens



SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Spring 2017



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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

MAGGIE THORPE

I am happy to be back as chairman of our very special and successful group.

All the conservation work we do in Suffolk is of the utmost importance and your help at our plant sales and propagation events is vital in our efforts to raise money for the protection of all collection holders, the people we call our 'Living Libraries'.

We also aim to make available to members some of the threatened plants. Watch our plant stall at each meeting for plants marked with a red label.

I look forward to seeing you at our Stowupland events and will welcome any suggestions you might have for future events or indeed for any help you can give us, particularly help at Helmingham.



Maggie Thorpe in the lecture tent at the Autumn Plant Fair.

TREASURER'S REPORT

JUSTINE CORNEY

The accounts for the year to 31 October 2016 were presented to the AGM. They showed a slight rise in subscription income as the membership increased during the year. Gross income from Helmingham Plant Fairs increased at both the Spring and Autumn events by £1,323 overall, but after expenses the net income rose from £6,504 to £7,172

(an increase of £668). Donations from the lectures held by committee members decreased by £571.

The drive to bring your friends and neighbours to meetings has continued with visitor income at monthly meetings, along with the summer party and the special March meeting, raising £1,967 gross (£402 in 2015) with the costs of £2,051 (£1,744 in 2015).

Our overall income for the year was £17,755 (2105 was £15,219) and our expenses were £16,308 (2015 was £14,961) leaving a surplus of £1,447 (2015 was £258) which has been added to accrued bank funds which now total £12,873.

We donated a further £10,000 to National Office at the end of the year as we have for the previous five years. This is a continuing outstanding result which I know is greatly appreciated by them.

NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

The collection of Suffolk 20th Century Hardy Garden Plants held by Margaret Wyllie for the Suffolk Punch Trust has been awarded full National Collection Status. The definition of a Suffolk Plant is one bred in Suffolk or named after a Suffolk person or a Suffolk place. It is a very interesting collection to visit and you can see the Suffolk Punch horses too.

A proposal for a dispersed collection of *Narcissus* – introduced by Rev. Engleheart - has been accepted, and Anne Tweddle, Darren Andrews and other group members are working towards making a full application. Anthony Pigott (*Dryopteris*) and Jon Rose (*Santolina*) are also working on their full applications. So we could have three new collections before long.

The *Thalictrum* collection held by Kim Forester has a new home. Kim felt her back garden was not a suitable site for the collection to be viewed by the public. She decided to donate the collection to Plant Heritage and find a new place for it to be kept. After asking lots of people who have gardens open to the public she has found someone willing to provide a home for the *Thalictrum* collection.

The new home is at the Old Vicarage at East Ruston where it will be looked after by Alan Gray. Thank you Kim for all your hard work getting the collection together.

The collection holders have worked hard selling plants at the plant fair, showing visitors their collections and giving talks. Jan Michalak (*Muehlenbeckia*), Jim Marshall (*Dianthus* – Perpetual Flowering) and Anne Tweddle and Darren Andrews (*Narcissus* – Rev. Engleheart) all gave very interesting talks at the Suffolk Group AGM.

The collection holders have all been invited to attend a training day in Ipswich where they will learn about the Plant Heritage plant record system called Persephone. We will let you know more when the training has been done.

SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

AESCULUS	Framlingham	Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203
CAMPANULA	Bury St. Edmunds	Sue Wooster, 07879 644958
DIANTHUS (Malmaison)	Ipswich	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
DIANTHUS (Perpetual Flowering Carnations registered in the UK before 1970)	Ipswich	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
EQUISETUM	Stowmarket	Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104
ERYSIMUM (perennial)	Walpole	Dr Simon Weeks, 01986 784348
EUONYMUS	East Bergholt	Rupert Eley, 01206 299224
HOSTA	Stowmarket	Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576
IRIS (Sir Cedric Morris introductions)	Ipswich	Sarah Cook, 01473 822400
MUEHLENBECKIA	Burgate	Jan Michalak, 01359 783452
SUFFOLK GARDEN PLANTS (C 20th Hardy)	The Suffolk Punch Trust, Hollesley	Margaret Wyllie 01394 411327

PROPAGATION GROUP

ANNE TWEDDLE

We will be operating our monthly propagation group again in 2017. Dates for meetings are set (see page 8), and we hope to get back to having some ‘specialists’ come and do some teaching this year. More details of this as the year unfolds.

The December edition of *The Plantsman* carried an interesting article about vegetative propagation of cyclamen. We will certainly be giving this a try. It’s a fairly new method of propagating cyclamen, as it is usually done by seed. By propagating using this new method exact replicas of cultivars can be made. This is a breakthrough if you have a clone with an interesting leaf pattern.

Iris Project

Our iris project is based round UK breeders living and working between 1900 and the 1960s. We began with just four breeders: Murrell, Long, Chadburn and Pilkington. We have added Dykes to this list and, thanks to the wonderful generous Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS) in USA, we have expanded further. The aim of the project is to search for and hopefully find cultivars bred by these important people. Many of their introductions have been lost, but some have been found.

We received our first shipment from the USA in summer 2016. To get a physo-sanitary certificate and be imported the rhizomes had to be trimmed of all roots and the leaf growth cut well back. So the little rhizomes looked rather pathetic on arrival. Sarah Cook is managing the intensive care programme. She potted the small plants up immediately and much to her joy their will to live was on our side. First signs of recovery were white roots showing at the bottom of the pots. The baby rhizomes are being kept in pots over winter, and we expect them to be planted out next year. It will be a year or so before we have these rhizomes for sale, but there is no doubt we will. It means any interested member can take part in this ‘hands-on conservation’ of important cultivars previously lost in the UK.

Narcissus Project

The group project of a Dispersed National Collection of Narcissus bred by Rev Engleheart is moving steadily forward. There are eight members of the Suffolk group involved in growing the cultivars we have found. The

idea for a collection has been approved and the title of Proposed National Collection formally granted. The Plant Conservation Committee who monitor the National Collections encouraged us as follows:

“The Plant Conservation Committee is very supportive of your proposal and considers it a very good example of this type of Historical Collection. They would like you to come back with an application (for full collection status) when a representative collection of the 23 cultivars are found and have been established for a season”

The 23 cultivars on our original plant list have expanded to 26. Of these 25% have a conservation status of Least Concern. The remaining 75% have a conservation status of Near Threatened or Threatened.

The bulbs are all planted in large pond type baskets in the eight gardens in Suffolk. Ninety five baskets have been planted.

We are actively looking for ‘Argent’; ‘Dactyl’; ‘Dawn’; ‘Lucifer’; ‘Tenedos’. These should all be in the UK and we should be able to track them down. If you happen to have them in your garden we would be delighted to hear from you.

Our next level of enquiry will certainly include asking across the pond. Once again the Americans look to be ahead of us in the plant conservation business. Photographs and write-ups of Engleheart introductions we are seeking regularly appear in the American Daffodil Society journals.

It’s going to be very exciting this spring to see our bulbs come into flower and begin the process of understanding what we have. Any member who would like to see bulbs in flower can email anne@tweddle1.co.uk or Darren Andrews at waspfactory72@yahoo.co.uk, and we can help.

This collection belongs to the Suffolk group not only to the individual members growing the cultivars. In time we hope all members interested in growing narcissus will add some of these lovely cultivars to their own gardens. This is how we will ensure Rev Engleheart’s wonderful work and cultivars will not be lost to future generations.

Plant Guardian Scheme

I strongly recommend to members to register a plant or plants you have growing to this project. It’s Plant Heritage’s way of recognising and formally registering the conservation efforts of individuals. It’s what we are about - plant conservation.

The rules for being accepted into the PG scheme are found on the national website where you register the plants. A link to the correct page Plant Guardians, can be found from the home page at www.nccpg.com

PROPAGATION PROGRAMME

ANNE TWEDDLE

Maggie Thorpe and I will be continuing our propagation events in 2017. We hold monthly sessions, on weekday mornings in Stowupland Church Hall. We start at 10 with coffee and it's almost always wrapped up by 12.

What we achieve is pretty remarkable. All the plants we sell at talks, plant sales and other events are raised in this group. Justine Corney showed in her accounts for last year we raised not much short of £5,000 in selling plants.

The sessions are open to all members and are very friendly. Don't be put off by not feeling confident. We will teach you. The only thing we ask is that if you would like to come along, please let either Maggie or me know. We can't accommodate more than about 10.

We use different propagating techniques during the year, so there is usually something new to learn. We try to have an occasional 'expert', and or collection holder who will show us how they propagate. It's all hands-on learning.

Dates for 2017 are:

February	23rd	Thursday
March	21st	Tuesday
April	18th	Tuesday
May	17th	Wednesday
June	15th	Thursday
July	19th	Wednesday
August	16th	Wednesday
Sept	21st	Thursday
October	18th	Wednesday
November	15th	Wednesday

Contacts: Anne Tweddle (anne@tweddle1.co.uk) and Maggie Thorpe (maggiethorpe37@gmail.com)

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome four new members who have joined Suffolk Plant Heritage since September.

Mrs. Clare Dawson Mrs. Lorraine Wood
Mr. Lucas Hatch Mrs. Gillian Smith

The committee and other members look forward to meeting you at the Stowupland talks and other events. Please introduce yourself when you sign in at the membership table.

TRIBUTE: SUE HAMILTON

JIM MARSHALL



Sue Hamilton who died on 8th November 2016 after a long illness was both a friend and an active member of the Suffolk Group of Plant Heritage. For a good number of years she organised the group's lectures at Stowupland and I always looked forward to our discussions on the pros and cons of specific lecturers.

A keen and knowledgeable plantswoman Sue enjoyed discussing plants and gardens with her many friends and visited gardens both at home and abroad. Her beautiful garden in Lavenham reflected her wide interest in plants and it was a joy to visit when it was opened on behalf of St. Nicholas Hospice and Plant Heritage. She will be sadly missed.

GARDENS HOLIDAY

Maggie Thorpe has asked AT Ventures to organise a garden holiday for members of Plant Heritage, East Anglian Garden Group and other garden societies.

GLORIOUS GARDENS, Wednesday 13th to Friday 15th September 2017
visiting Easton, Biddulph Grange and Trentham. Twin Room £319pp,
Single Room £379pp. Pickups from Halstead, Lavenham and Bury.
Ring 01787 477253 or info@aandtventures.co.uk

SUFFOLK GROUP EVENTS 2017

JANUARY

Saturday 28 *Talk: The Plantsman Magazine. Speaker: Mike Grant
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

About the speaker: Mike Grant is editor of The Plantsman and RHS specialist publications such as plant monographs, cultivar registers and yearbooks. He previously worked as a senior botanist at RHS Garden Wisley.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 25 *Talk: 'Poppies of the Monsoon (the Genus *Meconopsis*)'
by Christopher Grey-Wilson.
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

About the speaker: Christopher Grey-Wilson was editor of the Alpine Garden Society for 20 years. Before this he served as a Principal Scientific Officer at the Royal Botanic Gardens for 22 years and from where he made plant collecting expeditions to Iran and Afghanistan, Nepal, western China, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Tanzania. A former editor of the Royal Horticultural Society's magazine The Plantsman he has also been closely involved in a number of gold medal winning awards at the Chelsea Flower Show.

MARCH

Saturday 25 *Talk: 'Growing for Gold'. Two national collection holders
Melanie Collins and Sarah Cook discuss their aims and
approaches to showing.
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

About the speakers:

*Mel Collins is a partner in Mickfield Hostas, a family micro-business, which has grown out of a collection of the genus *Hosta* spanning 40 years and now holds the largest National Collection of the genus *Hosta*. She is happy to share her experiences with fellow collection holders contemplating the publicity of their own National Collections.*

Sarah Cook holds the National Collection of Cedric Morris irises. In 2015, in collaboration with Howard Nurseries, she won a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show showing Cedric Morris irises. She has spent many years sourcing and growing the irises bred by Cedric Morris who lived at Benton End. Before her retirement she was the Head Gardener at the National Trust Garden at Sissinghurst in Kent.

APRIL

Sunday 2 Narcissus workshop. Hullwood Barn
10.30am-3pm. Lunch, tea and coffee provided. £10.
01473 822400, email Sarah@malmaisons.plus.com

Saturday 22 *Talk: 'New Garden Worthy Plants' by Bob Brown.
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

About the speaker: Bob has a life-long obsession with hardy perennials widened and much honed since he started his nursery Cotswold Garden Flowers 25 years ago on an isolated acre of unpropitious alkaline clay in Worcestershire. He is known for having opinions (many very critical) about all the 15-16 thousand kinds of plants he's grown or tried to grow. He has been vice chairman of the Herbaceous Committees of the RHS and is the holder of the Veitch Memorial Medal awarded for the science and advancement of horticulture.

MAY

Sunday 28 PLANT HERITAGE SPRING PLANT FAIR
10am-4pm, Helmingham Hall, IP14 6EF Entrance £7.

JUNE

Wednesday 14 Suffolk Group summer garden party by kind invitation of
Plant Heritage member Jane Crowe
6-8pm at Shelley House, Shelley, Ipswich IP7 5QY.
Tickets £7.50 from Maggie Thorpe 01787 211 346,
maggiethorpe37@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 17 PLANT HERITAGE AUTUMN PLANT FAIR
10-4pm, Helmingham Hall IP14 6EF. Entrance £7

Saturday 30 *Talk : 'Trees for Autumn' by Graham Proctor
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

About the Speaker: Graeme attended Hadlow, Merrist Wood and Capel Manor colleges before starting work with Redbridge Parks Department. Keen to combine his practical knowledge and design skills he started a successful landscaping company that he ran until 1993 when, with his wife

and sister in law, he took over what is now Crown Nursery in Ufford. He is a BBC Radio Suffolk Gardening Guru and writes a regular gardening column in the East Anglian Daily Times.

OCTOBER

Saturday 28 *Talk: 'Greece: From Forest to *Phrygana*. A personal experience of a diverse landscape and its flora' by Graham Kendall
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

About the speaker: Graham has worked in horticulture since 1968. Having studied at the Savill Gardens, Windsor, and the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, he went on to be Head Gardener at three National Trust properties before starting his own business. A year studying in Greece in 1979, at what is now a garden owned by the Goulandris Natural History Museum and home of the Mediterranean Garden Society, kindled his love for its native flora. Graham has been leading plant tours to various parts of Greece for 10 years.


*Lectures marked * are free to members, with £5 entrance fee for non-members.*



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THE FREE PLANT AT THE 2017 HELMINGHAM SPRING PLANT FAIR

Each year Suffolk Plant Heritage selects a plant which is not widely grown to give away free to the first 800 visitors to the spring plant fair at Helmingham.

This year it is to be *Fuchsia* 'Whiteknights Pearl', a hardy fuchsia cultivar which is upright and bushy with neat dark foliage. Flowers are single, slender pale pink. This fuchsia flowers during summer and into autumn, and grows well in sun or shade. Its size is approx 1.5m. by 1.5m. It works well in pots or in the ground and is a very versatile and garden worthy plant.



It's not rare but not often seen in gardens so this is an opportunity to make a good plant more widely grown in Suffolk. It has an AGM (Award of Garden Merit) from the RHS indicating it is a garden worthy plant that will grow well in a wide variety of conditions.

AUTUMN JOURNAL

Contributions for the autumn issue of Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal should be sent by mid July to Widget Finn, Smallwood Farmhouse, Bradfield St George, Bury St Edmunds IP30 0AJ or widget.finn@gmail.com

To reach the most discerning gardeners advertise in Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal

Quarter page £25

Half page £50

Whole page £75

Enquiries to Heather Medcraft, gingerandh@hotmail.com
or 01359 270721

PLANT HERITAGE COUNCIL REPORT

ANNE TWEDDLE

Plant Heritage is in the middle of a governance review. Why and what does this mean?

PH has made an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In doing so the first part of the process of being accepted for a grant is to establish if the PH organisational structure is 'fit for purpose'. The lottery fund provides advice and funds the process for this to happen. Hence the need to take a look at our organisational structure.

As members you probably took part in a recent questionnaire about your understanding of PH's governance. This was part of the review. Much discussion is taking place about the role of Council. Is it effective? Should it be changed? As your Council rep I can say without a shadow of doubt it is an unwieldy arrangement with 30+ members sitting in a meeting.

For PH to move forward in the field of plant conservation, which is after all what we are and do, we need funds. We need to grow our conservation work. We aren't just an expensive garden group, we are plant conservationists with a healthy reputation across the globe.

To have a chance of being successful in our funding bid PH has to be structured in the most effective way. I don't yet know what the outcome will be, but I do know PH will travel this road and come out the other side stronger and more purposeful than ever.

The shape and constitution of committees seems distant to many members, but these committees do ultimately impact on our success. Individually we may not be directly affected but it does matter to the overall direction of the charity and its important work in plant conservation.



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www.woottensplants.com
01502 478258

Growing our plant conservation work is something we can all be involved in, and in Suffolk we are very busy with many different projects and activities.

By spring 2017 we expect an answer. From there we look forward to the opportunities a successful HLF grant could bring to the organisation. If anyone is interested in further information, please get in touch with me.

NEWS FROM PLANT HERITAGE NATIONAL OFFICE

A grand total of 29 new National Plant Collections were approved by Plant Heritage in 2016. They include

- * *Narcissus*, Backhouse Heritage Daffodils in Fife, rescued from possible extinction by a fourth generation descendant of the original growers.
- * Two *Camassia*, one at the National Trust's Attingham Park in Shropshire, the other at Stella Exley's Hare Spring Plants nursery in Sheffield
- * Local apple cultivars at Sparsholt College, Winchester.

Members' Weekend and AGM

Hosted by the Yorkshire Group, this event takes place on 5-7 May in Harrogate. The weekend includes visits to three very special Yorkshire gardens including The Manor House Garden at Heslington. For details of the weekend and a booking form contact www.plantheritage.com

Missing Genera

The Missing Genera campaign was launched this summer to highlight 10 popular garden plants that are not in National Collections. Without being conserved in a National Collection these plants, like so many others, could quietly disappear from cultivation. The list includes *Eryngium*, *Achillea*, *Antirrhinum*, *Ginkgo*, *Ranunculus*, *Verbena*, *Verbascum* and *Forsythia*.

Plant Guardians best year yet!

2016 has seen a record number of plants registered in the Plant Guardians scheme, and currently there are 532 plants registered including some with more than one Guardian. Over 100 of the registered plants came from the 2016 Plant Exchange. Being a Plant Guardian is important because not only are you caring for rare plants but also there is a known location for them. For information on how to become a Plant Guardian go to www.plantheritage.com (If you're a Suffolk Group member and interested in joining the scheme, contact Anne Tweddle anne@tweddle1.co.uk)

JOINING FORCES AT THE WALLED GARDEN

SUE WOOSTER

For some time my husband Simon had been considering a job change. Happily in autumn last year he closed his office door for the last time, and began a new era working alongside me at Bellflower Nursery and in the Georgian walled garden at Langham Hall.

Reaction from many people on hearing the news included raised eyebrows and questions along the lines of “Really?” “Will it work?” and “...all your eggs in one basket?”. It certainly wasn’t a decision made lightly, but



anyone who knows Simon will agree he likes a challenge and thrives on a juicy project. We have worked together before on our Plant Heritage displays of campanulas at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, which surely must be one of the biggest and most stressful tests for a husband and wife team?

In November 2016 we began to plan and prepare for our joint venture. After negotiations with the new owners of Langham Hall, following the departure of the previous market gardener, the entire three-and-a-half acres of walled garden are ours to cultivate – plenty of room for us not to be around each other all of the time! Two acres make up

Ordnance Survey County Series First Edition, 1:2500 scale, dated 1884.

the kitchen garden where we intend to grow and sell a range of edibles, including soft fruit and salad crops.



Aerial view of the Walled Garden in 2015.

There is a potentially overwhelming amount of work to do, and some areas will have to remain on the wild side. Fortunately this is not always a bad thing, as in last year's British Butterfly Count, when 11 species were recorded and we were praised for the number of butterfly host plants, including white nettle and unmown grass. Barn owls also hunt in the unkempt areas of the garden.

Bellflower Nursery and the National Collection will still be open to visitors on Thursdays and Fridays between mid March and the end of October from 10-4, as will the rest of this unique walled garden, or at other times by appointment. Please do come to check on progress, and which one of us will have claimed the official title of Head Gardener...

Bellflower Nursery, The Walled Garden, Langham Hall, Langham, Bury St Edmunds IP31 3EE. www.bellflownursery.co.uk tel. 07879 644958.

Mike Grant is editor of The Plantsman and edits RHS monographs and yearbooks. He's also closely involved in the RHS's specialist magazine The Orchid Review. He is giving a talk to Plant Heritage members in January about his work.

THE PLANTSMAN AND RHS PUBLICATIONS

MIKE GRANT

The *Plantsman* is well known to keen gardeners and RHS members, but the RHS Media group has a wide range of publications. Here is a guide to just a few of them.

Specialist magazines and yearbooks

The Plantsman was launched in 1979 and is aimed at the plant enthusiast who wants to read more in-depth articles about plants. The main subject areas are overviews of particular genera, new introductions, plant exploration in the wild, advanced cultivation and propagation techniques, breeding, horticultural science, taxonomy and RHS trials. Regular features included five pages of news, book reviews, letters and a few adverts. We have 3,000 subscribers in the UK, Europe and the US. Gender ratio is 60% male and 40% female, the commonest age class is 65+, and 86% are RHS members.

The Orchid Review has just under 1,000 subscribers and is more international in its subscriber base. It is the oldest orchid magazine in the world, being founded in 1893. It covers similar subject areas to *The Plantsman*, but obviously just focusing on orchids. It also gives extensive coverage to RHS awards to orchids.

Although not edited by RHS staff, we also oversee publication of the *Daffodil, Snowdrop and Tulip Yearbook* and the *Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Yearbook*. These are edited and commissioned by volunteer editors, most of whom are connected with RHS plant committees.

Cultivar registers

The RHS has international responsibility for registering cultivar names in nine groups of plants. These are clematis, conifers, daffodils, dahlias, delphiniums, dianthus, lilies, orchids and rhododendrons. Although the cultivar names and details of the parentage, raisers, dates etc are stored on

databases, we also have a responsibility to regularly publish updated lists of new registrations, which we do every year in the form of small booklets with a few hundred names in each. Every 10 to 20 years we publish a full register for most of our nine groups, and these are very large books sometimes exceeding 1,000 pages.

Horticultural monographs

A few years ago we decided to launch a series of horticultural monographs. A monograph is an in-depth account of a particular genus or group of plants. The last time the RHS was the sole publisher of a monograph was back in the 1950s. We had seen a bit of a gap in the market for books that were rigorous botanically, although not too dry, were attractively illustrated with photographs, and which also gave comprehensive coverage of cultivars.

So we thought it was a tradition that needed reviving. Our first one was on *Kniphofia*, by Christopher Whitehouse, published in April 2016. Our next will be on *Hedera*, by Hugh McAllister, in 2017. We then have *Wisteria*, by James Compton and Chris Lane, in 2018; *Lathyrus*, by Greg Kenicer and Roger Parsons, in 2019; and *Digitalis*, by a team at Wisley, in 2020. We hope it will continue after that.







AUTUMN PLANT FAIR AT HELMINGHAM



Photos taken by Peter Kendall
(top right in newly purchased hat
made from recycled tarpaulins).

Bob Brown of Cotswold Garden Flowers will give a talk to Plant Heritage Suffolk Group at Stowupland Village Hall on 22nd April on 'New garden-worthy plants.'

HARDINESS IN PLANTS

BOB BROWN

The public largely imagine hardiness is all or nothing. Thus, in their imagination, the thermometer drops to 0°C (freezing) and tender plants are reduced to mush. In the world of tender bedding this may be true. The nasturtiums that have been happy and even flowering during November with temperatures in single figures, dissolve to slime when, crash, there's a drop below zero. This kind of reaction is exceptional.

Lately, eastern Worcestershire has experienced some record low temperatures – officially about -20°C at the met. station on the side of the hill but as low as -26°C at the bottom. I suppose it's partly because we are about as far from the sea as it's possible to get. Of course, we experience less low lows in other years. Experiencing a wide range of lows means we can vouch for the differing hardiness of the very wide range of plants we grow.

I can vouch that perennials and shrubs planted out on my nursery finally die at all kinds of temperatures; *Puya spathacea* at -10C, *Pileostegia viburnoides* at -15C, *Viburnum tinus* 'Gwenllian' at -17C, *Agapanthus caulescens* at -20C, *Agapanthus* 'Navy Blue' and many others including the spectacular winter-flowering Moroccan *Ranunculus calandrinoides* presumably die somewhere out of sight below -26C. I conclude that hardiness is not an all or nothing quality.

It gets more complicated. New, modern *Echinacea* hybrids, bred from species native to the Midwest of the USA, are used to temperatures so low that freeze-drying operates and the activities of pathogenic bacteria and fungus are suspended. Currently the British public watch them disappear overwinter and (rightly) complain. During recent very cold winters I can report that they mostly lived. My theory is that warmish wet British winters allow pathogens to rot the crowns and conclude that new *Echinacea* hybrids die when it isn't cold enough.

Americans have known that their plants die at different low temperatures all their gardening lives and the US Department of Agriculture issue a

zoning map based on average minimum temperatures. Plants tend, therefore, to come with zoning attached. '*Farfugium japonicum* 'Argentea' Z(zone)8a-10b' means 'It'll thrive planted out in places zoned between 8a and 10b where the average minima lie between -12.2°C and $+1.7^{\circ}\text{C}$ '. How sensible! It beats my amateurish attempts to qualify the limits with "bone hardy", "hardy-ish", "needs the protection of a wall" or "tender-ish" and so on. The trouble is that American hardiness zoning doesn't translate to Britain. A plant like this *Farfugium* that'll thrive to -12°C in Virginia dies at -5°C in Ely. This is probably explained by the contrast between warm, ripening summers and physiologically dry winters in the US and cold, wet summers and cool, wet winters in Britain.

In 2012 the RHS introduced a new British hardiness zoning system: H1 to H7. H1 is hot-house conditions, H7 is very hardy (below -20°C). 0°C is included in both H3 and H4. Hooray! A solution to the problem is in sight. I've offered my four penn'orth and recorded H zones for plants I've killed, and others are doing the same. Eventually a consensus opinion about a plant's hardiness will be agreed. H numbers have started to appear in print. They'll soon be on labels.

I grow, have grown, kill and have killed an enormous number of plants in a part of Britain currently experiencing record low temperatures. I can say that *Ranunculus calandrinoïdes* even survives -26°C . Others who have had temperatures only down to -14°C or -9°C can vouch for its hardiness only down to their minima. The places where it originates in Morocco do experience winter weather worse than ours.

I remember a trip in late February when it snowed continuously between the Rif and sea level on the Mediterranean coast. At sea level no snow settled. At higher altitudes it did settle. I imagine that summer in the Rif is probably warmer and drier than our summer (I find this an easy concept to visualise). *Ranunculus calandrinoïdes* ought to rot to death whilst it's dormant in British summers.

As I write this it's in flower under some snow. Last summer high rainfall. I would have predicted it would have died then and not be in flower now. However, it's planted under a deciduous hawthorn tree which tends to dry the soil whilst it's dormant during the summer so I can't do any more than suggest that maybe it's summer hardy as well. When I said it's complicated I meant it.

A chart is included overleaf.

<i>zone</i>	<i>°C</i>	<i>category</i>	<i>definition</i>
<i>H1a</i>	<i>>15</i>	<i>Heated greenhouse – tropical</i>	Generally under glass all year
<i>H1b</i>	<i>10 to 15</i>	<i>Heated greenhouse – subtropical</i>	Can be grown outside in the summer
<i>H1c</i>	<i>5 to 10</i>	<i>Heated greenhouse – warm temperate</i>	Can be grown outside in the summer. (Most bedding plants, tomatoes and cucumbers.)
<i>H2</i>	<i>1 to 5</i>	<i>Tender – cooler frost-free greenhouse</i>	Tolerant of low temperatures, but not surviving being frozen. Except in frost-free inner-city areas or coastal extremities requires glasshouse conditions. (Most succulents, many subtropical plants, annual bedding plants, many spring-sown vegetables.)
<i>H3</i>	<i>– 5 to 1</i>	<i>Half-hardy unheated greenhouse mild winter</i>	Hardy in coastal and relatively mild parts of the UK except in severe winters and at risk from sudden (early or late) frosts. May be hardy elsewhere with wall shelter or good microclimate. Likely to be damaged or killed in cold winters, particularly with no snow cover or if pot grown. Can often survive with some artificial protection in winter. (Many Mediterranean-climate plants, spring-sown vegetables for later harvesting)
<i>H4</i>	<i>– 10 to – 5</i>	<i>Hardy – average winter</i>	Hardy through most of the UK apart from inland valleys, at altitude and central/northerly locations. May suffer foliage damage and stem dieback in harsh winters in cold gardens. Some normally hardy plants may not survive long wet winters in heavy or poorly drained soil. Plants in pots are more vulnerable to harsh winters, particularly evergreens and many bulbs. (Many herbaceous and woody plants, winter brassicas, leeks.)
<i>H5</i>	<i>– 15 to – 10</i>	<i>Hardy – cold winter</i>	Hardy in most places throughout the UK even in severe winters. May not withstand open/exposed sites or central/northern locations. Many evergreens will suffer foliage damage, and plants in pots will be at increased risk. (Many herbaceous and woody plants, some brassicas, leeks.)
<i>H6</i>	<i>– 20 to – 15</i>	<i>Hardy – very cold winter</i>	Hardy in all of UK and northern Europe. Many plants grown in containers will be damaged unless given protection. (Herbaceous and woody plants from continental climates.)
<i>H7</i>	<i>< – 20</i>	<i>Very hardy</i>	Hardy in the severest European continental climates including exposed upland locations in the UK. (Herbaceous and woody plants from continental climates.)

BOOK REVIEW

'BLISS IRISES – FAMILY AND FLOWERS, THE JOURNEY TO A NATIONAL COLLECTION' by Anne Milner

SARAH COOK

2016 has been a good year for bearded irises, not only are there now four National Collections of Iris devoted to individual breeders, with several more in the pipeline, but Anne Milner, one of the longstanding members of this select group, has published a book which charts the process of making such an historic collection from start to finish.

I know Anne well, as we have done several joint pictorial exhibitions of our collections at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show. The publication of her book was aimed to coincide with the start of the show this year but sadly it was delayed – for in the first run the pictures were accidentally printed in black and white. Fortunately Anne persisted, her book is now lavishly illustrated in full colour.

The book will give anyone and everyone a wonderful insight into making a National Collection. It is also much more than this, for as it says on the cover “Bliss Irises combines family history and gardening in a very unique and very personal journey”.

The first two chapters set the scene, give the family history and a short biography of ‘Uncle Arthur’. Arthur Bliss was in fact her grandfather’s cousin. He had a fascinating life, one which is a good read in itself, a personal and social history which could easily feature on the television programme ‘Who do you think you are?’ These two chapters illustrate how easy it is to become hooked on a hobby which involves beautiful flowers and research into a person’s life.

The final three chapters cover all the irises which Bliss bred, one chapter dedicated to all the irises which Anne has found, another on ‘Possible Bliss’ irises with unconfirmed identities’ and a third on all the other irises Bliss bred. These three show chapters show not only the great variety of bearded irises that Bliss bred, but give so much information about each



individual plant. Bliss was a very important breeder of the early twentieth century. His Iris 'Dominion' is to be found in the genes of many of the irises bred today. It is credited with being one of the first to give the velvety substance to iris petals

For me, it is the middle chapters that are essential reading for anyone who is interested in plant conservation, and especially anyone who wants a National Collection. Using 'Uncle Arthur's irises', these chapters show how interesting and absorbing making a National Collection can be. Hunting the irises, making friends and contacts abroad, visits to Prague and Basel, growing, showing, making herbarium specimens, photography, keeping records, and distributing the irises which Anne has found to ensure they survive in the future, it is all here. (Although, in the light of her struggles with the production of her book, I think the second edition should certainly contain a chapter of advice to prospective Collection Holders on publishing.)

I have thoroughly enjoyed going through the same process as Anne, to make and record my collection of Cedric Morris irises. Indeed it is the type of book I should be writing myself! Anne's book is meticulously researched, packed full of fascinating information. I would encourage you all to read her book and be inspired to make a National Collection of your own. Heritage irises would, of course, be best!

'Bliss Irises - Family and Flowers, the Journey to a National Collection'
by Anne Milner, Troubador Publishing, RRP £14.99. Available from
anne.milner@btinternet.com or www.troubador.co.uk

AMONG MY FAVOURITE GARDENING BOOKS.....

THE WILD GARDEN by Judith Berrisford pub. Faber & Faber 1966

NEIL BRADFIELD

'Three to five birch trees in rough grass, an old ditch beneath a boundary hedge, even four or five fruit trees can give us a piece of the wild in miniature where we can plant foxgloves, columbines, trilliums, and dog's tooth violets; where the earliest snowdrops and aconites may bloom and honeysuckle distil its scent – a sweet disorder that may bring us the happiest moments of our garden lives.'

Who could fail to be charmed by this description? Not me, that's for sure. From the moment I found this book in a second-hand bookshop in Cromer 20 years ago, I have been enchanted by it. Published in 1966, Judith Berrisford's vision of an alternative way of gardening must have been a breath of fresh air in its day. When I think of my father's garden in the 1960s with its beds of hybrid tea roses edged with alyssum and lobelia (I'm cringing as I write this), I could wish he had invested 30 shillings on the price of this new book rather than boxes of bedding plants! Somehow I escaped my childhood garden to become a professional horticulturist, and as such, I work in any kind of garden. But this book struck a chord with me and helped further develop my personal tastes and interests in horticulture.

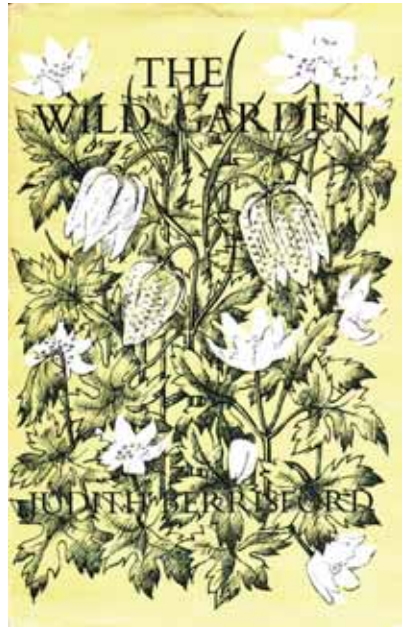
Berrisford considers the challenges and solutions when gardening in woodland, orchard, heathland, streamside, quarry and clifftop. While offering practical advice on establishing planting in less than ideal locations, her writing is full of tempting images of what might await us.

'Syringa persica, in purple or white... fits in happily (to an orchard garden). So, too, do the mock-oranges. Their scented white blossom seems exactly what is needed among the greenery of leaves and grass in high summer.'

Although writing this in December, I am already in the orchard amid humming insects with a hint of blossom carried on a warm breeze. But maybe the reader is interested in the idea of a heathland garden?

'Autumn is perhaps the finest season in the heathland garden. As the moor-purple drifts of ling spread to the skyline, the scarlet and gold of berry and leaf take over the theme. Low drifts of the marble-berried pernettias with their pink, white and crimson fruits may be heightened by the introduction of the rose-madder leaves and lilac fruits of Callicarpa giraldiana.'

Throughout the book Berrisford's prose has a lyrical quality. She writes with a deft touch and knows just how much to show us and also when to move on. Moreover, her style of writing displays the same sensitivity that she advocates when creating a wild garden.



‘One of the dangers of wild gardening is over-planting and nowhere is this more true than at the waterside. The setting is so tempting. One thinks one simply must have this or another clump of that and before one realizes it the original character of the place is gone... A pretty little stream... needs very little enhancement. Perhaps the addition of a willow... a few kingcups, with a patch of the purple drumstick primula set back a little way from the water’s edge... a belt of yellow water iris and a subtle planting of the tall Primula florindae... One has to be so careful, to add a planting here and there, feeling one’s way as it were and all the time remaining aware of the threat so inherent in wild gardening – that of spoiling an already perfect scene by over-embellishment.’

It should not come as a surprise really, that with the exception of the dust jacket, there are no illustrations of any kind in Berrisford’s book. As with good radio, the pictures she inspires us to create in our heads are better. And for me, that is the real joy of this book. Few of us will have the opportunity in life to create wild gardens in the range of places she describes. But despite this, we can enjoy making them all, grapple with the problems and ultimately sit back in the heathland or waterside garden that we will never have, intoxicated by our skilful and sensitive horticultural manipulation of it.

There are undoubtedly more up-to-date books about making wild gardens but I doubt many of them have the charm of Judith Berrisford’s. Although the plant material suggested is surprisingly comprehensive even now, there are moments of delightful nostalgia.

‘Orchis foliosa... at a guinea or more a plant... is too expensive a treasure for most of us.’

If only one could buy an orchid for a guinea today!

Aside from this book, the name Judith Berrisford didn’t mean anything to me. However, when researching this article, I discovered she wrote dozens of children’s books, particularly the ‘Jackie’ pony stories. Although these passed me by, my wife was instantly reminded of many happy hours reading as a girl. Whether writing children’s fiction or ‘The Wild Garden’, Judith Berrisford was an accomplished author. Her mastery with words brought charm and persuasion to an authoritative, practical book about an entirely different way to garden. Fifty years on, and her vision of a wild corner has found its way into many gardens.

This is a book I have read and re-read many times, not only for its insight and ideas but also simply for the pleasure of being a thoroughly enjoyable read.

SNOWDROPS: THE HARBINGER OF MADNESS AND SPRING

WIDGET FINN

We sit on rickety white plastic chairs on the rough meadow grass at Monksilver Nursery. It is high summer but Joe Sharman is talking snowdrops. He claims to be partly responsible for Galanthomania which has grown to fever-pitch over the last 15 years. The self-styled ‘Snowdrop King’ hit the headlines in 2015 when his *Galantea plicatus* ‘Golden Fleece’ was sold on eBay for £1,395.

Joe first focussed on snowdrops in 1986 when his mother spotted a rare yellow snowdrop on Wandlebury Ring near Cambridge. He produced a small clump of the plant which he named ‘Wendy’s Gold’ and when he submitted a photo to the RHS magazine he was overwhelmed with the response. An invitation came to join a very select snowdrop club, where around 20 galanthophiles met for lunch during the season, led by Primrose Warburg, the formidable doyenne of snowdrops.

After his initial entree into this small and specialist world Joe developed a collection of *Galanthus* and felt that the species deserved a wider audience. In 1997 he organised the first annual Galanthus Gala which kick-started the market in these plants.

Little is known about the origins of snowdrops. They’re not native to Britain and are thought to have been brought over by the Romans.

Galanthus nivalis the common snowdrop has religious associations as it is

often found in churchyards, is white and appears around the feast of Candlemas. It was first recorded in Gerard’s Herbal of 1597. “*These plantes do grow wilde in Italy and the places adjacent. Notwithstanding our London gardens*”



Left: *Galantea plicatus* ‘Wendy’s Gold’.

have taken possession of most of them many years past”.

They were first recorded growing in the wild in 1702, probably after escaping from gardens, then became fashionable in the mid-19th century. At the RHS Snowdrop Conference in 1891 seven or eight species were cited, and around 50 cultivars. The book ‘*Snowdrops, a Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus*’ by M. Bishop, A. Davis and John Grimshaw published in 2001 demonstrates the growth of interest in these flowers, covering over 500 cultivars.

To the unpractised eye one snowdrop looks much like another, so what is it about this small and unshowy flower which drives people to pay hundreds of pounds for a special bulb? Rarity is the key: Joe Sharman’s ambition was to develop a yellow snowdrop though it takes over 18 years from the first seed to having enough stock to sell.

But for those who are content to enjoy the sight of hundreds of *Galanthus nivalis* spread out like a white carpet in the dark days of winter, their true value is the promise they bring. After all, William Wordsworth called them “the harbinger of spring.

Read more about Joe Sharman and his snowdrops in the February 2017 edition of ‘Gardens Illustrated’ magazine.



Fullers Mill Garden at West Stow

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Wednesdays, Fridays & Sundays
April to end of September
2pm to 5pm

WEST STOW IP28 6HD
www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk
email: fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk Tel: 01284 728888

(Fullers Mill Garden is owned and managed by Perennial a registered charity and remains fully funded by its maker Bernard Tickner).

PERENNIAL
GARDENERS' ROYAL BENEVOLENT SOCIETY
Helping Horticulturists In Need Since 1839

CHRYSANTHEMUM ‘MAVIS SMITH’

MAVIS SMITH

My Pilates class had a nomadic existence but several years ago one venue had a particularly beautiful garden. I would position myself so that I could see it out of the window and during the autumn months there was a wonderful pink patch of hardy chrysanthemums. They positively glowed in the autumn sunshine and despite wind and rain they stood tall and continued to flower from October to December. I just had to beg a cutting. On closer inspection, there were two varieties. One was a definite pink and the other a peachy shade and they complemented each other. Their form, habit and flowers were so similar that I feel they must be related.



Chrysanthemum 'Mavis Smith'

My two cuttings took a while to bulk up enough to flower and to send samples to the Chrysanthemum National Collection Holders, Judy Barker and Dr Andrew Ward of Norwell Nurseries, Newark. There was then a long gap whilst they grew them on to flower to identify them. One appears to be 'unknown' and recently appeared on the Norwell Nursery website as 'Mavis Smith'. The other may be 'Rose Madder'.

As I understand it, a lot of historical information on the breeding and source of cultivars is lost as chrysanthemums rather fell out of fashion for a while. Judy Barker has been diligently seeking out and growing cultivars on her allotment but has now passed on her collection to Dr Andrew Ward. She is at present compiling a booklet for the Hardy Plant Society to share her knowledge and recommendations. It is proving to be a difficult task, but I am looking forward to its publication.

Hopefully more information will materialise but, regardless of their eventual names, the two cuttings I took are from stunning chrysanthemums that deserve to be widely grown.

www.norwellnurseries.co.uk

GARDENS TO VISIT IN 2017

GABLE HOUSE. HALESWORTH ROAD, REDISHAM, BECCLES
NR34 8NE Brenda and John Foster 01502 575298

Sunday 12 February 11am–4pm. Entry fee £4. Snowdrop Day in aid of The National Gardens Scheme. Large collection of snowdrops, aconites and cyclamen in a one-acre garden

Sunday 4 June 11am–5pm. Entry fee £4 in aid of The National Gardens Scheme. Flowering shrubs, roses, perennials, water feature

Sunday 3 September 11am–5pm. Free entry. Collections of cyclamen, crocus, colchicums, fritillaria, erythroniums etc. Autumn bulbs and perennials

FULLERS MILL GARDEN, WEST STOW, IP28 6HD
Perennial 01284 728888

Saturday 11 February Snowdrop-in day (Friends of Fullers Mill). Free.

Sunday 21 May 2-5pm. Entry £4 in aid of NGS

Sunday 16 July 10am-5pm. Entry £4 Suffolk Nurseries Plant Fair

Please check website for other openings and information
www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk

COLUMBINE HALL, GIPPING ROAD, STOWUPLAND, SUFFOLK,
IP14 4AT Hew Stevenson and Leslie Geddes-Brown 01449 612219

Sunday 23 April 2-5pm. Admission £4, children under 16 free. In aid of NGS. Plant sales, teas and homemade cakes.

Sunday 25 June 1-6pm. Guided house and garden tours, under the Invitation To View scheme (www.invitationtoview.co.uk) and visits at other times by appointment (01449 612219 or 07730 922530).

Gardens surround a medieval manor house (not open) and its large moat. Formal areas designed by Chelsea gold medallist George Carter. Bog and Mediterranean gardens, colour-themed walled kitchen garden, orchards, ponds and wild rose beds. Featured in Gardens Illustrated, The Daily Telegraph, The English Garden and Suffolk magazine.

More information www.columbinehall.co.uk

STONE COTTAGE 34 MAIN ROAD, WOOLVERSTONE, IPSWICH IP9
1BA Jennifer Young 01473 78056

Sunday 7 May 2-5pm. Entry £4.50 in aid of Friends of Woolverstone
Cottage garden of small rooms, intensive mixed planting of old-fashioned
perfumed shrubs, roses, herbaceous plants and spring bulbs. Tea and cakes

HIDDEN GARDENS OF HADLEIGH

Saturday 10 June 11-5pm. Programmes £5 from St. Mary's Church or
participating gardens. Variety of stalls and refreshments at the church.
www.hadleighgardens.co.uk

HIDDEN GARDENS OF GRUNDISBURGH, BURGH & CULPHO

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 June 2-6pm. Programmes £5 from
Grundisburgh Green (IP13 6TA). Wide variety of village gardens, teas,
plant and cake stalls. 01473 738267

HIDDEN GARDENS OF BURY

Sunday 18 June 11am-5pm Programmes minimum donation £5 from
Angel Hill on the day. In aid of St. Nicholas Hospice Care

Over 30 gardens in the historic core of Bury St. Edmunds open for one day
only giving visitors the opportunity to explore behind the garden walls.
www.hiddengardens.co.uk

UK NATIONAL OPEN GARDENS DIRECTORY

A website, conceived by two keen gardeners, is run voluntarily by them
with the help of a few committed gardening friends. Entries are included
free and can be updated at any time. It has facilities to search by county
and by date. www.opengardens.co.uk

WE LIKE TO SUPPORT OUR PLANT HERITAGE MEMBERS' OPEN GARDEN EVENTS!

Are you opening your garden to the public in 2017?

Send us the details and we'll include them in a special e-letter
to members in the spring. Please use the format: Name and
address of garden, your name and contact details, date and
time of opening, entry fee, brief description of the garden.

Email to isobel.ashton@btinternet.com before 15th March.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Jan 29 Su	Blacksmiths Cottage Snowdrop Day
Feb 4 Sa	EAGG – Luci Skinner of Woottens on Auriculas
Feb 12 Su	Gable House Redisham Open day
Feb 14/15	RHS Early Spring
Feb 18 Sa	EAGG Matthew Wilson ‘Star plants for small gardens’
Feb 25 Sa	Suffolk Plant Heritage – Chris Grey-Wilson ‘Meconopsis’
Mar 4 Sa	EAGG Dave Ward ‘Beth Chatto and her nursery’
Mar 5 Su	Norfolk Plant Heritage Gala
Mar 5 Su	AGS Mid-Anglia The Wallis’ The Flowers of the Pontics
Mar 11 Sa	Monksilver Spring Thing
Mar 11 Sa	HPS Essex Graham Spencer of Plants for Europe
Mar 19 Su	Norfolk Plant Heritage Jan Michalak
Mar 25/26	Gardens Illustrated Festival, Westonbirt
Mar 25	Suffolk Plant Heritage ‘Growing for Gold’ Sarah Cook & Mel Collins
Mar 29/30	RHS Spring Plant & Orchid
Apr 1 Sa	EAGG Simon White of Peter Beales on Roses
Apr 1/3	Great Dixter Spring Fair
Apr 2 Su	Suffolk Plant Heritage Narcissus Workshop 10.30-3.00 Hullwood Barn
Apr 8 Sa	Blacksmiths Cottage Plant Sale
Apr 8 Sa	AGS Mid-Anglia Ian Christie & Plant Sale
Apr 9 Su	Suffolk Wildlife Trust - Lopham
Apr 15 Sa	NT Felbrigg Easter Plant Lovers Fair
Apr 22/23	Essex Plant Heritage Plant Fair, RHS Hyde Hall
Apr 22 Sa	Suffolk Plant Heritage. Bob Brown ‘New Garden-worthy Plants’
Apr 23 Su	SWWAG Plant Fair, Wyken Hall
Apr 23 Su	Burwash Manor Plant Fair, Barton
Apr 27 Th	EAGG to Ousden (Dip-on-the-Hill & Ousden House)
Apr 30 Su	Norfolk Plant Heritage Plant Fair, Hethersett
May 1	Sudbury Quay Bank Holiday Plant Fair
May 6 Sa	AGS East-Anglia Wymondham Show
May 6 Sa	Peter Beales Plant Fair
May 7 Su	Woottens Spring Event
May 11/14	RHS Malvern Spring
May 13 Sa	BGS Plant Sale Boxford

The East Anglian Garden Group
SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2017 at 2.30
Hitcham Village Hall near Stowmarket IP7 7NE

MATTHEW WILSON

'People's Choice' Award Chelsea 2016 Channel 4's 'Landscape Man'



'STAR PLANTS FOR SMALL GARDENS'

Matthew will talk about his star plants and how to use them to fill your garden with drama. Well-chosen plants can give lots of seasonal interest and your garden can look striking at every time of the year.

Small spaces needn't be dull spaces.

Matthew is a popular garden designer, writer, and broadcaster, a regular panellist on Gardeners 'Question Time' and presenter of the award-winning Channel 4 series 'Landscape Man'. His particular areas of interest include environmentally sensitive gardening, wildlife and landscapes.

Matthew spent 10 years at the Royal Horticultural Society as curator at Harlow Carr then Hyde Hall. He has designed two gardens for The Chelsea Flower Show, winning the prestigious 2016 'People's Choice Award' for his 'Garden for Yorkshire' inspired by the East Window at York Minster.

Tickets: £5 (EAGG members) and £10 (Guests) including tea from:
Matthew Long email flagpartnership@btinternet.com
or phone 01449 741551

May 14 Su	Bungay Garden Street Market
May 18 Th	Norfolk Plant Heritage, Marina Christopher at Blacksmiths Nursery
May 20 Sa	Cambridge Botanic Gardens Festival of Plants
May 20 Sa	Hadleigh Show
May 23/27	Chelsea Flower Show
May 27 Sa	Creake Abbey Plant Lovers Fair
May 28 Su	Suffolk Plant Heritage Plant Fair, Helmingham.
May 31 Jun 1	Suffolk Show
Jun 4 Su	EAGG to Spencers
Jun 10 Sa	East Ruston Old Vicarage Plant Fair
Jun 11 Su	Lavenham Open Gardens
Jun 15 Th	EAGG to Cobbs Hall
Jun 18 Su	Bury Hidden Gardens
Jun 25 Su	Chelsworth 50th Open Gardens
Jul 4/9	RHS Hampton Court
Jul 12/13	RHS Urban Garden Show
Jul 16	Suffolk Nurseries Plant Fair, Fullers Mill
Jul 16	Chenies Manor Plant Fair

HORTICULTURAL SHOWS IN SUFFOLK

NICOLA HOBBS

There has been a fine tradition of flower and produce shows in Suffolk for many years. But slowly some horticultural societies have been closing their shows as the volunteers organising them get older and not always replaced by younger members. Each year one or two societies report to the umbrella body SHAPA (Suffolk Horticultural and Produce Association) that they are unable to continue running their show.

Over the past dozen years the number of shows affiliated to SHAPA has reduced from around 70 to 50. Some, however, are thriving. Happily my own, the Grundisburgh Village Show, last year had a record number of entrants to classes, with the children's entries holding up particularly well.

Another show which is still well supported by exhibitors and by visitors on the day is Orford. Like Grundisburgh it is still held in a large marquee and is supported by other community activities which bring in more visitors.



Judging flower classes at Grundisburgh Village Show last summer.

Both have a wide range of classes which include handi-craft, art, photography, flower arranging, baking and preserves for adults and children, as well as flowers, fruit and vegetables. Exhibitors from all areas are encouraged to enter.

Details of all shows affiliated to SHAPA will be included on Grundisburgh's website www.grundisburgh.show by late March. Grundisburgh Village Show will be held on 15 July and the Orford Show on 26 August.

THE WONDERS OF TECHNOLOGY!

APPS FOR GARDENERS

PlantSnapp is an app for your mobile phone which identifies plants. Just take a photo of the plant, then the app will do its best to recognise it. Once recognised the app will give details of name, care information and even where/when it must be planted. Sadly the app is only available for Apple users.

FlowerChecker app uses real botanists to identify unknown plants, probably making it the most accurate app. Available from the App store.

Leafsnap identifies tree species from their leaves. It has partnered with the Natural History Museum to create a bank of images to help with identifying tricky trees. Available from the App Store.

Naturegate allows you to identify your plant with a database of 700 plant species. It also helps to identify birds, fish and butterflies. Available from the App Store

Google Goggles. Though not directly plant-related this works by using a photo taken by the enquirer. If it recognises the subject it will offer suggestions

And finally

PRIZE-WINNING SWAN-NECKED GOURDS

A new and highly successful addition to the attractions at the spring and autumn Plant Fairs at Helmingham in 2016 was the Children's Marquee, where an exciting programme of activities for young visitors was organised by Plant Heritage members Libby Brooks and Pippa Michelsen.

At the Autumn Plant Fair a competition called 'All the colours of the rainbow' kept around 50 children busy and keen. They were given the challenge of matching plants on display at the many plant stalls to the rainbow colours, drawing and naming the plants. The stall holders were very ready to help, and parents enjoyed the freedom to browse around the plant fair while their offspring were otherwise engaged.

The big attraction in the Children's Marquee was the prizewinning entries to a competition set at the spring fair, when children were given some seeds of Swan-necked Gourds and invited to bring the resulting gourds in the autumn. The three prize-winning gourds were on display in the marquee, and were real crowd pullers. They had been grown by Herbert and Ernie Schiller from Rougham, with support from mum and dad. The family named the three gourds 'the Gourdon's'.

What is planned for the Children's Marquee at the Spring Plant Fair? Bring your family along on May 28th and find out!



Ernie (7) and Herbert (11) with winning gourds.

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