



**SUSSEX GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2020

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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 SUE, OUR OUT-GOING CHAIRMAN

When you read this, I will have retired from the Chair after three years that seem to have rushed by with so many splendid meetings and visits.

The last few months have been a real challenge for us gardeners. Seemingly constant rain on sodden ground, high winds and warm



temperatures have all caused problems: our grass is growing fast and is at last dry enough for a first cut.

This spring also seems to be somehow concertinaed, with bulbs and flowers appearing together rather than in

sequence. We have fritillaries in flower amongst the daffodils and anemones, lovely camellias and the frogspawn is already hatched and writhing merrily in the pond.

The rain does have one upside, the droplets on foliage can look magical if the sun comes out. But sadly, we now face a much greater challenge with the threat of Covid-19 corona virus.



We have planned some excellent talks and visits, and the holiday to Norfolk and Suffolk looks set to be delightful.

We will endeavour to keep you updated as to when we can, again, enjoy each other's company.

Mindful of the travel time from the East of the county to Henfield, I am pleased to say that committee members Jane and Lesley have now found what looks to be an excellent venue in Hailsham. It has good parking, easy access for bringing in plants and equipment and is reached via main roads. If government guidelines permit, we plan to have our February and October meetings at this hall in 2021 and would welcome your opinion on this. We very much hope those in the West will be as willing to travel as our stalwarts from Bexhill- on -Sea and the 'Far East' are at present.

As Chairman I have been delighted by the very positive attitude from all our members: I am grateful not only to our outstanding committee, but to all our other cheerful and willing volunteers - I very much hope we can meet again before too long. In the meantime, I hope that your love of gardening will lift your spirits in this worrying time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that serves as a decorative underline.

Retired Chairman and current Membership Secretary

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Membership Renewal 2020

I am pleased to report that we now have 162 members.

Our October meeting 'Bring a Friend for Free' was a success with several joining our group and, so, will be repeated in 2020.

For the first time this year we have invited Horticultural students from our local horticultural colleges, Brinsbury and Plumpton, to attend our indoor events free of charge. We have had a good take up with nine students coming to our meetings, so far. These students can also join the

National Society for a reduced subscription of £10 (rather than £17). If you know anyone studying Horticulture do let them know of this benefit.

Please may I remind you all that you are required to be a National member as well as a local member – HQ are having to do a lot of chasing-up for payments this year. Your subscription to the National group must be paid separately from the local group, at present, and can be paid regularly by setting up a Standing Order.

Sue Stockwell

Membership Secretary

IN MEMORY OF CAROLYN McCUTCHAN

23/12/1942 – 22/12/2019

Loved and missed by us all.



Carolyn in her garden



Carolyn's Millennium Walk

GROUP PROGRAMME 2020

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT MEETINGS AND VISITS FOR 2020:

Due to the ongoing problems caused by the Covid 19 virus outbreak our hall meetings and some visits may be cancelled or rearranged. Please see individual items for latest details, as at printing time. This is due to Government guidelines and venue closures. Where this occurs, we will keep you updated by emails and on the website.

Indoor meetings are held in the Henfield Hall, Henfield BN5 9DB and also, in 2020, 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.

GARDEN VISIT

TUESDAY 12th May 2020 NOW CANCELLED

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

We visit by our own transport. The first stop, at 11am, is the garden of one of our Group members, Elizabeth Gammon.



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.



West Dean was, until last year headed by Sarah Wain and Jim Buckland as joint Head Gardeners. This husband and wife duo revitalised the garden during their time at West Dean and the Walled Garden is a wonderful testament to their talent and

should not be missed. There is a small restaurant at West Dean, but this may be crowded at lunchtime. A sample of the menu can be viewed on their website, or you could bring a packed lunch. 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 this outing.

HALL MEETING

We are trialling a meeting in East Sussex, on requests from our members who live in that side of the county. 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.

HALL MEETING

**SUNDAY 17th May 2020 at 2pm at Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux, BN27 4JX. Doors open at 1.30pm.
'Container Gardening' by Steve Edney.**

NOW POSTPONED TO 2021 AND WILL BE HELD AT HENFIELD

Steve has, until earlier this year, been the head gardener at The Salutation Garden in Kent. The garden has officially closed, but is opening again just for this summer, so visiting is still possible. Steve will have much to tell us, and as well as his day job, his own garden of jungle-type planting opens for the NGS. He has been a Gold Medal winner both at Chelsea and Hampton Court in 2019, too. He hopes to bring along plants, but this is not certain.

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

Trading stall and plant display, raffle and teas.

See page 19 for full details of how you can join in with the display of members' plants.

PLANT FAIR

SUNDAY 7th June 2020, 11am - 5pm at Sussex Prairie Garden, Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, Henfield BN5 9AT

NOW CANCELLED

We will be manning a stall selling our members' plants and hoping to recruit some new members to our group.

TALKING PLANTS

MONDAY 22nd June 2020 at 11am

NOW CANCELLED

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."*



GROUP OUTING

TUESDAY 30th June 2020 at 10.30am

NOW CANCELLED

A visit, in our own cars, to Mandalay, High Street, Burwash TN19 7EN. This is an NGS garden on the left side of the A265 after Heathfield, with a large car park on the opposite side of the road.

Mandalay's garden has been described as a contemporary style cottage garden, including specimen olive trees, perennials, roses and clematis, together with a water feature and colourful containers.

Entrance price of £6 includes refreshments.

A booking form is included in this copy of the newsletter.

We suggest a visit to nearby Pashley Manor in the afternoon, following your own arrangements for lunch. Admission to Pashley Manor (£11.50) is not included in the cost of today's visit.



TALKING PLANTS

Friday 17th July 2020 at 11 am

Patsy Walton invites us to her garden at Steyning.

Patsy says, "Our garden is more than twice as wide as it is long, and lies below the level of our house. There are a series of island beds, some box hedge edged, as well as borders. There is no lawn, just grass paths. We have roses, clematis, salvias, perennials, and a small grass bed.

On the terrace by the house we have lots of pots, filled with annuals every May, but no Busy Lizzies!"

TALKING PLANTS

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.”*

Some notes about Talking Plants

Please treat your booking for a Talking Plants visit as something you are committed to, not just a casual arrangement. 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. There is always someone who would love to take your place and there is usually a waiting list for each session. 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 07901 602838.

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 Jane Collins, by phone on 01892 653444 or e-mail to collinsjane1@hotmail.co.uk 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.

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.

NORFOLK COACH HOLIDAY 8th – 12th SEPTEMBER 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. Room prices and the total cost for garden entries, coach etc are as follows:

Single room £520 per person

Double or twin room for single occupancy £560 per person

Double room for shared occupancy £480 per person

Twin room for shared occupancy £480 per person

Bookings are on a first come first served basis and are secured with an £80 non-refundable deposit. We suggest that you take out your own travel insurance policy.

Contact Shirley Carman-Martin for a booking form, details are on the back page of this newsletter. We are keen, as always, to keep this economical while still offering value for money and being as enjoyable as possible.

Itinerary:

Tuesday 8th September 2020

Coach pick up at Hickstead Services and Uckfield High Street.



First stop is at Dragon's Garden, Chelmsford; with refreshments.

Lunch at Lathcoats Farm Shop, Chelmsford.

Then, on to Paugers Plant Nursery, Bury St Edmunds.

We then travel on to our base, The George Hotel, Arlington Lane, Norwich.

Accommodation is on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

Wednesday 9th September



Brick Kiln House Garden, with refreshments.



Gable House Garden, with lunch.



5, Ringsfield Road, garden and refreshments.

Thursday 10th September

The Plantation Garden.
Drinks may be purchased at your own expense.



East Ruston Old Vicarage.
Refreshments at your own expense.



Friday 11th September

Dale Farm Garden, with refreshments.

Lunch at Yaxham Waters.

Dunbheagan Gardens, with refreshments.



Saturday 12th September.



Beth Chatto's Garden.
Refreshments at your own expense.

Return to Hickstead and
Uckfield High Street.

PLANT FAIR

SUNDAY 13th September at Borde Hill, RH16 1XP, 10am-3pm

We will be manning a stall selling members' plants and recruiting new members.

HALL MEETING

SUNDAY 20th September 2020 at 2pm in Henfield Hall, BN5 9DB

Doors open 1.30pm

'Late Summer Flowers' by Marina Christopher

Marina is a popular speaker and has taken late summer flowers as her subject.

Bees play a large part in the choice of plants that Marina grows. We shall be introduced to these topical insects in relation to the plants.



Marina owns Phoenix Perennial Plants and will be bringing along plants for sale.

There will be stalls for members' plant sales, raffle and the trading stall. Also, the members' plant display stand, and our usual excellent tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

HALL MEETING

**SUNDAY 18th October 2020 at 2pm in Henfield Hall, BN5 9DB
Doors open at 1.30pm**

'Auriculas – Their History and Cultivation' by Rachel Castle

Rachael runs Swallowfields Nursery in Elmsted, Kent. The nursery is attached to her garden which opens for the NGS. Rachael is also a keen member of Kent HPS. She is fond of Auriculas, of which she has a large collection and will describe how best to keep these beauties in our gardens.



There will be a plant stall selling a wide variety of plants grown by our members, a raffle and trading stall, as well as the members' plant display table.

Tea, coffee and homemade cakes will be available after the talk.

HALL MEETING

Sunday 22nd November 2020 in Henfield Hall

Please note: this meeting starts at 11am, doors open at 10.30am.

'In the Not So Bleak Midwinter' by Timothy Walker

We welcome Timothy back again as our speaker. Timothy is a British Botanist and *Horti Praefectus* of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum. We have enjoyed many hilarious lectures by Timothy in the past and look forward to another happy morning in his company to end this gardening year of 2020.



There will be a trading stall for some early Christmas shopping and the ever-popular raffle. The hall is very full at this meeting so, please note, there will be no plant sales or displays.

Lunch arrangements:

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.

MEMBERS PLANT DISPLAY AT INDOOR MEETINGS

The aim of the display is to show flowers and foliage from members' gardens. Material can be brought in on the day of the meeting and it is very helpful to have a slip of paper showing names and cultivars of the items, together with your name, in case of queries. The items can be of cut flowers or even a pot of something that you would like others to see. The display brings an extra dimension to our meetings. How many times have you thought that you could have provided something interesting? It isn't a competition and doesn't get judged or sold.

So, please, have a look around your garden and bring a part of it with you. Containers are provided but you can bring your own. Items should be collected and taken home again when you leave. It could even be something that you don't know the name of, in which case one of our knowledgeable members can probably help.

We do hope that you will want to join in and make the display spectacular every time!

PLANT SALES AT INDOOR MEETINGS

Plants brought for the sale table should have 2 plant labels, one with plant name and cultivar, if possible, and the other label showing your name and the price required.

Plants should be well-rooted and not just recently dug up.

We are all trying to reduce our use of plastics and so would request that members bring their own bags for taking plant purchases home. Plastic bags will no longer be supplied from the plant sales table.

TAKE THREE PLANTS

We all want to get the most from the space in our gardens, especially if we garden in a small space. Here are some ideas for plant combinations to try that will give months of colour and texture in a compact space.

3 Plants for a lightly shaded spot

Spring: *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* (formerly *Dicentra*)



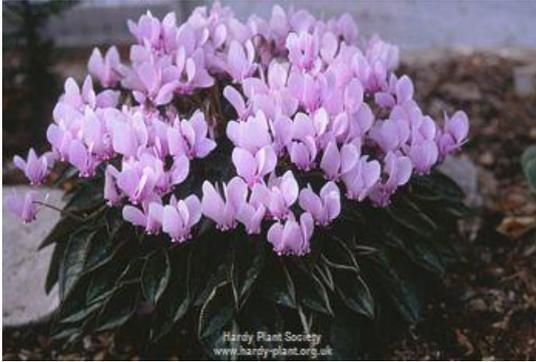
An early-flowering herbaceous perennial with fascinating heart-shaped flowers from late April – June. Attractive leaves and pink-flushed stems. Leaves die down in late summer. Height 75m.

Summer: *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (Japanese Forest Grass)

Deciduous grass with arching leaves striped in yellow, cream and green. Grows to 30cm and gradually spreads to form a lovely fountain clump. Leaves turn straw blonde in autumn and finally disintegrate in late winter.



Autumn: *Cyclamen hederifolium*



The pink or white flowers emerge in early autumn and are followed by heart-shaped leaves, many with silver and dark green markings. The leaves are fresh-looking all winter. It will seed around and form large corms after several years.

3 Plants for a sunny spot.

Spring: *Crocus* and *Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens'* (Black Lily Turf)

Alright, this makes 4 plants! But the golden crocus really lights up among the black lily turf. Choose yellow or white crocus and plant around the *Ophiopogon*, which is evergreen (or ever-black?) and will gradually spread so that the two will merge together.



Summer: *Helianthemum 'Cerise Queen'* (Rock Rose)



A low-growing evergreen shrub that only reaches 15cm but is lax and can make a carpet 50cm across. Prune lightly after flowering to prevent it getting woody. Other colours are available including white or yellow, some with silver leaves.

Autumn: *Hesperanthera 'Mrs Hegarty'*

A bulb with narrow sword-shaped leaves in a fresh green. Flower spikes emerge during August and open to delicate-looking starry flowers throughout September and well into October. Height 45cm. This is also available in scarlet, depending on your preference.



A HARDY SURPRISE

Many of our favourite summer flowers for tubs and pots are Fuchsias. There are also many familiar hardy forms for the garden, but here are a couple that you may not be aware of.



Fuchsia thymifolia has small, serrated leaves and small, magenta-pink flowers that are not of the usual fuchsia shape. It flowers so profusely that the size of the flowers is immaterial. It will flower almost all year-round through a mild winter and if left unpruned. However, a good trim in April produces a better shape and more flowers on less woody growth.

Shady places can also be brightened up by fuchsias with golden or variegated foliage and these deserve to be planted more widely.

Fuchsia magellanica var. *molinae* 'Sharpitor', pictured below, or *Fuchsia magellanica* var. *gracilis* 'Aurea'.



Another surprise is that the fruits of the Fuchsia are edible. The blacker they are, the sweeter they become. Thompson and Morgan sell a variety called *F. 'Fuchsiaberry'* which has been bred specifically for the edible berries which are high in Vitamin C. They recommend using the ripe berries to add to muffins or brownies.

Elaine Boot

GARDENING FOLKLORE

If it is warm enough to sit on the soil with no trousers on then it is warm enough to sow seeds directly in the ground.

Plant a single clove of garlic next to your roses to protect them from flying insects including aphids.

Pick blackberries before the end of September as, by October it is believed that the devil pees on the remaining fruit.

Plant chives in orchards to prevent lightning strikes.

Chilli plants will be spicier if you plant them when you are angry. Whilst, parsley and basil will grow better if you swear profusely as you plant them.

In 17th century England, brambles were considered magical. If you stepped under a thorny arch it could cure any ailment.

Planting by the phases of the moon:

In the moon's first phase plant vegetables that are grown for their above-ground crops, such as sweetcorn, spinach and lettuce.

In the second quarter, above-ground fruit crops should be planted, such as squashes and tomatoes.

The week after full moon is the time to plant below-ground crops, such as carrots and potatoes.

In the final quarter of the waning moon, planting should be avoided altogether and, instead, weeding should be the priority.

The Editor takes no responsibility for the effectiveness of any of these measures! But your thoughts and experiences would be welcomed.

WHO'S WHO?

Polly knows Phil and Phil knows Fred.
Bob knows Bill and Bill knows Ted.
But what I cannot take as read
Is if Polly knows Bill and Bob knows Fred?
Harry knows Barry and Barry knows Pam.
Danny knows Fanny and Fanny knows Sam.
But I find myself in quite a jam
Knowing if Harry knows Danny and Danny knows Pam?

It's never easy remembering names.
Is that guy Andy, or is he James?
And is that Felix over there?
That portly chap with thinning hair?
Is his wife Rita, or is it Grace?
I'm sure I recognise the face!
And that chap known as Mr Ball,
Is he our Chairman we call Paul?

How many times we've felt confused!
Is that the wrong name
That I have used?
I've called him Charles, but is he Rex?
No wonder he appeared perplexed!
I called her Jill,
But her real name's Jane!
I mustn't make that mistake again!

But our own Group has the answer
That assists our addled brains –
And helps us sort out who is who,
As the following explains.
If, when we come to meetings
It's our name tags that we wear,

We'll easily identify
Each member we see there!

Is it Maureen? Is it Tess?
No longer there'd be need to guess –
End up embarrassed and in a mess.
For when conversing
Just glance at the badge!
So, of course it's not Mary!!!
I'm talking to Madge!

Poem by Alan Ruby

Kindly agree to wear your personal name badges at HPS Meetings.
It will assist newcomers and long-standing members alike.
Personal badges can be picked up from the sign-in desk or speak to Sue
Stockwell (look for her badge!) or contact any Committee member.

Summary of dates for 2020 meetings and visits

Tuesday 12th May, in own cars, Arundel and West Dean
Sunday 17th May, Herstmonceux Hall BN27 4JX, 'Container Gardening'
Sunday 7th June, Plant Fair, Sussex Prairies BN5 9AT, 12 – 5pm
Monday 22nd June, Talking Plants with Terri Le Fevre
Tuesday 30th June, visit in own cars to Burwash and Pashley Manor

ITEMS ABOVE ARE CANCELLED.

ITEMS BELOW ARE STILL PROCEEDING, AT THE MOMENT.

Sunday 9th August, Talking Plants with Shirley Carman-Martin
Tuesday 8th Sept – Saturday 12th, **Coach holiday to Norfolk and Suffolk**
Sunday 13th Sept, Plant Fair at Borde Hill
Sunday 20th Sept, Henfield Hall, 'Late Summer Flowers'
Sunday 18th Oct, Henfield Hall, 'Auriculas' Rachael Castle
Sunday 22nd November, Henfield Hall, 11am 'In the Not So Bleak
Midwinter' and Bring and Share lunch

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter. The cover photo for this issue is of a larger-than-life orchid sculpture seen at RHS Wisley.

In this issue we are trying out a new listing format for the dates and details of our forthcoming programme. I hope you will agree that it makes more sense to list everything in date order and not split the items into their categories. Unfortunately, some of the planned items have had to be cancelled due to the Corona virus outbreak. We have decided to leave the details in the Newsletter to show what a vibrant and interesting group we are. This also brings the newsletter into line with the new pocket-sized date-list given out recently. If you haven't received one of these, please speak to a member of the Committee or at the sign-in desk at our meetings.

newsletter@hardy-plant-sussex.org.uk

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.](#)