

# SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Spring 2024



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

*Editor: Rosie Ansell*

*Layout: Tuddenham Press*

*The cover photo is Ribes laurifolium Rosemoor form  
at RHS Rosemoor.*

# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

*MAGGIE THORPE*

What we grow and how we manage to maintain plants in either very wet or very dry conditions is becoming increasingly challenging.

Our Talks Tent at Helmingham will have speakers who cover these difficulties. Please volunteer to help at the plant fairs by emailing Linda Weeks ([linda.weeks2@aol.com](mailto:linda.weeks2@aol.com)). All we ask for is one hour of your time in return for free entry.

Please remember to bring plants for sale, either to our monthly talks or to Jude or Matthew for sale at Helmingham. If you have anything special or rare you would like to have propagated, please speak to Jude.

We are joining with Norfolk Group to share a speaker, Derry Watkins, an American who set up and runs Special Plants Nursery near Bath. She will come to us on Saturday 21st and move on to Norfolk on Sunday. See 'Events' for full details.

We had a very successful Study Day on the Propagation of Ferns by our own Collection Holder, Anthony Pigott, held at Fullers Mill by kind permission of Perennial. We aim to have more of these Study days – the workshop there is excellent for these events and we thank them for hosting us.

I am looking forward to our Garden Party on Sunday 9th June at 3.00pm in the lovely garden of Linda Weeks in Clopton. Do come and join us for champagne and strawberries.

Our Secretary, John Humphries, took over last year from Isobel Ashton, and I want to thank him for his excellent emails to members. They really keep us all in touch and up-to-date with events and we are grateful for his help in setting up our new talks venue at Wetherden.

**Contributions for the Autumn Suffolk Group  
Journal wanted by 29th August 2024.  
Please send to [rosieansell@aol.com](mailto:rosieansell@aol.com)**

# **PLANT HERITAGE SUFFOLK EVENTS 2024**

A reminder that all meetings in 2024 will be held at Wetherden Village Hall, Park Road, Wetherden, IP14 3JS.

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

## **23rd March 2024: Perennials in season by Rosy Hardy**

Rosy is a popular speaker whom we have welcomed before to Suffolk. She set up her nursery in Hampshire in 1988 and specialises in perennials. \* Plants for sale.

## **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.

## **26th and 27th May 2024: Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall**

**Sunday 9 June** 3.00 pm Summer Garden party in Linda Weeks' garden, The Brambles, Manor Road, Clopton, Woodbridge, IP13 6SH A quiet and peaceful plantaholics garden nestled in the countryside, which has been developed over the last 10 years. There are over 100 roses, many shrubs, trees and perennials and a pond which plays host to visiting ducks. Plenty of sitting areas in which to rest and contemplate. A garden to share full of interest and joy. Tickets £5 members, £7 guests from Maggie Thorpe.

## **17th September 2024 Autumn Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall**

**21st September 2024:** Gravel Gardening – low maintenance, drought tolerant plants: Derry Watkins of Special Plants Nursery near Bath. Free to members, visitors £5. Website [www.specialplants.net](http://www.specialplants.net)  
\* Plants for sale.

**26th October 2024:** Drought Tolerant Plants for the modern cottage garden: Steve Edney of No Name Nursery, Sandwich.  
\* Plants for sale.

## **23rd November 2024 – AGM**

Asian Woodland Plants: Helen Chen. One of our own collection holders will talk about her specialism. Website: <http://japonicaplants.co.uk/talks/> \* Plants for sale.

# EVENTS AND GARDEN OPENINGS

## OPENINGS

**Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 March** 11.00 am – 5.00 pm Open days for the National Plant Collection of Hyacinths at Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, CB25 9LQ. Admission £3.

**Sunday 7th and Sunday 28th April 2024** 2.00 – 5.00 pm The Place for Plants open for NGS, admission £9, children free

## ADVANCE WARNING

**Sunday 2nd June 2024** Open garden at Beech House, 82 Leiston Road Aldeburgh, IP15 5PS Garden open in aid of St Elizabeth Hospice, Admission £4 (cash only). ¼ acre garden near the sea, packed with plants to withstand drought, poor sandy soil and salt laden winds. Woodland walk, fruit and vegetable gardens, pond, bog garden, greenhouse. Refreshments and plants for sale.

**Sunday 16th June** 11 am – 5 pm Garden open at 2 Holmwood Cottage, Bower House Tye, Polstead, CO6 5BZ for NGS.

**Sunday 29th September** 11 am – 5 pm Garden open at 2 Holmwood Cottage, Bower House Tye, Polstead, CO6 5BZ for NGS.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE EVENT

**Saturday 9 March** 2.00 pm Talk by Anne Tweddle on Engleheart's Daffodils, Madingley Hall Cambridge, CB23 8AQ.

## ZOOM TALK

**Free to Plant Heritage members but please register online in advance**

**Thursday 28 February 6.30 pm** “Historical Tulips – a National Plant Collection” by Polly Nicholson. A talk on English Florists Tulips and Dutch Historic Tulips from the early 17th century to c 1960.

## EVENTS LIST

**Wednesday 28 February** 11 am – 3 pm Snowdrop Day at Fullers Mill Garden, IP28 6HD, with Hedgehog Plants

**Saturday 2 March** 2.30 pm EAGG Secret Gardens of the South East, Barbara Segall, Monks Eleigh Village Hall, IP7 7JL, visitors £5

**Saturday 9 March** Spring Thing at Monksilver Nursery, Cottenham, CB35 8TW

**Saturday 16, Sunday 17 March** RHS Hyde Hall Early Spring Show

**Wednesday 21 March** Propagation workshop (details to be advised)

**Saturday 6 April** 2.30 pm EAGG Unusual Edibles, Matthew Oliver, Monks Eleigh Village Hall, IP7 7JL visitors £5

**Sunday 14 April** Suffolk Wildlife Trust Plant Fair Lopham Fen, IP22 2HX

**Saturday 20 April** RHS Hyde Hall Plant Heritage Essex Plant Fair

**Sunday 21 April** 1 pm – 5 pm Columbine Hall, Stowupland for St Elizabeth Hospice, IP14 4AT

**Saturday 27 April** 2.30 pm EAGG About Gardens, Robin Lane Fox, Monks Eleigh Village Hall IP7 7JL, members £12, visitors £14

**Sunday 28 April** East Ruston Spring Fair NR12 9HN

**Sunday 5 May** 10 am – 3 pm Woottens Spring Fair, Wenhaston IP19 9HF £1 entry

**Sunday 5 May** 11 am – 5 pm. Fullers Mill Garden open for NGS, IP28 6HD, £10

**Sunday 27 and Monday 28 May** 10 am – 4 pm Spring Fair and Artisan Market, Helmingham Hall, IP14 6EF

**Saturday 8 June** East Ruston Summer Fair NR12 9HN

**Sunday 9 June** 3.00 pm Summer Garden party in Linda Weeks' garden, The Brambles, Manor Road, Clopton, Woodbridge, IP13 6SH

**Sunday 16th June** 11 am – 5 pm Garden open at 2 Holmwood Cottage, Bower House Tye, Polstead, CO6 5BZ for NGS.

**Saturday 17 August** Mid Anglia Bulb Sale, Fullers Mill Garden, IP28 6HD

**Sunday 29th September** 11 am – 5 pm Garden open at 2 Holmwood Cottage, Bower House Tye, Polstead, CO6 5BZ for NGS.

For local village garden openings check out

[https://www.opengardens.co.uk/open\\_gardens\\_in\\_suffolk.php](https://www.opengardens.co.uk/open_gardens_in_suffolk.php)

# PROPAGATION REPORT

*JUDE LAW*

2023 was a quiet year on the propagation front but we had two very successful workshops refreshing our twin scaling and fern spore-sowing skills (see below).

In the background, huge thanks go to Matt Tanton Brown for manically sowing and producing plants for our plant fairs at Helmingham whilst our more regular propagation sessions were on pause. With support from a few regular propagators, our tables at the fairs were well stocked with very healthy and often unusual plants.

As we move into 2024, we have a few more workshops at the planning stage and Matt and Jude will kick off some more general propagation mornings again. The first is scheduled for 21st March in the morning. Venue to be announced but as always space is likely to be limited, so please contact Jude ([Judith.law@btinternet.com](mailto:Judith.law@btinternet.com)) to register interest.

## SPH FERN CONSERVATION PROJECT

This exciting project is being masterminded by Anthony Pigott who, as many know, was awarded scientific status for his National Collection of *Dryopteris* last year. What a wealth of knowledge Anthony has, which has been built over many years studying *Dryopteris* and other ferns both in the field and within his collection. He also has a wonderful ability to translate that knowledge into simple terms.

The primary focus of the project is the preservation of the threatened fern, *Dryopteris pseudodisjuncta* which is a British native. Anthony came across the only known colony growing in England in the Lake District over 25 years ago. With just a few established plants it is now in serious danger of dying out and there are only two other known, but tiny populations elsewhere in Britain. Anthony gathered vegetative material on that first visit and now has spore-producing progeny from the original collection. The aim now is to increase stocks, get SPH members and others growing and establishing plants in their Suffolk gardens and beyond and be able, if necessary, to re-introduce specimens to the wild.

To that end Anthony led a fern propagation workshop at the beginning of November on the reproductive life cycle of ferns and how to propagate from spores. A practical session followed, where spores from his collection were sown under sterile conditions. These will be cared for by those attending who will report back as they germinate and develop prothalli. Once the sporlings have established we will meet again to pot on and collect 'citizen science' on rates and conditions of germination.

Once the *D. pseudodisjuncta* were safely sealed in their sterile bags and there could be no unintended introduction of other spores, we went through the same process with spores of various *Dryopteris affinis* varieties, collected over the years and stored securely. We will hopefully raise new plants from these sowings too for distribution in the same way, but also gain an insight into the length of time spores remain viable and the effect of aging on germination rates.



Fig 1: *D. pseudodisjuncta* frond arising from the original specimen

Fig 2: Mature sori on the frond from the original specimen

Fig 3: Examples of *Dryopteris* sporelings in sterile conditions prior to potting on

We concluded by looking at division as an alternative means of propagation. No new skills to learn but hopefully we will have established plants of *Adiantum venustum* and *Polypodium x font-queri* (a hybrid between *P. cambricum* and *P. vulgare*) for sale at Helmingham in May.

So, whether you wish to simply grow mature plants, join in with fern propagation, or watch from the sidelines, it's a very exciting step into conservation for the Suffolk group!



# SUFFOLK NATIONAL COLLECTIONS REPORT

*DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT*

I have been able to visit Collections this year and they were all good.

I have visited:

Sarah Cook – Iris

Robert Grimsey – Aesculus

Debbie Symes – Rosa

Steve Baker – Iris

Jon Rose – Santolina

Suffolk Punch Trust – Suffolk Garden Plants

Will Purdom – Impatiens

We have two new Collections:

Rosa – Pemberton & Bentall hybrid musk with Debbie Symes,  
Earlsway Farm, Bramfield.

Pelargoniums – Lucinda Skinner, Woottens of Wenhaston.

See page 11 for an article on Helen Chen's latest collection, recently approved, and see page 23 for an article on the Pelargonium collection.

## SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS 2024

Aesculus Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203	Framlingham
Bellevalia Debbie Amor, 07565 966682	Lowestoft
Dianthus (Malmaison) Dianthus (Perpetual) Jim Marshall, 01473 822400	Shelley
Bambusoides (hardy) Disporopsis, Disporum & Prosartes Heloniopsis & Ypsilandra Helen Chen, 07805 238680	Bures

Dryopteris Equisetum Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104	Mendlesham
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	Charles Tye
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 info@woottensplants.co.uk	Wenhaston
Rosa - Pemberton and Bentall hybrids Debbie Symes, Earlsway Farm, debbie@earlswayfarm.co.uk	Bramfield
Santolina Jon Rose, Botanica, 01728 747113	Campsea Ashe
Suffolk Garden Plants Suffolk Punch Trust, 01394 411327	Hollesley

# HELONIOPSIS AND YPSILANDRA

HELEN CHEN



I was delighted to be awarded a new National Collection of *Heloniopsis* and *Ypsilandra* in November 2023. The collection contains eleven species plus five cultivars and forms – all that are currently available in the U.K. (There is a variegated form of *Heloniopsis orientalis*, not available here at present, which I would love to get my hands on!) They are all in propagation and I hope to be able to offer small numbers of most forms for sale in the next few years.

*H tubiflora*

*Heloniopsis* and *Ypsilandra* are two very closely related genera of evergreen woodland perennials from East Asia – so closely related that some authorities place them in a single genus, *Helonias*. They belong to the *Melanthiaceae* family, together with more well-known plants such as *Trillium* and *Paris*.

*Ypsilandra* contains about 5 species and *Heloniopsis* about 7. They are quite uncommon and not all species are in cultivation in the U.K. The most commonly available is *Ypsilandra thibetica*. They all have low rosettes of strap-like leaves and produce flower spikes of nodding, tubular flowers in shades of white, pink, and lilac, in late winter into early spring.

*Heloniopsis* are native to China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea. Their common name is Oriental Swamp Pink or Japanese Hyacinth, and their name in Japanese is Shoujou Hakama (Shoujou is a red-haired, sake-drinking spirit, and Hakama are the traditional Japanese wide trousers). They require a reliably moist, humus rich soil in at least partial shade. It is a good idea to plant the rosette at a slight angle to allow water to run off and avoid rotting.

*Ypsilandra* are native to China, Myanmar and Thailand. They require similar growing conditions to *Heloniopsis* but will tolerate slightly drier conditions, which *Heloniopsis* absolutely will not. They flower very early – often in February - and have lightly scented white flowers with unusual pale blue anthers. The flowers fade to a coppery



*H tubiflora Temple Blue*

pink as they age. They are used in Chinese medicine to stop bleeding.

Both *Ypsilandra* and *Heloniopsis* can be rather reluctant to produce many seeds, but can be propagated, carefully, by division in spring. However, they can be propagated more reliably by leaf cuttings. Last year's leaves are detached and placed in trays with both ends of the leaf inserted in a slightly damp growing medium. The trays are then placed in indirect light and kept warm. Plantlets may be produced at either end, and sometimes along the central vein. They take two or three years

to reach flowering size. *Heloniopsis orientalis* naturally produces these plantlets where the tips of its leaves touch the soil, and in fact this is its main method of reproduction in its native habitat.

Though uncommon, they are great garden plants and worth seeking out, providing delicate colour at a time of year when every flower is especially valuable. I particularly recommend *Ypsilandra thibetica*, *Heloniopsis orientalis*, and *Heloniopsis tubiflora* 'Temple Blue'.

**Interesting and unusual plants**

\*Perennials \*Shrubs \*Herbs

\*Seasonal plants \*Trees

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# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*JOHN HUMPHREYS*

I'm very pleased to report that 15 members have either joined or rejoined the Suffolk group since April 2023. A very warm welcome to you all including Jag de Alwis (our new Treasurer) and his wife Liz. This now moves us back over 200 Suffolk Group members but not quite back to the 213 we had at the end of 2022. The autumn plant fair at Helmingham proved a successful event for attracting new members so thank you again for joining Plant Heritage.

Please see page 26 for an article from Plant Heritage Head Office about the option of members using the Persephone recording system in their own gardens.

The Essex Group of the Hardy Plant Society are looking into the life of Frances Elizabeth Rivis, after whom the *Clematis Alpina* Frances Rivis is named. They are looking to mark the 150th anniversary of her birth and note that she lived in Suffolk for many years at Rosehill, Farnham, Saxmundham, and knew Cedric Morris at Benton End.

There is also the Mrs F E Rivis award for excellence in cultivation, which is still awarded annually by the RHS.

If anyone has any information or memories please contact me.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

*PAT STANLEY*

I am pleased to report that this year, we have continued to successfully raise funds for Plant Heritage.

Our main sources of the income were the Plant Fairs at Helmingham Hall, our plant stalls and crèche at Helmingham and further sales of plants by the Propagation Group

As a result we were able once again to send a donation of £10,000 to Plant Heritage Central Office.

I would like to express my thanks to the Committee, members of the propagation group and all the volunteers who have given their time, expertise and enthusiasm to this year's fund raising events.

On a personal note I would like to sincerely thank Maggie and the Committee for all the guidance, support and care they have given me during my time as Treasurer.

Those of you present at the AGM will remember that we made a presentation to Pat on her retirement from the role of Treasurer.

## AUTUMN TALKS

In September we welcomed John Anderson (Keeper of the Gardens of the Windsor Estate) who gave us an excellent talk entitled: 'The Gardens of Windsor Great Park and the Savill Garden'.

John's talk was extremely interesting in that it highlighted the enormity of his role and the number of different gardens under his remit. It was fascinating to learn some behind the scenes anecdotes and the day to day balancing act of operationally making his decisions sympathetic to the wishes of the King and previously the Queen yet also asking for their Majesties' input as and when deemed appropriate. He also highlighted a crucial aspect of his role in helping new team members and those with less experience to expand their knowledge but also take on specific tasks which highlight their existing skills and expertise. Whilst John has very much a managerial role he keeps his hand very much on the horticulture tiller and ensures he is up early checking 'his estate' and mentoring the team of professionals in the gardens.

In October we welcomed Jane Lyndsay and Toni O'Connor, familiar from their stalls at Helmingham, with a talk on their passion for climbers, remarking on the devastation the previous winter had wrought on their stocks.

In November, after the AGM, Twigs Way gave one of her inimitable talks about Chrysanthemums, not especially on plants themselves but their history and role in various cultures.



## Plant Centre, Garden and Café

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Garden open March-September

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The Place for Plants, East Bergholt Place, Suffolk CO7 6UP

Tel: 01206 299224 E-mail: [sales@placeforplants.co.uk](mailto:sales@placeforplants.co.uk)

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

## PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

For an update on what's happening at National Office visit the current issue of Newlines on the website [www.plantheritage.com](http://www.plantheritage.com)

To find out more about Suffolk Group activities - including details of garden events and openings visit

<https://suffolkplants.org.uk/>

## TO ADVERTISE IN SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE JOURNAL

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# BOX MOTH (CYDALIMA PERSPECTALIS).

MATTHEW TANTON BROWN



*Box Moth Caterpillar*

This pest has become increasingly common in gardens throughout Britain over the past few years. Particularly bad infestations are common around London and the South-East.

**What is it?** – Sometimes known as Box Tree Moth this invasive pest is a native of East Asia but became established in

Europe from around 2007. Caterpillars were not found in British gardens until 2011 and by 2014 it had become well established in London and the surrounding areas. It is no longer a notifiable pest and is seen as a regular problem.

**Plants commonly affected** – All box plants but especially cultivars such as 'Suffruticosa'.

**Symptoms** – unfortunately it only becomes apparent that there is a problem when it is too late. Box plants exhibit defoliation and dieback. This is caused by the moth caterpillar eating the fresh shoots, stripping them down to the bare stalk. In serious infestations the older leaves are eaten as well, leaving a bare plant resembling a Witches Broom! Dead patches may occur in severe cases due to the hungry caterpillars stripping bark off the younger stems which causes girdling of the stem and dieback. There is often webbing around the tips of the areas of damage which the caterpillars produce, this helps to protect them from predators and makes them more waterproof, reducing the effectiveness of chemical sprays.

**Life Cycle** – Newly hatched caterpillars are a yellowish-green and have conspicuous black heads. Older caterpillars are greener in colour and have thick black and white stripes along the body.

To add to the difficulty of controlling Box moth when old enough

the caterpillars spin a silken cocoon of white webbing and attach it to the twigs of the plant making it difficult to see. This makes it difficult to remove.

The adult moth is actually quite pretty and has white wings with a burgundy-brown border. Sometimes the wings can be completely brown and more unusually clear. The wingspan is usually 4cm.

The pale yellow, flattish eggs are laid on box leaves in midsummer and are difficult to see.

**Control** – Cultural Control - where possible remove caterpillars by hand. I find a small hand-held rake a great help to gently pull through the box ball etc, this catches many of the caterpillars and flicks them onto the ground allowing you to squash with your size 11's !! It's a very satisfying job.

There have been reports that some garden birds will eat the caterpillars including Blackbirds, Starlings and Blue Tits. This is quite new information; it is not clear if predation by these will help reduce infestations in the future.

**Biological** – Pheromone traps can indicate if the moths are about, these will capture some of the adults. These are available from companies such as Agralan, Solabiol and Dragonfli.

Nematodes seem to have some effect on the caterpillars, but they need to be applied several times to get a reasonable kill. Biological controls have no effect on plants and can be residual against the pest for a while.

There are also some natural predators that may have some effect on box moth caterpillars such as parasitoid flies, parasitic wasps, spiders, and ants.

The final thought, and this maybe the way we will have to go in the future, is to choose alternatives to box such as Ligustrum, Taxus, Podocarpus and Sarcococca.

**Chemical** – **Bug Clear Ultra 2 concentrate** or **Neudorff Bug Free Bug and Larvae Killer** contain natural pyrethrum and pyrethrins. A natural product produced from the flowers of Tanacetum



*Box Moth Damage*  
needed 7-14 days apart.

cinerariifolium. Unfortunately, it is a broad-spectrum insecticide and is not specific to the pest and will kill other insects including pests but also bees and wasps.

**Bug Clear Fruit and Veg concentrate** contains refined organic plant oils such as those derived from rapeseed and sunflowers which block the breathing pores of the insects sprayed. Larger invertebrates such as bees and ladybirds are less likely to be harmed. For the box moth caterpillar 2 applications may be

**Provanto Ulimite Bug Killer or Toprose Bug Killer** are non-organic, synthetic insecticides that kill on contact with the pest. Can contain active ingredients such as deltamethrin, permethrin or cypermethrin. These can be residual for a short period in the spray zone allowing for a better kill of the pest sprayed, however they are non-specific and will kill a range of insects if used indiscriminately.

**BugClear Ultra** contains acetamiprid, a synthetic broad spectrum, systemic, contact action pesticide for use as a foliar spray on ornamental plants. A useful chemical as it is absorbed by the plant so that when the pest sucks the sap or chews the leaves it gets a stomach poison which will kill it.

### **Alternatives to Box**

Box moth and Box blight are such serious problems that many gardeners are now looking for alternative plants to grow as hedges and balls, here are a few suggestions:

Lonicera ligustrina var. yunnanensis 'Maigrun' – a low spreading evergreen shrub that has small leaves of a similar colour to box. Will make a good hedge if kept clipped often, can be a bit tricky to turn into a ball due to its spreading habit.

Sarcococca confusa – lovely evergreen which has scented flowers in

late autumn through to Winter. Needs to be trimmed carefully with secateurs rather than sheers or cutters as these cause ragged leaves and these go brown quickly. Quite easy to get into a ball shape but as a hedge it is a little more informal as it is difficult to get neat edges.

*Taxus baccata* 'Repandens' – a great alternative which has a spreading habit, grows reasonably quickly, and can be trained into a hedge or ball with ease. Very cold tolerant so ideal for exposed positions.

*Euonymus japonicus* 'Green Pillar' or 'Green Spire' – a great plant for hedging with deep olive-green evergreen leaves. Can be susceptible to Vine weevil in sandy shallow soils.

*Myrtus communis* subsp. *tarentina* – a lovely evergreen for a warm sheltered position that makes a good alternative to box, with the added bonus of scented white flowers in late Summer.

*Teucrium chamaedrys* or *Teucrium x lucidrys* – a good alternative, with flowers in the Summer. These create a low informal, relaxed evergreen hedge suitable for warm hot sunny spots.

*Berberis thunbergii* 'Admiration' – a great low growing bushy deciduous plant which has many thorns. Naturally rounded it makes a good alternative for making balls, has the added advantage of good autumn colour, yellow flowers in Spring and small red berries in Autumn.

*Berberis thunbergii* f. *atropurpurea* 'Helmond Pillar' - elegant dark burgundy leaved form of Barberry with an upright habit ideal for make cones and pyramids. Also has great autumn colour turning a fiery scarlet-orange, yellow flowers in Spring and some small oval red berries in the Autumn.

*Podocarpus* 'County Park Fire' – this unusual conifer can be used for topiary balls and squares quite easily. It doesn't mind being clipped and has a nice bronze tinge all year round which can complement lots of different plants in beds. Other podocarpus you could try include 'Guardman' which is a deeper bronze-red, compact but slightly tall growing if you want to make cones, or the taller and more robust *Podocarpus totara* 'Aureus' with its yellow tipped new growth which makes great pyramids and obelisks.



# BOX TREE MOTH – A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

*ISOBEL ASHTON*



*Box Tree Moth*

The first damage was seen in my garden in late May 2022. Try as we might, we couldn't find any caterpillars though the damage and frass were convincing on two plants, other Box seemingly free. We trimmed the damage and waited. Later I bought a

pheromone trap and capsules (Andermat UK) and hung it around 10ft from the damage, collecting about 10 moths over what was left of the summer. The pheromone is designed to entice and catch male moths – fewer males, fewer viable eggs.

May 2023 brought many more moths and damage to Box plants. The moths are very small and pretty, and many were seen flying, also inside the house, over the next five months, even though our trap was often full.

In 2023 I used the pheromone trap with fresh six week capsules. I also used a biological insecticide that controls caterpillars, not flying insects, (TopBuxus Raupen & Zunslerfrei). This is administered as a fine spray to leaves. The recommendation is two weekly but, due to cost, I sprayed monthly June to September. I felt able to do this as my Box collection is not the many metres of hedge seen in large gardens. I decided we could take out one rather large Box tree to help reduce the problem, and continued pruning all Box plants in the usual way. We did not cut away twigs where leaves had been affected, leaving them to refoliate.

It seems we won't eradicate the moth and caterpillars, but we can control the damage.

# INTRODUCING WOOTTENS PELARGONIUM NATIONAL COLLECTION

LUCINDA SKINNER AND GILLIAN MORRIS



*Pelargonium lobatum*

Growing Pelargoniums has been at the heart of Woottens Nursery since its establishment in 1991.

After more than 30 years, our collection continues to thrive and now boasts over 300 different varieties. We are proud to have 172 of these

varieties as part of the National Collection, which includes 82 unique species and 90 scented leaf and species hybrids. The collection has evolved from flamboyant and floriferous hybrids to focusing on collecting and preserving rare species forms, making them accessible to the public.

The National Collection is available for public viewing from March to October, on Wednesdays through to Saturdays. Best viewed in May when you'll be able to see all the forms at their finest. The hybrids will be coming into bloom, the cool season growers are yet to be disgruntled by the heat and the tuberous forms, that flower from February to June, will be in full glory, including the delectable *P. x Ardens*. With the exception of some incredibly rare forms, the nursery actively encourages visitors to embrace the full experience of the Pelargoniums by rubbing the leaves to release their fragrance. The delightful scent emitted by a "scented leaf" Pelargonium is due to tiny glandular hairs or "trichomes" on the leaf surface, which secrete oils containing the delightful aroma.

One of the most enchanting, scented leaf Pelargoniums you'll ever come across is the magnificent *P. tomentosum*. Thriving in the



*Pelargonium triste*

picturesque mountainous regions and forest edges of the South Western Cape Province, this species truly captivates the senses. Its botanical Latin name, meaning 'downy leaf', perfectly encapsulates the velvety texture of its

leaves, but it is the intoxicating aroma that truly sets it apart - a heavenly essence of pure peppermint. It has huge soft silvery leaves and produces clouds of minute white flowers. A remarkable plant that, when established, loves a shady spot in the garden for the summer and can, if kept well, survive temperatures to – 5.

Other scents you may come across include citrus. P. Mabel Grey has rich lemony oils that can even slightly tint your fingers yellow. You'll also find P. Orange Fizz, a delightful cultivar where one can actually sense the 'fizz' as well as smell the delightful orange aroma. If you yearn for a scent that awakens the senses with a touch of intrigue, look no further than P. dichondrifolium, a scented species gifted with a musty, intriguing spice reminiscent of the finest black pepper. Yet, for those with more delicate nasal receptors, nothing can match the alluring fragrance of rose.

While P. Attar of Roses reigns as the most renowned of all the Rose-scented hybrids, there are numerous others to explore and admire.

Unbeknownst to many, there are actually a few Pelargoniums with scented flowers. One of the first



*Pelargonium x Ardens*



Pelargoniums to reach European shores in 1632 was a tuberous species, now called *P. triste*. Originally named *Geranium Indicum Noctu Odoratum* due to the exquisite, scented flowers in the evening and a belief that it had been discovered in India. *P. lobatum* is another tuberous form with black and gold scented flowers, more famously known as one of the parents to *P. x Ardens*.



*Pelargonium Nervous Mabel*

Pelargoniums primarily originate in South Africa. There are more than 200 documented species and thousands of cultivated varieties, mainly known as Zonal Pelargoniums or 'bedding Geraniums'. In the mid-1700s, Pelargoniums were

referred to as 'Geraniums' due to their comparable botanical structure. However, later in that century, they were renamed as the genus 'Pelargonium' and classified within the larger Geraniaceae family, which also includes *Erodiums*.

Wootens nursery cultivates over 10,000 Pelargoniums annually by utilizing stock or 'mother' plants for cuttings. Certain species varieties are grown from seed, while tuberous forms are divided in autumn and propagated from young tubers. The demand for species and scented leaf plants has experienced significant growth in the past 3-4 years, so please refer to the website for availability details.

The Pelargonium genus exhibits a wide range of diversity, with each species displaying its unique characteristics, including varying flower shapes, leaf structures, and growth habits. These plants are truly captivating and are best appreciated as a collection. It would be quite lucrative if we received a pound every time someone viewing our collection exclaimed, 'Really...that's a Pelargonium?!'

## PERSEPHONE FOR MEMBERS



*“Recording my plants on Persephone has added a whole new dimension to enjoying my garden”* David Simpson,  
**Gloucestershire Group**

Many of you will have heard about Persephone, Plant Heritage's online plant records system. Originally developed for National Collection Holders, it is now available to all members of Plant Heritage to record up to 500 plants in their private garden.



You can now build up a comprehensive record of your garden, create a photographic catalogue, share your records with friends and fellow enthusiasts and even pass your records on to a future owner of your property.

Persephone makes easy what many of us enjoy doing anyway: keeping track of when and where we bought our plants, what they cost, where we've planted them and how well they're growing.

- Use on PC/Mac, tablet or smartphone
- User-friendly and flexible
- Record plant names, synonyms and common names
- Upload multiple images from your smartphone or computer
- Map the location of your plants, especially trees & shrubs
- Helpful friendly support

Persephone is now available to our members with the Membership Plus subscription - just £20 more per annum on your current individual or a joint subscription. You can upgrade at any time during the year.

To find out more, please contact the Persephone Team ([persephone@plantheritage.org.uk](mailto:persephone@plantheritage.org.uk)) or to sign up contact Central Office ([membership@plantheritage.org.uk](mailto:membership@plantheritage.org.uk)). Should you wish to record more than 500 plants, please contact us to discuss.

## SECOND INSTALEMENT

### INTRODUCING

More of our committee members - this time Jag De Alwis, our new Treasurer, Anne Tweddle, our long time Propagation Officer and Catherine Bacon, a relatively new member.



#### **JAG DE ALWIS – TREASURER**

I was born in Sri Lanka and lived there until my early twenties. After my A Levels I trained at Ernst & Young and qualified as a Chartered Management Accountant. In my early childhood I enjoyed spending time in the garden, be it playing cricket, maintaining the lawn, trimming the hedges, or growing plants. Unfortunately I lost this habit once

I moved to the Caribbean for employment.

In 2004, Liz, Maya, Oliver and I moved to Sudbury, Suffolk where Liz was born. Subsequently we fell in love with Boxford and moved there in 2006. Gardening, however, took a back seat once again due to Sunday cricket in the summer. In the last few years, after some gentle encouragement from Liz and Maya, especially during Covid, I have rekindled my love for gardening. However I very quickly realised there is much to learn so when Maggie approached me with a request to help out at Plant Heritage I thought it was a great opportunity to learn about plants and also contribute to the success of this fantastic organization!



#### **ANNE TWEDDLE**

I moved from London to Suffolk in 1988 and joined Plant Heritage pretty much on arriving. I had been working in international marketing for a major oil company, and was now looking forward to a new life. I can't remember joining the committee, but Chris Wheeler the then Chairman

lived in the same village as me, so that's how it probably happened. 30+ years and I am still hanging about... We had had a plant sale at Helmingham with a handful of nurseries on the back

drive just near the tea room. We set about organising a new sale at Euston, which ran in the spring for quite a few years, before going over to two sales at Helmingham.

There was always plenty going on in the group regarding propagation and much to learn. Rod Leeds taught us to twin scale and off we went making more plants for PH to sell and members to buy. Robert Shepperson was the propagation officer, a lovely man with an eye for a good plant and a young brain to remember the names. Sadly he died, which was a huge loss to us all. I then stepped into his shoes as prop officer and so began several years of a thrilling journey. I was self taught and lent pretty hard on anyone who had formal training. We started a prop group and would meet each month to make plants. It was very popular and we had great fun. Everyone was encouraged to come along, and we all learnt from one another.

The groups National Plant Collection of Narcissus developed out of this arrangement as did the propagation of many rare and interesting plants we had through the National Plant Exchange.

I spent many happy years raising plants for Plant Heritage, giving talks and teaching folk how to propagate. It's been a wonderful and fulfilling time for me and a complete change of career as I hoped in the beginning. I have now retired as propagation officer, but continue to be involved with the daffodil collection with Darren Andrews.



### **CATHERINE BACON**

Having graduated with a chemistry degree, I worked in a laboratory before changing careers and gaining a diploma in horticulture. I did a placement year at National Trust for Scotland's Threave Garden near Castle Douglas before obtaining a job at Savill Garden in Windsor Great Park. After a few years I moved a few hundred yards to work at Royal Lodge.

Eventually I returned home to Suffolk and retrained (hopefully for

the last time!) to become an accountant. I can now enjoy the pleasures of gardening at home without having to endure the cold and wet days ..... but do have to endure being in the office on the lovely gardening days!

I was introduced to Plant Heritage by my mother and aunt (original members of the Suffolk Group when it was NCCPG). I somehow managed to get on the committee but do enjoy getting involved and learning from those with far superior horticultural knowledge. I help to book the nurseries for the Plant Fairs at Helmingham Hall. These events are hard work but entertaining too. There are always opportunities to get involved in the fairs, so get in touch!

I enjoy visiting other gardens and am fortunate to have friends spread across the country which gives me an excuse to visit lots of different ones. Each is unique and helps provide inspiration!

## PLANTS OF DISTINCTION

Plants of Distinction is a local family run seed company based at Framsdon near Stowmarket. Members of Suffolk Plant Heritage can order seeds from them at a 30% discount on the catalogue price. Catalogues can be obtained by calling the Order Hotline and Customer Service No. 01449 721720. Seed orders can be posted using the order form in the catalogue and applying a 30% discount to the seed price, but the postage and packing cost is **not** discounted. The website has a greater selection of seeds than can be found in the catalogue together with a selection of bulbs and plants.

The discount code shown below must be written on the order. Orders may be placed on the hotline number shown above and again the discount code must be quoted when placing the order. If you place your order via their website [www.plantsofdistinction.co.uk](http://www.plantsofdistinction.co.uk) and enter the discount code the discount will be applied automatically.

The discount code, **for seeds only**, is SPH30 and can be used until 31/7/2024.

## PL@NTNET APPEAL

You may remember that this app was recommended as a plant identification app. They are currently campaigning for more funds.

“Our goal is to raise 400,000 euros which will allow us to finance the material and human costs of the IT infrastructure as well as new developments. We have currently reached 71% of this total

“To learn more about the objectives of the campaign and the philosophy of Pl@ntNet, find all the information on our website <https://plantnet.org/en/>

“Last year we made tremendous progress. Pl@ntNet has continued to grow, evolve and offer new opportunities for nature and botany lovers around the world. In 2022 Pl@ntNet processed over 722 million plant identifications worldwide, now covering 45,000 different plant species. Active use of the platform has been extraordinary, with over 20 million users finding Pl@ntNet a valuable ally in their exploration of plant biodiversity. We were able to update our species data, and introduce a new identification model based on the latest artificial intelligence technologies.

“Pl@ntNet plays a crucial role in raising awareness of biodiversity protection, encouraging everyone to take action, whether in their personal or professional lives.

“But we don't intend to stop there. For the coming year, we have some exciting projects, including disease identification and geographical exploration of plants. We also plan to further improve identification performance through new AI models and the inclusion of geolocation.

**“Your support is essential if Pl@ntNet is to remain independent and ad-free, and continue to offer free access to all.** We are therefore launching our campaign to collect donations on our website and mobile app. Every donation, regardless of the amount, brings us closer to our goal.”

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