



PLANT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1 – SPRING 2016

Dear Plant Society Members

At the Plant Society workshop last November many of the delegates showed an interest in a newsletter that we can use to network and share information amongst societies outside the annual workshop.

Photo RHS/Mike Sleigh

So welcome to the first Plant Society newsletter. This is a trial for now, and will depend on feedback from all of you – but I hope we can use it to help solve problems, promote large events and society workshops, share photos and ask questions you think other societies may be able to help with; it's really up to all of the members to participate and decide what you'd like to include.

There will of course be less of the interactive side in this first version, but please do let me know if you have anything you'd like included in the next one, which I hope will be ready to send in June, and the final one of the year in mid October. Please contact me about anything you'd like included, suggestions are:

- Information about any unusual or special events your society is holding
- Questions for other societies to help with
- A special feature about your society
- Interesting photographs about visits/new plants etc you may like to show others

You can email me on vanessapenn@rhs.org.uk or call me on 01483 226522.

Let's see how it goes!

Plant Society Twitter page – I have set up a Twitter Account that will be used for promoting Plant Society events – so please follow me VanessaAPenn or tweet me directly @VanessaAPenn if there is something you'd like to me retweet; and please encourage all your members to do the same. The official RHS twitter feed will retweet the events we publicise so this should grow to become a really useful communication tool for all the societies. We've already had re-tweets from some of the local Surrey 'What's on' Pages about the Cyclamen Society show on 7th Feb and their upcoming show on 9th April. This was the first Plant Society event of the year and so the first to be featured on the new Twitter feed, and they had a really successful event on 7th February.

Under Dates for your diary there is information about the social media workshop running at Wisley on 4th April – if you'd like to learn more.

MEMBERS' NETWORKING PAGE

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask other societies?

Do you have any advice or information you'd like to share with societies about increasing and retaining membership?

Do you have any hints and tips for success with your website, social media, advertising for events etc?

Let me know and hopefully we can fill this page up for the next issue!

Increasing Membership

The Delphinium Society www.delphinium-society.co.uk has recently introduced a PayPal link for new members to join, and existing members to renew. This appears to have attracted 20 or so new members over the last couple of months.

It is particularly helpful for overseas members as there are no currency exchange problems. The members don't need a PayPal account to pay this way, just a debit or credit card.

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IS YOUR SOCIETY AFFILIATED?

If your society isn't already affiliated to the RHS, have a look at all the benefits you'll get for just £35 a year. If you're interested please contact susancorr@rhs.org.uk

- Monthly copy of The Garden magazine
- Annual visit to an RHS Garden for up to 55 of your members
- Banksian or Grenfell Medal and certificate to award at your show
- Information Pack offering society related advice and support
- Gardening advice from RHS experts
- Quarterly magazine and email bulletins packed with the latest community gardening news and information
- Register of speakers and judges to help you plan your events and shows
- RHS Affiliated Societies logo for use on your stationery
- Promotion of selected shows and events on the RHS website
- Access to the largest network of gardening clubs in the UK
- Opportunities to participate in national awareness-raising events and activities

Optional benefits include:

- Insurance cover for Employers' & Public Liability, and Sheds, Equipment, Cups & Trophies, at highly competitive rates.
- Certificates, stationery and medals designed exclusively for RHS Affiliated Societies
- Discounted RHS garden entry all year round for up to six of your members with the optional Garden Entry cards
- Special group rate tickets for RHS flower shows (excluding RHS Chelsea flower)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

17TH November 2016 – Plant Society Workshop ‘Sharing our Expertise’ at Wisley. Invites and information about the workshop will be sent out in the summer.

TBC – but we hope to hold the next Plants for the Future workshop at Wisley on 8th or 9th November. The theme will be bringing breeders and the commercial side together. More information and a confirmation of dates will follow later in the year.

Monday 4th April, Wisley - Social Media Workshop

There are 2 places left on the workshop – if you’d like to send a representative from your society please let me know. The booking details were sent to all society contacts in early January. As well as an optional account set up session in the morning the afternoon agenda will include:

- What is social media – how & why can Plant Societies benefit from using it.
- An introduction to the most popular and effective social media platforms
- How the RHS use social media
- With so many platforms, which one/s are for you?
- Top tips for all social media platforms, plus specific tips on using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & Pinterest – to make the most of these platforms for your society.

18th & 19th June 2016 – Plant Society Show, Wisley

There are still a few weeks left to register for the show if you haven’t already done so. Much of the feedback from last year has been taken on board to improve the exhibitor and visitor experience this year, as well as improving the publicity leading up to the event. The societies who have registered so far are below, so it promises to be a wonderful colourful event with master classes and great displays.

- Alpine Garden Society
- Australasian Plants Society
- British Cactus & Succulent Society
- British Clematis Society
- British Hosta & Hemerocallis Society
- British Pteridological Society
- Cyclamen Society
- Delphinium Society
- Fritillaria Group
- Hardy Plant Society
- Heather Society
- Hebe Society
- National Dahlia Society
- National Sweet Pea Society
- National Vegetable Society
- Thames Valley Orchid Society

Have a look at The Plant Society Events Page

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/plantsmanship/plant-society-events>

for more information about the plants society events being held at RHS gardens. If your event isn't listed here please contact me for Wisley, or the event organiser you have been speaking to for any of the other gardens.

TRIALS

Some of the Plant Society members may be involved in trials this year; some of those that will be looking at their best in next 4 months are:

- Thalictrum - Aberglasney House and Gardens (Wales)
- Hippeastrum – Glasshouse, Wisley
- Iris Dutch bulbous – Trial garden, Wisley
- Viburnum - Trial garden, Wisley
- Peony trials will be starting to show some good colour – Wisley in the trials field and around the gardens
- AGM Trial and a People's choice trial for Pelargonium zonal – Wisley in the trials field and adjacent to Hillside.

OTHER EVENTS

8th April – Terrific Trees - Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, W Sussex RH16 1XP

If you're in the West Sussex area why not take the opportunity to enjoy one of Britain's best collections of champion trees in the company of the RHS Woody Plant Committee. Meet some of Britain's greatest tree experts – Roy Lancaster VMH CBE, plantsman, author and broadcaster and Tony Kirkham, Head of the Arboretum RBG Kew, author and plant explorer. Included in the day are a talk on the history of Borde Hill Garden by the owner, Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke, a question and answer session and 'Walk and Talk' around the garden led by RHS experts and Borde Hill Head Gardener, Andy Stevens.

The event will be open between 10:00am – 4:00pm and tickets must be booked in advance.

For more information, and to book, go to www.bordehill.co.uk/events, call 01444 450326 or email bookings@bordehill.co.uk

PARTNER GARDENS

If you're out and about in the next few months you might like to visit one of our Partner Gardens. With around 190 to choose from throughout the country, they offer a huge range of styles, some specialising in specific plants which your members might be interested in, and many of the newer gardens showcasing the work of distinguished garden designers past and present. Take a look at the website if you'd like to find out more or plan a visit www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/partner-gardens

Feedback, input and comments to vanessapenn@rhs.org.uk