

SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Autumn 2023



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**Check out our Instagram page
Suffolk Plant Heritage**

Editor: Rosie Ansell

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The cover photo is Chrysanthemum Spartan Linnet at Hullwood Barn, Shelley, IP7 5RE

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

MAGGIE THORPE

Thank you to those who kindly helped at our very successful Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham. It was our new Secretary, John Humphrey's introduction to the membership stand where he met many old and some prospective new members.

As I write, we are preparing for the Autumn Fair on the 17th September. These two important events provide the main income for our Group and help to support Central Office in the affairs of Plant Heritage, particularly the work of Collection Holders, our Living Libraries.

I am sad that, after the death of her husband, Pat Stanley is retiring as our Treasurer. Pat stepped in at short notice seven years ago and we have enjoyed working with her. The good news is that we have appointed Jagath De Alwis to take over from Pat in November and we look forward to working with him in the future.



We had a very enjoyable summer Garden Party in Neil Bradfield's beautiful garden. It is such a joy to meet new members and have time to chat. If you would like to offer your garden for a future summer event, please do let me know. The Committee does all the work and provides the food and drink, we just need a lovely garden.

*Maggie Thorpe and Neil Bradfield
at our summer Garden Party*

**Contributions for the Spring Suffolk Group
Journal wanted by 8th January 2024.
Please send to rosieansell@aol.com**

MEMBERSHIP / SECRETARY REPORT

JOHN HUMPHREYS

MEMBERSHIP

I am delighted to welcome the new members affiliated to the Suffolk Group. Please introduce yourselves at events and make yourselves at home with us.

Sadly, since covid, several members have been unable to get to our events and winter talks and it would be excellent if each of us could sell the virtues of Plant Heritage in our local communities.

Our Group is one of the most active and we have a lot to offer new members - be it here in Suffolk or at national events such as open gardens, visiting national collections, attending talks and lectures or learning new skills at workshops. It's easy to join – simply click on the word JOIN on our Suffolk Plant Heritage website:

<https://www.plantheritage.org.uk/events/?AreaGroupId=22>

TALKS AT STOWUPLAND – PLEASE READ

FROM JANUARY 2024 we are having to re-locate from the Village Hall at Stowupland.

The building is being re-purposed with another storey being added. Thankfully, we have secured the village hall at Wetherden (between Haughley and Elmswell) for all our 2024 talks. The address is Wetherden Village Hall, Park Road, Wetherden, Stowmarket, IP14 3JS. The hall is easy to find

and has plenty of parking but please allow plenty of time in January for your first time there. No need to fret – the WI will still be providing tea and cakes!



OPENINGS

Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th October Open days at The Place for Plants, East Bergholt Place, CO7 6UP 10 am – 5 pm. View their National Collections of deciduous Euonymus, Rhus and Toxicodendron. www.placeforplants.co.uk. Guided tours by Rupert Eley at 10.30 each day – need to be booked but no extra charge. Café will be open.

ADVANCE WARNING:

Sunday 18th February 2024 Snowdrop day at Gable House Redisham NR34 8NE 11 am – 4 pm for NGS, admission £5.

Sunday 25th February 2024 Open Garden at the Laburnums, St James South Elmham, IP19 0HN in aid of local charities. Admission £4, children 50p.

PLANT HERITAGE SUFFOLK EVENTS 2023/4

The autumn talks will be held at Stowupland Village Hall. Due to the hall's closure at the end of the year meetings in 2024 will be held at Wetherden Village Hall.

The programme of events may be subject to change - please check the Suffolk Plant Heritage website.

17th September 2023 Autumn Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall

23rd September 2023: The Gardens of Windsor Great Park and Savill Gardens by John Anderson

John Anderson is Keeper of the Gardens in Windsor Great Park. The Savill & Valley Gardens of Windsor Great Park have so much to offer in terms of history, royal connections, plant diversity, landscape use and seasonal interest. They are one of the finest woodland gardens in the country.

21st October 2023: A Passion for Climbers by Jane Lyndsay and Toni O'Connor

Jane and Toni are familiar visitors to our plant fairs at Helmingham and speakers at Suffolk Plant Heritage and need no further introduction.

25th November 2023: AGM and Chrysanthemums by Twigs Way.

Twigs Way runs a small business delivering consultancy and research projects on historic gardens and designed landscapes of all periods and sizes. This includes production of Parkland Management Plans (PMP), Conservation Plans (CP) and Heritage Statements as well as undertaking specific research targeted projects for public and private clients. She is currently also working with a volunteer group in Essex to document historic parks and gardens in the area of Thurrock and the associated 'Land of the Fanns'.

27th January 2024: Plants in art and culture - how plants created society by Dr Mark Spencer

Dr Spencer is a Forensic Botanist and has written a book 'Murder most Florid' describing some of the investigations he has undertaken. (Postponed from earlier in the year)

24th February 2024: Spring Jewels by Guy Barker

Guy has spoken to several local groups and is well known for his love for and knowledge of snowdrops.

23rd March 2024 Perennials in season by Rosy Hardy

Rosy is a popular speaker that we have welcomed before to Suffolk. She set up her nursery in Hampshire in 1988 and specialises in perennials.

27th April 2024: Henstead Exotic Garden by Andrew Brogan

Andrew is a familiar figure at the Helmingham Plant Fairs, his creation, Henstead Exotic Garden described as Suffolk's Secret Jungle, is found just off the A12 between Southwold and Beccles. The garden is open every Sunday in July, August and September.

TREASURER'S REPORT

PAT STANLEY - August 2023

This year we have again been very successful in raising funds for Plant Heritage via the Helmingham Hall Plant & Craft Fair in May and PH propagation sales during the year.

Our share of the Helmingham Spring Plant & Craft Fair admissions and pitch fees, less costs incurred, brought in £10,215.65. Added to this were PH plant sales and plant creche donations, together with PH propagation plant sales made during the year, totalling £1,583.11.

A further £86.74 in funds was raised at the excellent summer party held at Neil's lovely garden in June.

Once again our thanks go to the Committee and all our Plant Heritage volunteers for their contributions at these events.

SUFFOLK NATIONAL COLLECTIONS REPORT

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT



I have recently visited three collections – the Suffolk Punch Trust, Santolinas and Aesculus. We have lost the erysimum collection as Simon Weeks has died.

Erysimum

SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS 2023

Aesculus Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203	Framlingham
Bellevalia Debbie Amor, 07565 966682	Lowestoft
Dianthus (Malmaison) Dianthus (Perpetual) Jim Marshall, 01473 822400	Shelley
Disporopsis, Disporum & Prosartes Helen Chen, 07805 238680	Bures
Dryopteris Equisetum Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104	Stowmarket
Euonymus Rhus Toxicodendron Rupert Eley, Place for Plants, 01206 299224	East Bergholt
Hosta Melanie Collins, Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576	Stowmarket
Impatiens Will Purdom, team.botanico@gmail.com	Beccles
Iris (Sir Cedric Morris) Sarah Cook, 01473 822400	Shelley
Iris (Sir Michael Foster) Lucy Skellorn, 07730 507900	Stowmarket
Iris (Suffolk pre 1985) Steve Baker 07764 500104	nr Woodbridge
Narcissus (Rev. G. Engleheart) Darren Andrews, 01473 822987	Dispersed

Pelargonium, hybrids and scented leaves
Lucinda Skinner, Woottens of Wenhaston
01502 478258

Wenhaston

Rosa - Pemberton and Bentall hybrids
Debbie Symes, Earlsway Farm, 07787 152451

Bramfield

Santolina
Jon Rose, Botanica, 01728 747113

Campsea Ashe

Suffolk Garden Plants
Suffolk Punch Trust, 01394 411327

Hollesley

SCIENTIFIC STATUS FOR THE DRYOPTERIS COLLECTION

ANTHONY PIGOTT

My National Collection of *Dryopteris* (species & hybrids) has recently been awarded 'Scientific Status' by Plant Heritage. I've been asked to explain how this has come about, not least as only 19 of Plant Heritage's over 700 National Collections have this special designation.

To achieve this, as the national Plant Heritage web site puts it: "You have to demonstrate your active involvement in maintaining and enhancing the taxonomic status of your plant group, in cooperation with other collections and authorities, a sound knowledge of other collections (held nationally and internationally) in your genus or group and regular communication with them where possible. You should also be able to demonstrate how you have shared your knowledge and plant



Dryopteris pseudofilix-mas



Dryopteris caucasica



Dryopteris x lunensis



Dryopteris kerryensis

material for the good of conservation and the genus concerned.”

That all sounds very demanding. In practice, I had to fill out a form that needed a paragraph or so in answer to the questions. That doesn't sound too daunting but you do end up writing the equivalent of an longish essay about all aspects of your collection and its history. I also had to get a review and recommendation from someone respected in the field who knew my work and the collection. Fortunately, I've been lucky enough to know a very eminent botanist for many years who has worked on *Dryopteris* herself and has visited the collection a number of times. Anyway, the Plant Conservation Committee liked my application and was kind enough to grant 'Scientific Status' in June this year.

I began collecting *Dryopteris* in the early Eighties, when I first became interested in the genus and ferns and other pteridophytes (including *Equisetum*) generally. I find a (perhaps perverse!) satisfaction in studying groups of plants that are apparently very similar but really all different, with sometimes obscure differences that need to be understood to identify them. My main interest was always botanical rather than horticultural although *Dryopteris* do mostly make good garden plants too. For some time, I've believed that cultivating them over an extended period would give greater insight into the genus rather than just observations from field trips or herbarium specimens, important though those are. Although I'm interested in and will grow any *Dryopteris*, I'm particularly focused on the 'Male Ferns': *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris affinis* and their mostly European and South Asian relatives, which make up the bulk of my collection.

I have recently been involved in active research in projects with

international partners on their taxonomy, DNA size and ploidy level. The work on DNA size, using a technique called flow cytometry in which I've been greatly enabled by a Czech botanist (who has the laboratory and equipment!) has led, amongst other things, to the discovery that *Dryopteris pseudocomplexa*, which had been assumed to be a form of *Dryopteris cambrensis* and therefore triploid was, in fact, tetraploid and therefore a good species.

Although Plant Heritage understandably is mostly involved with collections of ornamentals, it's important to remember that it covers all cultivated plants, including those primarily of scientific interest. In doing so, Plant Heritage can play an important role in supporting, through cultivation, the conservation and study of all plants.



*Photo courtesy
of the RHS*

JIM MARSHALL VMH

We are very pleased to report that our own Jim Marshall has been awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour by the RHS. The VMH is the RHS's most prestigious award, limited to 63 members at any one time.

The citation said: Jim has been instrumental in guiding and maintaining the heritage of National Trust Gardens over a long and eventful period, and has succeeded in guarding historical precedence and influencing innovation in equal measure. His work with Plant Heritage continues to this day, guiding and offering sage advice when needed. His enthusiasm to share his wealth of knowledge in the practice of horticulture, his encouragement to all who love gardening and his foresight in the preservation of disappearing cultivars is immense.

Jim is a former Garden Advisor to the National Trust where he worked for 27 years. He is a founder member, Trustee and National Vice Chair of Plant Heritage, holding two national plant collections for many years and winning several gold medals at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Festival. He is also Vice Chair of the Society's Herbaceous Plant Committee and a regular member of its AGM Plant Trials Forums.

WORK AND RETRAIN AS A GARDENER SCHEME (WRAGS)



WRAGS trainee in her placement gardens pond!

KAREN DE ROSA

Applications for the WRAGS training scheme, where would-be gardeners learn practical horticultural skills in a carefully selected garden, have surged due to people looking for a career change. A WRAG (Work and Retrain as a Gardener) trainee works for 12-14 hours a week for a year under the instruction of the garden owner, head gardener and/or a gardens team.

The administration fee for an applicant to join is £600 (paid by the trainee on confirmation of the appointment) and when in place trainees are paid the National Living Wage by the garden owner.

Graduates of the scheme have gone on to run their own garden business, work in plant nurseries, private gardens and on large estates.

The scheme is administered by the WFGA (Working for Gardeners Association), a charity formed in 1899 whose aim is 'Advancing Horticulture'. Its original intention was to provide education and employment for women working on the land, and from it sprang the Women's Land Army. Now open equally to men and women, alongside the WRAGs training scheme, it also offers workshops, skill days and garden visits. Its national network of Regional Managers monitor and visit trainees, and use their local knowledge to source new gardens.

The one downside of the increase in potential trainees is that their number currently outstrips that of gardens available. The WFGA is always on the look-out for garden owners, who have established a garden they are proud of and can pass on their skill and knowhow to a new generation of gardeners, either themselves or through their garden staff. Training is built around the charity's curriculum, and Regional Managers are on hand to advise.

If you think that you can give a trainee a year's part-time paid experience, please do get in touch at admin@wfga.org.uk; telephone 01285 841468 www.wfga.org.uk

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photos by Kevin Pulford and Rosie Ansell



NT FAIR



CHAOS, GARDENERS & BIODIVERSITY

JOHN LITTLE @GRASSROOF

After 25 years working and talking about the importance of public greenspace, we are now 'in fashion' and get asked to present our ideas to many groups and conferences.

Firstly it's worth, as I do always in my talks, making clear that without investment in people to look after/garden places most of the other work we do is close to pointless and at best dishonest.

It feels like we know 'why' we should invest in green space but 'where' should we invest? I'm suggesting we move funding from capital into care. Invest in people caring for our poorest places and watch what happens. We need more and better gardeners embedded in our communities subtly changing places to suit the people that live there. It's not sexy and it's difficult to photograph but it's vital if we are serious about community, biodiversity, and joy over the long term, surely?

If you want to call a landscape 'sustainable' it must be cared for. It also means you employ local people, in essence you buy their labour, knowledge and energy - a very low carbon investment.

Adding people into a place also means you can connect and understand local communities, not gardening but maybe more important?

I have realised for many years that our disrupted and disturbed places (brownfields, chalk pits, gravel pits etc) were often our most biodiverse and vibrant places. Indeed 25% of our SSSI sites are the result of previous mineral extraction.

More recently the conversation and success of rewilding, a landscape this time disrupted by grazing animals/ beavers etc, is creating a similarly important landscape.

If we know these are the best places for wildlife, why aren't we designing this topography, substrates, and chaos into new landscapes? We understand our wildlife evolved with the disruption from megafauna, we have destroyed this vital part of our ecosystem, so surely we should now become the keystone species and mimic this landscape – design it back into our greenspace.

To understand this most vibrant and biodiverse period in our history,



Photograph taken by Alister Thorpe <https://www.alisterthorpe.co.uk/gardens>

I suggest you look at two great books – 'Rebirthing' by Benedict McDonald and 'Wilding' by Isabella Tree.

If we are to start designing these ideas into our new spaces then we can also look to reduce our waste by designing it back into our landscapes. We should have a conversation around what waste is going to be produced by a development and then try and use this waste to build wonderful, complicated landscapes. Indeed the waste from construction is often the ideal material to create one of our most important habitat types – open mosaic habitat.

The other fascination and challenge for me is how we can make our everyday infrastructure work harder. Work harder for us, and function as habitat for our fauna and flora. With the urgency of climate change and biodiversity loss we must look at the design of all our urban infrastructure and ramp up the biodiversity potential, whether that be a bin shelter, building or car park. Everything can deliver niches for wildlife alongside its function.

Architects, urban planners and designers now have the joy of designing for people and for wildlife. What an amazing job they have.

So, I guess I'm suggesting we free ourselves from the restrictions of conventional horticulture and dive into the wonderful world of chaotic and biodiverse landscapes.

Happy days!

www.grassroofcompany.co.uk; www.greenroofshelters.co.uk

The Green Roof Company also create bird hides, outdoor classrooms, cycle shelters and bin stores with green roofs and walls of wildlife habitats from recycled materials. I look forward to seeing one of their hides on a Suffolk Wildlife Trust site!

OTHER SPRING TALKS

In February we welcomed Sandra Lawrence to talk about Ellen Willmott, her life and gardens. Ellen was a complex character who spent a fortune creating gardens, principally Warley Place in Essex, but ran out of money and her gardens did not survive her. Sandra has written a book about Miss Willmott and spent many hours on research among her papers, now stored at Spetchley Park, the home of her sister, Rose Berkeley.

Ellen also funded plant hunting expeditions and bought gardens in France and Italy, although these later had to be sold. Although awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour she ruffled feathers when she did not appear at the award ceremony, and became increasingly eccentric. On her death Warley Place had to be sold to pay her debts. The house was demolished though part of the gardens is now a nature reserve and the rest cared for as an abandoned garden.

Sandra Lawrence feels there is more of her story to come out from the papers at Spetchley, most of which are in poor condition having been overlooked in a cellar for many years.

In March our own Matt Tanton Brown stepped in at short notice to give us a talk on composting, which has hopefully inspired us to try harder!

WILDING: THE RETURN OF NATURE TO A BRITISH FARM

ISABELLA TREE

This book was originally published in 2018 and describes how Isabella Tree and her husband completely altered the way that his 3,500 acre estate in Sussex was run for the benefit of wildlife.

They started in 2000 upon realising that, despite investment and diversifying, the conditions on their estate were not best suited to profitable agriculture, the soil being poor. They sold their cattle and all their farm machinery and aimed to restore the parkland, originally designed by Humphrey Repton, using government funding under the Countryside Stewardship scheme. They had been advised that many of their trees, despite being veterans, had been damaged by intensive farming.

The parkland was rejuvenated by the lack of chemicals, and the arrival of wild flowers, closely followed by insects. Next they imported a herd of fallow deer from the nearby Petworth park. The next step was to declare the intention to become “a biodiverse wilderness” introducing wild cattle, ponies, wild boar, beavers and bison. This led to years of involvement with English Nature and its subsequent incarnations and the adoption of their plans incrementally rather than all at once.

Longhorn cattle, followed by Exmoor ponies arrived in 2003. The following year Tamworth pigs arrived (safer than wild boar!). The thorny scrub that developed on the uncultivated land proved a nursery area for trees from acorns etc buried by squirrels and jays.

The wilding of the landscape was not generally appreciated by local people, who felt the land should have been continued to be farmed, the ingrained feeling being that we should grow food for people. Isabella Tree quotes figures for world food production and also how much of this food is wasted. For marginal land, such as at Knepp, costs are higher and, if prices are low, it is unprofitable.

By 2009 many species had either returned to Knepp or increased in numbers – redwings, fieldfares, lesser redpolls, skylarks and ravens, bats, and painted lady butterflies. Particularly exciting was in the increase in nightingales, turtle doves and purple Emperor butterflies.

In 2011 they embarked on rewilding the River Adur as it crossed the park, returning it to its original meanders, rather than the canalised straight course it had become. This has led to an increase in the wildlife massively outshining the still straight section of the river beyond the park to the sea. So far they have not introduced beavers.

In 2014 the Knepp Wildland campsite and safari business opened and

the estate has received numerous awards. Rewilding is a concept that has a growing appeal, though there is now a debate as to how far it should be taken. On marginal land and brownfield sites, as described by John Little, it has more appeal than on top grade agricultural land. And the debate has spread to gardens with both Alan Titchmarsh and Monty Don arguing against wholesale rewilding in gardens. How far does rewilding go in your garden?

NEW FEATURE - PROFILES

We felt that it would be a good idea to introduce our committee members to the membership so that you can recognise us (and not just at the AGM!).

Here we have perhaps our two most important post holders – our Chairman and our new Secretary, and also Sarah Cook who has been instrumental with the success of our Helmingham plant fairs. More to follow in subsequent editions.



MAGGIE THORPE - CHAIRMAN

Maggie's interest in flowers began with a Diploma in Floristry from the Constance Spry School in 1955. She ran a flower shop in the West End, The Four Seasons, buying flowers in Covent Garden Market. After marrying and having a family Maggie spent three years at Birchetts Green Agricultural College and gained a Diploma in Horticulture. She teamed up

with a friend and ran a Garden Holiday Group taking people to visit gardens at home and abroad. She moved to Suffolk in 1994 and was introduced to Suffolk Plant Heritage by Jenny Robinson becoming Chairman in 2002 then President in 2010.



SARAH COOK

Gardening has been part of my life since I was very young, I think it is part of my DNA. My brother and I had small gardens of our own from an early age. Ancestors on my mother's side include a number of gardeners; (I can remember my maternal grandmother being distraught when I broke a stem of her Agapanthus). She was given a

piece of *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* by Cedric Morris in the 1950's. I used to be able to remember my visits as a child to Benton End but I have been back so often recently that my early memories have faded – a shame.

Leaving university with a degree, but no idea what to do with my life I 'retired' to Cornwall with an unsuitable man. I worked for several years as a fishmonger and waitress, living in an ex miners cottage, with a large front garden. One of my customers decided I should become a gardener and soon I started a job as assistant gardener on the Glynn Estate– my first as a professional. I learned so much there from Rene who was keen to share her knowledge.

I studied horticulture in the evenings, taking an RHS 'beginners' exam. Eventually I spotted an advert saying 'Kew Gardens, gardeners wanted, training given' - exactly what I needed. I was given an interview and moved to Kew. I was sent to college to study for the 'City and Guilds' Horticulture. Then the Head of the Herbaceous Department offered to tutor me one evening a week for what is now called M.Hort. Two years later I had a respectable qualification, and shortly after a job at Sissinghurst.

I spent 20 years with the National Trust (Sissinghurst, Upton House, then Sissinghurst as Head Gardener), before I retired to Suffolk with husband Jim spending most of my time gardening, or on garden related activities, including my Plant Heritage National Collection of Irises bred by Cedric Morris. One of my great joys is being able to grow and eat my own vegetables!



**JOHN HUMPHREYS - GROUP
SECRETARY AND MEMBERSHIP
OFFICER**

I took over from Isobel Ashton in May just before the Helmingham Spring Plant Fair. Apart from 4 years back in Cheshire, my wife (Marion) and I have lived in Suffolk since 1985 when my work in the agricultural industry with ICI brought us 'down south' from Little Haywood in Staffordshire to Debenham. We soon realised Suffolk was quite different – expansive, dry, lots of sky and brown lawns in the summer so we had to change how

we managed our garden and adapt to the new conditions. We have recently moved back to Debenham via Earl Stonham, Wetherden and Woolpit.

My parents farmed in south Lancashire between Manchester and Liverpool but, sadly, most of our farm and village changed for ever when Fiddlers Ferry Power Station was built during the 1960's. My hobby is family and local history and assisting (or frustrating) my wife in the garden. In retirement, I chair BASIS exams across the country for those coming in to the ag and hort industry and wishing to advise growers on crop production, turf management, soils, fertilisers, sustainable land management etc where a BASIS certificate of competence is a pre-requisite. I look forward to meeting members at our various events.

SCARLET LILY BEETLE (LILIOCERIS LILII)



MATT TANTON BROWN

A very common pest that attacks lilies and other bulbous plants.

What is it? – for anyone who has never come across this little beastly it is quite an easy one to identify. The Adult beetles are around 8mm in length and have bright red wing cases and thorax. The legs and head are black in colour as is the underside of the beetle. They tend to feed on Lilies (hence the name), but they are also

often found on Fritillaries.

It is also known as Red Lily Beetle and it is a member of the leaf beetle family Chrysomelidae. The adults lay eggs which are conspicuously orange-red and sausage-shaped, on the undersides of leaves. These develop into the larvae which can get up to 6-8mm long, these are rotund in shape, reddish brown in colour with a black head. Sometimes the larvae look black to the eye but this is because they are covered in frass, or to put it bluntly they cover themselves in

their own poo!!! This helps to ward off predators. Well, would you eat anything covered in that?!!

Plants commonly affected – Liliium, Fritillaria, Cardiocrinum, sometimes they are found on other plants such as Disporum and Polygonatum.

Symptoms – Adults – visible signs of feeding damage, adults make rounded holes in the leaves and along their edges. They will sometimes feed on petals and seed pods.

Larvae – the young graze on the undersides of the leaves, which often causes dried up brown or white patches. Older larvae can eat entire leaves starting at the tips and moving down towards the stem.

Life Cycle – the adults overwinter in the soil and other sheltered places such as compost heaps and hedge bases. The adults can fly and so move from one garden to another. They can detect the volatile chemicals that plants such as fritillarias produce, once a plant is found the adults will produce aggregation pheromones which draws in more adult beetles. The adults emerge from their winter hiding place in March and April.

The eggs are laid from April onwards, when fully fed, the larvae drop off into the soil to pupate. The next generation will emerge from mid-summer, however they only feed and will not mate until next spring, (a great time to control as you will reduce next year's damage by removing the adults).

Control – Cultural Control – remove the adult beetles where practical.

Place a white item such as a pillowcase or towel around the clump of lilies where there is sign of damage in the evening, when you go to hunt for the beetles first thing the following morning any that feel your vibrations will drop off. Normally you cannot see them as they drop onto their backs which means that their black bellies will be facing upwards. Having a white cloth underneath means you can catch everyone!!

I find that checking lilies for the adult beetles is best done first thing in the morning, they seem to be sleepy and not so active, also this seems to be the time when they mate, so while they have other things on their minds you often get the chance to get two for the price of one!! Remember to be stealthy as they can feel vibrations,

the slightest movement and they drop to the ground, so don't wear your wellies to do this!

Encourage wildlife into the garden such as birds, frogs, wasps and predatory ground beetles. Most of which will eat the larvae and some adults. There are some parasitic wasps which prey on the larvae.

Chemical – Grazers G4 is advertised as a repellent for lily beetle.

Any insecticide containing the contact chemical pyrethrum can be used on lily beetle however they are broad spectrum and will affect other insects including bees.

Chemicals containing Flupyradifurone can also work but again can kill many other things.

Generally, if the infestation is not too bad regular removal of the adult beetles should be enough to keep attack to a minimum, remember to wear gloves if you are going to remove the larvae as the frass is smelly and can stain!!



*Just Joey - Photo
courtesy of
Maggie Thorpe*

REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR

How do our gardens grow?

Following on from our reflections last autumn on the effect of heat and drought in our gardens we invited members to give us further feedback on how things have fared this year as a result and following the cold spells of the winter.

Reflections on the past year from Mickfield Hostas

The drought last summer reduced the water table to the lowest we have known since 1976. I believe this is why so many people lost plants, even well-established shrubs, rather than the cold wet spring in isolation. The drought caused the plants that did survive to be stunted if they were not watered more generously. The important lesson here is not to think that well-established planting can survive such extreme weather without intervention.



It has made us rethink plans to plant our hostas out, at least in containers you can selectively water.

The spring weather did result in damaged leaves on quite a few hosta varieties. Once the weather improved we removed the damaged leaves and the plants then

worked on a second flush of leaves to replace them. The sudden improvement in the weather towards the end of May saw at least 6 weeks of dry hot weather. This sent the hostas into overdrive and now they are starting to look a bit autumnal in places due to the stresses of the weather – we expect the season to be shorter as a result.

In general hostas are tough cookies but even they will need more care and attention as our weather oscillates between prolonged wet and dry periods.

Members report

Several people remarked that it had been a great year for roses and our irises were spectacular following their baking in the sun last year. Next year, who knows? Dahlias which were not lifted over the winter had a slow start but are now also doing well.

Sarah Clark in Aldeburgh reported that her penstemons suffered in the heat last year, and the cold north east winds earlier in the year have caused her rosemary and salvias plants to suffer, leading to losing some all together.

Tina in Brundish reported that she had lost some established shrubs and some small trees, but her dahlias and crocosmias have flowered very well, aided by our copious rainfall this summer.

John Dyter, near Woodbridge, credits the long hot summer of last year with the excellent flowering this year of his Rhododendrons, *Genista aetnensis*, and *Koelreuteria paniculata*.

In our garden in Bury we lost a large leafed hebe and a callistemon, and our autumn sown broad beans. The santolinas that border our veg patch suffered in the winter and have only partly grown back so are poorly shaped. The choisya in the front had no flowers as all the tips were frosted.

The main part of my passion flower died, but there are smaller sections growing up some distance away, but they will not flower. All our established plants of verbenas bonariensis died, but the usual crop of seedlings has come up to replace them.



PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

For an update on what's happening at National Office visit the current issue of Newslines on the website www.plantheritage.com

To find out more about Suffolk Group activities - including details of garden events and openings visit <https://suffolkplants.org.uk/>

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