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Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Group



Calycanthus chinensis

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019



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Cover photo: *Calycanthus chinensis* (syn. *Sinocalycanthus chinensis*)
Photo by Barry Clarke

Editor's note

A big thank you to all those who have been generous with their time and contributed to this issue. The deadline for the Autumn Newsletter is 1 September. I would really appreciate short articles on a wide variety of topics from members and Collection Holders. Contact the editor: Juliet Bloss: tel 023 8084 8085. email: sevenmeads@aol.com

Chairman's Letter

Another season and another year. After one of the hottest summers for a while we are about to record yet another mild winter, with no frosts in December, one scattering of around $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of snow, and only two nights below -3°C . A couple of nights around -2°C on the last night of October and the second of November put paid to the summer display. Timing of these was not the best as we had arranged for Chris Bird and his Sparsholt students to join us in a putting-to-bed fest, three days later. This involves a major move of plants from the garden to the greenhouses. We got away reasonably well, but quite a lot of plants, particularly the aeoniums, turned out to be more badly damaged than we had anticipated.

Spring appears to have arrived now. With the sunshine we have had recently, the crocuses have certainly performed. I have no particular axe to grind with the galanthophiles, and love the picture of seas of white with a hint of green that they can generate, but for me an area of lawn populated with a mass of crocuses spreading year by year takes a lot of beating, particularly when visited by significant numbers of what appear to be overly large bumblebees. The scent of so many late winter flowering shrubs is quite amazing. The



daphnes, and the sarcococcas. have been wonderful as have the wintersweets, although I think they are better picked and brought into the house. I have recently bought a *Hamamelis* 'Arnold Promise' to replace a very large one we had outside the house, which died a few years ago. I just missed the fragrance too much. I might keep it in a pot and wait until it gets closer to nose height before I plant it out. It's got to be the best of the bunch.

Last year's autumn colours weren't particularly special, but you don't normally expect a show in February. Many years ago I obtained cuttings of a euphorbia which grew against the back wall of the house of that most excellent and much missed plantsman John Phillips. He gave it the name 'Roundway Titan'. It is now accepted as a hybrid between *E. mellifera* (Madeira & the Canary Islands) and *E. stygiana* (Azores) and holds an AGM for its garden worthiness. It is a big one, some 2m by 2m given time, and really quite hardy. The honey fragrance of the blossom kicks *E. mellifera* into a cocked hat. What is not generally known is what it can do with its old leaves, which will be shed over the next couple of months. The picture shows it all.



We had some really good events over the last year, culminating in a very impressive talk, by Jim Gardener on Magnolias, at our AGM. If you didn't manage to make it you missed a treat. It was also a pleasure to ask Peter Catt and Roy Lancaster, respectively, to introduce him and to thank him for his presentation. It was particularly good to be shown spectacular specimens growing at Windsor and in our west country gardens, many of the views I can remember well from numerous visits. Caerhays is always a highlight. I have included some pictures from this amazing garden in the next section.

At our AGM, I gave an update on how central office has been slimmed down over the year. As we no longer have a CEO, Gill Groombridge was promoted to Office Manager and we are relying on two extremely competent volunteers (both now Board members) to run the accounts. A new (charity funded) post of Conservation Manager has been created and filled, and Vicki Cooke will be leading the conservation team into the future. As I reported, I believe this will put us on a much firmer foundation with a better emphasis on how we use our resources. The only major project, which has been bubbling on the back burner for too long, is to sort out our IT. We are in the process of revamping our website but, more importantly, sorting out the database that drives it. There was a plea from the Board to groups who had funds greater than their short term requirements to commit resources to this initiative. Your group was very pleased to make a contribution of £15,000, a significant boost to this effort. This leaves us with a much reduced balance, but more than adequate for our short term needs. A successful 2019 plant fair will ensure we can help further.

We have a good series of events coming up. The programme leaflet listing everything up to the 2020 AGM is included with this newsletter, and we are also including a couple of flyers for the plant fair. Please try to get them displayed. They are an important part of our advertising.

At the AGM, I made some pleas, which I don't apologise for repeating here:

- Offer your names to Gill for gate duties at the Plant Fair, and please bring some good plants for us to sell.
- Let the events team have any ideas you have for future events
- Think about writing a snippet or a full article for the newsletter
- Encourage a friend to join us so that we can move up from the 3rd to the 2nd biggest group in the country.
- Think about helping with the running of the group and talk to us about possibly joining the committee.

I wish you all good gardening for the season ahead.

Doug Smith, Chairman

Report on Autumn and Winter Events

Friday 5 October 2018

Visit to Nymans Garden, Handcross Nr Haywards Heath

Nymans is often described as a 'Very English Garden'. The house and 600 acres around it were the home of three generations of the Messel family. In the 1800s, the garden came to prominence and by the end of the century camellias, rhododendrons, magnolias and heathers were well established. In the second half of the 20th century the Regency house was demolished and



replaced with a picturesque stone manor in the Gothic / Tudor style. In 1947 a catastrophic fire reduced most of the house to ruins, still visible there in the garden and due to open to visitors within the next three years. To add insult to injury, the 1987 storm destroyed around 500 mature trees along with many shrubs. The recovery is impressive.

Nymans is famous for being at its best in spring and summer, but our early autumn visit was bathed in warm sunshine and the grasses in particular really glowed.

The gardens hold National Collections of Chilean & Tasmanian plants collected by Harold Comber, *Erica* & *Calluna* and plants related to and bred at Nymans

If you are choosing a time to visit, the wisteria tunnel is amazing when in bloom. The property was passed to the National Trust on Leonard Messel's death in 1953 – so don't forget your card.



Linda Smith

Thursday 22 November 2018

Social and talk by Tom Clarke: 'Plants and People of India's North East Frontier'

Tom Clarke has taken over as Head Gardener at Exbury, after some years at National Trust gardens. He has travelled extensively and this talk concentrated on his trips to see Rhododendrons. He explained that this genus is found throughout the northern latitudes and in the east as far south as Australia. The centres of diversity are in the Himalayas and Malaysia, with the greatest species diversity in the Sino-Himalayan region, Southwest China and northern Burma.



He took us on a fascinating trip around this area. The Lohit river valley was most impressive. The region, on the borders of Tibet and India, was administered by the North East Frontier Agency, constituted in 1912 to protect Tibet's independent status. After much fighting in the 1950s and 60s, the state of Arunachal Pradesh was formed as part of the Indian Union in 1987. In

places the valley sides are very steep and nearly a mile deep. Tom described some of the enormous range of rhododendron species that grow on the sides of the valley: more tropical at the base and almost alpine on the peaks. The size of some of the *Rhododendron* var. *giganteum* was impressive. This species, the largest in the genus, can grow to 30m. The river then



opens out dramatically to a large plain flowing into the Brahmaputra. The bridges in this area are amazing, from simple rope to the longest road bridge in India – the Dhola-Sadiya bridge opened in 2017.

In the wide valleys and plains, the plants are a different world, with oranges and lemons galore, grazing Yaks and apricot trees.



Then on to Nagaland, a small state in NE India, on the boundaries of Assam, Myanmar, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, a little south of the area described above, and a particularly interesting place, isolated from the rest of the world until the arrival of the British. Originating as a large number of warring hill tribes, with



similar traditions, including headhunting right up to the 19th century, they speak over 89 different languages and dialects, mostly incomprehensible to each other. English was adopted as the official language in 1967. The US missionaries have been at work, turning the people from their tribal customs, and today some 95% of the

Naga people identify themselves as (mostly Baptist) Christians. Very pro-British, the Naga people were extremely important in the fight to repel the Japanese invasion of India in 1944.

The region is mostly mountainous with a very rich flora. Of note on this trip was *Rhododendron macabeanum*. With a very limited distribution, much of their area had been destroyed by fire. Happily, Tom managed to find a good stand of this garden-worthy species.

The presentation was so inspiring, I just had to go and search for more information. Thanks so much, Tom, for a fascinating evening.

Doug Smith

Thursday 17 January 2019

Talk by Andrew Halstead: 'Encouraging wildlife into your garden'.

Andrew is an author and lecturer who worked for the RHS for 41 years. Entomology is his main passion and he is very keen to stress the importance and value of gardens because of the varied mosaic of habitats they create.

After World War Two, the large grants given for food production resulted in a country-wide loss of hedgerows. The prairie-style farming abolished weeds, many of which are valuable food sources for insects. Farmed oil seed rape attracts bees when in bloom, but otherwise is a virtual desert for insects. Fortunately, increased ecological awareness has helped to turn things around with hedges and protected field strips being recreated.



Andrew emphasised the importance of ponds for amphibians and invertebrates such as pond skaters, dragonflies and small crustaceans. On a small scale, bowls and buckets work well.

Compost heaps are great for worms and woodlice. Rotting wood is good for beetles. It seems we must stop trying to be tidy in the garden. Overwintered seed heads, such as teasels, encourage birds like goldfinches. Dandelions are a rich source of nectar, blackthorn encourages early hoverflies and ivy, being a late flowerer, spins out the food for butterflies, wasps and bees. Many birds will feast on the slow ripening berries in mid-winter.

Andrew finished his talk with the scary news of the Asian Hornet – see Juliet's article on this topic on page 22.

One final tip from Andrew: if you want to bribe your garden birds, sunflower hearts are much preferred to boring old peanuts! Gentrification of the bird table – whatever next?

With many thanks to Andrew for raising our awareness of the wild life around us and how to nurture it all.

Linda Smith

Saturday 9 February 2019 AGM and talk by Jim Gardiner: 'Magnolias'

Jim started his gardening career with Eric Savill at Windsor Great Park, moving on through Cambridge & Edinburgh Botanical Gardens to Hillier's Arboretum and finally to RHS Wisley where he held the posts of Curator and Director of Horticulture for some 20 years.

Magnolias are a very ancient genus, dating back 65 million years, with over 300 species. Originating in what is now North America, they spread south and then east. They come in a wide range of sizes, from giant trees to small shrubs, both evergreen and deciduous. Many are endangered in the wild, having to compete for space with logging and agriculture. They are fairly easy to propagate; seed, budding, grafting and cuttings are all options. They have great regenerative powers, even from old wood. If pruning is required, evergreen species should be tackled in March, deciduous species after flowering. Most are shallow rooted and should be planted in well prepared soil. Free draining, acidic loam in an area with good rainfall and mild winters is the ideal spot for them. One of the best examples of this is Caerhays Castle in Cornwall (above and overleaf), probably the best collection in the world,



particularly for the large flowered, deciduous species. There are also good



collections at Cherry Tree Park in Cheshire, particularly of *M soulangiana*. *M. campbellii*, a most impressive large tree first introduced by Forrest from Yunnan, is found throughout the Himalayas. Flower colour can be anything between purple, through pink to white. *M. sargentiana* and *M. spregeri* are of a similar habit. Much hybridisation has been undertaken, more recently in

New Zealand by Felix Jury and his son Mark. A number have been named, and of note are 'Iolanthe', 'Apollo' and 'Felix Jury'.

The last of these is fast growing with massive dark pink blooms (right). *M. 'Galaxy'* is a smaller, upright, tree, a hybrid



between *M. spregeri* var. *diva* and *M. liliflora*. It is later flowering and hence less likely to suffer frost damage to the blooms (left).

Jim moved onto the smaller deciduous species and hybrids, such as *M. stellata* and 'Leonard Messel' (a chance seedling found at Nymans), which are more appropriate for the smaller garden. Finally, he covered the large leaved summer flowering evergreen species,

such as *M. macrophylla* and *M. grandiflora* and the smaller, highly scented species. All in all, a spectacular range of plants. In response to a question from the audience he suggested the following short list. Deciduous: 'Mags Pirouette'. Evergreen: *M. laevifolia* and its varieties (previously *Michelia yunnanense*). 'Daybreak' for its upright habit. Most site tolerant were *x soulangiana*, *x loebneri* and *Kobus*. For summer scent: *sieboldii*, *wilsonii* and *sinensis*.

A fantastic tour through a fantastic genus by a fantastic speaker. We thank Jim for giving up his time to speak at our AGM.

Doug Smith

Future Events

Thursday 11 April 2019.

Colin Moat 'Fifty greys of shade'

Pineview Plants in Kent is run by Colin & Cindy Moat. The nursery offers a wide range of perennial plants ranging from rare, new or unusual, to easy, interesting and reliable. The nursery mainly sells plants that interest them and have proved to be good garden plants. Colin has been a member of HPS for 25 years and on the National Committee twice. He co-ordinated the 2015 display at Chelsea and is an assessor for the RHS *Sanguisorba* trial, growing many selections on the nursery.

Time: 7.30pm. Warnford Village Hall.

Monday Bank Holiday 6 May 2019

Grand Plant Fair. Longstock Park Nursery SO20 6EH

The main fund-raising event of the year and the 'Best Plant Fair in Hampshire'. Thirty plus specialist nurseries -- Greenfields hog roast-- Bowman Ales beer tent-- Julies traditional ice-cream-- Live music from The Jazz Beans.

Longstock nursery, farm shop and café open all day.

Members' plant stall - **please bring clearly labelled plants for our sales table.**

The following Nurseries and other Specialist Stallholders are booked to attend the event:

Acorn & Oak-- Beans & Herbs-- Birchwood Plants-- Brambly Hedge-- Butterfly Cottage Garden Plants-- Chase Plants-- County Park Nursery-- Edulis-- Elworthy Cottage Plants-- Fernlea Nurseries-- Five Two Designs-- Floyds Climbers & Clematis-- Garden Secrets Nursery-- Garden Treasures-- Greenleaf Plants-- Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants-- HJ Plants-- Hilltop Garden Nursery-- Lodge Hill Plants-- Long Acre Plants-- Longstock Allotments-- Marcus Dancer Plants-- Mrs Mitchell's Kitchen & Garden-- My Plants-- Nicholas Lock-- Paddock Plants-- Park's Perennials-- Peake Perennials-- Pennards Plants-- Phoenix Perennial Plants-- Roseland House Nursery-- Snape Stakes-- Spring Hill Plants-- Test Valley Nursery-- Tufton Plants-- Wild Thyme Plants

If there are any nurseries that are likely to have a plant you are looking for, contact them in advance, and they can probably arrange to bring it to the Fair.

Entry: Free to members, and children, John Lewis employees £2, adults £5.

Directions: From Stockbridge: turn right at north end of the High Street. From all directions, follow signs.

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm.

Friday 21 June 2019

Visit to Richard Dukes garden at The Woods, Ampfield Hill, Ampfield Romsey SO51 9BD.

Richard has been a very keen plantsman for many years and the giant redwood that you see from the road was grown by him from seed. He continued with a lot

more recent plantings and he will show us around and answer questions. For anyone wanting lunch before the visit or tea afterwards, Cedar Nursery, Sandy Lane (past the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and straight over at the roundabout), comes highly recommended. They stock some unusual plants and one of their staff will be on hand to assist us.

Directions: On the Hursley to Romsey Road (A3090), go past Hillier Nurseries - Ampfield House. After 500yds (over the brow of the hill, just before the de-restricted sign), look out for the entrance to Grosvenor Court on the left. Drive in between the pillars. Follow the track behind 4 new houses and park to the right.

Time: Meet at 2.00pm

Friday 5 July 2019

Visit to Andy McIndoe's garden, Sandhill Farm, Sherfield English, Romsey. SO51 6JY.

Andy McIndoe worked for Hilliers for many years and was responsible for numerous gold medals on their behalf at the Chelsea Flower Show. The two-acre garden is on a sloping site featuring a meadow, many trees, shrubs and perennials. We last visited Andy's garden in 2006, and it will be interesting to see how it has developed over the last 13 years. **Entry:** £10 for tour & afternoon teas.

Directions: From Romsey take the A27 towards Salisbury, go over Shootash crossroads and past Dunwood Manor. Turn right into Newtown Road at the bottom of the hill; Sandhill Farm is the first house on the left.

Time: Meet at 2.00pm for 2.30pm tour.

Sunday 1 September 2019

Autumn Plant Sale at Meon Orchard, Kingsmead, Nr Wickham. PO17 5AU.

A visit to Doug and Linda Smith's garden, in conjunction with their NGS Open Day. A two-acre garden planted with a huge array of exotic plants, including three National Collections. Specialist nursery stalls and members' plants, 20 acre meadow and ½ mile of river Meon bank. Please bring plants for sale. Members and children free, general public £5. Home-made teas. Ample parking.

Directions: A32 north from Wickham for 1½ miles, turn left at Roebuck Inn, garden in ½ mile. Follow NGS yellow signs.

Time: 2.00pm - 6.00pm.

Later events will be published in the Autumn Newsletter

New Members

We are pleased to welcome **Caroline Sims** and **Rachel Shields** to our group. We look forward to seeing you at some of our events.

National Collection of *Clematis montana* – Val Le May Neville-Parry

Val Le Lay Neville-Parry belongs to that special breed of gardeners that share their garden with you. "I think of my friends as I go round the garden and tend them all". There are trees and shrubs, other climbers, occasional exotics and abundant perennials, often self-sown. There are wilder corners where the garden blends seamlessly with the surrounding countryside. But the inhabitants that weave it all together are the elite *Clematis Montana* Group, climbing, trailing, cascading and sparking with white and pink stars amidst delicate fern-like foliage.

Most thrive in this garden of two thirds of an acre which tumbles down a south facing slope in the New Forest National Park. Some plants are less successful, but her respect and admiration for all is immense. She sees **By the Way** as a trial ground: "If it survives in my garden it should do well anywhere", she says confidently. However, a plant is never blamed for failure: rather the growing conditions that she is able to provide. Certainly no one could do more to ensure a plant's success. Gardening without the use of chemicals, the poor, dry, gravelly soil is enriched with home-made compost, two year old leaf mould and an annual, application of bone meal. The composting facility is a masterclass. Careful use of ingredients, a strict regime of turning and insulation using old carpets ensures the aerobic compost is ready in just two months.

But why choose *Clematis montana*? Val had already joined the British Clematis Society during a visit to Hampton Court Palace Flower Show on her way to the Grand Prix with her late husband. Bewitched by the beauty of clematis and "a collector at heart" she decided to go for Montanas. Val now has two hundred



Montana Group plants across fifty species and varieties. A few are rampant, reaching 8 metres or more, but breeding has produced more compact varieties suitable for smaller gardens, or even growing in pots. The flowering season is far longer than most assume, beginning as early as March and continuing to late June. Some, such as Val's all-time favourite *Clematis* 'Continuity' Montana Group, now re-named 'The Jewell', after David Jewell at Hilliers Arboretum, will continue to produce sporadic bunches of flowers through summer and into autumn. All go on to

produce attractive seedheads. The compact 'Van Gogh' is a good example.

The foliage of the Montanas is also a feature. "I love the leaves as much as the flowers", she is keen to point out. *Clematis montana* var. *rubens* 'Tetrarose' may have a short flowering season, but it has exquisite foliage.

'Freda' has found her way over a power line; originally she draped "gracefully" over a winter flowering viburnum. *Clematis montana* 'Grandiflora' transforms a laurel hedge running down one side of the garden, the shining white blooms of the clematis sit like butterflies upon the glossy leaves of the laurel. Both clematis and laurel are pruned together by late June, and thrive on it. The vigorous *Clematis montana* var. *wilsonii* can be used as ground cover where space permits. It forms an undulating carpet of foliage studded with scented creamy-white flowers in early summer. These are versatile plants with so many uses in the garden.

Val is not as keen on the doubles, mainly because they prefer a richer soil. She waxes lyrical about the wonderful soil gardened by Charlotte Wemyss in Fife, who perhaps should have that second collection she is keen for someone to establish. However, the double that receives approval is the lovely 'Broughton Star': dusky pink, dark leaves and fabulously floriferous.



Favourites among the singles include 'Marjorie'; "such a darling little plant", and of course *Clematis* 'By the Way', a seedling selected in the garden which has proved to be one of the best. Blooming from the base to the tip, with soft-pink, deliciously fragrant open blooms that develop into seedheads, thus remaining attractive through autumn.

But what of the future? Val has worked with the nearby Sir Harold Hillier Gardens to establish a collection of *Clematis Montana* Group plants which could become another National Collection. Visitors are welcome to By the Way by appointment during the second half of April and throughout May. She generously shares her plants by encouraging them to take cutting material and telling them how to propagate these amazing climbers. I came away from my first visit feeling that I had enjoyed a lesson in real gardening and that I had seen a familiar group of plants for the very first time.

Vigorous varieties

Clematis montana* var. *wilsonii Flowering a few weeks later than other varieties this is a useful plant to extend the *Clematis montana* season. Masses of small starry, white flowers with cream stamens and a delicious chocolate fragrance.

***Clematis* 'Rhiannon'** Montana Group Named by Val after the God-daughter of a lady from the local choir. Fabulous large, open flowers of mauve pink with cream stamens held on strong stalks.

Clematis montana* var. *rubens Strong growing and reliable, ideal for a tree or pergola with profuse, fragrant, pink flowers. Plum tinted foliage and dark young stems.

Clematis montana* var. *grandiflora The hardiest and most reliable montana with some of the largest flowers in the group. Open, pure-white blooms with primrose stamens create a stunning display over cascading stems from late spring.

Clematis montana* var. *williamsii (*Clematis williamsii*) Vigorous with an unruly habit and large green leaves; good for large gardens. Soft, pale yellow urn shaped flowers add a different hue to the montana palette.

Medium-growing varieties

***Clematis* 'Broughton Star'** Montana Group Perhaps the best double-flowered cultivar with abundant dusky pink, veined blooms displayed against bronze-tinted foliage. Excellent to grow through a shrub or a small tree.

***Clematis* 'Giant Star'** Montana Group A large flowered cultivar Introduced from New Zealand. Cup-shaped blooms with waved tepals of mid-pink, paler at the edges eventually open flat and upward facing.

***Clematis* 'Crinkle'** Montana Group Another New Zealand introduction that is easy to grow and requires little maintenance. It drapes elegantly over any support, producing garlands of lightly-scented, medium, mid-pink blooms.

***Clematis* 'Victoria Welcome'** Montana Group An elegant montana with delicate dark-green leaves and starry white, green-eyed blooms, reflexed at the tepal edges.

***Clematis* 'Marilyn'** Montana Group A seedling of 'Prosperity' named after a friend. The mauve-pink blooms open as tiny cream-eyed stars but mature to open blooms with the longest, narrow tepals in the group.

Compact varieties

***Clematis* 'Prosperity'** Montana Group Introduced by Sheila Chapman this compact clematis needs a sheltered sunny position. Neat foliage and masses of pure white starry flowers with sparkling primrose stamens. No pruning required.

***Clematis montana* 'Veitch's Form'** Small, open blooms of square formation with rounded tepals of deep, mauve-pink with pale stamens. Best against a light background and seen at close quarters.

***Clematis* 'Freda'** Montana Group One of the best, discovered by Freda Deacon in her Norfolk Garden; later introduced by Jim Fisk. Open, lightly fragrant mauve-pink blooms, darker at the edges, displayed against bronze-green leaves.

***Clematis* 'Van Gogh'** Montana Group Excellent, compact variety that starts to bloom early and continues for up to six weeks; cherry-pink blooms, sometimes double at the end of the flowering period. A good choice for a large pot in a sunny, sheltered situation.

***Clematis* 'Miss Christine'** Montana Group Easy to grow, with multiple stems it blooms from the base; excellent to grow on a pole. Pure white, green eyed blooms are heavily scented and followed by attractive seed heads.

***Clematis* 'Primrose Star'** Montana Group Attractive cultivar from New Zealand with fully double pale lemon-yellow flowers, pink at the edge of the tepals. It needs a sunny spot and fertile soil.

***Clematis montana* var. *rubens* 'Tetrarose'** Deep pink, cupped blooms with a spicy fragrance are produced for a relatively brief period compared to other

montanas. Often marketed as 'Picton's Variety' which is similar but with many six tepalled flowers.

Clematis 'Continuity' Montana Group. This has been re-named **Clematis The Jewell'**. It is Val's "all-time favourite" producing posies of apple-blossom blooms, darker on the outside of the tepals, from late spring through to autumn. Parentage is unknown but there is clearly *Clematis chrysocoma* in the parentage.

Clematis 'Marjorie' Montana Group Abundant semi-double flowers with creamy-white outer tepals, becoming pink; the narrow inner tepals darker. At its best in fertile soil and full sun, the flowers open later than single montanas.

Clematis 'Dianna Jazwinski' Montana Group Named by Val after the photographer, this new cultivar has abundant, neatly-cupped cream-white blooms, deep pink on the reverse of the tepals. Upright in habit and perfect on a pole. This is a seedling from the fabulous '**Prosperity**'.

Nomenclature in line with international Clematis Register.

Pruning Clematis montana

Clematis montana is classified as Pruning Group 1: clematis that do not require pruning. However you can prune to control size and stimulate new growth. This should always be done immediately after flowering; by the end of June at the latest. Any dead wood or damaged growth can be cut out in winter / early spring to keep the plants tidy. One in three stems of established multi-stemmed plants can be cut back each year to just above ground level. This promotes new growth from the base of the plants which hopefully results in flowers from the ground up. Feed after spring pruning with an organic fertiliser such as Fish, Blood and Bone and mulch generously with good garden compost. Water after feeding, especially if the weather is dry.

Author: Andy McIndoe – Writer, broadcaster and speaker on Horticultural affairs. Also designer and overseer of numerous Hilliers Chelsea Gold Medal exhibits.

By the Way is open by appointment for individuals and groups of up to six from mid-April until the end of May. Visitors are welcome to take cuttings and collect seeds when material is available. Admission charge: £6.00pp, which includes a personal tour of the garden. Every penny goes to Race Against Dementia. Cherizena Coffee sponsors the garden and Val and friends serve and donate the light refreshments.

Collection location: By The Way, Lodge Drove, Woodfalls, Salisbury SP5 2NH.

Tel: 01725 511931 **Website:** www.clematismontana.co.uk

Directions

7 miles W of Cadnam (& M27). B3078 & B3080; L turn opposite Woodfalls recreation ground. Down Lodge Drove, along track, L opposite end of paddock on RHS. Limited disabled access.

From the collection holder of *Hemerocallis*

I find it hard to believe that I have held my National Collection of Spider and Unusual Daylilies for over 15 years now. I am, however, quite sure that my enthusiasm hasn't waned in the least in that time. I love everything that I do with



them, from producing the plant list in the spring to sharing plants via mail order, and opening the garden for visitors during the blooming period. Although each flower only blooms for a day the established clumps in the display field can have well over 100 blooms during a season. I particularly love the unusual open forms: they are on the

whole taller and larger bloomed and waft above the beds gently on the breeze. There is a huge variation in colour these days, too, from the very striking oranges of 'Primal Scream' and 'King Crab' to the gentle lavenders of 'Karen's Curis' and 'Cruise Control'.

Plantings in the garden, too, give an idea of what companion plants look good with them, but for me during the main season, mid-June to mid-August, the daylilies are the stars - daylily heaven.

Pollie Maasz, National Collection Holder

Calycanthus

I was very happy to have recently been awarded full status for my collection of *Calycanthus*. This is a great opportunity to promote this small group of amazing shrubs, that only in recent times are being used in popular horticulture. I was thrilled to see the RHS using *C. x raulstonii* 'Hartlage Wine' as a container shrub around their show sites last year. This complex hybrid is a real gem! The magnolia-like flowers are a deep burgundy-red with the inner tepals splashed with white,



and are in themselves very attractive, but the fact that this hybrid *Calycanthus* can be in flower from April to late September (fullest display of flowers from May to August) gives you one extraordinary shrub.

The Carolina Allspice, as it is sometimes known, is a member of the small family *Calycanthaceae*. There are only three genera in this family, *Calycanthus* (4 species, 3 native to North America and 1 from China), *Chimonanthus* (the Winter Sweet, 6 species native to Asia) and *Idiospermum* (1 species native to Northern Queensland). All species are deciduous and bear flowers which have tepals, a word that describes where a flower has no differentiation between petals and sepals. They are slow, suckering shrubs of moderate size.

My journey to falling in love with the Carolina Allspice, started back in 2003, when I travelled to Carolina and Georgia with the then curator of the Hillier Gardens, Mike Buffin. We were visiting nurseries and gardens and also specialist collections to gather together some plants to enhance the collection at the Gardens. One of our visits took us to the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station in Fletcher where we met Dr. Thomas Ranney. Dr. Ranney was involved with a lot of breeding projects, but at the time was doing a



lot of work on *Calycanthus*. He kindly showed us around the site, allowed us to have scion and cuttings material from various plants and then took us to the area where they held their latest developments. This is where he proceeded to open a safe-like door and brought out 3 small plants of what they were calling *Calycanthus* 'Venus'. At the time they were just twigs and nothing to get excited about. Then he showed us a poster made to promote this variety to nurseries. Wow! I was in plant love. This was a plant that was very hardy, had large, *Magnolia stellata*-like flowers, white elongated outer tepals and a central mass of tepals with a splash of red. It also had the ability to flower for more than four times longer than a magnolia. The complex cross of species to produce this variety is *Calycanthus* (*chinensis* × *floridus*) × *Calycanthus* (*chinensis* × *occidentalis*). 'Venus' is now a readily available variety.

The common North American species *C. floridus* has been in cultivation since 1832, but has never really made its mark as a garden shrub. The flowers are indeed quite small compared to recently introduced hybrids. However, they are still an attractive flower with long red tepals and a sweet fragrance, somewhat like bubble gum. There are several interesting varieties of the species, including 'Athen', a green-flowered sport and 'Michael Lindsay' a selection made by an American nurseryman and said to have large flowers with a particularly strong

scent and strong autumn colour in the butter yellow range. *Calycanthus occidentalis*, also from North America, but found in the west of the country, is a much larger plant. This species bears larger, more fragrant flowers with narrow elongated tepals. It is this species that is used in the perfume industry. This is also the species with the widest spread and overall height, so may not be suited to the smaller garden. *Calycanthus chinensis*, is the only species not native to North America. It is a much smaller and more manageable plant. The flowers differ from the other species as they are white, sometimes with a hint of pink, with prominent yellow inner tepals. All the tepals are fat and rounded, making the flowers very camellia-like. The name was changed some years ago from *Sinocalycanthus chinensis*, but some nurseries/gardens are still using the synonym. This species has been fundamental in the development of new varieties, adding shape and colour to its hybrids. The final species, *Calycanthus brockianus*, is native to Georgia State and almost identical to *C.floridus*. However, the flowers are usually quite pale to green.

The genus has a reputation for being acid lovers and not tolerating alkaline soils, but I have found that not to be the case. They will grow well in alkaline soils, as long as they are kept moist through the growing season. I have grown them successfully in a chalky, Hampshire garden for nearly 20 years. For those with limited space, where only one plant can be accommodated, I would highly recommend *C. x raulstonii* 'Hartlage Wine'. This spectacular plant deserves a place in every garden

Barry Clarke, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

National Collection of Hostas

Collection Holder
 June Colley's
 dazzling array of
 colours, textures,
 shapes and sizes
 welcomes visitors to
 the front garden.
 Below, from Top
 Middle clockwise:
 'June', 'Sagae', 'Orange
 Marmalade', 'Golden
 Tiara', Blue seedling
 with yellow edge,
 'Appletini', 'Praying
 Hands', 'Birchwood
 Parky's Gold'.



A “Jungle Garden” to the rear of the house displays many large hostas including ‘Blue Angel’, ‘Sum and Substance’ and ‘Dream Weaver’, mixed in with ferns and other plants, giving it a tropical feel.



Some suggestions from *Hosta* National Collection Holder, June Colley:

Hosta 'June' is a sport of 'Halcyon' with beautiful foliage. It has pointed ovate leaves and pale lavender flowers. It is a medium sized hosta reaching a height of 35 to 40 cm and can be grown in sun or shade. It forms a perfect mound of gold leaves with a wide blue-green margin. There is a third lighter green colour between the margin and centre of the leaf that often streaks to the midrib. For best colour this hosta should be sited where it gets the morning sun. The leaf centre will turn lime green if it is sited in deep shade. The leaves are very thick and fairly slug resistant. It is one of the last hostas to go dormant and will look good until the first heavy frosts.



Hosta 'June' is consistently number one in the popularity polls and for good reasons. It's a must have!

Other suggestions from June Colley include:

H. 'Blue Mouse Ears': makes a small tight clump of blue-green leaves, a mutation of H. 'Blue Cadet'.

H. 'Sum and Substance': large growing with corrugated yellow/green leaves, best in part shade.

H. 'Blue Angel': one of the largest blue-leaved hostas, white flowers; for shade and moist soils.

H. 'Sagae': large and upright, blue-green leaves with variations of creamy white on the margins and grey-green streaks in the leaf centre.

H. 'Appletini': a small neat hosta, bright yellow in spring, apple green by summer; smooth leaves, light purple flowers. A real mini..

H. 'Orange Marmalade': medium grower, green leaves with bright yellow centre fading to cream.

***Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender'**

Plectranthus is the largest South African genus of native plants belonging to the mint family (*Lamiaceae*). There are many *Plectranthus* species (around 44)



that are currently used as tender ornamental herbaceous plants. *Plectranthus* have generally been used as foliage house plants or in hanging baskets.

More recently, further species and hybrids with outstanding ornamental potential have been discovered. For me, the best generally available example of the new flowering varieties is *Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender' which was bred at the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in the late 1990s. 'Mona Lavender' is a quick-growing perennial shrub, reaching 18 to 24 inches tall. It does very well in either shaded or partly sunny positions. The plant has upright stems densely covered with dark-green ovate leaves with toothed edges. The glossy leaves are evergreen with purple

undersides. Just when most plants are slowing down in autumn, this flowering beauty sends up tall spikes of tubular lavender flowers spotted with purple. It's the shorter daylight hours that trigger blooming, so don't put it under artificial lights. When it receives sun it tends to stay smaller and more compact, and the leaves exhibit a much more intense colouring, especially on the purple undersides of the leaf. Pinching off new stem tips will promote branching and keep the plant compact. (Don't toss them out - you can easily propagate them for more plants.) Flowers grow at the tips of new branches, so you'll get more blooms this way. Also, cut off flower spikes when flowers have faded to encourage further flowering. Keep the plant frost free in winter and do not overwater. Repot in spring after flowering is over using a pot and compost with good drainage to prevent soggy soil which leads to root rot.

Enjoy this plant in your patio containers during the summer months. Then when the cold months come, move 'Mona Lavender' inside and enjoy it as a conservatory or greenhouse plant for a splash of colour during the grey months of winter. I also encourage you to consider using many of the other attractive *Plectranthus* varieties.

Jeff Heaton

Autumn Propagation Meeting

Our autumn propagation meeting was hosted as usual by Lynsey Pink with Rosie Yeomans officiating. Some new faces among the regulars were very welcome. We concentrated on softwood cuttings from material provided by Rosie or brought by the participants. Grey-leaved shrubs including lavender, phlomis, and ballotta, seem to sell well at present and Rosie gave helpful advice on how to get the best results. Rosie had brought seeds of *Baptisia australis* for people to take home and try, and Exbury Gardens had donated a large box of Amarine bulbs, to which people could help themselves. Hopefully the spring plant sale will see the benefits of all this industry.

The usual cups of tea and cake kept us all well fuelled and inspired us to keep going.

Juliet Bloss

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<https://www.ngs.org.uk/beneficiaries>

In 2018 the **National Garden Scheme** donated a record £3.1 million to these charities despite a rather difficult year, for gardeners in 2018, with a very wet spring and scorching temperatures through some of the summer months. We are hoping to match this total for 2019. For the last four years Hampshire has raised the most money of any county, exceeding **£200,000 per year**. This is a record of which we are very proud and we are aiming to stay at the top for many years to come. To this end we would ask that the people of Hampshire keep an eye out for the Yellow NGS County Booklet, available at most garden centres and outlets in the towns and villages, or visit the website **ngs.org.uk** to see which NGS gardens are open on any specific day in an area close to you - or maybe further afield. You can ensure a very warm welcome at all of our gardens - enjoy a relaxing visit (someone else has done all the hard work) and at the same time donate to an amazing charity.

For 2019 the NGS has around 120 gardens open for your pleasure. For really good value the Group Gardens take some beating. This year we have five throughout Hampshire:

1. Amport & Moxton Gardens SW of Andover:
<https://www.ngs.org.uk/find-a-garden/garden/17569>
2. Crawley Gardens:
<https://www.ngs.org.uk/find-a-garden/garden/17567>
3. Froyle Gardens:
<https://www.ngs.org.uk/find-a-garden/garden/17570>
4. Romsey Gardens:
<https://www.ngs.org.uk/find-a-garden/garden/17568>
5. Stockbridge Gardens:
<https://www.ngs.org.uk/find-a-garden/garden/22313>

Pat Beagley, Hampshire NGS Publicity

Asian Hornet

Beware the Asian hornet! Everyone should be looking out for this insect this summer as there is a distinct possibility that it may colonise the UK. Why the concern? The Asian hornet comes from China, arriving in France in 2004, and has colonised large parts of the Continent. It is a voracious predator of other beneficial insects including honey bees and other pollinators such as butterflies, bumblebees



and hoverflies. Two nests were detected in Hampshire in 2018, one near Alresford, the other near Brockenhurst, though both were happily destroyed.

The Asian hornet is smaller than the native hornet and much darker, with a dark brown or black velvety body, an orange band on the fourth segment of its abdomen and

orange markings on its face. It has yellow tipped legs, dark at the base. It tends to nest very high in trees or other structures, and is not active at night. By comparison, the European hornet is larger, with an orange yellow abdomen and uniformly coloured pale legs.

If you spot one you should immediately email the authorities at alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk, who will then seek out and destroy the nest. If possible send a photo and include information on location, date and number of Asian hornets seen. You can consult the internet for more information.

Juliet Bloss

European Hornet



Wildlife Gardening - habitat creation

If you want to attract butterflies and moths to breed in your garden rather than just visit it for nectar, you'll have to provide the foodplants that their larvae feed on.



There are quite a few species that need specialised habitats, such as chalk downland, heathland, wet meadows, etc., so that even if you grow their larval foodplants they will not breed in your garden. The more you think of your garden as a "habitat", a link with the surrounding countryside, the better it will provide for wildlife in general. You need a canopy layer formed by a tree or trees, a shrub layer, and the understorey, which can be

your garden plants, plus an area of rough grass, preferably with nectar-rich flowers growing in it. Since butterflies are cold-blooded they also need a warm, sheltered, sunny environment to thrive; and it goes without saying that the use of pesticides should be avoided.

The best way to determine which species you might be able to attract is to look at the surrounding area and see what naturally occurs there. The size of your garden will also have an influence on what you can hope for. The easiest species to cater for are: Holly Blue, whose caterpillars eat holly flowers in late spring and ivy flowers in autumn; in gardens Orange-tip lays on Honesty and Sweet Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*); Green-veined White is likely if you grow lady's smock or hedge garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*); and any brassica (not just cabbages), plus nasturtiums, will attract Small and Large Whites. Brimstones lay on alder buckthorn, and Common Blues on birdsfoot trefoil, but for both these species other conditions have to be right before they will breed. The larvae of the vanessids (Peacock, Red Admiral, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell) are well-known for feeding on nettles, but the nettles they go for have to be in full sun with fresh young growth. Not many people want this on their plot, besides which growing nettles deliberately for them tends to be a waste of time.

Probably the best thing you can do to attract a range of butterflies to breed in your garden is to have an area of mixed long meadow grasses. Skippers, Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Speckled Wood all breed on a range of native grasses such as bents, fescues, cock'sfoot, false brome and others. You can provide such an area by using part of your lawn. The easiest way is to stop mowing a section of it. Decide on a nice shape and let it develop, cutting it in

spring and autumn, but not too close as the larvae shelter in the tussocks. Remove the cuttings to cut down on soil fertility and encourage wildflowers to grow. Inserting plant plugs is a good way to increase the diversity of species.

Most butterflies overwinter as eggs, larvae or pupae, and are usually well hidden over winter. Leaf litter is a valuable habitat for butterfly and moth chrysalises, and some caterpillars pupate in dead plant stems, or at the base of grassy tussocks, so that the old adage of "don't be too tidy" holds good. Try to leave odd corners or the back of borders a bit rough all year so that moths, beetles, and other creatures have somewhere to hide.

It is not enough to provide the right conditions for the larvae: the adult butterflies and moths will need all the nectar-rich flowers you can provide from about March to November - to cater for early emerging species as well those that are still flying in late autumn.

Early spring flowers such as primroses, bluebells, crocuses, wallflowers, pulmonarias, etc., are vital. From then on there is an increasingly wide choice of plants available. Bear in mind that single flowers produce more accessible nectar and pollen than doubles.

Herbaceous perennials and flowering shrubs provide more nectar than annuals, and should be grown in a sunny spot, preferably in large blocks to make refuelling easier for insects, such as the Ringlet (right). Plants with composite flower heads, such as buddleia, provide a



lot of nectar on one flower spike, which is energy efficient for the butterfly, though buddleia flowers are too deep for Gatekeeper and Speckled Wood, which have shorter tongues than most. Daisy-type plants (*Asteraceae*) are attractive to most species, as are flat-topped or clustered flower heads which have short flower tubes, such as *Verbena bonariensis*, scabious and *Knautia*. Late flowering sedums, e.g. *Sedum spectabile*, and some single chrysanthemums and dahlias are valuable in providing nectar into October.

Other insects, such as bees, moths, hoverflies, and beetles will also benefit from measures taken to provide good habitat for butterflies, and your garden will be a rich source of pleasure at all seasons.

Juliet Bloss

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