

Keeping in Touch, April 18th 2020

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all managing to keep your spirits up and enjoying the sunny weather, though it is a bit gloomy and cool as I write this. So many of you have mentioned in your emails how lucky/blessed/privileged we are to have the joy of a garden to tend in these very trying times. You can get lost in your patch however big or small it is, and to paraphrase Ella Fitzgerald 'cast off all your cares and woes'. Speaking of Bye Bye Blackbird, Janet Boulding reports that the eggs in her fortified nest have gone, they suspect a rat may have had them.

GARDENERS WORLD MAGAZINE

Tricia Fraser emailed in to let us know that the May edition, on sale now, includes the 2-for1 garden entry vouchers and some free seeds. Although all the gardens are shut at the moment, the vouchers last for a year. I suspect the magazine might be snapped up because of the free seeds, trying to get seeds delivered online requires some patience, Marshalls and Mr Fothergills have both got a 3 weeks delivery time. But I did notice that Wilkinson's still has a fair selection of veg seeds available in their shops.

SOUTH PENNINE HPS QUESTION TIME

Jane and John Holbrey are quite new members and got in touch with a couple of queries. Jane said 'We have inherited my parent's garden which was started by them over 50 years ago and are now learning as we go along. First query is about a large Hellebore foetidus, should it be cut back in the autumn? It is covered in flowers now, which I believe bees love, but the leaves are rather unsightly. Second query, what is this yellow flowered plant please?' Photos below.





I responded as follows, but if anyone wants to add any further advice, feel free to share it. Hellebore: cut old manky leaves back when flowers show. New leaves grow every year, they show after the flowers and as you say, the old leaves spoil the display. This is true for all hellebores as far as I am aware. Yellow flower: it's a daff, the lovely *Narcissus bulbocodium*.

I bought some *N. bulbocodium* 'White Petticoat' from Ian Greaves (I think!) at one of our last meetings, they have been a joy.

PHOTOS

Lots of lovely photos again this edition. First we have photos from Jill Gorvett who declares herself an anemoholic. Here are two from the selection she sent in. *Anemone nemorosa* 'Allenii' making its bid for world domination.



Anemone lipsiensis 'Pallida' under the oak tree.



Next is from Don Witton, he was out on one of his regular walks towards Kiveton Park one morning at 7am. 'I was completely alone when I encountered this sight'



It moved him to poetry:

***I wondered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and tips
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden crowslips!***

Meanwhile, in Dorothy Harriman's garden *Iris unguicularis* is out. Dorothy says 'I purchased this about 13 years ago (yes I do mean 13). I planted it, as I thought in the best position I had for this particular plant, but over the years it NEVER flowered. I did resite it several times where I thought it should flourish. Last year, however, I dug it up to throw it away, but just couldn't do it. As a compromise I planted it in the heaviest, cloggiest, dankest spot I had which would not support any other plant I had tried there so was left empty. Imagine my surprise 2 weeks ago when I saw this beautiful, large, iris flower in that spot. It has gone on to produce 2 more flowers, always on the plant individually. They don't last more than a couple of days and would look better if they all flowered at once, but hey, I am not complaining. Goes to prove that our best efforts don't always over-ride what the plant actually wants!'



Is there a horticultural prize for patience??

Chris Hibberd's garden is coming alive with early flowering clematis. Here are a couple:

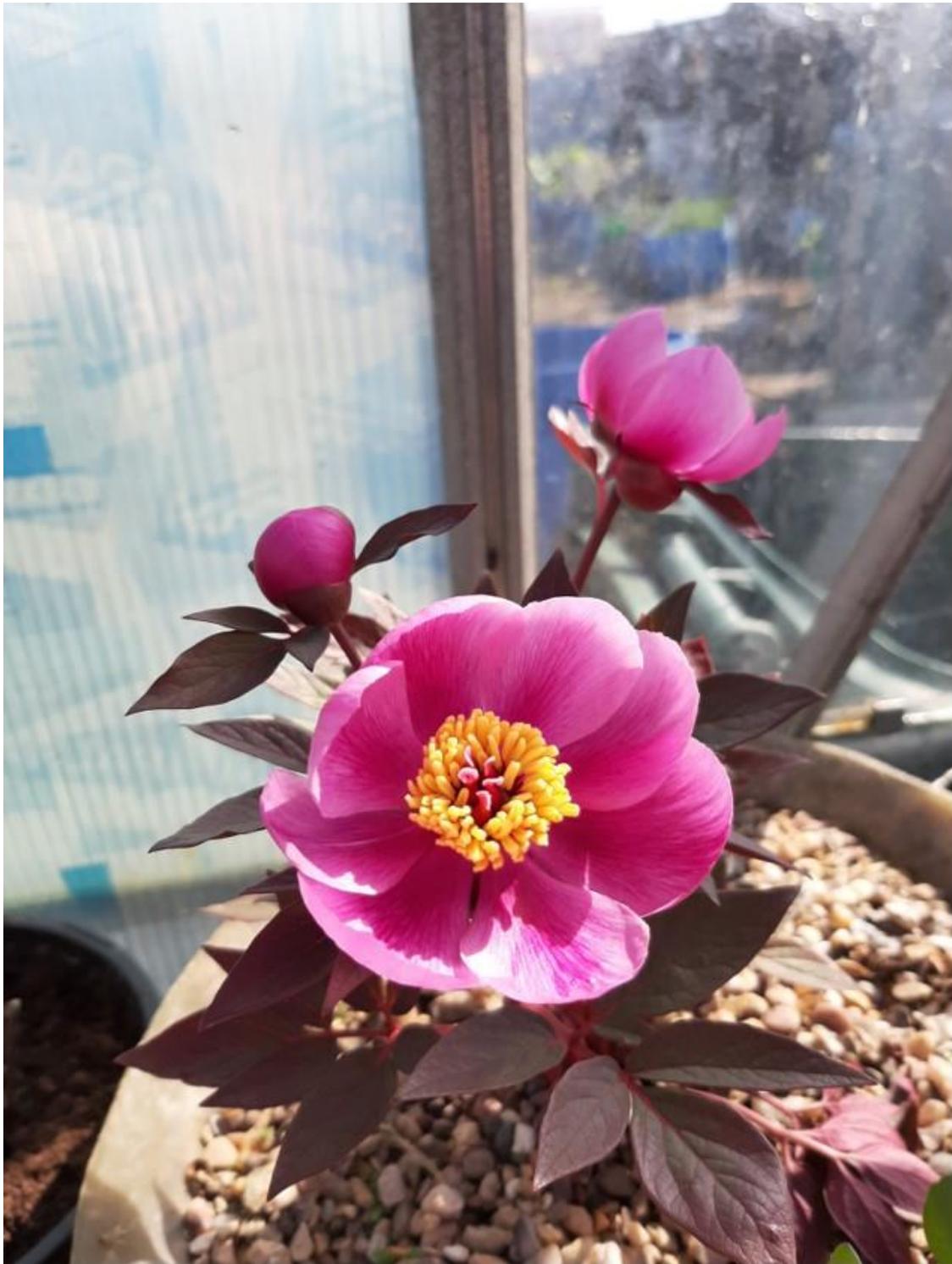
Clematis alpina 'Diamond Jubilee'



and *Clematis cartmanii* 'Avalanche'



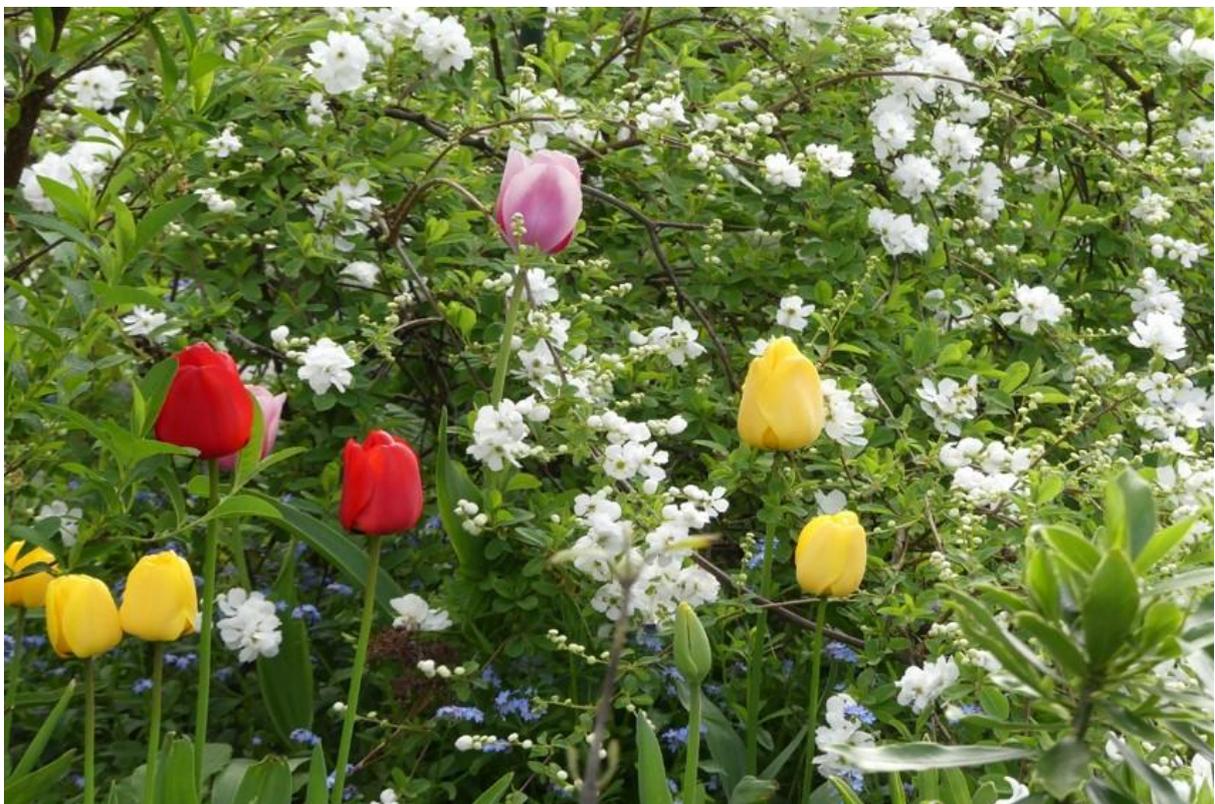
Paul Forster has a lovely peony growing in his greenhouse, *Paeonia cambessedessi*. He says it's a 'lovely thing always a delight in the spring. Strong scent of cloves. Catches the sun on the petals.'



A couple of woody plants now, the first is from David Andrews, *Magnolia 'Leonard Messel'*



and the second from Hugh and Judy Reid *Exachorda x macrantha The Bride*.



Hugh and Judy say 'this deserves to be planted more than it is as it is a perfect foil for tulips. It was bought from Wards Garden Centre Sheffield in a bargain pack.'

I have more photos to share, but don't want to overload the email systems so they'll have to wait until next week. I have been exploring how to set up a blog (which is basically a website) so I can share more photos with you, but I'm afraid I haven't got very far as yet. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this latest edition.

NEXT TIME

Lots of pulsatilla, viola, tulips and other treats.

Keep sane

Toni