

HPS South Pennine group, Keeping in Touch, April 26th 2020

Hello all,

More amazing April weather for us to enjoy this past week, it's certainly bringing everything on judging from the pics you are sending in, however the weeds flourish too. I reckon I spend about 2 hours a day weeding at the moment!

PLEA FROM EDITOR OF NATIONAL HPS NEWSLETTER

Mick Dunstan contacted Judy to ask for content for the next newsletter. He's new to the job and with lockdown says that a lot of promised content has evaporated. So he's going to do something on how branches are keeping in touch (I sent him a copy of our last KIT) and asks that if anyone is doing a lockdown garden project which they would be willing to write about to send him something. Mick says "It doesn't have to be a work of great literature. Just send me some words and I'll edit them into whatever the available space allows - which may not be extensive." His email address is mick.dunstan@sky.com

HPS CONSERVATION SCHEME

More on national HPS activities. For those of you who aren't familiar with this, the conservation scheme organised nationally, seeks to ensure that perennials which are garden worthy but not widely propagated commercially are kept in propagation. Janet Boulding organises things for our branch. Early in the year she asks at a meeting if anyone wants anything from the list of several dozen different plants (see list at <https://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/about-plants/conservation/conservation-plants>), then in September she brings whatever she's been able to get from your list. If it settles well in your garden, you are asked to propagate anything you can to contribute back to the scheme. I have to admit to killing quite a few specimens, but four seem to be doing well from the growth so far this spring. *Hemerocallis 'Cherry Ripe'*, *Zantedeschia aethiopica 'Glencoe'*, *Chrysanthemum 'Picasso'* and *Erysium 'Ruston Royal'*. The *Zantedeschia* seems to grow anywhere, and clumps up rapidly.

Last year Janet had a number of the *Erysimum* going spare so I took a couple. They are just coming into flower and I have to say I am pleasantly surprised even for their first year of flowering. I've never been one for growing *Erysimum*, but I think that's because my experience is of *E. 'Bowles Mauve'* in May when it is past its best. But I'm quite taken by this one, a lovely, pale pinky lavender. Can't wait for it to clump up especially as I've seen it on Beth Chatto's online shop and the large clumps look wonderful. But their individual plants are quite expensive, yet free from the conservation scheme.



PHOTOS

Some Violas from Tricia Fraser and my own garden. Tricia's viola came from our only garden visit this year when we went to Hollies Farm Plant Centre. It's called '*Gypsy Moth*'.



Mine is *V. 'Avril Lawson'* which I bought at the talk last year from Jack Willgoss of Wildgoose Nursery (if you were there you'll definitely remember it, full of sex, drugs and murder!). It's just starting to flower and I just love the deep rich colour. Honey scented too.



Don Witton has sent in “two wonderful yellow flowered sun lovers are looking good. I’ve got to include a euphorbia and my favourite species is *E. epithymoides* (syn. *polychroma*). My Open Days in May were always when this plant was at its best so we are about 3 weeks ahead of normal this year. It will cope with half shade but always looks best in full sun.



Don asks “Is *Doronicum* the only spring flowering perennial daisy? There are plenty of daisies in August/September. I bought *Doronicum pardalianches* at a FOBS sale years ago. It’s easy to split in autumn so I’ve 4 clumps dotted around my garden and allotment. Both plants look wonderful in all the sunshine we are having.



Pam Hutchinson sent in two photos; “first off is my *Brunnera* ‘Sea Heart’ As you can see, it doesn’t seem too bothered about the soil, it’s planted in! “



“Secondly is *Zaluzianskya capensis*. The marvellous thing about this particular plant is that it overwintered, forgotten and neglected behind a pile of pots until I found it a couple of weeks ago. Feeling guilty, I repotted it, gave it a light prune since when it has doubled in size. I love how it’s buds are tight closed during the day, opening in the early evening and releasing the most amazing scent. I think it might have forgiven me!!”



Judy Coulson also sent in her *Zaluzianskya* (which I think is species *ovata*, underside of petals are dark pink/red), she describes the perfume at night as incredible as it is pollinated by moths. Their common name is Night Phlox, for obvious reasons.



I bought a *Z. ovata* and *Z. ovata* 'Orange Eye' at our visit to Potterton's Nursery a couple of years back. They are lovely plants originally from South Africa, but not reliably hardy. As with a lot of borderline hardy plants they hate getting their feet wet in winter.

Nigel Reeves sent in what he described as "Nothing special, just a normal Berberis, but it is just so glorious, and it feeds the blackbirds later in the year". You can't fault that.



Jean Marshall sent some images of wonderful erythroniums in her nursery at Green End Farm Nursery up in Bradfield. Sadly Jean can't attend her usual plant fairs etc. or bring them for sale at our meetings, but they'll be there when lockdown is over. They are in order of appearance: *E. 'Joanna'* and *E. 'Kinfauns Pink'*





Paula Thomas sent in a photo saying “This is my colony of *Tulip saxatilis*. I particularly like the shorter species tulips and the original few of this variety were planted many years ago. I always think they look happy when they open up for the sun.”



VEG TALK

A couple of weeks ago I asked Janet Boulding for some advice on growing carrots. I fail every time. Janet has spent the winter researching how to grow a good carrot, free from rootfly damage and has come up with some interesting results. She is trialling three methods.

1. Growing carrots as tapes (seeds from Lidl impregnated onto strips of paper). This will hopefully mean no thinning. The thinnings release a strong carrot smell which attracts any carrot fly within a 15 mile radius!
2. Seed sown into 12 inch pots with normal drainage holes using an old cooling tray to enable her to space the seeds individually. She reflects that it would have been easier if she'd used pelleted seed.



3. Leon's self wicking tubs (see You Tube). There are many versions out there but all basically the same idea. This method needs a deep container, the base is filled with pots, cans etc. Janet says 'I have used empty drinks cans (follow video advice for piercing of cans and container), filled with a mix of

sieved garden soil, home-made compost, leaf mould, wood ash, coffee granules general garden fertilizer, seaweed extract, lime and Epsom salts.”



She says ‘Watch this space. Buying a bunch of organic carrots is a lot less effort but not as exciting!!!!!!
Set what lockdown does for you?????’

Janet, carrots are 60p a kilo.....

AND FINALLY

David and Angel Andrews send what David calls 'the first Christmas Card of the season'. His good friend Robin tucking into what he calls the 'Dore Food Bank'. Merry Spring Everyone?



NEXT TIME

Climbers, an Iris border, more from Jean's nursery, a garden visit missed and bluebells, bluebells, bluebells

See you soon, and keep those photos coming to tonifascina@outlook.com

Toni