

## Keeping in Touch, August 30<sup>th</sup> 2020

Hi there,

Well what a wet week! I've been having some landscaping work done outside on a bank where no machinery can be taken. At about noon on Friday there were three poor young chaps up to their ankles in mud, dripping wet, carting hard core up the bank, breaking up stones with sledgehammers and generally looking like members of a chain gang. I felt so sorry for them.

### KITBITS

**Crococsmia identification** – Tricia Fraser sent in this photo of several crocospmia flowers. It's a really good way of comparing the different cultivars, from left to right they are: C. 'Plaisir' (this has dusky leaves), C. 'Castle Ward Late' (with the narrow petals), C. 'Severn Sunrise', C. 'Okavango' and C. 'Debutante'. This final one is a new one on me.



**Poorly Rhodo** – Decie Needham sent in the following advice for Linda Headford to help in her efforts to rescue R. 'Lemon Dream' (see last week's edition). Decie describes it as a compact, bushy yakushmanum hybrid. The underside of the leaves has a lovely buff indumentum. She says the leaves look a bit chlorotic and might need ericaceous compost, or it could be the drainage, due to extreme spells of wet weather in the last few years. If repotting, the new pot should only be a size larger. The mix would benefit from adding about a third leaf mould, or own garden compost to help the soil structure. Rhodos are shallow rooted and benefit from a mulch each year, applied when the soil is damp taking care to keep the stems clear. The drainage could be also be improved by elevating the pot off the ground. In extremely dry weather, water with rainwater if available and soak well. Decie suggested it would look good planted in the garden where the bare stems would enable closer planting around it.

**HPS Seed Collection/Distribution** - I know a number of you are regular contributors to the scheme, sending in your own seed and choosing seeds from other members to try. If you haven't already had a go, I'd recommend it. Some of the seed is quite challenging, others pretty easy, but the pleasure you get when you spot the seedlings coming up days, weeks or months after sowing is immense. I once heard a TV or radio gardening expert (forget who) call it the 'annual miracle of germination'. One tip, make sure you write your labels in pencil if you are leaving stuff out to cold stratify. Even in a cold frame I find names written in black markers turn into incomprehensible marks which I can't read, and I ALWAYS forget what I've sown!

This year, despite the situation, the seed collection is still taking place, however distribution depends on where we are with lockdown – details here <https://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/about-plants/seed>

## PHOTOS FROM YOUR GARDENS

A couple more from Frank Abel's lovely garden. Can you spot Desdemona again?







Rene May's has the lovely *Aster amellus* 'Veilchenkönigin' (Violet Queen). Rene says this favourite of hers, was bought from Sarah Raven 5 years ago and flowers nonstop from mid July to late October. She wasn't sure if this is still called 'aster' after recent name changes, but the RHS still list it under this name, good enough for me. Anyone know any different, let [tonifascina@outlook.com](mailto:tonifascina@outlook.com) know.





Rene also sent through evidence of her first attempt at climbing annuals, *Cobea scandens*, also known as the cup and saucer plant for obvious reasons. She's rather chuffed with it. These are the first flowers, so it struts its stuff late in the season but Rene hopes for a warm September and October so she can continue to be enjoy them.



This is one of the photos I couldn't fit in last week, *Roscoeia* from Baraba Dygnas. She thinks it's a Trevor Nunn creation.





A couple of photos from Decie Needham. The first is *Lilium speciosum* var. *rubrum*. The second includes; *Eucryphia x nymansensis* 'Nymansay', a variegated phlox *P. paniculata* 'Harlequin', and the pink phlox 'Bright Eyes'. 'Harlequin' is from Alan Bloom and is a sport of 'Border Gem' which is a very old phlox dating back to 1913. 'Bright Eyes' was bred by B.H.B. Symonds-Jeune in 1967 and has an AGM.

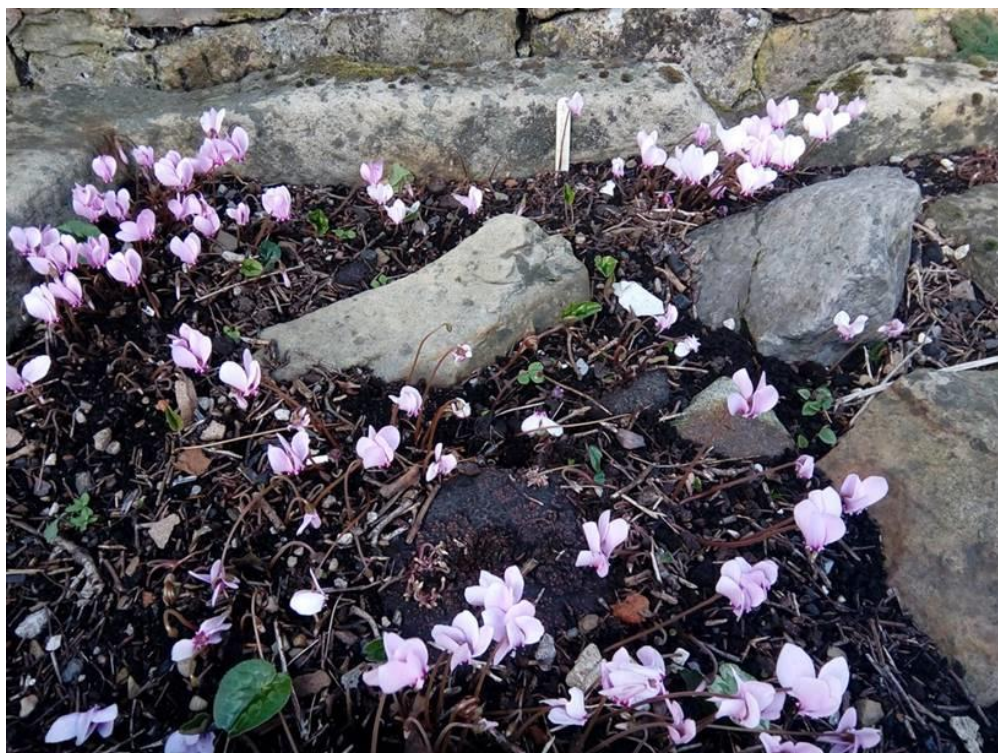




A bit of sunny cheer from Tricia Fraser's garden, Chrysanthemum 'Early Yellow'. Tricia says the name says it all – it starts flowering in August and it's yellow, and it has made a large clump in her front garden in one year.



Janet Boulding's has cyclamen coming up telling us that autumn is about to be upon us.





BUT she also has a hellebore contradicting that message, in flower now, shouting 'no its spring'.



It has certainly been a strange year all round.

See you next week, Toni