



**SUSSEX GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

Autumn 2019

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Photographs from the HPS Image Library
and our Sussex members

Website www.hardy-plant-sussex.org.uk
Facebook: HPS Hardy Plant Society- Sussex Group

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As usual the weather had been a challenge for us and our gardens: high heat, high winds and both drought and heavy rain have made for an interesting summer! As I write, it is the stormy wind that is lashing the



plants: the lawn is covered in debris and an echium has keeled over. However, the elements have been kind for our summer events including delightful Talking Plants and the splendid visit to Chenies Plant Fair. For me, however, the stand out event

so far this year was our April anniversary tea party – sociable and scrumptious.

We have greatly benefited from all our keen propagators who raise so many interesting and unusual plants to sell at our meetings and at the plant fairs we attend. Do get growing for next year: we have reduced the commission we take to 20%, and if you bring plants to a plant fair you will keep all the revenue! We will also have an extended season in 2020: we plan, on an experimental basis, an extra meeting in May, so there will be an additional opportunity for plant sales and purchases.

Looking at my herb bed, I realise I am not following the received wisdom that says your herbs taste better if you cut off the flowers. Mine are all flowering profusely, and are a real magnet for a wide range of bees and hoverflies: much more exciting than a bit of extra flavour.



I greatly appreciate my committee for all the continuing hard work and enthusiasm in helping to plan what should prove to be a very interesting series of indoor meetings complete with delicious homemade cake – thank you bakers all! I am also delighted that you all remain so positive, friendly and helpful – it makes our meetings a real pleasure.

Sue

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & TREASURER

Membership Renewal 2020

Our group currently has 161 members. Subscriptions are due on the 1st January 2020. If you wish to pay by cheque (payable to Hardy Plant Society Sussex Group) you can bring it to any of the meetings in September, October or November. Cheques will not be cashed until January so can be post-dated to 01/01/2020.

Cheques can also be posted to the Treasurer (address on the back of this newsletter) to arrive by the end of December. Please put '2020 SHPS membership' on the back of the cheque.

Subscription prices are:

Single £12.50 or £22.50 for 2 members at the same address.

Payments made electronically must use the following bank details:

Payee Sort Code: 77-25-08

Payee Account Number: 03118268

Reference: see below

It is important that you quote as a reference your surname plus your national HPS membership number. Please don't forget you also need to renew your National Membership.

Alternatively, you can set up a standing order (collected on 7th January each year) using internet banking, or fill in the form available at meetings or by downloading a form from our website:

<https://hardy-plant-sussex.org.uk/membership.html>

Please ensure payments are remitted promptly. If you decide not to renew your membership, please let Sue Stockwell know so that time is not wasted chasing up non-receipt.

MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2019

Indoor meetings are held in the Henfield Hall, Henfield BN5 9DB and also at Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux BN27 4JX. There is a large free car park adjacent to both halls. The hall is open to members at 1.30pm for all meetings unless stated otherwise. The meetings commence at 2pm.

SUNDAY 24th November 2019 at 11am

at Henfield Hall, Henfield, BN5 9DB

Hall opens at 10.30am for coffee, meeting begins at 11am.

Talk by Troy Scott Smith

“Roses at Sissinghurst, Their Care and Cultivation”

Troy has been Head Gardener at Sissinghurst Castle. He has reintroduced some of the old rose cultivars that were grown there by Vita Sackville-West.



Buffet lunch follows at approximately 1pm (see over for details)

There will also be the trading stall and raffle.

MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2020

Lunch arrangements for Buffet Lunch Nov 24th 2019:

We ask you all to bring a dish, either savoury or sweet and we will sit down together and enjoy a 2-course lunch. This will be served buffet-style. Wine and soft drinks will be available, on the House and there is, of course, no charge for this lunch, but booking is required for this event. A booking form is included with this Newsletter.

SUNDAY 19th January 2020 at 2pm

at Henfield Hall, Henfield, BN5 9DB. Doors open at 1.30pm

"Gardeners' Question Time"

Question-master Steve Bustin, plus a panel from Sussex Group HPS.

This is a new venture for our group, requested by a member. We ask you to submit your garden-related questions, so, thinking-caps on please, to make this an enjoyable afternoon. Questions can be submitted on paper on the day or by email to Sue beforehand. We will also be taking questions directly from the floor.

There will also be the trading stall, raffle, members' plant stall (see page 19) and plant display.

SUNDAY 23rd February 2020 at 2pm

at Henfield Hall, Henfield, BN5 9DB. Doors open at 1.30pm

Talk by Juliet Sargeant

"What Value, The Green Stuff?"

MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2020

Juliet lives in nearby Brighton and is a garden designer, working from her studio in Hurstpierpoint. She is well-known from TV appearances on gardening programmes and has won awards at Chelsea Flower Show. We look forward to welcoming her to our Group.



Juliet's garden at Chelsea Flower Show 2016.

There will also be the trading stall, raffle, members' plant stall (see page 19) and plant display.

SUNDAY 22nd March 2020 at 2pm

at Henfield Hall, Henfield, BN5 9DB. Doors open at 1.30pm

AGM followed by lecture at 2.30pm

Talk by Dr Andrew Ward

"Fabulous Foliage, A Foil for Flowers"

Andrew and his wife own Norwell Nurseries on the outskirts of Nottingham and this will be his second visit to our Group. His last visit was much enjoyed. Andrew will be bringing plants to sell and you can order direct for him to bring plants for you.

His website is: www.norwellnurseries.co.uk

MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2020



There will also be the trading stall, raffle, members' plant stall (see page 19 for details) and plant display.

SUNDAY 19th April at 2pm

at Henfield Hall, Henfield, BN5 9DB. Doors open at 1.30pm

Talk by Peter Williams and Seedling Swap

"Un-Natural Gardening"

Peter will be travelling from York to visit us. He lectures widely in the North of England so we are particularly delighted that he will be visiting us.



“Much is now made of the need to garden naturally and to garden for wildlife. This talk looks at the concept of natural gardening and questions whether this current fashion is actually possible, sustainable or even desirable. The talk has four main sections – native vs alien species, naturalistic planting,

encouraging wildlife into the garden and organic gardening. The conclusion reached might well be that all gardeners – even the most ‘*ecologically sound*’, definitely adopt unnatural practices! This talk adopts a humorous approach but covers important underlying themes.”

There will also be the trading stall, raffle, members' plant stall (see page 19), plant display and seedling swap, where the following procedure applies:

Seedling Swap Instructions:

1. Bring along any seedlings or tiny plants that you have left over and do not need, still in their original compost and pot or seed tray. Clearly label the pot with the plant's name, variety, if appropriate and any other information. Add your name, in case of queries.
2. The Committee provides compost, plastic cups, spoons, labels and pencils for the new owners to use.
3. Help yourself to a small scoop of whatever takes your fancy; put in a cup and write your own label. Please don't take the original label. Each cupful is charged at 10p with an honesty box for the money, so bring lots of small change!

SUNDAY 17th May 2020 at 2pm

at Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux, BN27 4JX. Doors open at 1.30pm

We are trialling a meeting in East Sussex, on requests from our members who live in that side of the county, so we are returning to a lovely hall we have used before. If it is popular and well-supported it may be continued, in conjunction with meetings in Henfield.

The hall is located on the south side of the A271, right hand-side as you travel from Hailsham. It is well signposted from the approach road and has a large free car park adjacent. The speaker for the day to be advised.

Please bring plants for a bumper plant stall, as I am sure that you will be splitting your perennials and will have lots of surplus plants. Priced in the normal way (see page 19) with 2 labels, please.

Trading stall, members plant sales and plant display, raffle and teas.

GARDEN VISITS

WEDNESDAY 12th February 2020

Snowdrop Gardens Outing by Coach to Kent

We are visiting the Old Rectory garden in Fawkham, Kent to see the wonderful collection of naturalised snowdrops, as well as species snowdrops.

We then go on to Brogdale, where our lunch, of either soup and roll or sandwich, will await us.

There is then a 10-minute onward journey to the garden at Copton Ash. This is the home of Tim Ingram who was our speaker at the February 2019 meeting. Copton Ash is renowned for its snowdrop collection.

Price for HPS Sussex members is £42 per person, price for guests £47. This includes coach travel with pick-up points at Hickstead Travel Lodge RH17 5NZ and Uckfield High Street, entry to gardens, refreshments at both gardens and a light lunch at the Brogdale Courtyard Café.

TUESDAY 12th May 2020

4, Birch Close, Arundel BN18 9HN and West Dean Gardens, near Chichester, PO18 0RX

We visit, by our own transport, the garden of one of our Group members, Elizabeth Gammon, at 11am. We look forward to visiting this beautiful Spring garden with its lovely trees, shrubs and early clematis.

We continue on to West Dean Gardens at approximately 1pm, for lunch in their excellent restaurant. We will then explore the gardens and plant sales area afterwards.

Admission to both gardens and refreshments at Birch Close are inclusive, at £16 per head.

Booking forms will be issued for both of these outings.

TALKING PLANTS PROGRAMME 2020

MONDAY 22nd May 2020 at 11am

Terri Le Fevre invites us to her garden in Horsham.

Terri says, "A plantaholics garden (as anyone will know who has accompanied me at a plant fair!) Our garden is about 150ft X 60ft, jammed packed with colour. No lawn remains but gravel and bark paths intercept the planted areas. There is a beach hut style summerhouse on a deck, nearby is a pebble circle with water feature and grasses. A white themed bed was added last year. One side of the garden is sunny the other shady, with plenty of seating on each side. Containers are used aplenty for plants that will get lost in the borders, these include my obsession with Salvias! The whole garden is also packed with vintage finds and gardenalia. The end of the garden is dedicated to fruit growing, cut flowers and plant propagation, with three greenhouses."

SUNDAY 9th August 2020 at 11am

Shirley Carman-Martin invites us to her garden in Cuckfield.

Shirley says, "August can be an awkward month in the garden, autumn creeping in, but summer still hanging on for a little longer perhaps. Come and see whatever nature has decided that we can enjoy this year. *Dahlias*, *Salvias*, and *Heleniums* come to mind as well as the lovely varieties of the shrub *Abelia* that I enjoy, and the berries should be turning on the *Sorbus* and the *Euonymus*, perhaps, will be starting to colour. I look forward to welcoming you."

We would like to thank our very welcoming hosts this year, Frances Druce, our Secretary, Ian and Carole Woodland, who very kindly volunteered to host for a second time, Pauline Bastick, who chose to host on the hottest day on record (!) and Celia Withers, who has also very kindly been a host before.

TALKING PLANTS 2020 AND BEYOND

A CRY FOR HELP FROM THE TALKING PLANTS TEAM

Although bookings for the Talking Plants visits are always over-subscribed, we struggle to get volunteers to be a host. It's been suggested that perhaps people don't know what is involved and that I should put that right with an article in the magazine, so here goes.

Talking Plants was an idea that Maggie Lamb, a former chairman, came up with for members to get to know one another. Our meetings are so busy, and we normally only get to talk to the person sitting next to us - often the friend we came with. She suggested a sort of coffee morning, inviting a small group of members to come to your home to share experiences about what we all love – plants, gardening, and anything else we find we have in common. Of course, there is also a walk around the host's garden, chatting about what has grown well and of course, what was a disappointment/disaster. It was agreed that a small donation, currently £1 per visitor, would be made to cover the cost of providing coffee or tea. Groups are kept small, so that everyone can get to talk to everyone else, but the size is ultimately decided by the host.

Roz Hicken (now also our treasurer), Lesley Wembridge and I (Jane Collins) took over the running of Talking Plants shortly before Maggie left. Since then, it has proved so popular that we had to ask hosts to do two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The refreshments provided by the hosts



also became more and more lavish, with a variety of cakes on offer. Because we felt this was putting too much of an expectation on hosts and because we didn't want them wearing themselves out in the kitchen, before, during and after a visit, it was agreed by the committee a couple of

years ago that we would simplify things. We ask hosts only to provide tea, coffee and biscuits. If they don't have enough mugs, then we ask members to bring one when they visit and we can also bring along extra chairs or a kettle if needed. Roz, Lesley and I make and serve the drinks and wash up afterwards. If we aren't able to be there, then other committee members will step in. We have also tried to make the visits just in the morning. However, for very popular visits, we have sometimes had to ask hosts if they would mind hosting an afternoon visit as well.



This brings me to another problem that has been getting worse in recent years. People are inclined to reserve a place early, because they know that Talking Plants gets booked up. However, we are then getting lots of cancellations, often at the last minute. In 2019 we had as many as a third of the bookings cancelled. We even had people not turning up at all, without letting us know. I'm sure you will agree that this is not acceptable because of the extra work it causes Lesley. Please treat your booking for a Talking Plants as something you are committed to, not just a casual arrangement. As there is nearly always someone who would love to take your place, could we ask that if you do have to cancel, you make sure that Lesley, who is responsible for the bookings, is notified in time to offer your place to someone else. In other words, it's no good relying on an e-mail sent on the day, as she might not get to read it in time. Please ring her instead on 07901602838.

Talking Plants is not just popular with the visitors. Many hosts have liked it so much that they have offered to do it a second time. However, we cannot keep relying on their generosity, so PLEASE, think seriously about volunteering to be a host, and get in touch with me, Jane Collins (see contact details on last page) or speak to any

committee member. We are definitely not asking you to 'open' your garden. We are not expecting rolling acres or NGS standards.

We have only two volunteers to host in 2020, and one of those is our former chairman Shirley, who has already been a host several times for the HPS. We have no volunteers for 2021 and will be very sad if this popular part of our club life comes to an end. We all enjoy seeing where and how others garden and in the process, getting to know more members of our friendly club.

Go on, give it a try!

Jane Collins



TO BOOK, as usual, please contact Lesley Wembridge (her details are on the back of the newsletter). If you are not on e-mail, you will need to send her a stamped addressed envelope, so that she can send you instructions in time for your visit. Please also remember that if you book for a friend you will need to give their name and they must be a member of HPS Sussex Group as well.

If you would like to get to know more people in the Sussex HPS, then please consider volunteering to host a TP yourself. It's a great way to make lasting friends. It's not the same as a formal garden visit, just a few people round for coffee and a chat about plants and gardening. Please contact Jane Collins (details also on the back of the newsletter) if you might be interested.

COACH HOLIDAY PLANNED FOR 2020

As you may know, we are planning another short group holiday in 2020 similar to those that we have enjoyed in 2016 and 2018. The George Hotel in Norwich has been chosen for our stay from Tuesday 8th September 2020 until our return on Saturday 12th September. Further details of room prices and the total cost for garden entry and coach etc will be available soon.



We are planning this break to take place in early September and it will include, by popular request, a visit to East Ruston Old Vicarage, pictured, in Norfolk. We have had wonderful support from our sister group of the local Hardy Plant Society in both Norfolk and Suffolk and the members have kindly offered their gardens for us to visit and are looking forward to meeting you all.

As always, we are keen to keep this as economical as possible whilst still offering value for money and being as enjoyable as possible. Both single and double rooms will be available. We will be using Heritage Coaches that we used for our last holiday in 2018 and David our very tolerant driver. More details will follow shortly.



If you wish to cancel your booking, money will only be refunded if your seat can be resold, and £2 will be retained as a contribution towards administration costs.

Shirley Carman-Martin

AUTUMN LEAVES



Have you ever wondered, or been asked, why leaves change colour and fall in the Autumn? And why, in some years the display is better than others?

It is all a consequence of chemical reactions in response to sunshine and night-time temperatures. The reds, yellows

and oranges of autumn colour are always present in the leaves, we just don't normally see them because they are masked by the green colour of the chlorophyll.

Chlorophyll is the chemical that converts sunlight into energy for the plant to use and as the days grow shorter deciduous plants (those that lose their leaves in winter) breakdown this molecule to store it for the next growing season. The removal of this green pigment reveals the other chemicals that we see as yellow and red colours.

Dry, sunny days followed by cool, dry nights speed the breakdown of the chlorophyll and the production of the red colours. So, the autumn colours are more intense than in a warm, wet Autumn.

As the chlorophyll breaks down a layer called the abscission layer is formed where the leaf stalk joins the branch. This finally allows the leaf to break away and fall to the ground.



PLANTAHOLICS AT CHENIES MANOR PLANT FAIR

What a wonderful trip we enjoyed to Chenies Manor recently, with Dave our faithful coach driver. Such a pity there were not more of us, but those of us who did support this outing, thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the wonderful plants on offer from a huge number of specialist growers, all spread out in the beautiful grounds. Although many of us declared that we couldn't fit another plant in, (!) we struggled back to the coach to stash our many bags, during the afternoon, and the ever-helpful Dave managed to pack them in to the boot. He is quite used to us and our 'strange' ways, but never moans about the quantity of stuff we manage to purchase!

I had never been to Chenies before, but it was a beautiful house, and many of our group took advantage of the offer of a guided tour around the inside; unfortunately I didn't have time to do that, much as I would have liked to, but there was so much to see apart from the nurseries' stalls – lots of lovely unusual gifty bits and gorgeous ice-cream. At the end of this lovely outing, a couple of members were seen staggering under the weight of all the plant supports they had found, ready to join us on the trip home!!

Very many thanks to Shirley and Alison for organising this outing – it was fab. and just what we plantaholics needed. Shame many of you missed it!

Pictured right, is one of the plants bought at the fair, *Dietes bicolor*, African Iris.

Chris Hart



PLANT SALES AT INDOOR MEETINGS

We all love buying plants and our plant sales are an excellent way to help keep our subscription at its attractive, low price.

We take 20% from your chosen price for club funds.

A few guidelines for a successful sale are as follows:



A good, healthy plant, remove any fading flowers and foliage and make sure that the plant is well-rooted before selecting it for sale. Leave it for the next meeting if you have recently re-potted the plant.

Plants should be presented in a clean, unbroken plant pot. No yoghurt pots or soggy, muddy newspaper bundles, please.

Please use two labels. One with the name of the plant and any description you feel will help the buyer to grow it successfully. i.e. likes sun or shade or damp position etc. Don't worry if you don't know the Latin name of the plant, a clear description and its colour is a great help to the would-be buyer.

The second label should have your name and the price on it.

This is removed from the pot at the time of sale and the label is returned to you with the cost you requested less 20%, the small percentage the club retains.

A note to buyers:

Please bring along your own carrier bags or boxes to put your purchases in. We DO NOT supply plastic bags for this purpose. We all enjoy buying your lovely interesting plants so please keep bringing them in, the plants sales are a very good way of supporting our group and are always very popular.

HELPFUL HINTS

TAP-FITTING THAT IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT



If you are fed up with turning and turning to switch off your garden tap then try this gadget.

You can have a hose-reel permanently attached to one outlet and it only takes a quarter turn for on or off. A great time and patience-saver if you have lots of pots to water.

Search online for 'Arco double bib tap valve' to buy one, the cost is under £20.

HOT BIN COMPOSTING UPDATE

The Hotbin Mini was awarded RHS Garden Product of the Year 2019.

Manufactured in the UK, it reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and is ideal for a smaller garden. It was chosen for showing that composting can be made cleaner and simpler for modern households. The unit is more compact than the original model and reaches temperatures of 40-60C, meaning that all food waste, including bones and cooked food can be composted in 60-90 days. The resulting compost can be used around the garden.

Retail price is around £150.

MEETINGS WITH FAMILIAR PLANTS

Some of our most beautiful plants garden can still be seen in the wild. Here is a small selection from South Africa.



Kniphofia, the Red Hot Poker, grows in large clumps in areas where there is a constant supply of moisture, often next to rivers. The ones shown here are at the top of the Sani Pass in Lesotho. The long tubular flowers are pollinated by birds.

Streptocarpus, a common houseplant in Britain, can be found growing on moist rocks with almost no soil, in the shady forests of South Africa.

The flowers are mostly white with purple markings, so it is quite interesting that we have such a colour range available to us. But no surprise that they prefer a cool, shady spot in our houses.



Agapanthus is another summer favourite which originates in South Africa. Here it was seen growing through a clump of bracken.

It has also escaped from gardens and naturalised itself in many other countries, such as Australia and Madeira, where it can be found growing along the side of the road.



The *Gloriosa* lily climbs by means of the curled tips of each slender terminal leaflet. These are commonly grown in our greenhouses or conservatories and are herbaceous. The long, thin tubers are started into growth again each Spring.

It is the national flower of South Africa and there it scrambles through shrubs and trees.

Another familiar summer flower is the *Gladiolus* that has been bred to produce many different sizes and a vast range of flower colours.

It is a grassland flower from South Africa, with this example showing a beautiful apricot coloration.



Eucomis is another bulbous plant that is also found in grassland. Commonly called Pineapple Lily because of the tufted flower that resembles that fruit. The two plants are not related, in fact *Eucomis* is in the same family as *Asparagus*.

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Newsletter. The cover photo for this issue is of a large willow sculpture of a pine cone seen at the Harold Hillier Arboretum in Hampshire on our HPS Sussex coach trip in the Spring.

I have been contacted by Marion Jay, the Editor of HPS Cornucopia publication. As you probably know, this is a compilation of items from newsletters of HPS groups around the country. She has asked if she can reproduce a couple of our recent newsletter articles. This came as a pleasing surprise to me and shows that at least someone is reading it!

So, put your thinking caps on and send draft articles and photos to:

newsletter@hardy-plant-sussex.org.uk

You never know, yours could be chosen, too.

If you have submitted articles or pictures to the Editors but they have not yet appeared, please don't be disappointed as it is probably a matter of space on the pages.

Group Facebook Page

Many of our members have been enjoying the daily flower pictures on our Facebook page. If you have any pictures that you would like to add to that page please upload them with a short description for everyone to enjoy.

A different plant is posted every day and this can be a great way to discover and learn about new plants. We also welcome any comments that you may have about each post.

The page can be found on Facebook as:

[HPS Hardy Plant Society - Sussex Group.](#)