

Keeping in Touch, 3rd April 2020

Well we're into April, hopefully we'll see some brighter days ahead, in more ways than one. Remember all photos/musings/tips etc. are welcome, send to tonifracina@outlook.com.

PHOTOS

Our first is from Elaine Blair. Its Ribes Icicle, about 5 years old and Elaine says it's a nice change from the common flowering currant and doesn't smell as bad either! I agree with her that it really compliments the daffodils.



Pam Hutchison snapped this lovely Comma butterfly on her equally lovely *Primula denticulata*



Don Witton sent through a photo of this strange looking plant. He says it always fools early visitors to his allotment and is a great topic of conversation. Looking at the flower buds might give you a clue. Know what it is? Answer at the end of the mail.



Another photo from Don is of a patio table which can be viewed from their sun room. Dot is inhabiting this a bit more than usual at the moment, the reason being that she's broken her leg, the result of a fall whilst out on a pre-lockdown walk. Don says "I change the display as and when - a bit like the front door display at Great Dixter. Bulbs are mostly at the front, 2 Euphorbias at the back and a couple of Erodiums in the middle including E. Spanish Eyes (centre) which has remained in flower throughout the winter. You can read about it in the Newsletter." I found Don's article on Erodium really interesting and plan to buy several now, particularly anything that flowers on Christmas Day.

Don is hoping Dot makes a speedy recovery as they need the table when they dine out in the warmer weather!



You may remember a couple of editions ago we featured a Rhodo from Ruth Ludford's garden and a Corylopsis from Judy Coulson, neither had a name. Decie Needham called me to offer two, she's fairly sure the Rhododendron is 'Elizabeth Lockhart' and Judy's shrub is *C.spicata*. Decie has *C. parciflora* and says they are very similar.

NURSERIES IN NEED

Tricia Fraser sent me through two pdf files (attached) of nurseries which were planning on exhibiting at Harrogate Spring Show. Some have websites and seem to be supplying plants by post, so do a bit of online shopping and support the nursery trade.

HINTS AND TIPS

Janet Boulding keeps her seedlings in old fish boxes and covers with recycled bubblewrap at night as she has no heating in her greenhouse. Great idea Janet. I'm using my conservatory as a greenhouse this year but there are several trays of annual seedlings which are suffering from damp off because of the cold nights. Alcea, Amaranthus and Antirrhinum seem to be suffering the most so I've started bringing some seed trays into the house over night until night time temps buck up.



Now a tip for Dot. Many of you may remember Dot was airlifted off a Swiss mountain a few years ago having fallen and broken her ankle. Well Dot, is it time to rethink your leisure activities, perhaps take up something slightly less risky than walking. Perhaps white-water rafting, ski jumping or off road mountain biking?

DON'S MYSTERY PLANT IDENTIFIED

It is *Paeonia tenuifolia* a species from Turkey and the Caucasus. *Tenuifolia* means thin dissected foliage of which it has plenty and is completely different from the 30 or so other paeonias he grows hence it always creates interest. It grows up to 2ft and flowers early with bright red single blooms that last for about 7-10 days so blink and you'll miss it. He bought it about 10 years ago because it was different and as you can see it is a slow grower, now having about a dozen stems.

NEXT TIME

Triffids in Janet Boulding's conservatory, the horti websites keeping Barbara Dygnas sane during lockdown, a gorgeous clematis from Rene May and a 'green' plant from Don Witton.

The weekend is set fair and warm so enjoy it in the garden

Toni