



Derbyshire Group

NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2024

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COVER PICTURE: HYDRANGEA PINKY WINKY

Hydrangeas have done really well this year, the clue is in the name "hydra" or water, and we have had plenty of that this year. The name 'hydrangea' comes from Greek and it means 'water vessel'. The national collection of Hydrangeas is at Darley Abbey Park in Derby and is a wonderful place to visit.

FROM THE CHAIR

What a year we gardeners have had! I think it will go down as one of wettest on record and the slug population seems to have tripled. My roses, aconitums and all the persiacarias have been fantastic but it was the end for some of my Nepetas and delphiniums, the Scabiosa '*Miss Willmott*' gave a poor show and my thymes are on their last legs. I feel our autumn gardens have fared better thanks to the late sun we had in in the last couple of months. I would love to know which plants have thrived in your gardens this year; we could redefine the definition of hardy plants; maybe a national survey would be interesting.

I guess every year is different in the garden and It's a bit like that at the Hardy Plant Society Derbyshire Group (HPSD); we have had some big changes over the last two years. I took over from Nigel as chair. Nigel had been the chair for five years and was excellent in the role. He is a humorous, dedicated, keen gardener and is just a lovely person. He was a hard act to follow so I was nervous about stepping up. However, Nigel has been a huge support and is currently covering vice chair until someone else offers to help. I have really enjoyed this year, and you have all made it an absolute pleasure.

We are also sad to be losing Martin Brown, an ex-chair of the group, who has sat on the committee for a number of years and decided it is time to do other things, but we will still see him and Chris at our meetings. We will miss his energy, enthusiasm and creativity at the committee meetings. Our membership secretary Mike Vardy has also decided after around 7 years in the role he would like finish in April, We are looking for someone who would be willing to work with him over the next few months and to take the role forward as it becomes more computer based.

Another change last year was that our Newsletter editor Hildegard stepped down to focus on her National Garden Scheme commitments, we were very sorry to lose her, but she is still very much part of HPSD community. Thankfully after the AGM last year Pauline Little offered to be the new editor and so our newsletter lives on. Linda O'Neil is taking over the booking of speakers and Pauline Little has offered to take on the Meet At Destination (MAD) trips: a big thank you to both of them. Celia will stay on as Group Secretary now her workload is more manageable.

This doesn't mean the committee is at full strength we still have vacancies for volunteers to take on a number of roles and would also love to have more people involved with the general running of the Group.

The Hardy Plant Society Derbyshire had several excellent speakers in 23/24. Some of course didn't live up to expectations, others I have heard described as marmite, but on the whole they were inspiring and were worth the investment. Celia arranged the Meet at Destination events in our members' gardens starting in June with Sue and Alan's garden in Shirland. We had a lovely afternoon in their Japanese inspired garden; all the money collected went to the Green Fingers Charity. The following month Jennie and Keith kindly opened their garden in Radbourne to members. Although the weather was against us the garden was lovely with its well-stocked herbaceous borders and new pond area. Our final event was in August when Pauline opened her garden in Repton, raising money for the NGS charities. Unfortunately I was away and couldn't

visit this garden, but heard from others it was a lovely day. It was a shame that the number were low at all these events as the cakes were delicious, the gardens lovely and the company was great.

As always Ian (and Anne) did a fantastic job running the trips. The first trip was on the 26th June to Powis Castle and The Dingle Nursery and the second on the 11th September to Bourton House and Kiftsgate. Ian is looking at scheduling the trips for 2025, one in April and one in June. Look out for the sign-up sheets and sign up early to make sure you get a place.

Looking forward to next year, 2025 is the 25th anniversary of The Hardy Plant Society Derbyshire Group and we are thinking of ways in which we can celebrate and acknowledge our history. The committee have a few ideas in the pipeline, but we want to hear from you, our members about how you would like to commemorate this milestone. We will of course be hosting the Hardy Plant Society ALD /AGM on the 13th Sept 2025. Our first venue fell through due to structural problems with the roof, but we have a new venue, Eastwood Hall, and are in the process of firming up the speakers and setting the ticket price with national. The next stage will be the detailed planning and scheduling of tasks which you will hear much more about at our meetings.

Finally, I would like to thank all our volunteers that give their time and expertise so freely. This includes those that grow plants for our plant sales, volunteer for our plant fair, those that organise the raffle, the sales table and teas and coffee. As well as those who meet and greet new members and those who set up and operate our audio-visual system and lots of other help. Without them the monthly meetings couldn't happen.

Ann Franks

NATIONAL HARDY PLANT SOCIETY NEWS

The HPS continues to go from strength to strength; at the Lincolnshire AGM in September our new chairman Steve Buskin was voted in. Steve will continue to build on the work undertaken by Pamela Clark and take the society forward over the next few years. He has been a member of the Hardy Plant Society Sussex group for more than 15 years and describes joining HPS as one of the best decisions he's ever made as a gardener. He gardens in the city garden in Brighton that he shares with his husband and dog and counts *Thalictrum* 'Elin' as his (current) favourite hardy plant. He also holds part of a dispersed National Collection of Noel Burr daffodils.

He is joined by a new Vice Chair Mike Millington and a new Honorary Secretary Maliya Price. Mike is a neighbour of our group as he's based in Nottingham and so I will be inviting him over to meet us at the Derbyshire Group in the near future. After Pamela's appeal for volunteers earlier this year the society now has a full complement of Officers and Trustees. There is also a new newsletter editor Sarah Probert (newsletter@hardy-plant.org.uk) and a new image library postholder Alan Lennox, who says the 2024 HPS photo competition closes in early Dec so don't forget to get your entries in <https://hardy-plant.org.uk/photo-competition/>

I think the best news of all is the appointment of Val Bourne, our new Vice President, and Rachel de Thame, our new Ambassador, both of whom are both big supporters of HPS.

We continue to raise the profile of the society within the garden press and wider community and are starting to get the message out there about who we are and what we do. We will be at next years' Garden Press Event and The Shows & Events team would love to hear from members willing to support the Society at the various garden shows around the country; if you are interested please contact shows.events@hardy-plant.org.uk.



Of course there are some difficult decisions ahead for the new officers and high on the agenda is the increase in subscriptions. These have remained at the same rate since 2010 and are no longer sustainable as they no longer meet the day to day running costs of the society.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello from your new editor, at least not so new as I edited the first 10 newsletters from 2000 – 2005 so I know that I will have to put pen to paper and persuade others to do the same; it is so much better if you make the contributions so that we get a diverse range of views and experiences and I can concentrate on the techy bits. The first member article is from the 2005 newsletter with an update from 2024. The first newsletter was just 4 pages long, but the text was smaller and there weren't so many pictures! My main memory was of printing them, which took ages on our home printer and involved several changes of cartridge and careful handling to make sure that there were no upside-down pages! In those days far fewer members had access to electronic devices; I will not be volunteering to do the printing again.

Thank you once again for your various contributions to this newsletter.

Many thanks to Hildegard for acting as editor since 2021. As a fellow NGS garden opener I know Hildegard well and understand the work involved as county organiser.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

October 19 – Mike Davey

Plant Genetic Engineering. A Simple Introduction

Mike is a scientist who worked for many years at Nottingham University as a lecturer. He has a degree in botany and has worked with plants all his life. Mike is involved with 'Ruddington in Bloom' and local open gardens.

The AGM will be held after this talk

November 16 – Fergus Garrett

Biodiversity Audit at Great Dixter (How a garden can support wildlife)

Fergus is CEO and Head Gardener at Great Dixter Garden in Rye. He took over the garden management from the original owner and designer, Christopher Lloyd.

December 14 – Tom Nicholls

Growing in Sand

Tom is the Senior Gardener at York Gate Garden at Adel, near York

ACCOUNTS FOR 2023/2024

THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY DERBYSHIRE GROUP

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/7/24

RECEIPTS	Y.E. 31/7/24	Y.E. 31/7/23
Annual subscriptions	567.00	653.00
Meetings fees	1003.00	900.00
Raffle proceeds	341.50	471.11
Annual Plant Fair	2978.60	2652.10
Coach trips	3156.00	3100.00
Book, card, etc. sales	517.35	576.85
Plant sales	311.85	336.80
Donations	0.00	22.00
Bank interest	213.86	99.88
TOTAL RECEIPTS	9089.16	8811.74
EXPENDITURE		
Speakers fees & expenses	2401.10	1233.60
Hall hire: monthly meetings	391.00	311.00
Hall Hire : Committee Meetings	53.40	44.00
Hall Hire : Plant Fair	63.50	63.50
Refreshments	57.74	80.30
Coach trip	3166.75	3030.00
Book, card, etc., purchases	399.29	358.19
Raffle prizes	116.39	84.25
Plant Fair : Stallholders share	1683.20	1548.95
Printing & photocopying	30.00	46.26
Postage, stationery	66.91	44.67
Website	109.98	169.98
Appreciations	7.00	80.97
Charitable Donations	0.00	0.00
RHS subscription	45.00	45.00
Committee expenses	0.00	0.00
Misc expenses	26.20	0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	8617.46	7140.67
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	471.70	1,671.07

BALANCE SHEET

Cash in hand	70.00	70.00
Current Account (Santandar)	4,501.32	2,914.16
Deposit Account (Mansfield BS)	10,285.41	10,072.55
- Uncleared cheques issued	-1,284.00	-454.68
Accrual re September coach trip	-500.00	
+ Uncredited lodgements	0.00	0.00
ACCUMULATED YEAR END FUNDS	13,073.73	12,602.03
Financed by:-		
Opening accumulated funds	12,602.03	10,930.96
Surplus (deficit) for year	471.70	1,671.07
ACCUMULATED YEAR END FUNDS	13,073.73	12,602.03

I have examined the books and records of the HPS Derbyshire Group and believe this Statement of Accounts to be in accordance with the information supplied. Examiner:

Date:

9-9-24

N.J. Nall

GARDENS VISITED

DAY TRIP TO POWIS CASTLE AND THE DINGLE

It was the first time that I had been on a coach trip with HPS but I had been to Powis Castle several times before. As always, the terraces were full of slightly exotic plants that I can't name



and that won't survive in my garden over winter but interesting anyway. The hedges drew my attention, watching one gardener precision cutting a box hedge to create a perfect wall showed real dedication and attention to detail. By contrast the huge yew "tumps" had an artistic "Lord of the Rings" feel to them; I just needed a grandchild to



hide in the trunks.

Keeping the famous yew "tumps" in tip-top condition is a challenge, but the gardeners make the task look easy. In late summer and early autumn, they take to the air in a cherry-picker and spend several weeks trimming the garden's high topiary. This guarantees the hedges look spectacular for the next 12 months.



Further afield the shady grass meadows were full of spotted orchid flowers; it was an area to linger in the cool on a very hot day.



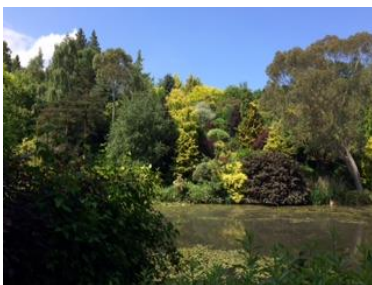
Pauline Little



And another report from Nigel, previously published on Facebook. We had a super day trip to Powis Castle and the nearby garden and nursery, The Dingle, last week. The castle gardens were magnificent; we seemed to visit at just the right time to see so much in bloom, including many tender and half-hardy plants. Due to the aspect, sheltering walls and the climate, the plants generally seemed far more advanced than our own.



The Dingle garden featured numerous trees and shrubs around a large lake, thus affording respite and shelter on a sweltering day, and there was an extensive nursery in which to indulge in further acquisitions for our own gardens. A happy group returned home with grateful thanks to Ian and Anne for organizing such a splendid day.



Nigel Needham

VISIT TO THE GARDENS OF BOURTON HOUSE AND KIFTSGATE COURT

A good number of our group arrived at South Normanton and boarded a coach to the Cotswolds for a visit to the gardens of Bourton House and Kiftsgate Court. The weather forecast wasn't good and this did not help the outward journey which was dogged by rain showers, hold-ups due to road works, and the failure of the coach's air conditioning which caused the windscreen to continually steam up. Our trusty trip organiser Ian saved the day by repeatedly clearing the driver's view with a cloth.

We arrived in the Cotswolds a little later than expected but in good spirits as the rain showers had eased and the sun was shining. I had visited both these gardens before, but this was many years ago and earlier in the season. All I could remember from my previous visit was that the garden at Kiftsgate made a big impression. Little did I realise that by the end of the day it was going to be Bourton House that left me with the Wow factor, and I think this was due primarily to the time of year. This is supported by an extract in the Bourton information leaflet that states that the garden is always beautiful but absolutely glorious in the summer months and early autumn. By contrast I think Kiftsgate is at its best in spring and early summer.



Our first location was Bourton House and as we entered the garden I was immediately struck by the vibrant container plantings made up from a mixture of exotic annuals and perennials as well as many interesting succulents. This cast of plants extended to the many borders and beds and were joined by an extensive range of unusual and rare shrubs and trees. All the plantings made maximum use of



texture, colour and form. I took many photographs but none of them managed to convey the beauty and interest provided by this garden.

We left Boughton just after lunch and moved on to Kiftsgate Court. The views and vistas at Kiftsgate were as dramatic as ever but in comparison with Boughton house the garden looked a little tired and jaded and again I think this was due to the time of year. Just as we were about to set off from Kiftsgate, on our journey home, the showers returned with a torrential downpour providing a full stop to our visit. The journey home was uneventful and we arrived safely back in South Normanton around 19.30 after what for me was an interesting and enjoyable day.



Chris Bowyer

MAD GARDEN VISITS

(For anyone new to HPS MAD means Meet At Destination, so no transport provided, just a nice afternoon out at a nice garden with nice people.) Ed

Thatched Farm, Radbourne, Derbyshire A party of 16 Members of the Hardy plant Society visited Jennie Pegram's garden on Saturday 6th July.



Weather was pleasant if a little blustery, but this did not spoil our enjoyment of this beautiful garden.

The house is a timber framed property and located very much in the Countryside just outside Mickleover, but not thatched any more.

The gardens are full of herbaceous plants and were full of colour on the day we visited



The pond was bordered by many candelabra primroses and cowslips as can be seen by the attached photo

A very enjoyable visit and many thanks must go to Jennie and Keith for their hospitality and letting us see their lovely garden

Mike Bone & Linda Galloway

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

OCTOBER 2005 ARTICLE – MY £32 STICK

Back in January, just after Roy Lancaster's talk, I wanted to mark a promotion at work with a tree and decided on an *Acer tegmentosum* "White Tigress" as recommended by Roy. I researched and it was £42 everywhere unless I bought twenty and then it was £21. Rather a lot but I thought it would be worth it. With teeth bared and nails extended I explained my celebratory purchase to my drop dead gorgeous (or so he thinks) boss - he was highly amused.



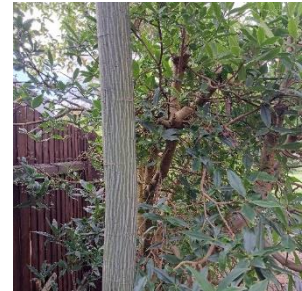
Well, we went to Bluebell Nursery and rather expected a well-formed tree so were a bit disappointed at a four foot stick, much like the bamboo it was attached to – but at least it was £32 not £42 as expected. It was duly planted with much preparation and carefully wrapped in fleece – this provoked comments from daughter – "why have you put a ghost in the garden?". Some while later number one son arrives home for a visit – "Have you seen my new tree?"; his reply "Oh I thought it was a gap in the fence"; my response – "that stick cost £32 – don't compare it to a gap in the fence; you'll offend it"; I guess it didn't hear as it is now 6 months later and the 4 foot stick is 8 foot (well, over 7 foot anyway) and is covered in golden green leaves and the bark is colouring up nicely. It did come under threat from a huge

leylandii being felled, where all the branches were passed over a fence just inches away from it - needless to say, we took great care to protect it. I am now looking forward to the best season for *Acer tegmentosum* "White Tigress" – which is of course winter.

Update August 2024 - Roy Lancaster visited us in January 2005 to mark our 5 year anniversary as a group and recommended this tree. My £32 stick is now quite a large tree but still quite slender and it screens a neighbouring upstairs window quite nicely. In recent years when I take people on garden a tour, I always describe it as my £40 stick; how one's memory fails in the detail!



Pauline Little



GARDENERS' WORLD LIVE 2024

Mandy and Glenys won tickets in the HPS raffle to visit the Gardeners' World show at the NEC. Here are their reports.

So, after a break of more than 30 years and on an unusually dry morning, we find ourselves heading down the A38 from Alfreton on an almost deserted road. It was a pleasure driving, but maybe not so much a pleasure getting up before the robin and blackbirds.

After an hour we encountered lots of traffic cones, lots of huge earth movers and lots of HS2 works. We guessed we had arrived in Birmingham and were close to our destination and this was the only time on the outward journey that we hit a traffic jam, trying to get into the NEC car park.

Literally, within a few steps from the car we were amongst the show. At opening time, there was not the jostling to see things, which was nice, so we headed straight for the Floral Marquee (past the 45 wheelbarrows planted up by school children) and it really is impossible for us to put into words here, the standard of the plants on show.

Amazing, brilliant, beautiful, unusual, rare, exotic, calming, exciting – where do you start? We took many pictures, none of which portray adequately the sheer excellence of the plants on display.

The UK International Orchid Show in the centre of the marquee was teeming with flowers neither of us had ever seen before. The Hostas were completely hole-less and completely sold out of a wonderful miniature called "Pandora's Box", sadly.



As we passed the new plant introductions vying to win the Peter Seabrook Award, we cast our own votes (a Cornus and a Coleus) and will be interested to see which new plant will take the title.

Lunch was a sandwich in the Subscriber Lounge listening to Joe Swift's entertaining talk detailing

his failsafe plants, Erigeron, any Euphorbia, Sarcococca and grasses amongst them.

Outside the marquee, the day remained dry, thankfully, and the crowd numbers had swelled significantly so we had to be careful not only avoiding the people but also the trollies laden with plants, garden gizmos and even one containing a sleeping child!



The planting in Adam Frost's "The Chef's Table" garden was inspirational and the Bonsall Field Barn Garden was a delight.

Weaving through the plant stalls and garden ornament stalls, we made our way back and sat for a few minutes discussing how the weather had affected gardening with a couple on

their elevated, open garden, who were from North Wales.

So, trundling back down the M1, slightly less talkative and a lot more tired, we reviewed our 9000+ steps and both agreed it had been a very enjoyable outing.

We would like to say a big thankyou to the Derbyshire HPS Group Committee for obtaining the tickets and would thoroughly recommend GW Live 2025 to anyone thinking of going next year.

Mandy Wood

GARDENERS' WORLD NEC BIRMINGHAM

We set off – bright and early – at 7.30 to be precise, to travel along the A38 to the NEC Birmingham. A fairly problem-free route – thanks to Mandy's excellent driving and navigational skills, especially in the mind-numbing roundabouts. The journey was around an hour and a half and pretty soon we were being very efficiently directed to a car park area full of tented displays, and several plots of gardened area. It was good being early and amongst some of the first there – to be able to see and manoeuvre! We were prepared for a long day!

To describe all that we saw would be impossible but there were many outstanding displays – the garden designed by Adam Frost was by far the best for me - "The Chef's table"; it had everything. "The Bonsall Field Barn" by Faye Geesa - was so beautifully presented and was also a favourite.

All of the show gardens were excellent and different, each so clearly themed. There were so many innovative ideas to draw from. Then the equipment and materials being used to enhance areas – and a particularly clever design was a curved, tactile handled garden fork; replaced the short straight handle; a very good gardening gift idea! Gradually it became busy, but always with a pleasant genial atmosphere; there was something for everyone. We stopped for lunch in the subscriber lounge, which is adjacent to the live theatre, and so could listen to Joe Swift. He then moved into the area where we were – pausing to compliment Mandy on her choice of lunch – saying it was his favourite sandwich. We could watch again as he was interviewed and again complimented Mandy - much to everyone's amusement. In the Good Food Hall was Si King, but we had so much to do and see that we didn't venture down into that area.

Perhaps it's a gardening thing, but chatting to perfect strangers and sharing knowledge is the most natural and probably best way to learn about plants. The displays were all stunning and the respective exhibitors were helpful, giving advice freely. We left in the late afternoon with plants and goody bags, very contented having been totally indulged by the beauty, the variety, the quality and the memorable scents of the flowers and the plants on show. It was a totally memorable day.

Glenys Douglas



WHAT JUST ARRIVED – GATE CRASHERS

Last year I wrote about plants that I left behind when I sold part of my garden to a neighbour; this time I am looking at plants that just couldn't leave me and gate-crashed their way into two new areas created from lawns.

One surprise was a *Coronilla valentina* 'brookhill blue'; this has occasionally seeded before, but I was very pleased to find a small seedling; I had to rescue it before it was trodden on as it was growing in area of gravel which is walked over regularly. Being in the pea family they don't like to be transplanted so I carefully dug it up and nurtured it in a pot for a month or two before planting it next to the house in a warm spot to replace a huge wisteria. Optimistic you might say but it will get there in time and in the meantime, I have planted some sweet peas around it. They are doing really well so I hope the spot will suit another pea and I am looking forward to the scent over the winter.



I grew a white hardy *Lobelia siphilitica* from seed a few years ago and that has appeared in both the white and the blue form. It is quite pretty, and it does fill in some gaps readily and I know I didn't plant it.



Atriplex hortensis, red mountain spinach, was in the garden when we moved in 36 years ago and has appeared regularly ever since so it couldn't resist popping up in unexpected places. Depending on the conditions it will grow from 1 foot to 3 foot tall and is basically red leaves; it is easy to recognise and pull up if not wanted and has never been a nuisance. It is an annual, but I have never made any effort to save seeds from one year to the next.

Foxgloves and forget-me-nots were no surprise but calendula which I haven't had for years were quite welcome as a spot of orange.

Californian poppies also just appeared where there was space and give me great joy. Some germinate in the autumn and some in the spring, so they give me a long season of colour and I just love their bright orange colour. This year none of the autumn seedlings survived in the winter wet but more did grow in the spring.



I have hardly had any opium poppies this year but enough have appeared to ensure survival.

A welcome surprise was *Verbena rigida* which jumped 6 foot from one side of the path to another, completely disappearing from one area and reappearing a distance away in an area that was lawn previously; most odd.

I have been plagued with tree seedlings oak, hazel, hawthorn, willow, birch and a few ash and sycamore. They come free from the wind or with some help from the squirrels. The willow are the most troublesome and I notice quite a few growing in peoples' front gardens down the road; they are clearly unaware that that small looking shoot will grow to 30 foot in a few years and outcompete most other plants. Once about 6 inches tall they are hard to pull out and need an implement to uproot them.

I am sure I didn't plant any *Geranium pratense striatum* but they have appeared, of course G.



pratense is on a mission to take over any available space, beaten only by nettle leaved campanulas in their determination to become squatters in any available space.

I planted a couple of troughs of *Sempervivum* and the crows or other birds peck at them and drop bits into the surrounding gravel. These have now grown and look quite pretty, welcome gate crashers!

Don't get me started on the weeds this year.....it's been the same for everyone I am sure!

Pauline Little

SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

There are a lot of buzzwords flying around in gardening at the moment - no dig, peat free, rewilding, sustainability, to name but a few.

Of these, I would like to consider sustainable gardening and how it can apply to us as gardeners and allotmenters.

Firstly, I would hazard a guess that a fair number of us are already practising some aspects of sustainability, especially if we care about the world we share with other creatures.

So, what do I see as the main principles of sustainable gardening?

1. To have as little impact on our growing spaces as possible - what does this mean in practice?

Well for me it means caring for the soil by

a) not turning it over. This destroys soil life as in chopping up earthworms and disrupting fungal networks which have a symbiotic relationship with plant roots. These contribute to the health of the soil. Also, soil is a huge carbon sink - digging i.e. inverting the soil releases carbon into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to global warming.

b) not using artificial fertilisers, weed killers and other sprays. Again, these adversely affect the earthworm population and other microscopic fauna.

c) making as much compost as possible. Charles Dowding, the no dig advocate, says "feed the soil not the plants".

d) ensuring the soil is covered with plants and/or mulch throughout the year to prevent erosion

and damage to its structure. When does one see bare soil in nature? Weeds are Nature's natural colonisers (please note: I am not advocating cultivating weeds!) Growing green manures and mulching with organic matter are ideal for this purpose.

2. Reduce the amount of plastic used in the garden/allotment. This is a difficult one as it is so pervasive - compost sacks, plastic pots, fleece and enviromesh, etc. I am as guilty as the next person when it comes to this. I do try, as in making my own compost and plant feeds from comfrey and nettles and reusing pots and trays many times over. This can also help to create a system whereby inputs and outputs are kept to a minimum- the garden/allotment in effect becomes a self-sustaining entity.

3. To create a haven for all wildlife from the larger ones such as birds, bats, frogs, toads and hedgehogs to the smaller such as spiders, beetles and microscopic soil dwellers. If the above have been followed this should naturally occur.

A useful formula is RETHINK, REDUCE, REUSE to inform all our gardening practices.

For anyone who is interested in this subject I can recommend a book by Doug Stewart, 'A Gardener's Guide to Sustainable Gardening'.

I have only scratched the surface of this topic but I hope I have given everyone some food for thought. The important thing is to keep an open mind.

Happy Gardening and Growing. 🌱🌸

Linda O'Neill

LET'S FACE IT



I often wonder how many of our members view our own Facebook page; I'm guessing not too many if the number of submissions is any guideline. Amongst other things the page was created to provide interest for members and keep them up to date with 'group matters', and to serve as a window to anyone else with an interest in gardening and hopefully encourage them to join us. Unfortunately, we don't seem to have attracted new members from this source. In my opinion we will only do so if we have a fairly regular supply of contributions: we will hardly look a lively, vibrant, committed group if the latest item(s) are weeks or months old. The main contributor is Chairman Ann who does a sterling job in providing reports on our meetings, forthcoming events and on other matters as necessary. Other items are infrequent, and I feel that Ann deserves much better support. Thus, I have provided an occasional item. I fully understand that many of us of a certain age (and certainly myself) may not be enthusiastic Facebook users, but it is a potential shop window for our group, and 'for the greater good' I would urge you to consider submitting something occasionally. It's easy to do so, with Ann happy to insert items on your behalf if you just email them to her; they needn't be long and can be done in a chatty, informal style; you don't need to be a wordsmith. As examples, and in case you

haven't already seen them, here are some of my submissions. I hope you enjoy them, and they encourage you to post an item in due course.

Nigel Needham

Here are some recent posts from Nigel.

A plant that is currently affording much pleasure in our garden is *Thalictrum* 'Black Stockings'. The individual flowers are quite small but form good 'heads' to give a good overall splash of colour. The black stems which give the variety its name, and the shapely small leaves just add to the overall delightful effect.



Plants don't have to be rare to be enjoyed. Many gardens have *Phlox paniculata* and we have a couple that really stand out in the border at the moment. A white one contrasts particularly well against dark foliage whilst a purple/pink one is a real bobby dazzler. It's a pity that we don't know the varieties.



We bought this mop head hydrangea on an HPSD trip several years ago. It is named Sabrina and is a nice variation on most such hydrangeas. The leaves have purple tinges and although the flowers in the photograph look pink and white, from a distance they look more like a brick red colour in their early stages. It is a variety well worth growing, we feel.

Looking splendid in our garden at the moment is *Deutzia hybrida* 'Strawberry Fields'. The masses of pink/white flowers are giving a really good splash of colour. I think that some deutzias are a bit twiggy and perhaps slightly lax in habit. However this variety has quite sturdy stems which are mid-brown in colour and which keep their horizontal bearing quite well.



By the way, you don't have to have a Facebook account to view Facebook pages, here is the link for Derbyshire Group Hardy Plant Society

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=hardy%20plant%20society%20derbyshire%20group>

If you have a post to share on Facebook please send it to Ann Franks<afbanks700@gmail.com>



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