Plant Hunters’ Fairs
Newsletter 2019

“Something for every plant lover”
“Something for every plant lover”

is definitely what’s coming up in this issue of our newsletter.

We have articles covering Beardless Irises; a Wilderness Garden; a garden reflecting life in Stuart England; planning ahead to get to the best from climbers; growing Pomegranates for fruit and flowers; shouting out for annuals and biennials; changing times at a grand garden; a passion for Sanguisorbas; in praise of garden societies; an artisan’s journey from Bugattis to butterflies and plant names and characters.

There’s also news of our 43 events this year. I think Martin can say he’s the only person who gets along to them all, although some of you have a good go at challenging him for that distinction—where do you put all those plants?!

This year we say goodbye to two of venues with finales at Consall Hall and Henbury Hall but we also hello to Patchings Art Centre in Nottinghamshire and we also add a second plant fair at Cholmondeley Castle to our list.

We’ve had a good go at creating a calendar full of grand venues, small local fairs and everything in between; all offering great value low, or even free, entry charges. We think there’s something for every plant lover. Hope you agree!

Best wishes Martin & Janet

All views expressed are those of the authors only.

We try to get everything right but if you notice anything wrong please let us know.
Email janet@planthuntersfairs.co.uk phone 0771 699 0695 Website www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk
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Reducing Plastic Bags at Plant Hunters’ Fairs

This year we are looking to dramatically reduce the use of plastic bags at our fairs. We aren’t banning them as plants aren’t something you really can’t have rolling about in your car on the way home. But we are asking nurseries to not offer bags as standard. Please ask for one if you need one but a few easy actions can reduce the single use of bags dramatically.

• Bring your own reusable bags, boxes, baskets, trolleys etc, - keep a stock of dirty bags, that are still suitable for plants, in your car boot.
• Line shopping bags with newspaper to protect them from soggy compost
• Re use any bags you are given at home for messy waste or even as I do, in late spring, protecting plants from frosty nights or keep them for the next plant fair—don’t let them be single use!
• Keep a box or crate in your boot and return bags to the stall holder when you’ve offloaded

Newsletter Photo Credits:

All photos in this newsletter are by the author of the article, the venue of the event, or Plant Hunters Fairs with the following exceptions:

Zoltan Hamori: Page 3: Top, bottom left; Page 28 Top left, middle right, bottom left; Page 33 Top, bottom left and right; Page 41 Top; Page 42 Both photos Magdolina Hamori-Kovacs: Page 17: “Dark Compact”)
Rob Potterton: Page 30 Bramall Hall, top
It’s been a little touch and go whether we would be able to hold our highly popular plant fair at Henbury Hall for one last time this year. The Estate had been up for sale and so the future was a little uncertain.

So we were really thrilled to receive the call telling us that the fair could go ahead this summer and this would be the final opening of garden before the hall and gardens moved into new ownership.

We’ve had such a wonderful time there and Mrs De Ferranti has been such a wonderful and charming host that we’re really sad to say goodbye. We would also like to thank the team there especially Sue Flack and Sean Barton who have made the plant fair happen!

So please don’t miss the opportunity to visit the gardens and fair one more time.

For this year we holding the fair on Friday 28th & Saturday 29th June.

The fair is open from 10am-5pm. Entry to the gardens and fair is just £3.00 for adults and there is lots of free parking. Homemade refreshments and light lunches will be available. Dogs on leads welcome.

Henbury Hall Gardens, Henbury, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 9PJ
Consall Hall Finale

This will be our 9th and quite probably our final year at the fantastic Consall Hall Gardens that nestle in a valley between Stoke on Trent and Leek.

The hall and gardens have been sold and Michelle and Justin who currently run it as a wedding venue will be leaving in June. So this is could be your last chance to visit—don’t miss out.

Sunday 14th April. 10am-5pm Entry to the fair and gardens is still just £3.00 and there is free parking. Dogs on leads welcome.

Consall, Wetley Rocks, Staffordshire ST9 0AG

Phone: 01782 551947

Here are a few of our happy memories from the gardens.
If you are planning to visit the Plant Hunter’s Fair at Adlington Hall this year, then I suggest you come equipped with stout footwear as well as your ‘bags for life’ and trolleys for plants. In past years far too many of our visitors have left laden with botanical gems but without experiencing the heady scents and visual delights of our wholly naturalistic Wilderness Garden.

First laid out in the 1740’s with a combination of native plants and exotics from nurserymen from Exeter to Pontefract in Yorkshire, the ‘Wilderness’ today seems as far from artifice as is possible. A leisurely walk around the fifteen-hectare riparian landscape will delight the discerning horticulturally minded visitor. Mature and majestic trees many planted in the 18th century shelter verdant glades that are home to a myriad of wild and naturalised flowers.

In early May the first flush of flowering will include Golden Saxafrage, Bugle, Lady’s Smock, Pink Purslane and the Yellow Flag Iris. However, the sheer scale of the bluebell plantings combined with their olfactory predominance will ensure that any visit will provide a sensory experience far greater than the sum of its parts. In this age of instant this and that this fleeting force of nature is to be savoured.

This year is our 11th at Adlington Hall and we have more nurseries and artisan than ever.

Adlington Hall are supporting Christies Hospital this year and they will be there selling lottery tickets with the chance to win a car.

Sunday 12th May 2019
10am - 4pm
Entry to the gardens and plant fair is just £3.00 for this special event only.
Free parking. Dogs on leads welcome
Mill Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4LF
Tel: 01625 827 595
Email: enquiries@adlingtonhall.com
website: www.adlingtonhall.com
Japanese Iris (Iris Ensata)

by Gordon Link, The Gobbett Nursery

Iris ensata, otherwise known as Japanese iris, have been cultivated in Japan for hundreds of years. Thousands of cultivars have been raised but they are relatively unknown by the general public in most of Europe.

Most of the modern day breeding has been done in Europe & especially the U.S.A. where several specialist nurseries have raised some very beautiful varieties.

Japanese iris require a moist, acid to neutral soil. They are sometimes referred to as “Japanese water iris”, but they don’t generally do well if planted in water.

We find they do very well on our clay soil even with a P.H of 7 & sitting in a soil resembling concrete this past summer with very little extra water.

Being the last group of Iris to flower, usually mid-June through July, they can extend the Iris flowering season for several weeks. Like

Japanese iris are sometimes referred to as “Japanese water iris” but they don’t generally do well if planted in water.
most Iris they prefer a sunny position.

Here on the nursery we now have almost 200 varieties, they can become quite addictive. They should be split every three to four years to maintain vigour, but do not plant them on top of the ground like bearded Iris, if anything they should be planted quite deep. Japanese Iris are quite hungry beasts, they can be top-dressed with well-rotted manure & should be fed with a feed for acid loving plants or slow release pellets at least once a year.

Some people successfully grow them in large pots sat in trays of water for the summer. At the end of the year cut all leaves back to ground level.

“Anyone interested in Japanese or other beardless iris should consider joining the beardless iris society whose website contains a wealth of information.”

See http://www.beardlessiris.org for details of how to join

Gordon and Chris have run The Gobbett Nursery for thirty years. They have a keen interest in Syringa, flowering dogwoods and beardless Iris.

The Gobbett Nursery, Farlow Nr Kidderminster Worcs DY14 8TD
Phone: 01746 718647 Website: www.thegobbettnursery.co.uk

**Gordon and Christine will be at these fairs in 2019:**
Sun 7 Apr Bramall Hall, Sat 13 Apr Sandwell Valley Park, Sun 14 Apr Consall Hall, Fri 19 Apr Whittington Castle, Sat 20 Apr Bodenham Arboretum,
Sun - Mon 21 - 22 Apr Dorothy Clive Garden, Sat 27 Apr Battlefield 1403,
Sun 28 Apr Cholmondeley Castle, Sat 4 May 1620’s House, Sun - Mon 5 - 6 May Weston Park, Sun 12 May Adlington Hall, Sat 18 May British Ironwork Centre, Sun 19 May Abbeywood Gardens,
Sun 26 May Pottertons Nursery and Garden, Mon 27 May Carsington Water,
Sat - Sun 1 - 2 Jun Hodnet Hall, Sat 8 Jun Bosworth Battlefield, Sun 9 Jun Norton Priory,
Sat 22 Jun Arley Arboretum, Fri - Sat 28 - 29 Jun Henbury Hall, Sun 30 Jun Cholmondeley Castle, Sun 7 Jul Sughton Walled Garden, Sun 21 Jul Middleton Hall, Sun 28 Jul British Ironwork Centre,
Sun 4 Aug 1620’s House, Sat 10 Aug Carsington Water, Sun 11 Aug Southwell Minster,
Sun 18 Aug Abbeywood Gardens, Sun - Mon 25 - 26 Aug Dorothy Clive Garden,
Sat 31 Aug Bodenham Arboretum, Sun 8 Sep Weston Park
All Change at Abbeywood Plant Hunters’ Fair in 2019

We have two completely new dates for our fairs at Cheshire’s Abbeywood Gardens this year—so please make a note in your diaries

Sunday 19th May
Sunday 18th August
10am-4pm £3.00
Dogs on leads welcome. Free parking

We are really looking forward to seeing the garden in late spring and high summer.

Abbeywood Estate, Chester Road, Delamere Cheshire CW8 2HS
Tel: 01606 888251
website: www.abbeywoodestate.co.uk/gardens/
A window into 1620s England

By Michael Arkle,
Garden Volunteer and a Friend of the 1620s House & Gardens

Admission to the Plants Fairs in May and August also includes free admission to the re-created gardens of the 1620s House and Garden. Wandering around at your leisure, you will have the chance to experience and learn about how gardens were used in the early 17th century. From roses to rue and from lilies to lavender, we grow scores of period plants, labelled and interpreted, which give the visitor an insight into the purposes of a garden at that time.

Certainly gardens were there to feed and amuse their owners, but much more than that. As both treatment and the prevention of diseases largely relied on plants, the garden was the chemist shop. It was also often their perfumery, the source of materials to deter and kill household pests, a means to overcome domestic odours and even a way to dye yarn and cloth made from linen and wool.

Shakespeare made reference to over 170 different plants in his work. He not only showed a good understanding of botany, he also gives us a good insight into how plants were regarded at that time. The scientific approach of the Enlightenment had barely made any impact and so beliefs in the powers of plants were still steeped in folklore which helped to explain the unexplainable. Look out for the quotations, scattered throughout the garden which accompany plants to which he refers. They range from brief quotations to the wonderful excerpt from Richard II where the gardeners compare their well-ordered garden to the chaos of a nation falling apart when the king was imprisoned.

Early May is very much the beginning of our season while early August will bring the maturity of many of our plants. Tulips were a stunning, late 16th century introduction to England from Turkey and this year we will be growing them in terracotta pots to avoid devastation to the bulbs by grey squirrels. By August our sunflowers, another stunning introduction, should be in full bloom.

This year we are trying the long-term investment of asparagus. At the time of writing a new bed has been prepared, but with snow still on the ground, planting will have to wait. There are no orange carrots in our vegetable garden, they came later, so ours’ are purple, yellow or white. Both Skirret and Good King Henry seem to thrive on our soil and we are hoping that our Carlin and Lord Leicester Peas will be dried and used in pottage through the winter months. However, you will not find potatoes growing, yes a new introduction from the New World, but, a member of the nightshade family…. Since the May 2018 Plant Fair, we have erected a large green oak arbour in the herb garden to become the cen-
We have two plant fairs at the 1620s House in 2019:
Saturday 4th May 2019
Sunday 4th August 2019
Times 10am - 4pm
Fair, gardens and grounds £1.00
House open (additional charge if you decide to visit the house). Free parking.
Dog’s on leads welcome in the fair and garden. Cafe open throughout.
1620’s House and Garden, Donington Le Heath, Coalville, Leics LE67 2FW
E-mail: dlhmanorhouse@leics.gov.uk Phone: 01455 290429 website: www.doningtonleheath.com

Central focus. Soon we will begin to remodel and replant areas adjacent to it so that its importance is emphasised. We have taken many semi-hardwood herb plant cuttings and hope that these survive the winter to become part of our display.

If you require more information on plants during your visit, there are folders giving details on plants with an interesting story to tell as well more in-depth information about “The Bard as a Botanist”. There is even a booklet about the garden which can be bought in the Barn Tea Room.

There will be a display of gardening tools dating from the 1880s to the 1950s.

The Garden Volunteers, hope that you find the plants that you want and that the visit to the garden is enjoyable and interesting.

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Plant Hunters Fair and NGS Open Day at Norton Priory

Sunday 9th June 2019 10am - 4pm
FREE ENTRY TO FAIR Free parking
The Walled Garden itself will be open in aid of the National Garden Scheme (NGS) with a special admission price of £3.50 for the Walled Garden (entry to the garden is optional).
Norton Priory Museum & Gardens,
Tudor Road, Manor Park, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 1BD
Looking out of the kitchen window this winter at a mass of pink flowers on Camellia ‘St Ewe’ I was reminded that back last summer I could see a sheet of beautiful pearl white flowers flowing down over the very same camellia, belonging to Clematis ‘Huldine’ and they had been neatly framed by the yellow flowered and coconut scented Clematis tangutica. So easy to forget when the sun is shining that summer won’t be here forever!

Following on from all the flower of summer there is still much to look forward to; among my favourite climbers for Autumn are the vines. Some true vines like Vitis purpurea and Vitis ‘Spetchely Red’ will of course have looked good all summer long, but they will look even more spectacular come the Autumn as the foliage fires up. Both produce small edible red grapes.

For real fire in the autumn you cannot better the Parthenocissus, P. quinquefolia the true Virginia creeper is at its flamboyant best grown through hedges and trees; although self clinging it becomes too heavy to stay on walls. In contrast P. tricuspidata the Boston Ivy will happily smother a building! All forms of this look good in autumn but I would choose one of the named smaller leafed varieties such as P. tricuspidata ‘Veitchii’ or ‘Beverly Brook’, save the actual species for when you want something completely covered! ..continued

The star of the group though has to be Parthenocissus henryana, like the other two self-clinging, this has the most
wonderful leaf markings all summer long, especially when grown in the shade. The quality of the copper and silver marked foliage and red stems during summer would alone make this a good plant, but the autumn display is one of brilliant fiery reds.

Like other plants grown for autumn leaf colours try and avoid very windy situations or your autumn leaves will end up next door, but with a bit of wind shelter these plants will look good until December.

It may seem odd to be thinking of late summer and autumn when spring is yet to happen but climbers need to get established if they are to give of their best.

Charlie and Liz Pridham run Roseland House Nursery where they also hold two National Plant Collections: Clematis Viticella cultivars and Lapageria rosea cultivars. They also grow a great range of other exciting climbing plants and conservatory plants.

Roseland House. Chacewater, Truro Cornwall TR4 8QB
01872 560451
www.roselandhouse.co.uk

Your only chance to see Roseland House Nursery at a Plant Hunters’ Fair this year is at The Dorothy Clive Garden on Easter Sunday & Monday 21st & 22nd April.

Hoghton Tower

Saturday 6th April 2019
10am-4pm Entry to fair and gardens £1.00

This year the entry charge also includes entry to the gardens making this fair even greater value!
In aid of Hoghton Tower Preservation Trust (charity number 508357)

Free parking. Dogs on leads in the fair only. Refreshments available throughout
Hoghton Tower, Hoghton, Preston, PR5 0SH Phone: 01254 852986  Website: www.hoghtontower.co.uk
Patchings Art Centre celebrated 30 years last year, when we opened new areas and walks in celebration. The 50 acres include areas of wild flowers, woodland and meadow landscapes. The aim is to inspire and encourage artists to paint the landscape in the open, whilst providing a setting of enjoyment and tranquillity for visitors.

The walks and pathways meander through a variety meadows and woodland aspects, which includes our water area and replica of Monet’s bridge taken from the details of his bridge at Giverny.

In terms of our background, it all began in 1988 with a redundant and dilapidated farm, 1/3 acre of land for a car park and a family portrait. The portrait was a commission, the subject was the owner of the redundant farm, and the result Patchings Art Centre, the start up of a small family business, with the aim of promoting the enjoyment of art. Far too quickly although thankfully slightly spaced in time, the opportunity came along for additional accommodation either side and the availability of extra land at the rear of the centre. Although such opportunities were unexpected, they were once in a life time and perhaps not to be repeated. Thanks to a friendly Bank Manager, who enjoyed painting and the Wood family selling up to live at Patchings, the development over time gradually took place. A new then unique log building, additional galleries and studios and of course the grounds and gardens gradually took shape.
The two additional fields, previously used for root crops, became the biggest challenge, but with nature herself contributing in so many ways, she only needed time and little assistance to create what is there to enjoy today. In 1990 there was nothing but open ploughed fields, soil and a thorn hedge dividing the fields. The trees, flowers, grasses and shrubs there today have all been planted or allowed to self set. It is now a well established landscape with woodland walks, trails through meadows and grassland, offering inspiration to those who paint and photograph. We also hope this area is a space for all, artist or not, to enjoy and relax within the tranquillity of this landscape.

There are areas to sit and enjoy the views and marvel at the colours, shapes and texture, which are all part of nature’s canvas. Perhaps with a degree of sympathy for those who try to re-create the complexity of nature on their canvas.

We hope you will enjoy your visit to the Plant Hunters’ Fair, a new departure for Patchings. As well as the grounds and gardens, please talk time to look at our galleries and gifts shops. Showing in the main gallery is an exhibition called Shirley Trevena RI and friends. Shirley is a nationally respected watercolourist and a member of the Royal Institute. Her subject of Still Life and Flowers links perfectly to those who enjoy flowers and gardening.

The Crew Yard Gift Shop, has a special range of glass, ceramics and jewellery, perfect for early Spring and looking ahead to summer. In the Pavilion gallery the art of photography is being exhibited with a wide range of subjects. Both the Patchings Café and the self service area in the Pavilion will be open for refreshments.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Our plant fair at Patchings Art Centre is on

**Saturday 30 March 10am-4pm**

Entry to fair, art centre, exhibitions, gardens and walks is completely free

Dogs on leads welcome. Ample free parking. Refreshments available throughout.

We currently have 22 nurseries and artisans lined up:

Aluminium Art  Artisan Plant Supports  Ashdale Cottage Garden Plants  Bridge Farm Plants
Conquest Plants Nursery  Coopers Nurseries  Garden Saver  Green’s Leaves  John Cullen Gardens  Jurassicplants Nurseries  Linda Scott Hardy Plants  Lyneal Mill Nursery  Mynd Hardy Plants Limited  Orchard Furniture  Packhorse Farm Nursery  Penmere Plants  Piecemeal Plants  Plantazia Lincoln  PlantWild  SpecialPerennials  Studio 8 Pottery  The Gobbett Nursery
Pomegranates – forgotten or forbidden fruit?
by Dr. Zoltán Hámorí, Jurassicplants Nursery

Pomegranates are exceptional ornamental plants with large, exotic flowers and fruits which are known to have huge health benefits. Some studies suggest that the juice contains the highest concentration of naturally occurring antioxidants of any fruit.

An open Pomegranate flower is a breath-taking sight: tissue like, often ruffled petals surround the large, almost fleshy calyx, decorative on its own, with a bunch of yellow stamen in the middle. Imagine a hundred of them within arching branches and shiny foliage. The Mediterranean looking pomegranates are highly underrated ornamental plants and they are suitable for a hot sunny spot against a wall in the garden, perform well on a sunny patio or in a conservatory and are excellent bonsai subjects.

Origins

The Latin pomum "apple” and granatum "seeded” explains the name “pomegranate”, which was known in early English as “apple of Grenada" probably stemming from the old French word for the fruit, pomme-grenade.

The pomegranate is believed to have originated in the area from Iran to northern India, but has been cultivated around the Mediterranean for so long (several millennia) that its true native range is not accurately known but it is historically proven that since ancient times it has been produced throughout the Mediterranean and the Caucasus. Spanish settlers introduced it to the Americas in the 17th century, especially to Latin America and California.

Artistically the pomegranate has been recognized by Cezanne, Raphael, and various other artists and it is even possible that Eve gave Adam a pomegranate instead of an apple in the Garden of Eden, regarding its believed location in the Middle-East. Pomegranate is thought to be one of the world’s first domesticated crops. But really, there are no easy ways to describe the fruit with words: let the pictures in this article speak for themselves

Just how popular is the Pomegranate?

Not only in Europe and the Middle East, in Africa, Asia, but even in California and Arizona and Mexico, pomegranate orchards can be found, their cultivation is greatly encouraged by the popularity of pomegranate juice which rose significantly in the early 2000's. It is a super-fruit, undeniably so.
Pomegranate seeds (precisely the pulp around them) get their vibrant red hue from polyphenols which are powerful antioxidants. Pomegranate juice contains higher levels of antioxidants than most other fruit juices and here times more than red wine and green tea. The antioxidants in pomegranate juice can help remove free radicals, protect cells from damage, and reduce inflammation and have a range of other health benefits.

**What pomegranates can bring to your garden?**

There are two types of pomegranates in European nursery production: flowering and fruiting varieties. The former usually have even larger flowers, up to 4 inches wide, and are more or less double-flowered. Most fruiting cultivars and the main species have single flowers with the most vibrant red colours imaginable. Some varieties have soft, edible seeds, these are also called “seedless”.

These plants branch out well and dry conditions encourage thorn forming on the branches but unless regularly trimmed, the shrubs may grow irregular and somewhat oddly shaped, however this is perfectly natural. The miniature varieties have the most regular, rounded shape with their branches arching under the weight of the flowers and fruits. Its Autumn coloration is also noteworthy, the foliage turns pure yellow in October. The shrubs can be trimmed heavily, making them suitable bonsai subjects. It flowers on the new growth. The plants overwinter well outdoors, being hardy to -15°C or so and as a late starter, it rarely suffers from Spring frosts – the flowers will only appear from June but flowering can last several months. The plant is not too fussy about soil conditions and can reach 2m in size in a UK garden or in a pot.

The fruiting varieties will need a hot position against a south facing wall in Southern Britain to have any chance to set and mature the fruit in the garden (the smaller the fruit, the easier to mature), or you need to think about a conservatory or greenhouse. For the fruits to ripen, a long, warm Summer and early Autumn is essential, otherwise the lack of heat has to be compensated by using a heated facility as soon as the flower buds develop as it pollinates much better in warm weather. It is perfectly possible to grow fruit on shrubs of a height 1.5-2m in a large pot, in a greenhouse. Expect to harvest fruit from late October in UK conditions. Small fruits on some varieties may even overwinter on the plant in a greenhouse and mature the following year.

Without a heated greenhouse, or a garden in Central London or the South Coast, you can still opt for flowering varieties if you have a sun trapped garden spot.

**Fruiting varieties (also make stunning ornamentals)**

Some popular fruiting varieties include several colours: Mollar de Elche (seedless, orange), Acco (sweet, bright red), Wonderful (juicy, purple) and ‘Dark Compact’ (sweet, aubergine). All but the latter are good medium sized shrubs (our dark selection is compact with a height of 0.8-1m) bearing medium to large fruits (300-400g).

‘Mollar’ is an orange/pale red skinned cultivar with soft seed-coats (not developed seeds) in the flesh, making the whole fruit edible. One of the sweetest pomegranate now on the market, even the soft “seed-leftovers” are sweet inside the flesh. Lovely numerous red flowers with a semi-compact habit (ultimate height is 1.5-2m). Medium sized fruits.

‘Acco’ is of Israeli origin, with a very colourful fruit both externally and internally and ripens early. The fleshy seeds are ruby red, pleasant to eat with a very sweet flavour. It is even sweet when not fully ripe, which is good news for UK gardeners!

‘Wonderful’ is a well fruiting variety, selected from cuttings in Florida in 1896 often planted for the juice industry. Large, red fruits with purple flesh, tangy, less sweet but very juicy.

More than a dozen other varieties are planted from Turkey to Mexico, including the popular 'Ahmar', 'Aswad', 'Halwa', 'Paper Shell', 'Provence' and the seedless (soft seeded) 'Bedana' and 'Kandhari' and more than a hundred locally selected cultivars/forms exist.

Flowering ornamental varieties with a little story

The best known flowering pomegranates are:

‘California Sunset’ (aka ‘Mme Legrelle’ or ‘Legrelleae’) - Carnation-like, double coral-red flowers bordered and streaked with creamy white. Delicate petals are like tissue paper. Fruitless variety. Foliage is bright glossy green and the shrub is densely stemmed.

This plant was first known as a gift from a Mme Parmentier (Belgian horticulturist, living in the US) to Madame Caroline Legrelle d’Hanis who lived near Antwerp and ran a nursery. A lithograph appeared in 1858, and may be the first illustration of the plant. It appeared in the most important Belgian horticultural periodical entitled l’Illustration horticole, journal spécial des serres et des jardins by Charles Lemaire (editor), published by Ambroise Verschaffelt. They first exhibited it in London in 1866 and the variety is very popular to this day.

‘Flore Pleno’ has a vigorous habit with large, double orange-red flowers and the creamy yellow ‘Luteum Plenum’ reaches similar size but both can be kept in a large pot, too. The dwarf ‘Chico’ is worth a try, too and there are numerous new varieties available, like ‘Faye’s Paintbrush’ (recently selected in El Paso, Texas) with peachy, ruffled petals and an almost white edge – this one is an ornamental and a fruiting variety in the same time.

If you lack space, then don’t give up on them as there are a few dwarf varieties available, the fruiting ‘Nana’ or “var. nana”, ‘Nana Gracilissima’ and the double flowered (not fruiting) ‘Chico’. We have selected two forms with a semi-compact habit (ultimate height is 1-1,5m) with smaller leaves and smaller but numerous flowers: our ‘Dark Compact’ (darker stem, deep purple to dark brown fruits) and ‘Semi Compact’ (light orange coloured fruits) selection are well suitable for small gardens and the patio/conservatory. The dwarf fruiting forms are capable of bearing between 50 and 100 fruits at a time on a 70-80cm tall and wide plant. These smaller fruits need less hot days to mature so actually they are more suitable for outdoor fruiting. In conservatory conditions, you certainly can achieve a good crop from these.

We have carefully selected nine vibrant Pomegranate varieties available for you to purchase or why not try one of our starter collections which include both flowering and fruiting cultivars which are available at Plant Hunters Fairs events or on our website www.jurassicplants.co.uk.
Jurassicplants are a family run nursery based in North Wales specialising in unusual and hard-to-find ornamentals, edible trees and shrubs and living fossils.

JURASSICPLANTS, WAEN, ST ASAPH DENBIGHSHIRE LL17 0DY
Phone: 07909 100 255
www.jurassicplants.co.uk

Zoltan will be at these Plant Hunters’ Fairs in 2019:
Sun 10 Mar National Memorial Arboretum Sat 16 Mar Carsington Water Sun 17 Mar Alderford Lake
Sat 23 Mar Sugnall Walled Garden Sun 24 Mar Ness Botanic Gardens Sat 30 Mar Patchings Art Centre
Sun 31 Mar Middleton Hall Sat 6 Apr Hoghton Tower Sun 7 Apr Bramall Hall Sat 13 Apr Sandwell Valley Park Fri 19 Apr Whittington Castle Sun/Mon 21/ 22 Apr Dorothy Clive Garden Sat 11 May National Memorial Arboretum Sun 12 May Adlington Hall Sat 18 May British Ironwork Centre Sun 26 May Potterners Nursery Sat - Sun 1 - 2 Jun Hodnet Hall

“Nana” has the countless flowers, followed by golf ball-sized, perfectly edible fruits, and it does well on a sunny patio.

“Chico” is a rare, double flowered dwarf or semi dwarf variety.

Wykeham Gardens: New to Plant Hunters’ Fairs

Wykeham Gardens Plant Centre, based in Leigh Sinton near Malvern, is joining the Plant Hunters’ Fairs this year and are very pleased to be attending Sandwell Valley Park on Saturday April 13th and Arley Arboretum on Saturday June 22nd.

Wykeham Gardens is run by husband and wife team Rachael and Andy Mahy, assisted by our Apprentice Aidan and Spaniel Max! At Wykeham Gardens Plant Centre you can find a good range of shrubs, trees, perennials, bulbs and annuals. Alongside garden favourites there are more unusual varieties, lots of plants for shade and an expanding range of scented varieties. As the plant centre gains in popularity so the range of plants continues to increase. Andy said “we are continuing to grow most of our own plants and our stock list along with our ‘new for 2019’ range can be found on our website.” For the Plant Hunters’ Fairs we will be bringing a great range of ‘in season’ colour, plants for shade and a small selection of seeds.

As well as running the plant centre Wykeham Gardens also offer garden design and the website has photos of recent projects.

Wykeham Gardens Plant Centre ‘The Yard at Crowcroft’, Leigh Sinton, Malvern WR13 5ED.

www.wykehamgardens.com Email: wykehamgardens@btinternet.com Phone: 01684 578381
The courtyard at Bosworth Battlefield has 2 rose beds containing The Bosworth Rose. This rose was named on behalf of Bosworth Battlefield (Leicestershire County Council) to commemorate the momentous discovery of the remains of King Richard III in 2012 and his re-interment to Leicester Cathedral in 2015. The rose is being planted in purpose built raised flower-beds at the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, the battle colours being most appropriate in the decision to choose this fantastic rose.

Very nicely shaped raspberry, plum and white striped flowers are formed in small clusters on tall upright strong stems which display the blooms so well. Bronzed edged semi glossed foliage with very high disease resistance. Bred by highly noted amateur breeder Ronnie Rawlins. Fragrance: Lightly scented, Bush Rose Height: 120 cm

No Snow at Alderford (Please!)

Last year’s second “beast from the east” came just at the wrong time for Alderford Lake plant fair and to keep things safe we made the decision to cancel the event because of heavy snow on the ground and still falling. This year we have absolutely everything crossed, hoping for more spring-like weather. We have a very strong line up of nurseries for the fair and the café will be serving hot food and drinks throughout.

Sunday 17th March 10am-4pm

The fair is free to enter and there is lots of free parking. Dogs on leads very welcome.

Alderford Lake, Tilstock Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 3JQ
website: www.alderford.com
Hooray For Annuals!

by Linda Scott

Quite often at plant fairs, people see a plant and are really interested until they realise it’s an annual, biennial or short-lived perennial, whereupon they disregard it completely, yet will spend a small fortune on bedding plants which only last one season. The annual plants the nurseryfolk grow are usually very reasonably priced being cheaper and lasting much longer than a bunch of flowers.

Just because the original plant only lasts a year or two doesn’t necessarily mean you will lose it as many will seed themselves and you can weed out the ones you don’t want or move the seedlings to a new position. With a little effort you can collect the seed and sow it yourself, thus controlling when and where the new plants grow. This means a lot of free plants which is surely a good thing, and many of these short-lived plants flower for months from spring to autumn.

A few of my favourites include Campanula incurva, a short-lived perennial that only lasts a couple of years on my heavy clay but longer on a well-drained soil. Unusually for a Campanula it has upward facing flowers which are large pale blue bells on a low growing plant.

I’m sure many of you are familiar with the perennial Omphalodes, but there is a lovely white flowered annual form called Omphalodes linifolia, commonly known as Venus’s Navelwort. This is a more upright plant and as its name suggests has narrow foliage. Unlike its perennial cousin it prefers sun and good drainage.

Of course, being me (aka the geranium lady) I have to include Ge-
Omphalodes linifolia

ranium bohemicum, a hardy geranium with masses of small blue flowers all summer. In the autumn the whole plant turns red with black seed heads, thus further extending the season of interest.

There are many of these short lived plants, catering for all tastes and I hope I have encouraged some of you to try one or two as I feel otherwise you could be missing out on some very interesting and attractive plants.

See you at the fairs!

Linda specialises in hardy geraniums with 30-40 types available on her stall.
You will also find other lovely hardy plants for sale there.

Telephone 0781 501 5561

Linda will be at these Plant Hunters’ Fairs in 2019:

- Sun 10 Mar National Memorial Arboretum
- Sat 16 Mar Carsington Water
- Sat 30 Mar Patchings Art Centre
- Sun 31 Mar Middleton Hall
- Sun 14 Apr Consall Hall
- Sat 4 May 1620’s House
- Sat 11 May National Memorial Arboretum
- Mon 27 May Carsington Water
- Sun 21 Jul Middleton Hall
- Sat 27 Jul National Memorial Arboretum
- Sun 4 Aug 1620’s
- Sat 10 Aug Carsington Water

Triple Treat at Carsington Water

3 great free to enter fairs

We are back at the walkers’ paradise of Carsington Water for our, now traditional, three plant fairs. We are now pitched on the paved area right in front of the visitor centre, handily placed for the restaurant and car parks.

As always, the fairs are free to enter with just a very reasonable pay and display parking charge.

Saturday 16th March 2019  Monday 27th May 2019  Saturday 10th August 2019

Times: 10am - 4pm Free Entry to fair and country park
Restaurant open throughout.

Carsington Water, Big Lane, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1ST
New faces at Hodnet Hall

by Ross Underwood, Hodnet Hall Gardens

Visitors to Hodnet may not notice too many changes this year. One or two areas of the main pleasure gardens have been replanted and improved especially with new roses. We like to use David Austin Roses which are known for their health as well as their scent and we were all saddened by the passing of David Austin Sr.

Yet the biggest change has occurred back stage rather than front of house. It is always sad to say goodbye to colleagues it is always exciting to welcome new members of the team. This year we said a fond farewell to Geoff who for nearly twenty years kept the walled kitchen garden in order.

This year we welcomed Rebecca Woodhall to the role. Rebecca first joined us as a volunteer whilst working as a self-employed Gardener and we were all impressed with her hard work, determination and her feel for design.

What she might lack in experience she has certainly made up for in enthusiasm. She is already planning to extend the range of fruit that is being grown including blackberries and new apple varieties. I’m sure that visitors will begin to notice some changes, and this will increase as the year goes on so why not come back later in the year to see what a difference has been made.

This will be her first plant fair and I’m sure she will enjoy picking up a few additions at the plant stalls.

For the garden’s owners Sir Algernon and Lady Heber-Percy 2019 has also been a year of change. After over twenty year’s service Sir Algernon has retired as Lord Lieutenant for Shropshire. This leaves him more time to devote to his garden which he has tended for over 40 years. Hopefully the gardeners will be able to keep up!

Our plant fair at Hodnet Hall Gardens is on

Saturday & Sunday
1st & 2nd June
10am-5pm

Entry to fair £3.50 (under 15’s free)
Dogs on leads welcome
Hodnet Hall Gardens
Hodnet
Market Drayton
Shropshire TF9 3NN
Website: www.hodnethallgardens.org
Email secretary@hodnethall.com
Call +44 (0) 1630 685786
I have become quite self-indulgent lately where Sanguisorbas are concerned. I noticed a pot of these lovely swaying flower heads at Tatton Park flower show a couple of years ago & since then my obsession with them has grown.

They aren’t a particularly well known plant & when I sell them from my nursery stand at specialist plant fairs people are curious about their unusual appearance & often want to gain more knowledge. I have expanded my collection since that first sighting & for me personally, there is the added delight of being able to propagate them. It is only when a clump of Sanguisorba matures after a year or two that it really comes into its own & offers that WOW factor to the garden. In early spring you may give them nothing more than a passing glance, but in summer, when the flower stems rise majestically from the heart of the plant you will be drawn into this magical world of Sanguisorba addiction!

The name Sanguisorba literally means to “soak up blood” & it was allegedly used to control internal bleeding. The Elizabethans enjoyed its cucumber scent & used it as a kitchen herb. Sanguisorbas belong to the rose family but fortunately they are presented minus the prickly unforgiving thorns! Upright wiry stems support the flowers which range from either tight button like heads, small cylindrical pokers or my favourite, drooping catkin shaped tails with a colour range of either white, pink or dark maroon.

Sanguisorbas are extremely hardy. They grow best in soil that doesn’t dry out too much but some varieties are more tolerant of drier condition once established. Generally they are trouble free & unaffected by pests & diseases although one or two species may be prone to mildew if the weather is very hot & dry for a long period of time. To
reproduce a particular favourite sanguisorba you need to take basal cuttings with a piece of root or divide woody rootstock in spring. Some varieties can be grown from seed but many do not come true although interesting variations are produced!

Sanguisorbas instil a wonderful swaying movement into a border & even the slight breeze will bring life to an otherwise static planting plan. Although Sanguisorbas are not showstoppers, they are in fact understated, but their appearance totally enhances a garden. They look especially beguiling when situated in a Piet Oudolf style of prairie planting mixed with the wonderful wispy, fluffy plumes of billowing Stipa tenuissima, stately Echinacea & vibrant Heleniums.

There are around 30 or so species of Sanguisorba & it is difficult to name a few but those that are particularly garden worthy deserve a mention. Sanguisorba tenuifolia alba takes pride of place in one of our new borders. It requires no staking despite rising like a phoenix from the ashes to a statuesque 6 feet tall. The fluffy white catkin flowers add grace & elegance to the border & it stands proudly towering above a pretty pink Diascia personata.

It flowers from July through to September. A profusion of dense and oblong, catkin-like blooms sway above decorative pinnate foliage, generating interest for months. Happiest in a sunny spot but will also tolerate drier conditions. There is no need for staking even as the plant reaches its final height of around four feet.

Sanguisorba Pink Tanna is slightly more compact than the other two species I have mentioned & grows to around three feet or 90cm. Erect stems bear densely packed dark pink flower heads above decorative mounds of finely dissected foliage. This plant is superb for adding vertical interest & movement to the herbaceous border or to naturalistic planting.

I hope you will be able to find room for at least one Sanguisorba in your own garden to adorn one of your mixed herbaceous borders, I don’t think you will be disappointed with its performance & you can be sure that your gardening friends will certainly admire it while it sways nonchalantly in the breeze.

Sue and Allan Gillon grow their plants at their small Lancashire nursery. They specialise in sought after perennials in the Apiaceae family, plus a choice range of Geum, Pulmonaria, Sanguisorba, Thalictrum, Aster, Hesperantha.

“Meadow View” 174 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton, Lancashire PR4 6AT
Phone: 07855 625572. Website: www.meadowviewplants.co.uk
Sue and Allan will be at these Plant Hunters’ Fairs in 2019:
Sun 24 Mar Ness Botanic Gardens Sat 6 Apr Hoghton Tower Sun 7 Apr Bramall Hall
Sun 28 Apr Cholmondeley Castle Sun 12 May Adlington Hall Sun 19 May Abbeywood Gardens
Sun 9 Jun Norton Priory Sun 30 Jun Cholmondeley Castle Sun 18 Aug Abbeywood Gardens
Sun 1 Sep Ness Botanic Gardens
Ten Years at the National Memorial Arboretum

For a tenth successive year the National Memorial Arboretum, in Staffordshire, will host a series of Plant Hunters’ Fairs, offering green fingered visitors the opportunity to explore a wide array of plants for purchase from a selection of specialist nurseries.

The fair will be located on Yeomanry Avenue near the Armed Forces Memorial for each of the fairs. All of the nurseries grow the plants they offer for sale and can therefore dispense valuable advice about which specimens would best suit a particular garden and whether they fit a specific planting plan.

Sarah Oakden, Head of Marketing at the National Memorial Arboretum, said: “Our annual Plant Hunters Fairs are a fantastic time for new and experienced gardeners to explore the expanse of the Arboretum before engaging in an unparalleled green fingered shopping experience. The fairs have proved consistently popular and we’re confident that this year’s programme will be just as successful.”

Battlefield 1403
Free to enter plant fair

Saturday 27th April 9:30am-4pm

Whatever the weather our fair at Battlefield 1403 farm shop and café is a must visit.

Strategically placed on the edge of Shrewsbury the farm shop is a must visit for foodies and on the day of our plant fair, plantaholics too!

As always it’s completely free to enter with free parking. The café is always popular and I’m ready to do battle again with the very generous bacon rolls on offer! Dogs are welcome in the fair.

Upper Battlefield, Shrewsbury SY4 3DB Telephone 01939 210 905 Email: info@battlefield1403.com website: www.battlefield1403.com
In Praise of Garden Societies
(A Speaker’s View)
By Jane Allison, Mayfields Plants

When I retired from teaching and converted my interest in horticulture into a second career, I had no intention of using my teaching skills ever again! After thirty-four years of marking papers, cramming facts into 11 to 18 year olds while trying to ensure that we all managed to have a laugh while learning, I was happy to go back to college myself, take some RHS horticulture and garden design qualifications, then bury myself in compost, seed trays, plant fairs and garden design.

Then, ten years ago, while selling plants at Arley Hall, the Speaker Secretary of Prestbury Garden Club asked my friend, who was helping me, if I “did talks”, and to my horror, I heard her say “yes”! I tentatively prepared a talk on “The Herbaceous Border: Variations on a Theme”, which involved handouts and drawings, and was very much like a lesson! Far too “teacherish”! I was surprised when it went down so well, so I decided to do it properly, invested in a slide projector, and borrowed the same friend’s excellent camera on which to take good quality slides (she owed me a favour!). I have since taken over 3000 slides as my list of talk topics grew. I now have ten talks on a wide variety of horticultural and garden design topics, and talk to Societies, U3A and WI Groups.

From that humble beginning, I now travel into North Wales, all round Cheshire and into parts of Lancashire, Staffordshire and Shropshire.

Giving a garden talk is very rewarding experience. Audiences are lively, engaged, curious and appreciative. They are also extremely hospitable: reserving a parking space, assisting in getting equipment and plants in to the venue, and, of course, there is always a welcome cup of tea and a selection of biscuits or cake. (WI groups, who pride themselves on their baking, really “up the ante” here by presenting the speaker with a selection of cakes and a cup of tea on a tray!) Some societies have become like old friends, inviting me back year after year. I have been invited to their shows and even their members’ suppers. Horticulture is a subject which seems to breed goodwill and friendliness.

Group numbers vary from 15 to 150, but so many people make an effort to attend no matter what the weather or personal circumstances. A few years ago I visited a small group deep in the Conwy valley, where the snow drifts round the venue were four foot high, but eight members still made it through, including one lady on crutches!

New members are always introduced at the beginning of the meeting, and I always feel a responsibility to make my talk doubly interesting and accessible when this happens. I want them to return. New members are important, particularly young ones, who are rare in most societies, and if I can do my bit to bring them into the fold, I am very happy.

The ageing population of Garden Society members is a worry which all societies recognise and comment on. It
worries me when a new young member comes up to me after the talk and says quietly “I didn’t know if I should come tonight because I don’t know much about gardening”. This assumes that you need to be knowledgeable to join a group, and a feeling of inferiority if you suspect that you won’t be able to “cut the mustard”! If this resonates with anyone reading this, please, please join a society. The majority of members will be enthusiastic amateurs with a smattering of knowledge and experience, and not Monty Dons! Speakers nearly always base their talks on that mix. We need young people to carry the enthusiasm for gardens and gardening through into the next generation.

One unfortunate “trend”, which has a negative impact here, is the seeming “need” to concrete over green spaces and cut down trees, so reducing our garden space to a large patio, a small lawn and a few flower beds in the back garden, and a flagged driveway for parking at the front, with maybe one or two pots. This brings about the very common “low maintenance” factor. Unfortunately, it affects our insects and wildlife, as well as accounting for a growing lack of interest in spending quality time in pleasurable activities such as choosing and planting plants, gentle maintenance and generally feeling a sense of “ownership” of our “own little piece of heaven” (to quote Alfred Fox who created Glendurgan Garden in Cornwall). Increasingly busy lifestyles probably account for this but gardens are a good place to stop and “chill out” in, and there is nothing tranquil about a garden that is mainly set to hard landscaping.

Joining a Garden Society or a U3A Garden Interest group is a good way forward here. Most villages and towns will have one, and for a small annual subscription you can enjoy talks each month, and usually garden visits in the summer months. The social aspect is also good, especially for chaps, as the majority of members are ladies! (Please forgive me for that remark. I am not suggesting that Garden Societies are some form of dating agency!)

For me, as a speaker, the whole experience is positive and uplifting. People attend because they are interested in learning something new, or building upon knowledge which they already have, and no-one ever says “Do we need this for the exam?” because, of course, there is no exam: just you and your own green space which is continually evolving.

I would like to thank Stafford Garden Society for being part of the audience photo above!

Mayfields is a small, private cottage garden nursery in Stanthorne, Middlewich, Cheshire. It specialises in a wide variety of home-grown herbaceous perennials, with a particular interest in varieties of Digitalis, and Geranium. Owner, Jane Allison, is also a garden designer and a popular speaker at Garden Societies, U3A and WI groups.

Mayfields, Birch Lane, Stanthorne, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 9JR
Phone: 01606 841591 Website: www.mayfieldsplants.com

Jane will be at these Plant Hunters’ Fairs in 2019:
Sun 9 Jun Norton Priory   Fri - Sat 28 - 29 Jun Henbury Hall   Sun - Mon 25 - 26 Aug Dorothy Clive Gardens
Charmingly Cholmondeley

We have two wonderful fairs at Cholmondeley Castle Gardens this year:

Sunday 28th April and

a new summer fair on Sunday 30th June

Cholmondeley Castle Malpas Cheshire SY14 8HN

Fair open 10am—5pm

Entry to fair and gardens £3.50 (less than half standard garden entry price)

Free parking, dogs welcome. Castle not open to public.
The Road to Aluminiumart: from Bugattis to Butterflies

by Matthew Warburton, Aluminiumart

It takes a little time to get a grasp of Aluminiumart. On first sight people often say “Ooh, that’s a bit different” and they are quite right. Put “aluminium holly wreath” into google and only one result comes up, with a link to my website. Not that anyone would search for such a thing in the first place which poses a problem for me and my marketing.

Reading this you may have already seen my work or someone has told you about it, so thank you for getting this far. It’s not quite over yet as seeing photos on a website don’t really do my products justice. You cannot appreciate how lightweight my bracelets are from a description. My website is slowly evolving as too do my products, although my skills lie with a hammer and not a keyboard.

Skills background

My first job was as a coachbuilder in the late 80’s making body panels from scratch. The first test piece I was set was to make a set of Bugatti mudguards. I passed and went on to be involved with some great projects over the years. I subsequently studied Automotive Engineering Design and entered the mass production environment as a Quality Engineer. Involved with prototype vehicles (Aston Martin DB7, MGF, Rolls Royce etc) and engineered parts I gained valuable skills along the way. This is the background to where my practical skills have come from. I combine skills from old and new to create unique and beautiful pieces.

Inspiration

Inspiration for products comes from many areas. Lilies were developed after missing out on my favourite flower blossoming due to having to take holidays from engineering in the first 2 weeks of August. Upon return I found the last petals falling off. After my sister introduced me to a silver-smithing technique I realised I could recreate the
lily and it would last. I utilise coachbuilding techniques to shape the aluminium to give it a more intriguing feature. My butterflies, that sway in the wind due to the correct choice of flexible yet tough stem, catch the light from many angles making an interesting garden ornament. My “posty’s best friend”, the house numbers are effective at allowing people to see from a distance. Sculptures can be made to order or can select a whale tale or a wave feature for instant impact in the garden. Christmas items range from a holly wreath, table decoration and tree decorations which are all built to last rather than throwing away each year.

Where does it happen?

Working from my studio from the heart of the National Forest, Ashby de la Zouch, I aim to create pieces of art for all to enjoy. I take pleasure in working with aluminium due to its longevity; maintaining its original colour and beauty as it ages. It is possible also for you to make your own and have a go at planishing techniques to make your own butterfly or even a bracelet.

This year we welcome Matthew Warburton to our fairs and we are certainly looking forward to something different and exciting for our gardens.

28 Oakham Grove, Ashby de la Zouch LE65 2QP
Phone: 07733 552888 website: www.aluminiumart.co.uk

Matthew will be at these Plant Hunters’ Fairs in 2019:
Sat 30 Mar Patchings Art Centre  Sun 7 Apr Bramall Hall
Sat 11 May National Memorial Arboretum  Sun 21 Jul Middleton Hall

Bramall Hall

Sunday 7th April 11am-4pm

Entry to fair: £2.00
in aid of special projects at the hall

Dogs welcome in the fair and park.. Hall open as well (separate charge) off Hall Road, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 3NX

phone: 0161 474 2020 email: bramall.hall@stockport.gov.uk
website: www.stockport.gov.uk/bramallhall
More the Merrier at Middleton Hall

Our biggest ever plant fairs at this wonderful venue

With 24 nurseries and artisans at our spring plant fair it definitely a case of more the merrier this year.

Our spring fair is at the earlier than usual date of **Sunday 31st March** and runs from 10am to 4pm. It's Mothers' Day so why not bring mum for a special treat.

The incredibly great value entry price includes the plant fair, gardens, grounds and entry to the historic hall as well.

Dog on leads are welcome outdoors.

**Our summer fair is on Sunday 21st July and the same great entry price applies.**

Middleton, Tamworth, Staffordshire B78 2AE Phone: 01827 283095  email: trading@middleton-hall.org.uk  webiste: www.middleton-hall.co.uk
ColourFence

By Mark Luton, ColourFence Solihull

ColourFence is a durable, secure, high-quality fencing product – and it’s also beautiful. These coloured garden fences are made from Zincalume steel. They can be complemented by garden gates, deadbolts and secure locks. You can also get gorgeous trellis sections in contrasting or matching colours.

They don’t need staining or painting, they will not rot, warp or peel and are guaranteed for 25 years. The standard width of a ColourFence section is 8ft rather than the more standard 6ft panels, and ColourFence can also be installed at your preferred height, 5ft, 6ft, or even 7ft with the appropriate permissions.

ColourFence comes in four beautiful colours; for four different looks.

Green is one of our most popular fence colours. Our green fences are made from the same tough yet beautiful material all our fencing enjoys. They can stand out or blend in as you would like; require very little maintenance and look very appealing. Our green fencing can be classic or contemporary, depending on your garden and the look you want. They can be paired with matching or contrasting trellis sections, posts and infills.

Brown fencing has a warm, homey appeal. It comes in all sizes up to 7ft, and can be enhanced with a new, secure fence gate in the same material. You can accessorise your brown fencing with trellis top sections – they can look especially charming in a soft cream, wound through with dusty pink roses or a strong, evergreen climber. It’s one of the more traditional fencing styles and the second most popular of our fencing colours. Blends perfectly in a cosy cottage garden.

A more contemporary look, blue fences take a classic hue into an unusual setting for a gorgeous juxtaposition. The gentle Prussian tint ensures that the colour is not jarring in a traditional garden. Yet this modern fencing colour is a refreshing change in a world of typical, dull wooden fences. And, unlike cheap external paints or stains, this colour fencing won’t run or fade. They offer the same high quality of all ColourFence steel fences and look incredible in minimalist, new build gardens.

Cream is a warm, cosy garden fence colour, perfect for the English countryside. Cream garden fences can be mixed and matched with posts and infills, as well as a secure new gate, or fence top trellis. As you can see, it looks fantastic paired with green or brown. When building a fence, our franchisees will put your tastes and directions at the top of their consideration. You may be concerned about the upkeep of cream fences. But like all our coloured fencing, it just needs an occasional hose down to look good.

For more information about our fencing please see our website www.colourfence.co.uk or for FREE no obligation site survey and quote call us on 0800 644 4113.

Mark will be demonstrating ColourFence fences, railings and gates at these fairs in 2019: Sat 13 Apr Sandwell Valley Park  Sun 21 Jul Middleton Hall
Happy Plant Hunting at Sandwell Valley Park

Our first ever fair at this brilliant family venue in 2018 was a huge success. A quick move from a waterlogged field to the main through path saved the day and the sun broke through to give us the first taste of spring of year. The blue skies told us the “beast from the east” was finally gone for good. Add to that the exotic sight and sound of wild parakeets flying to and fro and I can definitely say we had the perfect day!

This year our plant fair is on Saturday 13th April and is open from 10am to 4pm. Entry to park and plant fair is free (P&D parking).
Here’s a selection of the eclectic range we will be offering this year –

Phlomis italica – the “Jerusalem Sages” are fairly well known and rightly popular. The vast majority are yellow flowered. This pink flowered one has amazing foliage – so soft & silvery. Give it a sunny, well drained, sheltered spot for best results. Even after hard winters, it will shoot back from the base. One of those plants you just have to stroke!

Lonicera ‘Winter Beauty’ – one of the most under-rated plants ever! Creamy-white honeysuckle flowers over a long period (Nov – Mar) with the sweetest fragrance. Bee keepers take note – this is your dream plant, providing bees with food when little else is out in late winter. A sunny February day will have my stock plant buzzing! While usually used as a rounded shrub, I’ve seen it used as a hedge – different, but it worked. Remember to prune it well immediately after flowering – a bushy plant will produce more flowers, more fragrance, happier bees!

Grasses continue to sell well and rightly so. Our range is growing, this year including Miscanthus sinensis ‘Navajo’. It’s compact, neat, flowers well and has stunning red tinged foliage both in spring and autumn.

Ilex – let’s hear it for hollies! Such a useful plant thriving in shade or full sun. They are not all slow, pick your variety based on what you need. Great in pots, used as hedges or as specimens, they can be pruned to whatever shape you like. Good for wildlife too with a number of birds & butterflies feeding on them. Remember to get advice on which are male and female (the names may mislead you). It’s said (by an author in the US) that a ratio of 1 male : 20 female holly plants is good. Guess what I’m coming back in my next life as?!
Phormium or N.Z. flax is back in vogue, coming now in a wide range of colours, sizes and growing habits. We will be offering a good range of these stunning foliage plants for pots or borders. Remember that moist is good, waterlogged is not. Much loved by flower arrangers and those who appreciate all year round foliage beauty.
Alpine Peak of Perfection at Arley Arboretum

Visitors to the Plant Hunters Fair at Arley this year will see that we have been busy re-creating our alpine beds.

The alpine beds can be found adjacent to our Garden Tea Room, they separate the outdoor eating area from the main entrance. The alpine beds were created some years ago using the old brick and stone base of former glasshouses.

Over time they had become overgrown to such an extent it was hard to see any of the rock structures at all. All the planting was dug out and the stones reconfigured, some rocks have been placed on their sides to create areas with sharper drainage and to have a more dramatic affect. The rockery was particularly known for the pulsatilla in various shades and the subulata phlox, this year we will be adding more variety with a wider range of planting with the aim of having colour year round.

Our plant fair at Worcestershire’s Arley Arboretum is on Saturday 22nd June

As usual we will be sited in front of the garden entrance. Entry to the fair and gardens is at the special low price of £2.75. Open from 10am to 4pm.

There is free parking and dogs on leads are welcome.

Arley Arboretum & Gardens, Upper Arley, Near Bewdley Worcestershire DY12 1XJ

website: www.arleyarboretum.co.uk
Plants and Plantspeople at Weston Park

Our two fairs at Weston Park revel in the grand surroundings but in the fair it is the plants and plantspeople that make it special.

Spring Plant Fair: Sunday 5th & Monday 6th May 10am-5pm £3.00 for plant fair and gardens

Autumn Plant Fair: Sunday 8th September 10am-4pm £2.50 for plant fair and gardens
Earlier Spring Fair at Sugnall Walled Garden

Our first fair at Sugnall is on the earlier than usual date of Saturday 23rd March.

Enjoy the earlier fruit blossom in the garden, the home-grown produce in the café and, of course, pick a plant or two (or more) at the plant fair.

The fair is open from 10am – 4pm and entry is still just £1.00. Free parking, dogs on leads welcome in the fair. Our summer plant fair here is on Sunday 7th July and will be held in the old wood yard adjoining the garden due to building work planned for the summer.

Sugnall, Stafford, ST21 6NF The Walled Garden is on the B5026, Eccleshall to Loggerheads road, 2 miles from Eccleshall Website: www.suggallwalledgarden.co.uk

Get Carried Away at The British Ironwork Centre Plant Fairs

This year we have our two plant fairs at this eclectic Shropshire venue raising funds for Hope House Children’s Hospices.

We hope you can pop along and add to the £1.00 suggested donation per person to visit the plant fair.

This year’s spring event is on a Saturday for the first time so please make a note of that.

Saturday 18 May   Sunday 28 July   10am-4pm

Free parking, dogs welcome.

The British Ironwork Centre Whitehall Aston Oswestry Shropshire SY11 4JH

website: www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk

A Moment of Peace at Pottertons Alpine Garden and Nursery

There weren’t many of these for Rob & Jackie Potterton and their team of family and friends as over 1000 visitors flocked to their NGS open day and Plant Hunters’ Fair in 2018 all seeking tea, cakes and especially ice creams on a baking hot day.

Neither did the nurseries stop as plant-mad customers surrounded their stalls seeking out those special plants at Lincolnshire’s only Plant Hunters’ Fair.

Sunday 26th May 9am-5pm £3.00 to the NGS charities.

Pottertons Alpine Garden & Nursery, Moortown Road, Nettleton, Caistor, Lincoln LN7 6HX

Website: www.pottertons.co.uk
Why do we name plants?

Moreover, why do we so often name plants after people?

Sometimes it is to honour, remember or commemorate someone we love or respect. Sometimes (say it quietly) it’s pure commercialism: girl’s names sell plants.

Which Achillea would you go for sight unseen: “Walther Funke” or “Pretty Belinda”! Sometimes this goes too far and an established plant with an out of fashion name like Hesperantha “Wilfred H. Bryant” gets renamed to “Pink Princess” to kickstart sales.

I met a gardener at a fair once who told me she always threw away labels and replaced them with the name of the person she got it from, or a friend she was thinking of at the time. A lovely thought and a practice that has possibly led to multiple names from plants entering nursery lists when these plants are passed on. Aster “Connie” and Phlox “Trevor” come to mind as possibilities.

We also get enquiries from people for plants with specific names not just for birthdays or commemorations but also to satisfy a growing trend (pun unintended) of planting “family borders”. A couple contacted us last year looking for Rebecca and William to “complete the grandchildren section” of a new garden. We were able to oblige with Monarda Rebecca but draw a blank on William in our lists.

We used to have Violas “Martin” and “Janet” growing happily next to each other but unfortunately “Janet” didn’t stand the pace – nothing like the real world I must add!

Looking through our list of nursery stock and plants in your garden we have a veritable choir of girls and boys to choose from, but I would say there’s room for some flowers with more modern names in the list.

Here’s a few of my favourites – I hope the descriptions do justice to the names!

Elegant is the word for Veronicastrum “Erica”: she is tall, upright and clothed with spires of pink flowers. Whereas mischiev-
vous is the nicest word I can find to describe the rampantly invasive Helianthus “Miss Melish”.

Sisyrinchium “Aunt May” doesn’t really like being left out in a cold, wet garden in winter and a lot of books state that Geum “Lady Stratheden” catches cold easily. There should be no such trouble with Rudbeckia “Little Henry” who is tough chap.

Phlox are beautiful and dare I say, “girlie” flowers so it is no surprise that there is a complete chorus line of them and only a few boys. Looking at my garden list we have phloxes: “Anne”, “Becky Towe” (named after a Labrador apparently), “Charlotte”, “Delilah”, “Elizabeth Arden”, “Katherine”, “Jade”, “Little Laura” (possibly a cheeky rename of “Uspekh”), “Maude Stella Dagley”, Misses: Jessica, Jill, Mary, Margie and Kelly; “Monica Lynden Bell” and “Nicky” (definitely a rename of the not so easy to remember “Düsterlohe”). For the boys I can see just “David”, “Luc’s Lilac” and the enigmatic “Mister X”.

In contrast Kniphofia (Pokers) are undoubtedly “man plants” but there are plenty of girls among the names: “Jenny Bloom”; “Nancy’s Red” to name a few. The boys include “John Benary”, “Percy’s Pride” and “Timothy”.

Heleniums are a commonly given proper names and perhaps suit the person: “Vicky” is tall and brash; “Tom” is short and unassuming; “Betty” pretty and dependable; “Carmen” clothed with flowers; “Chelsey” modern and fashionable; “Luc” long-lasting; “Margot” a head-turner and “Sophie” a lady in red.

It’s nice to meet people associated with the names of plants. I met a colleague of “Eva Cullum” (phlox) who worked with Eva at Bressingham nursery but who herself sadly had no plant named for her by the Blooms.

A while ago I got a phone call from a lady wanting to buy Leucanthemum “Marion Bilsland”. When I asked her for her name she replied “Marion Bilsland”. Her grandfather, a head gardener by trade bred new varieties of Aster and Leucanthemum as a hobby and she had never realised he had named one for her when she was a baby.

So what border of names are you planning this year? I was thinking of “Unlikely Bedfellows” and looking at planting Gladiolus “Theresa” in the bed with Dahlia “Jeremy”. Do you think they’ll get on well together?

Martin & Janet Blow have run SpecialPerennials for over 12 years now and grow exciting hardy perennials to attract wildlife to your garden.

Martin is a well known garden writer and you can catch his articles in many local magazines across our region. Phone: 0771 699 0695   website: www.specialperennials.com

As organisers of Plant Hunters’ Fairs (in their spare time!!!!), Martin will be at every fair with a stall from SpecialPerennials nursery.
Easter Treats for Plant Lovers!

Whittington Castle

Good Friday 19th April
10am-4pm £1.00 per car

Good Friday at Whittington is now firmly establish in the plant fair calendar. We have many of your favourite nurseries plus some new ones for this fair:

The fair and castle grounds are free to enter—it’s just £1.00 to park. Dogs on leads are very welcome and the tea rooms and gift and book shops will be open throughout.

Whittington Castle, Castle Street, Whittington, Shropshire SY11 4DF Telephone 01691 662500 E-mail info@whittingtoncastle.co.uk website: www.whittingtoncastle.co.uk

Bodenham Arboretum

Easter Saturday 20th April 10am-4pm

Free entry to fair, free parking. Dogs on leads welcome. Entry to the arboretum is optional and at standard prices.

Now in our 9th year at this magical Worcestershire venue, the fairs goes from strength to strength. We have 18 great nurseries lined-up for the county’s best free plant fair.  Bodenham Arboretum, Wolverley, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 5TB

Our late plant fair here is on Saturday 31st August.

Spring Colourfest at Dorothy Clive Garden

With Easter coming late this year we are expecting a blaze of colour to greet us at the wonderful Dorothy Clive Garden on Easter Sunday 21st and Monday 22nd April. It’s our 12th year of plant fairs at this lovely venue and we have a brilliant line up of 19 great nurseries and artisans including Edrom from Scotland and Roseland House from Cornwall.

The fair is open from 10am to 5pm each day and entry which includes the fair and gardens is just £4.00—less than half standard price.

The garden is on the A51, 4 miles east of Bridgemere and 1 mile west of the A53 junction. Satnav: TF9 4EU

Our summer plant fair at the garden is on August Bank Holiday Sunday & Monday (25th & 26th)
We all remember the old fashioned Red Hot Poker plants with their tall, impressive heads of flower, red at the top and yellow at the bottom and great mounds of leaves, flowering away in a neglected spot in the garden. Eye-catching they certainly are and they have come a long way from these gaudy giants with lots of colours and sizes now available for every type of garden.

Other common names for this plant such as Torch Lily and Rocket Flower are equally as apt.

Kniphofia, as they are properly called come from Southern Africa. The ones we grow in the garden largely grow on high mountains and plateaux meaning they are cold hardy although you may find plants or seeds of subtropical species that will need protection in winter. As a rule of thumb those with very narrow, almost chive-like leaves are less hardy.

In the past gardeners have planted Pokers in the driest, sunniest part of the garden and then left them to get on with it, this comes from the misconception that they are desert plants. They will survive this but not thrive. The best treatment is plenty of sun and a rich, fertile soil with plenty of summer moisture. Here they will have more and larger flowers.

By careful selection of varieties and species it is possible to have a poker in flower from May to December, but for most gardens a few good varieties will cover the summer and autumn months. Here are a few of my favourites.

“Timothy” is very different from the standard poker with his salmony orange flowers on 2ft / 60cm stems in mid-summer he is more suitable for a small garden. Likewise, the cool, icy lemon and white flowers of “Percy’s Pride” are short and compact and create a zing in the border from July through August. The deep smouldering colour of “Nancy’s Red” heats up in August and September and again she is quite compact. There are even smaller ones available – watch out for “Brimstone” (Yellow), “Little Maid” (cream) and “Bressingham Comet” (Red, orange and yellow) for plants that are not much more than 1ft /
30cm tall.

Slightly taller is the lovely “Drummore Apricot” with bronze stems to set off the flowers in July and August. “Tawny King” is perhaps the most striking variety with very large caramel and cream flowers on 3ft / 90cm stems from June to August.

Some pokers are long and slender adding a gracefulness to the flowers. “Jenny Bloom” is one such with softly coloured peaches and cream coloured flowers. “Toffee-Nosed” is similar but has more distinctively caramel and white flowers. “Fiery Fred” is tall, slender and burning with heat through July and August and a must for the hot-coloured garden.

One of my favourites are the fatter flower heads of Bee’s Lemon who has yellow flowers that are greenish at first.

The giant of the group is uvaria Nobilis—he can send up flowers to more than 6ft tall.

Pokers can be propagating by division after flowering or in late spring from late flowering ones. Seed will be variable but does produce good plants – the colours may be a surprise! Sow on the surface of moist seed compost – do not bury the seed just press it lightly onto the surface – in late winter in warmth such as a heated propagator and transplant as soon as they are big enough to handle and then wait for the fireworks when they flower!

**Where to see Pokers:**

My two favourite places to see pokers growing in large drifts are Abbeywood Gardens and Ness Botanic Gardens. Our late summer fairs (18 August Abbeywood and 1 September Ness) are ideal times to see these spectacular flowers putting on their firework show!
Nurseries from Near and Far at Ness Botanic Gardens

Sunday 24th March:
If you are looking for RHS Medallists then there’s no need to pay a fortune to go to a big show. We have these medal winners: Edrom Nursery from Scotland with alpines and woodlanders, Hall Farm Nursery with perennials, Packhorse Farm Nursery with Acer, Pottertons from Lincolnshire with alpines, and for the first time at Ness, the Cottage Herbery.

In all we have 15 nurseries crammed into the sheltered and intimate space of the old herb garden.

Sunday 1st September:
Boasting a mouth watering line up including two new comers: Artisan Plant Supports with handmade iron supports and Crafty Plants with Tillandsia (airplants), bromeliads, tropical, sub-tropical, cacti and succulents.

The fairs are open from 10am-4pm. There is lots of free parking. Dogs are welcome in the plant fair (but no dogs in the main garden). Refreshments and lunches available in the spacious visitor centre.

Ness Botanic Gardens, Ness, Neston, South Wirral, CH64 4AY  website: www.nessgardens.org.uk

Southwell Minster

Fund Raiser

Our fair in the Education Garden at Southwell Minster is as always a fund raiser for conservation projects at the Minster which we hope lots of you will be able to support this year.

We have lots of great nurseries including some newcomers to the event.

Sunday 11th August 11am-4pm

Entry—suggested donation £2.00.

Dogs on leads welcome

Southwell Minster
Church Street
Southwell Notts
NG25 0HD
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<td>Sun 8</td>
<td>Weston Park Shifnal TF11 8LE</td>
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Check with website for any updates.
www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk