

## Keeping in Touch June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020

Hello again,

At last, some rain! I could hear a group sigh of relief from all our members.

It's been a week since the last edition of KIT, normally I send them out every 4 days or so. Its not for lack of photos, but I overworked my back in the garden and ended up in a pickle so couldn't sit for long at the desk. Consequently this is a packed edition.

### KITBITS

- Jim Chandler, our newsletter editor, has asked me to remind you that there will be a regular newsletter in October as usual, and he'd be grateful for any content. Have you got a lockdown garden project to share?, any insights into a particular species of hardy plant, any observations about gardening in lockdown? Send your contributions to Jim at [j.a.chandler@shu.ac.uk](mailto:j.a.chandler@shu.ac.uk).
- Judy Reid got in touch about Jean Houlton's mystery plant. Judy said "I wonder if Jean Houlton's plant is aromatic - does the foliage smell of spices e.g/ cinnamon, allspice etc. If so, it could be *Coleonema pulchellum* - we saw it in South Africa from where it comes.". I forwarded the info onto Jean, who says "I have looked up the plant suggested and I think it is mine. So many thanks to Judy. I have hardly any sense of smell so I can't say if it has a smell but it has been in flower since the beginning of March."
- Many of us missed having the May plant sale, for a variety of reasons. I'm sure along with other regular growers, you'd already started off some seeds before lockdown. I had a number of tomato plants which I gave to neighbours or left at the gate with a 'help yourself' notice. I wish I'd done what Myra Smith did with the plants she raised for the sale. She emailed me saying, "As you know, I only grow a handful of plants for the HPS plant sales - not much room in the car boot once the cakes are in! However, I did have some small plants all potted up which I didn't want to compost. So I put a notice up in my front garden offering them for free but also saying that donations for Baby Basics would be welcome. A few people came, friends and neighbours, and we all had a jolly time notwithstanding social distancing. I was absolutely stunned when I counted up the money to find that these generous people had raised an amazing £135! I have received a nice letter from Baby Basics thanking everybody and saying that this will provide a safe space for 20 babies to sleep."
- Judy Coulson sent an email out recently advertising the Plant Heritage webinar on irises. Barbara Dygnas watched it and said "Once they sorted out the technology it was excellent. I am signed up for next week's webinar on roses. If it's anything as good as the irises, it will be well worth the £4 fee." Judy has just sent out details today.

### PLANT IDENT

Judy Reid sent in a pic of a cistus. "We bought this from Morrison's some years ago for the princely sum of about £1.99. It flowers freely every summer & seems to be free of any pests. Does anyone know what variety it might be?". Before anyone suggests it, it is definitely not *Cistus morrisonii*!

I grew a cistus from seed (HPS seed distribution scheme) several years ago which looks very like this. I *think* it was *Cistus x hybridus*, but I can't be 100% certain as the label has disappeared.



For the uninitiated, Morrisons is a pretty good source of cheap plants. I never come out of there without something from their 'garden centre'. Recently I bought 3 clematis for £1.89 each!



Ruth Ludford sent in this happy, and apparently accidental, planting combo. Its *Papaver* 'Patty's Plum' plus an unknown, but beautifully coloured Iris. Ruth asks if anyone knows which one it is.



## PHOTOS

Some more wonderful pics from your gardens.

First, in the last edition I included some photos from Janet Lister, which I listed in the commentary as including hostas around their door like Great Dixter. The eagle eyed amongst you will have spotted I didn't actually include the hosta picture. So here it is, at last.





Sue Stockdale sent in a picture of her self-seeded echium a while back. Well its now 15ft tall!



Lockdown does strange things to people, Sue and Phil have been digging holes! Well actually they've been having an ash tree removed. Sue explained; "We have had a major problem at the bottom of the garden with an old ash tree that was completely rotten and we have had to take down. It had been reduced down to 4 metres years ago and being covered in ivy we had no idea that it was in such a bad state. It took a lot of planning and sleepless nights worrying about how we could get it down safely as it was in a very tight corner of the garden. All went reasonably well in the end' The photos give some idea of the problem they faced.









Sue also sent in evidence of how well her Camassia are doing





More echium from Jim Chandler; 'the dominant flowering plant in our lower garden. An *Echium*, possibly *pininana* but I stand to be corrected, which has flowered in its third year after two winters draped in garden fleece. In early spring this year the plant look rather sorry for itself but, when unwrapped after the rains had past, suddenly sprang to attention.'









Janet Boulding sent in a photo of her variegated forsythia. In flower it looks pretty much like its 'normal' cousin, but in leaf, something much more interesting.



Now for some gorgeous peonies from Don Witton. First, *P. 'Scarlet O'Hara'*. At almost 5ft tall and 5ft wide with flowers up to 8inch across, this is by far the largest peony he grows.





Then *P. lactiflora* 'Gay Paree'. Don says this is a good Imperial or Japanese flowered form which has modified stamens with no pollen called staminodes. This gives the attractive feature of a 'flower within a flower'.



Lastly he sent in *P. lactiflora* 'Festiva Maxima'. Don says 'I remember my dad growing this so it's a very old variety. It has double white flowers and every bloom reliably exhibits random crimson red blotches.'





Our final contributor is Barbara Dygnas. First is *Camassia leichtlinii semi-plena*. Barbara says 'I fell in love with the plant in Chris Littlewood's garden at our 2016 visit, bought some bulbs from Stella Exley when she gave us her talk, loved them so much that I bought another lot from Potterton's last autumn. Hope they survive till next year.'



Next from Barbara is a conservation plant *Iris variegata* var. *reginae* 'Bozhimir Davidov'





The third is *Iris sibirica* 'Painted Woman' bought on the South Pennine HPS Breezy Knees trip in 2018



### AND FINALLY...

I've been up to Fox Valley today and noticed on one of the vast retaining walls there is an apricot coloured climbing rose planted, near which there is a little slate plaque on which is written:

"I'd rather have roses on my table than diamonds on my neck" Emma Goldman

Emma sounded like a woman after my own heart (although I'd have the roses in the garden), but I had no idea who she was. According to t'interweb she was:

Born in Kaunas, Russian Empire (now Lithuania) to a Jewish family, Goldman emigrated to the United States in 1885. Attracted to anarchism after the Chicago Haymarket affair, Goldman became a writer and a renowned lecturer on anarchist philosophy, women's rights, and social issues, attracting crowds of thousands. She and anarchist writer Alexander Berkman, her lover and lifelong friend, planned to assassinate industrialist and financier Henry Clay Frick as an act of propaganda of the deed. Frick survived the attempt on his life in 1892, and Berkman was sentenced to 22 years in prison. Goldman was imprisoned several times in the years that followed, for "inciting to riot" and illegally distributing information about birth control.

So, not a gardener then!

Till next time, keep well

Toni