

## Keeping in Touch, April 2021

Hello everyone,

Well, spring arrived last week and there I was in shorts and t-shirt mowing the lawn slathered in factor 30. Then the north wind did blow and spring decided to make a retreat! Back on with the thermals and thick socks. My neighbour was telling me he was going to start watching the skies for swallows soon, apparently they arrive to roost in a barn near me on 13<sup>th</sup> April, give or take a day. Go back little birds, go back.

We have a lovely selection of early spring flowers for you below, all from members' gardens. Don't forget to send me your photos for the May edition [tonifrascina@outlook.com](mailto:tonifrascina@outlook.com). First some information and notices

### **RENISHAW PLANT FAIR**

Some of you will be glad to hear that this is going ahead on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May. I believe the event runs 11-3, but it may be ticket only, so best check the website [Renishaw Hall & Gardens | Renishaw Hall & Gardens \(renishaw-hall.co.uk\)](http://Renishaw Hall & Gardens | Renishaw Hall & Gardens (renishaw-hall.co.uk)) beforehand. A good opportunity to buy from local nurseries and see the gardens at a lovely time of year.

### **HPS TALKS**

A number of the local HPS groups have opened up their zoom talks to members from other areas. We don't charge for access to ours, and we had visitors last week from Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire, and Hampshire NW branches. Other groups may charge a fee, you can see everything that is available on the website at [HPS: Zoom Talks \(hardy-plant.org.uk\)](http://HPS: Zoom Talks (hardy-plant.org.uk)).

### **SOUTH PENNINE HPS MAY TALK**

This is 'Garden Photography' by Steffie Shields, Wednesday May 5<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm. As usual Don will send a link out closer to the date.

A full list of our talks is available on our excellent new web site at [Programme | South Pennine HPS \(webador.co.uk\)](http://Programme | South Pennine HPS (webador.co.uk)) There is no plant list from the April talk as it focused more on aspects of developing and running a nursery than on plants.

## YOUR PHOTOS

Our first stop is Helleboreland, aka the garden of Barbara Dygnas. Some lovely specimens here; in order they are: an unnamed Ashwood hybrid, Harvington Apricot (a rescue plant from Ferndale) and an unnamed variety bought from her daughter's local greengrocer in Birmingham for the princely sum of £3.99. The final hellebore was from seed produced by one of her Ashwood hybrids.





There is something incredibly satisfying about buying a cheap plant which turns out to be a star or, rescuing some bedraggled specimen from the reduced bench that repays your kindness. I visited Felley Priory last year and bought a number of such plants, some without labels, which makes it even more exciting! I patrol the borders daily waiting for foliage to emerge...



Our second garden is that of Elaine Blair who sent this photo of her *Daphne mezereum* situated in a very sheltered spot. Apparently this was a seedling given to her by Kay Keeton, who reckons it flowers better than the parent. Result! The bumblebees love it too.





Next is a spring display from Janet Boulding which includes a Japanese quince, a pieris and Cornus mas





Don Witton has shared a couple of his rarer euphorbia. Neither of them is listed in the Plantfinder. He says 'They are so rare I daren't plant them in the garden! Both are lax prostrate glaucous evergreen forms. The larger one on the right is *E rigida* 'Sardis' which came as wild collected seed by Chris Brickell from Turkey. The smaller one on the left is *E veneris* which is an endangered endemic from Cyprus, again grown from seed. He doesn't mention the provenance of that seed. Have you ever been on holiday to Cyprus Don?



Don grows *Corydalis solida* 'George Baker' in his woodland area. It is deservedly a very popular early spring flowering form.





His Chionodoxa 'Pink Giant' has been flowering most of March in one of Dot's patio pots.



From my own garden, a simple pot of Tulipa tarda. Sadly, after the frost of the other night this pot of species tulip was looking far less sprightly





A couple of primulas, the first I found in the garden surrounded by weeds and brambles. After digging up and splitting I put it in several places to see where it liked best. Answer: anywhere it's put. What an accommodating little plant. The second is Primula 'Carrigdale', bred by Joe Kennedy and also known as the Irish primrose. Blush pink on white, another that doesn't seem to mind where it is put.





And lastly, *Pieris japonica* 'Valley Valentine', this was only planted last year and is still quite small, but I simply love the red flowers.



Here's hoping for a return to spring temperatures soon!

Take care

Toni Frascina