

# SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Spring 2019



# CONTENTS

Chairman's Letter	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Suffolk Group Events	5
Free Plant at Spring Fair	7
New Members	7
List of Collection Holders	8
Collection Holders Report	9
Propagation Report	10
National Collection of Engleheart Narcissus	13
A Letter to The Revd. George Engleheart	15
National Collection of Alpine Campanulas	17
Growing the Next Generation's Gardeners	18
History of Plant Heritage	19
Wanted: Plant Guardians	20
Helmingham Autumn Plant Fair	22
Plant Conservation Panel	25
Update on Cedric Morris	26
Tales from a Norwegian Garden	28
The Art of Flowers	30
Looking after African Violets	32
<i>Tulipa sprengeri</i>	33
Pond Life	35
Members' Gardens Open	38
Gardeners' Diary	34
Book review: 'Roses'	42
Suffolk Group Committee Members	40

*Editor: Widge Finn*

*Layout: Nicola Hobbs*

*Photo editor: Peter Kendall*

*Cover design: Sally Geeve. [www.geevedesign.com](http://www.geevedesign.com)*

*Cover picture: Ambrosius Bosschaert, Flower Still Life, 1614. Google Art Project (public domain).*

# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

MAGGIE THORPE

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year.

You are all due enormous thanks for helping to make our Plant Fair at Helmingham such a huge success. This is the event that brings in our biggest financial return and which makes it possible for us to send much needed finance to our Central Office. The new structure of our organization is well under way and I look forward to a closer relationship with the new Board of Trustees. What I must stress is the need to have all your emails to make it possible to fulfill the one member-one vote system starting this year. So please ensure we have the correct one for you.

Quite a number of our members are happy to just sit in the background, their way of helping the conservation of our garden plants. Others join to get involved, especially with propagation and the running of our plant fairs.

Both are valuable but we must do more to recruit new members. Please do ask your friends, tell them we need their support.

We are very lucky to have such a great committee and would welcome anyone who would like to join us, especially those with computer skills. Please just talk to me – there may be something you could do to help us.

At the end of this year the editor of this Journal, Widget Finn, and Nicola Hobbs who does the layout, will be retiring. If you would be interested in taking over, do please let us know. We really need you!

The programme of events is on page 5. Make sure you book your ticket for the talk by Anna Pavord on 'Bulbs for All Seasons' on 23 March. This event is open to other groups and the public, so get your tickets right away.

Keep an eye on our website [www.suffolkplantheritage.com](http://www.suffolkplantheritage.com) for last-minute information and details.

I am sorry to report the death of Maire Ramsay and Rosemary Wilson. They were both members for as long as I can remember and great friends of Jenny Robinson, one of our founders. Maire took on many jobs to help in the running of Plant Heritage and Rosemary was a very fine plantswoman regularly giving our group native orchids and other rare plants. We shall miss them greatly.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

*PAT STANLEY*

Both the Spring and Autumn Plant Fairs were very successful this year, thanks to the hard work of Sarah Cook, the committee, our many dedicated helpers and of course the glorious weather on both occasions.

Gate admissions were 3,900 for the Spring Fair and 2,539 for the Autumn Fair, bringing a total of £8,820 after costs into our funds.

Anne Tweddle, Maggie Thorpe and the propagation team made plant sales at various events, meetings and the plant fairs, totalling £2,607 after costs for the year.

The Suffolk Group were once again able to make a donation of £10,000 this year to Central Office.



## **Plant Centre, Garden & Café**

Specialist Plant Centre stocked with an extensive range of plants for all gardens from trees and shrubs, including fruit to climbers, roses, herbaceous, ferns, grasses, alpine and herbs.

Garden sundries, pots, compost and gifts.

## **Garden open March-September**

Groups welcome and guided tours available.

Plant Centre and café open daily all year 10am – 5pm  
(dusk if earlier)

**The Place for Plants, East Bergholt Place, Suffolk CO7 6UP**  
**Tel: 01206 299224 E-mail: [sales@placeforplants.co.uk](mailto:sales@placeforplants.co.uk)**

# SUFFOLK GROUP EVENTS 2019

## JANUARY

Saturday 26th                      \*Talk: 'All My Own Work'  
(The Essex Garden of Lady Bing)  
Speaker: Jan Michalak  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

*Jan is one of our Collection Holders (Muehlenbeckia) and has researched the life and garden of Lady Bing.*

## FEBRUARY

Saturday 23rd                      \*Talk 'Tales from a Norwegian Garden'  
Speaker: Tommy Tonsberg  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

*Tommy is a Scandinavian gardener, plantsman, propagator, writer and photographer who spends a great deal of time in the UK.*

## MARCH

THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL EVENT – MEMBERS £8, GUESTS WELCOME £15

Saturday 23rd                      Talk: 'Bulbs for All Seasons'  
Speaker: ANNA PAVORD  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ  
  
Tickets by cheque in advance to Isobel Ashton,  
6 College Lane, Bury St Edmunds, IP331NN

*Anna needs no introduction having spoken to us before ('The Tulip'). Her gardening books and articles are read throughout the world and we are delighted she will come again to Suffolk.*

## APRIL

Saturday 27th                      \*Talk 'Looking Back at English Garden Daffodils'  
Speaker: Sally Kington  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

*Sally held the post at the RHS International Daffodil Registrar giving the world the first digitized Daffodil Register (1998). She was awarded the Peter Barr Memorial Cup for her work, and now retired, has been instrumental with advice and help in establishing Suffolk Group's Dispersed Collection of Engleheart narcissus cultivars.*

## MAY

Sunday 26th

PLANT HERITAGE SPRING FAIR  
10am-4pm, Helmingham Hall IP14 6EF  
Entrance £7

## SEPTEMBER

Sunday 15th

PLANT HERITAGE AUTUMN FAIR  
10am-4pm, Helmingham Hall IP14 6EF  
Entrance £7

Saturday 28th

\*Talk 'Siberian Iris'  
Speakers: Alun and Jill Whitehead  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

*Alun and Jill run a small nursery in Herefordshire. Their National Collection of Siberian Iris was in part rescued in 2007 from an abandoned nursery field nearby.*

## OCTOBER

Saturday 26th

\*Talk 'Growing Hardy Orchids in a Garden or Meadow'. Speaker: Jeff Hutchings.  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

*Jeff is the owner of Laneside Hardy Orchids and will tell us all there is to know about conditions and cultivation for growing these native orchids.*

## IT COULD BE YOU!

Widget Finn, the current editor of this journal, and Nicola Hobbs who does the layout, are retiring in November after 15 years so replacements are needed. The roles could be combined or separate, previous experience not essential but you will need to be computer literate. The next edition comes out in September; Widget and Nicola would be very happy to show you what is involved and can be available to support you in putting together the following edition. If you would like to know more about these interesting and creative roles please contact Maggie Thorpe, [maggiethorpe37@gmail.com](mailto:maggiethorpe37@gmail.com) or Widget Finn, [widget.finn@gmail.com](mailto:widget.finn@gmail.com) or Nicola Hobbs, [Nicola@nicolahobbs.com](mailto:Nicola@nicolahobbs.com)

# FREE PLANT FOR THE SPRING PLANT FAIR

ANNE TWEDDLE

The 2019 free plant for the first 800 visitors to claim it at the spring Helmingham Plant Fair is *Symphiotrichum novae-angliae* 'Rougham Purple'.

We have changes in taxonomy to thank for this mouthful. Most of us know this lovely plant as aster. It was bred in Suffolk at Rougham Nursery by the current owner's father some 20 plus years ago. It currently has one supplier in the RHS Plantfinder (online), being West Acre Gardens in Norfolk.

The plant qualifies for the Plant Guardian Scheme. It is late summer flowering, tall and a wonderful rich purple. The plant clumps up pretty quickly and has several flower heads on its tall strong stems. The colour is clear and rich. It wants an open site with reasonable fertile soil and drainage. It is growing in the Suffolk Punch Garden at Hollesley, being part of the National Plant Collection of plants bred or introduced by someone in Suffolk.



## NEW MEMBERS

We're delighted to welcome seven new members who have recently joined Suffolk Plant Heritage.

Mrs Gale Pryor, Hadleigh

Mrs Sonia Robbins, Ipswich

Mrs Carol Billinge, Rattlesden

Sue Borden, Wortham

Karen Murdoch, Bradfield St George

Mary Woods, Ipswich

Alastair Harris and Mrs Harris, Ipswich

The committee and members look forward to meeting you at the Stowupland talks and other events. Please introduce yourselves when you sign in at the membership table. If you would like a lift to events, contact our membership secretary Isobel Ashton (01284 754993).

## SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

AESCULUS	Framlingham	Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203
DIANTHUS (Malmaison)	Shelley	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
DIANTHUS (Perpetual Flowering registered in the UK before 1970)	Shelley	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
DRYOPTERIS	Stowmarket	Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104
ERYSIMUM Perennial	Walpole	Simon Weeks, 01986 784348
EUONYMUS	East Bergholt	Rupert Eley, Place for Plants, 01206 299224
HOSTA	Stowmarket	Melanie Collins, Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576
IRIS (Sir Cedric Morris introductions)	Shelley	Sarah Cook, 01473 822400
IRIS (Sir Michael Foster introductions)	Stowmarket	Lucy Skellorn, 07730 507900
MUEHLENBECKIA	Burgate	Jan Michalak, 01379 783452
NARCISSUS (Rev.G.Englehart introductions)	Dispersed collection	Anne Tweddle, 01473 737337
SANTOLINA	Campsea Ashe	Jon Rose, Botanica, 01728 747113
SUFFOLK GARDEN PLANTS (C 20th Hardy)	Hollesley	Margaret Wyllie, Suffolk Punch Trust, 01394 411327



# NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS REPORT

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

Good news. We have a new National Collection in Suffolk. Lucy Skellorn has had her application for her collection of Iris (introduced by Sir Michael Foster) accepted.

Lucy has been working hard to track down these Irises introduced by her great, great grandfather with help from Sarah Cook. She has them growing in her garden and has been propagating them there. Congratulations Lucy.

Sad news that Sue Wooster will no longer have her *Alpine Campanula* collection in the Walled Garden at Langham Hall. She will keep the collection but it will be in her own garden in Norfolk. We will miss having Sue as one of our Collection Holders as she has always been very active doing RHS trials, displaying her plants at shows and being featured on Gardeners World TV programme. We hope to still see her at the Helmingham Plant Fairs.

Rupert Eley has been working with the RHS with his *Euonymus* collection for the AGM trials. We look forward to finding out how this has gone.

Sara Sheldrake is looking for more *Scabiosa caucasica* plants to add to her collection and is giving her plants time to settle into her new garden before she applies for full status.

Some possible new collections have been mentioned so we may have some new proposals next year. All the Collection Holders have been working hard caring for their collections and searching for more plants to add to them. Most of them were at the Autumn Plant Fair displaying and selling their plants and giving talks. Their hard work is much appreciated.

## PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

FOR AN UPDATE ON WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CENTRAL OFFICE VISIT  
THE CURRENT ISSUE OF NEWSLINES ON THE WEBSITE  
[WWW.PLANTHERITAGE.COM](http://WWW.PLANTHERITAGE.COM)

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SUFFOLK GROUP ACTIVITIES  
VISIT [WWW.SUFFOLKPLANTHERITAGE.COM](http://WWW.SUFFOLKPLANTHERITAGE.COM)

# PROPAGATION REPORT

*ANNE TWEDDLE*

I can report on a very successful growing and selling year in 2018. By some quirk of fate we turned over an amount almost identical to that in 2017, £4,500. The monthly workshops are as popular as ever, and provide an opportunity for us all to learn from each other.

We spread our wings slightly by trying out roses. We began with hardwood cuttings in 2016 and sold some in 2017, and the balance during 2018. We are not grafting them, but growing the cultivars on their own rootstocks. The material is coming from members gardens, and we have a number of keen rose growers in the group, so lots of interesting and rare material is coming forward.

The twin-scaling programme continues with chopping up the bulbs in July and potting on the tiny bulbils in November. It's several seasons, and fairly intensive-care to get them to flowering size and ready for sale.

I have noticed something of a shift in the galanthus market. A lot of nurseries are selling snowdrops now, resulting in lower prices and wider availability. This is excellent news from the conservation perspective, as well as the wallet. We will continue to propagate and sell snowdrops, but want to move the emphasis onto historic daffodils.

The topic of historic daffodils brings me onto the Engleheart collection, owned by the Suffolk Plant Heritage group. This is reported on elsewhere in the journal but suffice to say that we will have the first material from the collection available for sale in 2019. Look out for these at talks early in the year. There are a lot of historic daffodils that need to be grown more widely. We will be propagating and offering for sale material from the early breeders in an attempt to conserve them more widely. We sent five Engleheart daffodil cultivars for micropropagation in the autumn, and await with interest what comes back.

Maggie Thorpe and I started a hydrangea project in 2018. We visited the National Collection holder at Derby and collected from him material of 13 cultivars, which all need conserving in addition to being excellent garden plants. Some have rooted already, tucked up in the hot-box in Maggie's propagator. Depending on the progress, this material will be available for sale later this year or next. All of these cultivars will qualify for the Plant Guardian Scheme and some for the Threatened Plant Programme.

Just a reminder if you buy any RED label plants from us, please, please

register them on the PH website. As a conservation organisation it is imperative that we formalise our growing of rare plants. This is done by registering them in the Plant Guardian Scheme.

There is a new Hardy Plant book on chrysanthemums out. I am very keen on hardy chrysanthemums, and we have had a lot of cultivars for sale, and all have come to us through the National Plant Exchange. Look out for more at our talks.

The propagation workshops are open to all members, and held each month at Stowupland Church hall. The dates for 2019 are:

*Tuesday January 15th   Wednesday February 13th   Thursday March 14th  
Tuesday April 16th   Wednesday May 15th   Thursday June 13th  
Wednesday July 17th   Wednesday August 14th   Thursday September 12th  
Wednesday October 16th, Wednesday November 13th*

Please let Maggie ([maggiethorpe37@gmail.com](mailto:maggiethorpe37@gmail.com)) or me ([anne@tweddle1.co.uk](mailto:anne@tweddle1.co.uk)) know if you are new, and planning to come along.

We are welcoming, but do have something of a space issue in the hall, and in my car when I take everything home afterwards. But it is very nice to have the problem of 'too many good plants' to look after.

## LOOK OUT FOR....

If you're in Rome, visit the Villa Farnesina and in the loggia look up to the ceiling. According to garden writer Robin Lane Fox the 16th century artist Agostino Chigi decorated the garlands in each lunette with around 160 different types of flowers and fruit. Among those recently identified by botanists are anemones, dianthus, poppies, jasmine pulsatilla, creamy elderflowers and artichokes.

An early lady visitor was shocked by the arrangement of vegetables in one corner above Hermes' arm ... but you will have to go and see for yourself!



**Wootens**  
*of* WENHASTON

**Plant Specialists**  
Nursery Open Every Saturday  
between March-October  
Hall Road, Wenhaston, Suffolk  
[woottensplants.com](http://woottensplants.com)

# Fullers Mill Garden - a waterside gem in the heart of Suffolk



**Fullers Mill Garden is an enchanting and tranquil waterside and woodland garden, situated on the banks of the River Lark at West Stow in Suffolk.**

Fullers Mill Garden combines a beautiful site of light dappled woodland with a fabulous collection of rare and unusual shrubs, perennials, lilies and marginal plants, collected over the course of 50 years by the creator of the garden Bernard Tickner MBE. In 2013 the garden was gifted to Perennial, the only UK charity dedicated to helping all those

who work in or are retired from horticulture, in times of need.

Private visits from groups are welcomed by prior arrangement, with guided tours available from staff and plenty of parking for coaches. Tea, coffee and delicious home-made cakes are available to purchase from the Bothy. Plants propagated from the garden are available for sale.

**Open April-September 2019**

**Weds & Fri, 2.00pm – 5.00pm | Sun, 11.00am – 5.00pm**

**West Stow, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 6HD**



**T | 01284 728888**

**E | [fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk](mailto:fullersmillgarden@perennial.org.uk)**

**W | [fullersmillgarden.org.uk](http://fullersmillgarden.org.uk)**

Charity no: 1155156. Images: © Marcus Harpur

# THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF ENGLEHEART NARCISSUS

NEIL BRADFIELD AND ANNE TWEDDLE

In September 2017 Suffolk Plant Heritage attained full National Collection status for its dispersed collection of historic Narcissus bred by The Revd. George Engleheart. Although his total output amounted to over 700 cultivars, it is shocking that many are probably extinct. We have set ourselves the target of conserving 70 cultivars, in the hope that at least 10% remain in existence somewhere. Currently our group hold 34 cultivars at eight sites across Suffolk. It is also immersed in the hard work of trying to find others.

Much of our time is being spent on research of both The Revd. George Engleheart and the gardens where his cultivars grow. We have been contacted by numerous people interested in what we are doing. A lady who lived in a farming commune with Engleheart's daughter has been in touch. We are making headway with the papers connected to Ellen Willmott held at Berkley Castle in Gloucestershire, and the National Trust who now own the house and garden (Little Clarendon) where Engleheart lived and did most of his work, are in touch. This is the tip of the iceberg and we hope to learn much more about the man and his life.



*The Revd. George Engleheart*

In April 2018, we visited two neglected gardens in East Anglia, known to contain historic narcissus. Both are horticultural time capsules, untouched for 70 years. Sally Kingston, former RHS Daffodil Registrar, studied the gardens some years ago and made her notes available to us. Although the house at Rougham Park was wrecked in the war, the gardens and pleasure grounds survive and we were shown around by Sir George Agnew, their current custodian. It was a joy to see sweeps and drifts of historic narcissus laid out on a grand scale and a useful exercise to try to 'get our eye in' to the older flower form. But did we find any Engleheart cultivars? Probably not. Estate papers and Sally Kingston's expertise indicate the bulbs were probably bred by Barr, a contemporary of Engleheart, in the early 20th century.

A week later we travelled to Warley Place in Essex, the former home of Ellen Wilmott. This legendary plantswoman was both a good friend and a good customer of Engleheart's. Again, the house is a ruin, but the site is run by The Essex Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve. Here, we had a map drawn by Duncan Donald (who spoke to Suffolk Plant Heritage members in February 2016 about his National Collection of historic narcissus) showing possible cultivars. Rather like a treasure map, 'X' marked the spot. However, translating a sheet of A4 paper into 25 overgrown acres, a number of years after being drawn, proved quite an exercise. But did we find the treasure? Possibly, yes. We tentatively identified several cultivars and cast hopeful eyes over many others. Really, there should be potential discoveries here, but needles in haystacks come to mind!

Many of the folk who contact us are after identification of daffodils in their own garden. We are learning fast, this is not a task to be taken lightly, if at all. However Darren Andrews, one of our Collection Holders, is interested in the work being done at Reading University in connection with the RHS, 'Breaking the Daffodil Code', The daffodil's chloroplast genome has been mapped for the first time. Who knows what the future in identification might hold?

It has become obvious that to identify a narcissus with certainty as an Engleheart introduction, it is essential to have documentary evidence of its provenance. Consequently, we applied for access to Ellen Wilmott's archive, to examine planting plans, orders etc, but it was not granted.

The group held its first open day in April 2018 displaying the Collection to the public at Columbine Hall. We have also conducted research at the RHS

## Love your garden?

Brighten up your borders with our range

\*perennials \*shrubs \*climbers \*ornamental trees  
\*soft fruit trees and bushes \*grasses

*Seasonal selection includes vegetable plants, herbs, bedding, bulbs plus a range of King's Seed.*

\*compost \*logs & coal \*farm shop



### Rougham Hall Nurseries

*A family run business for over 55 years*

A14, Rougham,  
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk  
IP30 9LZ  
01359 270577

Open / days  
10am - 4pm  
Major credit  
cards accepted

## To advertise in Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal

Contact Nick Stanley,  
[publicity@suffolkplants.org.uk](mailto:publicity@suffolkplants.org.uk)  
or 01359 270721

1/4 page colour £25.00

b & w £20.00

1/2 page colour £50.00

b & w £40.00

Full page colour £75.00

b & w £60.00



Lindley Library, had fascinating meetings with Sally Kington, visited narcissus experts in the north of England and been featured in the press. In addition, bulbs have been twin scaled during the summer to bulk up numbers. We are optimistic that cultivars which we do not hold remain in America and we are currently investigating this further. It has also been suggested that we try searching in Ireland.

We are planning two open days at Columbine Hall, Stowupland, in 2019: Sunday 17 March and Sunday 28 April. This will provide an opportunity to see early cultivars and the late poeticus (pheasants' eye) cultivars. We have been propagating the bulbs and will have several cultivars for sale to members in spring 2019.

It is curious how conserving historic narcissus reflects Engleheart's work breeding them 100 years ago. Both are complex, long term projects needing a multi-disciplined approach, persistence and sometimes a bit of luck. But, as The Revd. George Engleheart would doubtless attest, when it all works out, it is immensely rewarding.

Rougham Park is not open to the public. Warley Place has open days in spring and is well worth a visit. See the Essex Wildlife Trust website [www.essexwt.org.uk](http://www.essexwt.org.uk) for information. Columbine Hall Gardens also have open days – details on their website [www.columbinehall.co.uk](http://www.columbinehall.co.uk)

## A LETTER TO THE REVD. GEORGE ENGELHEART

*NICK STANLEY*

In the summer of 1912 the celebrated daffodil breeder The Revd. George Engleheart received a letter postmarked Nelson, New Zealand. The writer of the letter, William Murray Angus, introduces himself by saying that he had often heard the name Engleheart mentioned as a man who has 'raised innumerable beautiful flowers'. He continues by saying that his mother had become interested in daffodils about five years previously and over that period they had collected 'a fair number of the commoner sorts mostly for cuttings, though mother has shown at several daffodil shows with medium success she has not captured any big exhibit'.

William goes on to write that having recently reached the age of 16 and 'passed his matriculation' his mother and his auntie had bought him £2

worth of daffodils from local suppliers but they still had had no luck in the Annual Nelson Spring Flower Show.

William writes “At all the shows held by the Nelson Horticultural Society about five people win everything worth winning because they have such good exhibition varieties. For this reason many persons who have exhibited unsuccessfully good but cheaper varieties that unless someone breaks the power of the ‘chief five’ they will not exhibit anymore. Now that I have started with several good bulbs I hope to do much to beating them but at present I have not bulbs to compare with theirs...”.

It is evident from William’s poor syntax that he is becoming increasingly frustrated with the family’s lack of success in the local flower show.

He goes on to ask if The Revd. Engleheart would send him £8 worth of his bulbs and he enclosed an alphabetical list of almost 200 daffodil cultivars that he would like to grow. “I thought that you would have a good many of most of them and would not miss one or two of some varieties ..... If you do not consider £8 enough for all I have included in the list I will pay the balance as soon as I get the first lot of bulbs”.

William concludes the letter by saying that it is his ambition to become a civil engineer specialising in bridge, harbour work, railroad and electro-water power engineering.



*White Lady, one of the daffodils on William Angus' list.*

There is no evidence that Engleheart ever sent William any of his daffodil bulbs but announcing the results of the Spring Flower Show the Nelson Evening Mail dated 13th September 1916 reported that a Mrs Angus achieved the following in the general daffodil section of the show: One Highly Commended, one Third Place and five Second Places.

Mrs Angus also came runner-up in both the 1 Chalice Cup and in the 6 Chalice Cup, distinct. However, Mrs Angus was awarded a First Place in the 3 Chalice Cup, distinct.

So perhaps the Revd. George Engleheart did send young William a few of his choice daffodil bulbs.

*Postscript: William Murray Angus died in Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia in 1964. His occupation was listed as ‘Manufacture’s representative’.*



# THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF ALPINE CAMPANULAS

SUE WOOSTER

As many of you will have heard already, after over 10 years I have left the walled garden at Langham Hall and moved the National Collection of alpine campanulas and Bellflower Nursery to my home in Norfolk. Holding the Collection in Suffolk has been a wonderful time, full of amazing experiences and lovely people. I would like to thank everyone – committee, collection holders, co-ordinators and members – for all their help and support over the last 12 years.

From humble beginnings in my cottage garden to the four-acres of walled garden – what a journey it's been! The highlights have been two visits from the BBC Gardeners' World film crews and winning gold medals and best in marquee at Hampton Court, as well as lecturing in Germany at the ISU convention – all slightly out of my comfort zone but looking back it all had to be done.

Whilst it's the end of an era for me and the collection in Suffolk, at the same time it's the beginning of a new chapter as we cross the border to Norfolk. The Norfolk Collections Coordinator got in touch when I moved to suggest I have a year in transition to give me a breather whilst we get organised. In December 2018 PCC confirmed that the Collection would officially be granted Transitional Status initially for one year. This is very reassuring.

Bellflower Nursery will still be at Wyken Vineyards and farmers' markets in Suffolk, as well as plant fairs (including Helmingham if you'll have me!), so I hope to bump into many of you still on the plant circuit

Bellflower Nursery Garden Design Service is proving popular so if you have any design queries or plant requests, please let me know. Thank you everyone.

*Closing the gates at the Walled Garden for the last time.*



# GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION'S GARDENERS

*PIPPA MICHELSEN*

The growing popularity of the Helmingham Hall Plant Fairs has meant increased numbers of visitors and a growing number of children. About four years ago it was suggested that something could be done to engage these children in the plant fair itself by providing some kind of activity for them to take part in while their parents or carers went around the stalls.

In response, in 2015, Plant Heritage provided a children's area marquee, and Libby Brooks and I got together to plan a quiz activity worksheet. This proved to be a great success, as was the accompanying seed planting activity.



The following plant fair saw two young boys returning with amazing Swan Necked Gourds that they had nurtured and cared for from seedling to fully grown plant since the previous fair. We were delighted and felt that the children's activity area had proved its worth!

Since then each fair has seen a different quiz sheet, looking for clues or focussing the children's attention on different plant features such as colour or shape. They have also been provided with the materials necessary to

plant either bulbs or seeds to take home in a goody bag, sometimes also with extra packets of seeds, pencils or stickers. This activity has proved an unflinching success with both children and parents, especially as it is all for free!

During the past two fairs we have extended the activity area to include an art table where children can come and respond creatively to the plants they have seen by colouring, drawing or collaging. Parents have found this a very useful break for both themselves and their offspring, sometimes providing a period of time for one of them to visit plant stalls and make purchases - without having children in train.

Who knows: maybe the activities will prove the starting point for some child or other for a love for plants and gardening! Perhaps even to be a future plant collection holder!

Of course, it is only thanks to all those Plant Heritage members who have so kindly volunteered to support the activities, giving their time on the actual day, that all can go ahead. And if anyone out there has any ideas as to how we could extend or improve the children activity area or who like to be involved in the planning or running of it please do get in touch with Sarah Cook ([sarah@malmaisons.plus.com](mailto:sarah@malmaisons.plus.com)).

## THE HISTORY OF PLANT HERITAGE

*JIM MARSHALL*

I was interested to read the article in the Autumn Journal 2018 about the Origins of Plant Heritage and would like to comment. Although the first office as such was at the RHS Garden Wisley, Duncan Donald the first employee of the then NCCPG had at different times a desk at the Chelsea Physic Garden and later in the office of the then Horticultural Taxonomist Chris Brickell. At a later date NCCPG moved to a specific office at Wisley. There was indeed a continuing loss of small specialist nurseries growing cultivated plants but also the major Botanic Gardens prioritised on wild source plants which meant a dramatic reduction in their cultivated plant collections.

*Correction: In the Spring 2018 Journal the Brickhill Award was presented to Sarah Cook at RHS Hampton Court by Chris Brickell and not by Carol Klein as stated.*

*This article is reproduced from the Plant Heritage website in a series of blogs about rare plants explaining how important it is for them to be conserved. Follow the monthly blog on <https://plantheritage.wordpress.com/> and learn about a fascinating selection of plants which are in urgent need of our support.*

## WANTED: PLANT GUARDIANS

LUCY PITMAN

There are an incredibly varied number of reasons for continuing to find and conserve plants cultivated in gardens across the British Isles. Plants are often named specifically for a place or a person, Hidcote or E.A. Bowles for example, but just as often, are more closely linked to a garden and the people involved in it.

### ***Phlox stolonifera* ‘Violet Vere’**

Sarah Cook has grown *Phlox stolonifera* ‘Violet Vere’ for many years, and we have discovered the people behind this plant are some of the most iconic names in English gardening. It was named at Sissinghurst in the 1990s by the then head gardeners – Sibylle Kreutzberger and Pam Schwerdt. We are very grateful to Sibylle, who tells us that ‘The Phlox in question was picked up by us in a London florist and, having failed to get it identified, was finally named after Pam Schwerdt’s mother who was at that time, president of The Wild Flower Society.’

In fact, Violet Vere (Schwerdt) MBE remained as president of the WFS for 28 years continuing the legacy from her sister and before them, their mother who founded the society in the 1890s.

The plant appears in ‘Extracts of Proceedings of the RHS (Vol 117) 1993 when it was exhibited to the Joint Rock Garden Committee:



*‘Award of Merit: To Phlox stolonifera ‘Violet Vere’ as a hardy plant for flower on the rock garden (votes 12 for; 0 against), exhibited by the National Trust, Sissinghurst Castle, Cranbrook, Kent’.*

*Left: Specimen of Phlox stolonifera ‘Violet Vere’ at Royal Horticultural Society Herbarium (WSY), WSY0004415 on JSTOR: [plants.jstor.org](https://plants.jstor.org/)*



From left:  
*Phlox stolonifera*  
'Violet Vere';  
*Phlox stolonifera*  
'Mary Belle Frey'.

Sibylle Kreutzberger and Pam Schwerdt worked as head gardeners for Vita Sackville-West from 1959 and after Vita died in 1962, they remained in post for a further 31 years with the National Trust and were both awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour, by the RHS in recognition of their work at Sissinghurst.

*Phlox stolonifera* is a native of wooded areas and stream banks in the Appalachian Mountains in the SE USA. It is a creeping Phlox, forming a spreading 'mat' about 3 inches in height with flowers appearing above the leaves from April to July. Not a favourite of rabbits or deer it is also tolerant of drought and air pollution – two factors that make it very relevant in, and for, our changing climate.

Sarah grows it successfully in Suffolk, but suggests that it could probably do better in a region with higher rainfall. She tells us '*Phlox stolonifera* are excellent low growing plants, which we used to use at Sissinghurst to fill the spaces just under the shrub roses. Not deep shade and plenty of light at this time of year when the roses are only just coming into leaf. They are woodlanders and a recommended for moist, humus rich soils

### ***Phlox stolonifera* 'Mary Belle Frey'**

Sarah also has *Phlox stolonifera* 'Mary Belle Frey' in the Plant Guardian scheme. We now know that Mary Belle Frey (1907-1940) was born in Indiana. It hasn't been listed in RHS Plant Finder since 2011.

There isn't currently a National Plant Collection of *Phlox stolonifera* and although a few are sent to the Plant Exchange, of the 18 cultivars listed in the Plant Finder, only two have more than one supplier.

*Sarah Cook (formerly Head Gardener at NT Sissinghurst) is National Plant Collection Holder of Iris (Sir Cedric Morris introductions).*

Editorial contributions to the Autumn 2019 issue of  
Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal are wanted by 1 July.  
Please send articles and photos to [widget.finn@gmail.com](mailto:widget.finn@gmail.com)





SUFFOLK GROUP AUTUMN PLANT  
FAIR HELMINGHAM HALL  
SEPTEMBER 2018





Photos courtesy  
Peter Kendall







Lose yourself on our  
two-acre nursery ...  
... and find something  
new to treasure

- :: Perennials
- :: Spring bulbs
- :: Shrubs & trees
- :: Roses
- :: Annuals & bedding
- :: Alpines
- :: Herbs & Lavenders
- :: Grasses, Ferns & more

[www.katiesgarden.co.uk](http://www.katiesgarden.co.uk)

# Katie's Garden plant centre



Huge choice grown by us. For people who  
**love plants** as much as we do.



Katie's  
Garden



Ipswich Rd, Newbourne, Woodbridge,  
Suffolk IP12 4NS | 01473 736717



Buy your  
Katie's Garden  
plants from

## Bridge Farm Plants

[www.bridgefarmplants.co.uk](http://www.bridgefarmplants.co.uk)  
Hadleigh Road, Monks Eleigh,  
IP7 7AY | 01449 740502





# PLANT CONSERVATION PANEL

ANNE TWEDDLE

The Plant Conservation Panel or PCP is one of the three new panels set up under the recent structural changes to Plant Heritage. The role of the PCP is to develop conservation strategies which, when approved by the Board of Trustees, need to be implemented. I have a seat on this panel. The skills that I feel most able to help with are those surrounding groups. Suffolk group has any number of successful propagation/conservation activities and taking these ideas and programmes from group level to national level is a task I believe in.

We all know and understand about National Plant Collections, which is conservation on a genus or part genus level. Then at the other end of the scale PH has the Plant Guardian scheme where an individual can conserve a single plant. I see group activities fitting somewhere in the middle.

A grant of £150,000K has been secured from the Esmée Fairbairn Trust to pay the salary of a Conservation Manager. It is a three year project, and has some pretty keen targets in it. The targets are all round increasing the numbers of plants being conserved. More National Collections, more Plant Guardians, more plants being recorded as in formal conservation. There are areas to suit all members level of interest and commitment.

The formal record keeping of this plant conservation is significant. It is no longer enough to just grow the plant with a red label. We must ensure it is registered on the PH website as being in formal conservation under the Plant Guardian scheme. The registration is not onerous, and it will give formal recognition to the conservation work we do. We know we can't conserve everything so how do we decide what to conserve? The second and third items are not prescriptive rules, see them more as guidelines. The *availability* status is a rule.

*The availability* - The Plant Guardian Scheme accepts any plant with two or fewer suppliers as listed in the current RHS Plantfinder.

*The garden worthiness* - Is it a good garden worthy plant.

*The historic significance* - Is the plant connected to our garden history. Has it been grown for some time and has connections to people and places

As the work of the Panel gathers some momentum there will be more to tell you about. There is a big job to do to meet all the targets of our grant, and it's a great comfort to know that in Suffolk we have countless members interested in doing hands-on plant conservation.

# AN UPDATE ON CEDRIC MORRIS

SARAH COOK

2018 could have been called ‘The Year of Sir Cedric Morris’, and as the National Plant Collection holder of his bearded irises, it has been one of the most interesting since I started the collection in 2005.

There have been three major exhibitions of his art and associated lectures, from which I have learnt so much. The first to open was at Gainsborough’s House in Sudbury; they have recently been given over 100 works by Morris’ estate, notably a large collection of landscapes, portraits and some of his wonderful studies of café scenes from the 1920s



For me, the highlight of this exhibition were two of his portraits with direct relevance to my iris collection. One was of Delia (Cordelia) Dobson, for whom the prize winning *Iris* ‘Benton Cordelia’ was named, and the other of Angus Wilson, who lived at Tidcombe Manor in Wiltshire. Morris credits Wilson with introducing him to iris breeding in 1934



In an article written in 1947 for the American iris society Wilson wrote about his own iris breeding and went on to say “...*Then the war came and I was obliged to turn my garden into a market garden to grow food for local shops and canteens. I regretted it bitterly, but as far as the development of the iris in its plicata forms it was probably a godsend, mine was beginners luck, but now Cedric Morris, a brilliant breeder, took up the reins and after a year or two of very scientific work produced flowers far lovelier than mine.....*”

As far as I know none of Wilson’s irises have survived, indeed they may all have been casualties of World War Two some as a result of the ploughing, described in a fascinating letter from Olive Murrell to Morris written in 1942.

Another *Iris* - ‘Odo’ - named for his partner Paul Odo Cross, received an award in trials in Rome in 1939. Wilson wrote in 1946 “*It was however, sterile, a weak grower and subsequently died out. I am sure it cannot have survived the bombardment of Rome*”

The other exhibitions were also eye-openers. One at the Garden Museum was dedicated to Morris's flower paintings. I had seen illustrations of many of them, but it was wonderful to see the originals. The highlight for me was 'Heralding' (1959) as it features Iris 'Benton Olive' in a vase of mixed flowers.



*Iris 'Benton Cordelia'*

Philip Mould's lecture at the Garden Museum also opened my eyes to Morris' artistic style, amongst other things, saying that Morris painted character not beauty. I think this describes perfectly his flower, bird and landscape paintings and certainly his portraits, about which Morris once said, "I paint a portrait and lose a friend"!

So can 2019 be as good? The answer is yes. As I write contracts have been exchanged for the purchase of Benton End, by two Morris enthusiasts. Their intention is to run a charitable trust – 'The Benton End Trust'.

At this early stage the full aims and objectives are under discussion, but it will be inspired by the words from the original idea for setting up the East Anglian School of Drawing and Painting "to encourage freedom of invention, enthusiasm and enjoyment". The plan is to run courses and exhibitions which reflect Morris' interest in art, plants, gardening and cookery. This will be a wonderful facility for Suffolk, in particular Hadleigh. Watch this space!



*Benton End*

*Tommy Tonberg is Suffolk Group's guest speaker on 23 February (see the Events list). He is a gardener, author and photographer who lives and gardens just north of Oslo. He gives talks in Norway, Sweden and the US, and has written six gardening books, all in Norwegian.*

## TALES FROM A NORWEGIAN GARDEN

*TOMMY TONSBERG*

**I**n this talk I take you on a journey through my own garden in Norway as well as some other Norwegian gardens, and the plants that we can grow here where snow and frost covers the garden for up to six months of the year. Even though the climate may be cold, we can still grow a wide arrange of plants, everything from herbs and vegetables to wonderful alpines, herbaceous perennials and the odd tender plants that gets housed indoors in winter.

We began our garden nine years ago. It started out as a plant-poor garden, only a lawn and a field that was too steep to grow crops on, but steadily we've made several garden rooms, with different themes and plants. Today we have a large garden of about one acre which consist of mainly herbaceous plants, trees and shrubs, but we also have a pond, an exotic garden, herb garden, vegetable garden, a woodland, rock garden and too many tender plants in pots.

There will be photos from the Arctic Alpine Botanic Garden in Tromsø and the Oslo Botanic Garden as well as photos from smaller private gardens.

As the main reason we can grow anything at all in Norway is The Gulf Stream there will be a bit of focus on that and the way it warms up the country, as well as how our Plant Hardiness Map helps us when choosing plants



*Right: Himalayan blue poppy (Meconopsis baileyi)*





*From top: The Herb Garden is at its best in August. The Exotic Garden is filled with warm colours in late summer and autumn.*

### EAGG GARDEN TOUR 26-28 September 2019

The East Anglian Garden Group invite you to join them on their East Midlands Garden Tour from 26-28 September visiting Coton Manor, Hodnet Hall, Wollerton Old Hall and Ashwood Nurseries with John Massey's Garden. Talks will be arranged with the head gardeners or owners. The price, including two nights at the Holiday Inn Telford is £270 per person sharing twin room with a single room supplement of £34. For further details and booking forms contact [erica.bolam@sky.com](mailto:erica.bolam@sky.com)

# THE ART OF FLOWERS

*DARREN ANDREWS*

Depictions of plants have changed over time; early portrayals of plants are most usually encountered in illuminated religious texts and in ‘herbals’. Herbals have a distinct role in guiding the user to the appropriate plant to treat their ailment; in religious texts plants were decorative, while often adding a message relevant to the text. It is therefore odd that the plants in herbals are so often unrealistic in their appearance whilst those in illuminated scripts are fantastically realistic and detailed.

When looking at these ‘Herbal’ pictures, apart from the fact that they are often woodblock engravings, the thing that strikes me most are the often fantastical addition of beasts and men integrated into the image and the lack of relative sizing with respect to the flowers or fruits to the leaves. One wonders if these depictions emphasise the relevant part, rather than seeking accuracy. This would certainly fit with the way in which herbalism was practised in the medieval period.



There is a theory, which some believe goes as far back as Dioscorides 1500 years ago, called the doctrine of signatures. This theory suggests that plants are used to heal the body part they most resemble.

Plants such as Pulmonaria (Lungwort) apparently have leaves that resemble the lungs and therefore, smoking those leaves would alleviate lung disease. My personal favourite is the Lesser Celandine, or Pilewort (the suffix wort is a

translatable as ‘of worth’; the piles are the bulbous growths on the roots). I have never investigated how the treatment was administered. The medieval herbalist used classical texts which must have proved difficult, since plants with the same name were often wildly different, the hyacinth of the Greek legend bore the mournful exclamation *Al Al* (alas) on the petals and was probably red as it sprung from Hyacinth’s blood (possibly a fritillary).

The plants seen in illuminated scripts are truly wonderful and instantly recognizable. Apart from their obvious artistic enhancement, messages, obvious to the then reader, are included in the type of plant chosen.

Violets denote humility (hence ‘Shrinking Violet’) while Strawberries could denote the soul, as well as physical pleasure (Bosch uses it effectively in his allegorical paintings to show how sin equated with a brief moment of pleasure).



Above: From *The Falcon's Bath*, 1400-1415, wool tapestry, Met Museum of Art (US); Left: *Psalterium nocturnus*, XVII Century. Italian illuminated manuscript letter. (Creative Commons license).

Later depictions of plants become more political. In the beautiful tapestries created during the renaissance, the 'mille-fleur' details seen as the back-drop to the scenes are usually idealized versions of the then popular 'flowery mead', the new pleasure garden of the wealthy. The poor grew vegetables in small enclosed plots. These mille-fleur designs show a remarkable number of identifiable flowers, they were there in the same way we would create a garden now.

The height of floral art was arguably reached during the newly created Dutch Republic of the early 17th century. The Dutch were free from Spain, rich, protestant and socially aware. Art moved away from religious and classical scenes and went in a direction that encapsulated the new sciences, exploration and aspiration. This was the time of tulip-mania and families clamoured to have their expensive tulips and newly imported exotic species captured on canvas. The good protestant ethic that existed still meant that the iconography warned the owner against pride (dragonflies and flies were depictions of the devil amongst the treasures) while the falling petals reminded the patrons of life's fragility. One cannot help but notice that the baroque influences of the time add frills and curlicues that would probably not exist in the real flower.

I had recently seen a small pair of paintings of Bearded Iris which Sarah Cook was able to date purely on the style of the cultivar. I was both impressed and intrigued. How accurate can any image created by man be? The paintings of Cedric Morris are certainly not photographic records but manage to encapsulate the style and shape of the cultivar while staying true to the fashions in art found during the early 20th century. One is left wondering if these paintings should be read as a visual essay, a collection of facts that would never be available in a photograph

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR AFRICAN VIOLETS

*SUSAN ROBERTSON*

Probably more African Violets die of overwatering than from any other cause. All plants need air-spaces in the soil, but African Violets are more sensitive than most. Some authorities say not to water until the plant wilts. Another authority says a healthy African Violet should be given all the water it can use. Your job is to determine how much it can use, and not to drown the roots!

I think it is too extreme to wait until the leaves are visibly wilting; but you can feel the leaves and notice when they have become less stiff than usual. Then you should push your finger into the top of the soil to judge if water is needed. It does not matter if the top surface is dry, but if you cannot feel damp soil in the top centimetre or so you can water, and if you encounter nothing but dust-dry soil as far as you can reach, you need to water.



Water with slightly warm water, from top or bottom. If the soil is just a bit dry it will absorb water easily. If you water from the top, any excess which comes out into the saucer should be poured away. If you water from the

bottom, continue adding water until it is only slowly sucked up and the compost at the top becomes damp, pouring away any excess. After a bit of experience you will know how much to add. Aim to leave the surface no more than damp, as in saturated soil the leaf bases can rot.

Probably watering will be necessary only once a week or so, but this depends on conditions in the room.

If the compost becomes very dry it can be difficult to wet: water added at the top runs round the sides, and water at the base takes a very long time to be absorbed. Either leave with water in the saucer for up to an hour, or stand the pot in a deeper container



Right: *Saintaulia* 'Pink Amiss'.



with water coming about half way up the pot. Try not to leave it so long that the soil is saturated, but if this happens just take care not to water again too soon. The object is to moisten the whole of the contents of the pot. If you repeatedly wet only the top, or top and sides, or only the bottom, the roots in other parts of the pot will die.

Cold water on the leaves will mark them, but warm water will not, unless the sun shines through the droplets. If you get water on the leaves, do not let the plant stand in the sun until it has dried off. If you get water into the crown of the plant, mop it off with a tissue.

African Violets should not be kept in full summer sun, but they do need a reasonable level of light to form flower buds. If you ever find your plant looking really limp, check the soil before watering: if the plant has been overwatered it will wilt and you should leave it in a warm place for the soil to dry. Wilting can also be caused by disease or a chill.

The best potting medium is a peat-based compost, or a modern equivalent. For extended flowering you will need to apply fertiliser; one intended for flowering plants is best, it does not have to be one specially formulated for African Violets.

## TULIPA SPRENGERI

*SUE BANNISTER*

Several years ago I was invited by a friend to visit Sybille Kreutzberger and see her garden in the Cotswolds. She and Pam Schwerdt had gardened at Sissinghurst for many years for Vita Sackville-West. When they retired they bought a house with a small garden which they turned into another paradise. Pam had died a year or two before my visit.

Sybille took us into the garden where we sat under a large tree looking back to the house. Below the tree amongst its roots there was a wonderful group of *Tulipa sprengeri*. I had never seen it growing before, only photographs.

It so inspired me that I spent the rest of the summer looking for bulbs of which none of the specialist bulb companies seemed to have stock so I started searching for seeds. At either Chelsea or Malvern I bought a packet of the previous year's seed from a celebrated bulb grower and planted them straight away, following his instructions as to how to get them to

germinate, one of which was to plant them in a pot and bury it to the level of the rim in a bed. Nothing happened.

In the same autumn we visited our friends Widget and Tim Finn and attended a Suffolk Plant Heritage garden lecture - and scoured the plant stall for interesting things. There were a packet or two of fresh seed of the wondrous tulip and excellent advice on how to grow it from the chairman Maggie Thorpe who had collected the seed from her own garden, I believe. Of course, I leapt at the opportunity.

Her instructions were as follows: to plant the seeds in a clay pot with another slightly larger pot in which to stand the first. There should be a layer of sand between the two pots on the base and the sides. I imagine that this worked as insulation. I used ordinary potting compost with a bit of grit mixed in, sprinkled the seed on top and covered it with a layer of vermiculite or more grit. There were enough seeds for two pots. Then I put it into my small cold frame and watered it from time to time when I thought about it.

To my delight the following spring grass-like shoots covered the surface, each with its seed casing hanging from the tip of the shoot. I left them in cold frame for two more years in the hope they would establish better. Finally I planted them out. The instructions had been not to divide the pots, put the contents of each pot undisturbed into a hole. Being greedy I disobeyed and divided one pot, so that potentially I had three groups.



*Tulipa sprengeri* by Sten,  
CC BY-SA3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Last year, three years on from planting out, one group flowered. When we came back from holiday in mid-May we find four glorious scarlet flowers. Whether the ones which flowered were from the undivided pot I am afraid I don't know.

I shall collect the seed and try again and hand on pots of each to our children in the hope that they will also end up with *tulipa sprengeri* in their gardens.

# POND LIFE

JANET DEDMAN

There is something very rewarding about a garden pond, from the pleasure of seeing the simple reflection of a leaf to the thrill of being visited by a kingfisher hoping for a meal. Of course, if it is a proper wildlife pond there will not be any fish in it, just tadpoles, efts (baby newts) and myriads of other wildlife all trying to eat each other.

When we built our third pond we had experienced all the pitfalls and problems before, so we knew exactly what we wanted. We were lucky enough to inherit a mound formed by a spoil heap from an extension to the house, and we set about building our pond with a wildlife slope at the back and a retaining wall around the front, which we could use to sit on. In the daytime we spend a lot of time dangling our fingers in the water, while at night we peer into the depths with a torch.

The pond is 2ft deep in the middle and has a shelf about 9 inches wide around two-thirds of its perimeter for the marginal plants. In our experience, butyl is the most long-lasting material; you can buy it off a roll at a water garden centre or probably nowadays by mail order. When planning a garden pond, don't be mean. However big you build it, you will wish it was bigger, I promise. The liner will need an underlay to protect it from stones and anything sharp underneath. We built a double retaining wall and tucked the liner between the two courses, finishing with coping stones across the top. Our pond is actually quite big; we emptied all our water butts into it but it still needed another day to fill.

Plants are the most important feature of any pond and arguably the most fun. As I noted earlier, we have learned from our mistakes and know which plants to avoid and which are an absolute must. When we first bought pond plants in the late 1980s there wasn't much information about some very invasive species which have run amok in our streams and rivers (see list). Fortunately, there is more control now on what we should and shouldn't buy.

Oxygenators are vital: without them any body of water will be green and full of algae. They come in many forms, including some great native ones such as hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*). They do not need to be planted; they are usually available in small bunches which can be tossed into the water. The more they grow the more minerals they take up from the water, which in turn helps keep the water clear and healthy for the wildlife. All pond plants grow like mad, so if you know anyone with a

successful pond, they are very likely to be throwing out their surplus plants and will be only too willing to pass them on. That way, you get free plants and also some extras such as water snail eggs or newt eggs, which are often laid on foliage. Beware: you may also get unwelcome guests such as great diving beetles or duckweed. Everything has its place in the order of things; we were very excited to see pair of great diving beetles mating in our day-old pond only to discover that they are the top predator and chomp their way through tadpoles and efts. But being beetles they will fly in to colonise new ponds, together with water boatmen, pond skaters and other types of pond life.

Marginals are the stars of the pond and come in an array of colours from the white of *Caltha leptosepala* through yellow to the crimson of *Lobelia cardinalis*. Aquatic irises also come in various colours and there is a beautiful variegated *Iris laevigata* 'Variegata', which has blue flowers and is very well behaved.

Most marginals need about 4 to 6 inches of water and can be planted in baskets around the shelf of the pond. As they grow, the roots knit together and they hold themselves up. When they have outgrown their space, the baskets can be lifted and the plants divided like any herbaceous plant. There are marginal plants for all seasons: the beautiful marsh marigold *Caltha palustris* starts about March and the pickerel weed *Pointederia cordata* flowers well into September with its stunning blue spears.



We are great birdwatchers and planned the pond to accommodate birds and other wildlife. When we designed the slope, we cemented flat stones onto the liner to lead down into the water; one of the greatest pleasures we get from our pond is watching the starlings or sparrows having a communal bath. Water goes everywhere, and other smaller birds often join in around the edges and enjoy a shower. At a point in the retaining wall we have left out a stone, so that if the pond gets very full if it overflows into a bog garden where we have plants that don't mind standing in wet soil. Plants such



From top:  
*Lobelia  
cardinalis*;  
Aquatic  
irises;  
*Caltha  
palustris*.

as purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, *Primula denticulata*, *Primula florindae*, *Ligularia* varieties and hostas all enjoy a good soaking from time to time. We dug a hole, lined it with a piece of old liner, punctured it in a few places and then back-filled it with soil.

We are being told that we must help our bees and butterflies to survive, and a pond is certainly a magnet for insects of all sizes. Our native water mint *Mentha aquatica* is a favourite with many kinds of bumblebees and butterflies and has the prettiest fluffy blue flowers. All the beneficial pollinators drop in for the odd drink, including hornets (making me duck). Dragonflies arrived the first summer and laid their eggs around the edge of the pond, as did damselflies. Dragonfly nymphs can live in a pond for up to three years before metamorphosing, and they are voracious predators. And, of course, all those tadpoles make lovely fat frogs which help keep the slugs down, allowing us to grow more hostas. A favourite memory of ours was early one February when we had a chorus of at least 50 male frogs, all with their heads poking out of the water, croaking in the pond together, waiting for a female. Surely a garden pond, however big or small, is of huge benefit to any garden.

*This article first appeared in the Hampshire Plant Heritage Journal and is reproduced by kind permission*



## Bellflower Nursery

- ☞ Garden design
- ☞ Hardy plants, alpines, shrubs & climbers
- ☞ National Collection of Alpine Campanulas
- ☞ Gift Vouchers
- ☞ Plant Sourcing

Tel: 07879 644 958  
[sue@bellflowernursery.co.uk](mailto:sue@bellflowernursery.co.uk)  
[www.bellflowernursery.co.uk](http://www.bellflowernursery.co.uk)

# BOTANICA

We are a traditional growing Nursery and Arboretum in Suffolk with an amazing collection of nearly 6,000 species of British grown trees, shrubs and plants.

We only use 100% peat free compost, which we also produce.

We hold the National Plant Heritage Collection of Santolina.

Our wide selection of bare root stock, from fruit trees, to hedging is available to order now.

Chantry Farm, Campsea Ashe,  
Suffolk, IP13 0PZ  
01728 747113  
[www.botanicaplantnursery.co.uk](http://www.botanicaplantnursery.co.uk)

# MEMBERS GARDENS OPEN 2019

GABLE HOUSE, HALESWORTH ROAD, REDISHAM, BECCLES  
NR34 8NE

**Sunday 17 February** 11am – 4.30pm Entry £4.50

Snowdrop Day in aid of National Gardens Scheme. Large collection of snowdrops, aconites and cyclamen in a one-acre garden. Plants for sale. Soup lunches and home made teas

**Sunday 1 September** 11a.m – 5pm Free Entry Autumn bulbs and perennials. Collections of cyclamen, crocus, colchicums, fritillaria, erythroniums, etc. Plants for sale. Salad lunches and home made teas  
Groups welcome by appointment. 01502 575298

COLUMBINE HALL, STOWUPLAND, STOWMARKET, IP14 4AT

**Sunday 17 March** 1 - 4pm, Suffolk Plant Heritage Engleheart Narcissi Collection open day, part of Great Garden Trail, in aid of St Elizabeth Hospice (donations on gate).

**Sunday 28 April** 2 - 5pm, showcasing Columbine's tulips and chance to see late flowering Engleheart daffodils. Entry £5 for St John's Ambulance. Tea and cakes. Contact Kate Elliott, katesusanelliott@gmail.com

BURES OPEN GARDENS

**Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May.** 1pm - 6pm. Entry £5

Annual event in aid of local charities featuring up to 20 gardens on Essex/Suffolk borders. Contact Ken Jackson 01787 227860.

SHELLEY OPEN GARDENS,

**8 and 9 June;** Shelley Hall, Shelley House, Hullwood Barn, 2pm to 5pm, £5 entry fee to all gardens; proceeds to St. Elizabeth Hospice.

Teas, flowers, art exhibition and other stalls in All Saints Shelley, proceeds to All Saints. Contact: jim@malmaisons.plus.com

THE HIDDEN GARDENS OF HADLEIGH

**Saturday 8 June,** 11am - 5pm. Entry £5 from the St Mary's church or any garden on the day; children free. In aid of Friends of St Mary's Church for parish church repairs. Over 20 gardens open. Lunches and teas served in the church with live music and plant sale.

Contact: John Parry-Williams 01473 823233, johnparrywilliams@gmail.com

LAVENHAM HIDDEN GARDENS,

**Sunday 9 June.** 11am - 5 pm.

Whole village event, with around 20 gardens open, in aid of village upkeep and St Nicholas Hospice. Garden and plant related stalls. Dinner at the Swan on the Friday night with guest speaker Matthew Wilson. Contact Gaye Hodges, 01787 247434,



## HIDDEN GARDENS OF BURY

**Sunday 16 June** 11am - 5pm. Entry £5 in aid of St Nicholas Hospice. Around 30 gardens all within walking distance. Tickets in advance from the Apex, on the day marquee on Angel Hill. Contact [Miranda.McCoy@stnh.org.uk](mailto:Miranda.McCoy@stnh.org.uk)

## 6 COLLEGE LANE, BURY ST EDMUNDS IP33 1NN

Part of Bury Hidden Gardens, a walled garden in the former workhouse exercise yards. Summer roses, trees, sun and shade planting. Contact Isobel Ashton 01284 754993.

## THE COACH HOUSE, HALL ROAD, CHELSWORTH IP7 7HX

**Sunday 30 June** 11am - 5pm. Entry £6. children free.

Italian influenced garden, with mature trees, vegetables and fruit trees, once part of Chelsworth Park. Part of event with some 20 gardens open. Contact Sue de Sabata, 01449 740334

## BOTANICA, CHANTRY FARM, CAMPSEA ASHE, WICKHAM MARKET, IP13 0PZ

Santolina Open Week: **Monday 1 July to Friday 5 July**, 9am - 4pm  
Contact 01728 747113. [www/botanicaplantnursery.co.uk](http://www/botanicaplantnursery.co.uk).

EAST BERGHOLT PLACE GARDEN, CO7 6UP at The Place for Plants.  
Open daily **1 March to 30 September**; Open for charity **Sunday 7 April** and **Sunday 28 April** for NGS, **Sunday 12 May** for St Elizabeth Hospice. Contact 01206 299224. See website for times and entry price.

### *EAST ANGLIAN GARDEN GROUP CELEBRITY SPEAKER 2019*

Saturday 23 February at 2.30, Chamberlin Hall Bildeston IP77EZ

### **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR**

#### **'Dancing through borders'**

James is one of the leading garden designers in the UK, and an award-winning writer, entertaining speaker, member of the Council of the RHS and chairman of the RHS Gardens Committee. He has a regular column in *Gardeners World* magazine, and writes for a wide range of gardening publications. He is a third of 'Three Men Went to Mow' together with Joe Swift and Cleve West, producing a series of lighthearted films for YouTube covering many aspects of gardens and gardening. Tickets £10 (EAGG members) and £15 (non-members) in advance from Margaret Birch [margaretgardening1@gmail.com](mailto:margaretgardening1@gmail.com) or 01284 828363.

# GARDENERS' DIARY

Feb 2 Sa	EAGG talk Gail Harland on Snowdrops
Feb 5 Tu	Boxford GS – talk, Dr Peter Coles on Mulberries
Feb 10 Su	Gable House Redisham Open Gardens – ‘Snowdrops’
Feb 16 Sa	EAGG James Alexander-Sinclair ‘Dancing through Borders’
Feb 17 Su	Norfolk Plant Heritage talk, Richard Clark on Sth African Bulbs
Feb 19 Tu	Polstead GC 19.30 Frances Mount on Cedric Morris £4.00
Mar 2 Sa	EAGG Stephen Barstow – Around the World in 80 Plants
Mar 2 Sa	AGS Harlow Show,
Mar 9 Sa	Norfolk & Suffolk HPS – Tony Goode on Crocus
Apr 2 Tu	Boxford GS – talk Jaime Blake, Bressingham’s Dell Garden
Apr 6 Sa	EAGG – talk, Lucy Bellamy, ‘Wild & Brilliant - a Garden from Scratch’
Apr 20 Sa	Hindringham Plant Lovers Fair, NR21 0PN
Apr 27 & 28	Essex Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair, RHS Hyde Hall
Apr 27 Sa	Halesworth Garden Market
Apr 28 Su	SWWAG Plant Fair, Wyken Hall
Apr 29 Mo	Quay Theatre Bank Holiday Plant Market, Sudbury
May 4 Sat	AGS E Anglia Show, Wymondham
May 5 Su	Norfolk Plant Heritage Plant Fair, Hethersett
May 5 Su	Woottens of Wenhaston, Spring Plant Fair
May 7 Tu	Boxford GS talk Matt Oliver, Vegetables at Hyde Hall
May 15 We	EAGG outing to Fairhaven & E Ruston
May 18 Sa	Hadleigh Show
May 18 Sa	Cambridge Botanic Garden Plant Fair
May 21 Tu	Chelsea Flower Show to 25th
May 25 Sa	Creake Abbey Plant Lovers Fair
May 26 Su	Suffolk Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair, Helmingham Hall
May 29/30	Suffolk Show
Jun 5 We	RHS Chatsworth, till 9th
Jun 8 Sa	E Ruston Old Vicarage Plant Fair
Jun 9 Sa	Lavenham Open Gardens
Jun 16 Su	Bury Hidden Gardens
Jun 19 We	EAGG to Wickets, Langley Upper Green CB11 4RY
Jun 23 Su	Chelsworth Open Gardens
Jun 25 Tu	EAGG Summer Social Long Melford
Jul 14 Sun	Suffolk Nurseries Plant Fair Fullers Mill



# Anna Pavord

# BULBS FOR ALL SEASONS



2.30pm Saturday 23rd March  
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ



**Tickets: Plant Heritage members - £8.00**

**Guests - £15.00**

By cheque in advance to Isobel Ashton, 6 College Lane, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 1NN

Email: [isobel.ashton@btinternet.com](mailto:isobel.ashton@btinternet.com)



## REVIEW: 'ROSE' BY CATHERINE HORWOOD PUBLISHED BY REAKTION BOOKS

WIDGET FINN

In 2017 the BBC television programme Gardeners' World invited its viewers to vote for the most influential garden plant of the past 50 years. Unsurprisingly the winner was the rose. What is surprising is that it has taken so long for a book to be published on the subject which charts its botanical, religious, literary and artistic history in fascinating and colourful detail. Catherine Horwood, a horticultural historian who created a glorious garden in Clare, Suffolk, which will be well known to many Plant Heritage members, took up the challenge. The result is a gem of a book, lavishly illustrated, which is so imbued with this most sensuous of flowers that you can almost smell its scent when turning the pages.

'Rose' tells the story of what makes this botanical family so loved, from Cleopatra's rose-petal-filled bed and Nijinsky's Spectre de la rose ballet, to the highly prized attar of rose oil used by ancient Persians and for the most expensive modern perfumes. We learn the significance of the rose imagery of Elizabeth I's embroidered dresses and how to make rose hip syrup and pot pourri. Catherine Horwood wears her scholarship lightly, and informs with fascinating detail. This book will delight both the gardener and non-gardener alike.

## ADVICE FOR ROSE GROWERS

FROM SARAH RAVEN

For those of you hoping to grow roses without all that black spot and other fungal problems, try underplanting with salvias, hybrid microphylla and *Salvia x jamensis* to keep disease at bay according to Sarah Raven who uses this method with great success for roses in her cutting garden. She believes that salvias have sulphur in their scent profile and that in the heat of the day they release some sort of natural fungicide into the air to keep the roses clean. The hooded flowers of salvias are also stacked full of nectar attracting plenty of beneficial insects such as lacewings and ladybirds whose larvae then feast on aphids. That also helps to keep roses clean.

### OVERHEARD AT THE EAGG AGM

If you have trouble with animals digging up your bulbs try planting them covered in chili pepper powder, especially good when planting peas. It certainly fools the mice!

# SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**President & chairman** Margaret Thorpe, Weavers House, Swan Street, Boxford, Sudbury CO10 5NZ, 01787 211 346, maggiethorpe37@gmail.com

**Vice Chairman** Neil Bradfield, 2 Holmwood Cottages, Bower House, Tye, Polstead, Colchester CO6 5BZ, 01787 211816, scuddingclouds2@gmail.com

**Treasurer** Pat Stanley, Newlands Hall Lane, Witnesham, Ipswich IP6 9HN, 01473 785585, nickpatstanley@btinternet.com

**Secretary and membership secretary** Isobel Ashton, 6 College Lane, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1NN 01284 754993, isobel.ashton@btinternet.com

**Journal editor** Widget Finn, 07876 255554, widget.finn@gmail.com

**Propagation officer** Anne Tweddle, Brook Farm, Charsfield, Woodbridge IP13 7QA, 01473 737337, anne@tweddle1.co.uk

**National collections co-ordinator** Dorothy Cartwright, 605 Neptune Marina, 1 Coprolite Street, Ipswich IP3 0BN, 01473 289556, collections@suffolkplantheritage.com

**IT administrator** Anthony Pigott, Kersey's Farm, Mendlesham, Stowmarket IP14 5RB, 01449 766104, anthony.pigott@btinternet.com. Website enquiries it.admin@suffolkplants.org.uk

**Press officer** Nick Stanley, Newlands Hall Lane, Witnesham, Ipswich IP6 9HN, 01473 785585, nickpatstanley@btinternet.com

**Speakers secretary** Darren Andrews, 2, Hadleigh Farm Cottages, Woodlands, Raydon, IP7 5PY, 01473 822987, waspfactory72@yahoo.co.uk

## **Committee member**

Sarah Cook, Hullwood Barn, Bolton Lane, Shelley, Ipswich IP7 5RE, 01473 822400, sarah@malmaisons.plus.com

[www.suffolkplantheritage.com](http://www.suffolkplantheritage.com)

