



Hardy Plant Society Northamptonshire Group

NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

As I write this the future is still uncertain as Stage 4 has been postponed to July 19 and the Delta variant is fulfilling its description of being a variant of concern and cases are doubling every eleven days.

We have now held seven meetings on Zoom including, in May, an extra meeting as the Home and Garden Fair at Holdenby had been postponed (not that we were going to be involved this year, anyway).

Your Committee has recently met on Zoom, and it was hoping to make arrangements to resume our meetings in September at the Community Centre, as they are very aware that many members who are not able to be online have been left out of our talks. Also there are many members with online access that have chosen to not join us on Zoom.

However, it was decided to confirm that the remainder of our meetings in 2021 can, if necessary, be held on Zoom and to postpone any decision until another Committee meeting in early August.

Once again I am very grateful to our Chairman, Anna, who has been busy and contributed several items to the newsletter.

Also included are some more photographs from James' and Emily's garden which we are scheduled to visit on Sunday 27th June from 2pm.

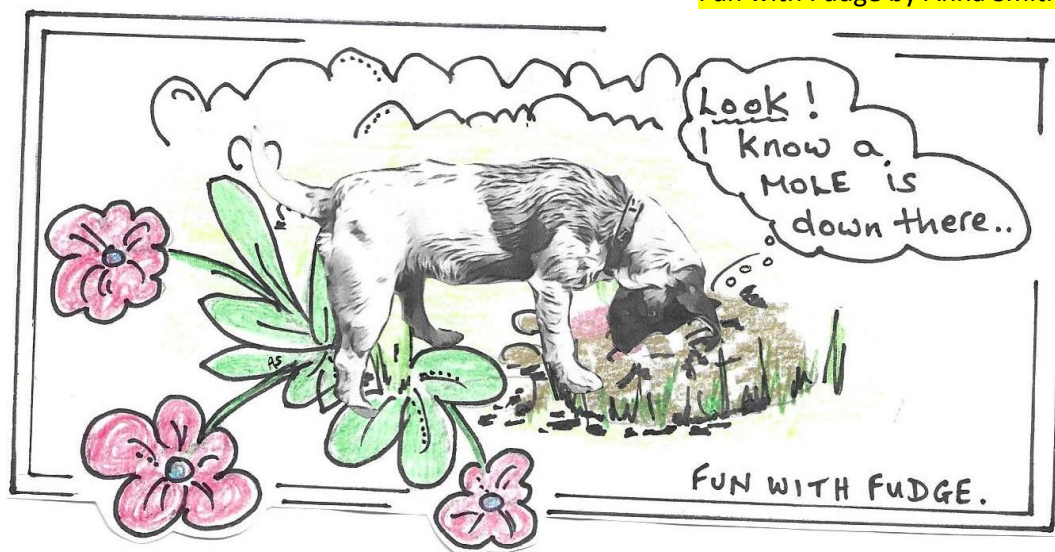
There is also a contribution from Chris Mense. Thank you again, Chris.

Sadly, the remainder of you attending the May Zoom meeting have been very secretive about your gardens and there are no other contributions.

The Editor on behalf of Your Committee

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Fun with Fudge by Anna Smith



2021 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Unless otherwise indicated all meetings are held at the Moulton Community Centre, Reedings, Sandy Hill Lane, Moulton NN3 7AX commencing at 2pm except for the October meeting which will commence at 2.30pm.

4th September 2021

Darren Rudge 'The Laughing Gardener' –
'Sustainability in Your Garden'

2nd October 2021

Please note this meeting may start at 2.30pm
Samantha Hopes of Hopes Garden Plants –
'Journey into Horticulture'

6th November 2021

Simon White of Peter Beales Roses –
'Highlights of Chelsea and Hampton Court'

4th December 2021

Paul Barney of Edulis Nursery –
'Plant Hunting in Manipur'

HOPES GARDEN PLANTS

Halesowen, West Midlands
01384 413070

We propagate a range of plants from our garden and plant collections, some are reliable border staples, while others are rare jewels.

www.hopesgardenplants.co.uk

DARREN RUDGE

Darren Rudge, also known as 'The Laughing Gardener', has been a BBC Radio presenter for over 15 years.

www.darrenrudge.co.uk

PETER BEALES ROSES

London Road, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1AY
01953 454707

The gardens, plant centre and shop are open Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10am to 4pm. Visiting at other times is by appointment.

The Rosarium Restaurant is open Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10.30am to 3.30pm.

www.classicroses.co.uk

EDULIS NURSERY

The Walled Garden, Tidmarsh Lane, Pangbourne, RG8 8HT
01635 578113 / 07802 812781

Founded by Paul Barney, Edulis is tucked away in a walled garden in the Thames Valley near Pangbourne.

www.edulis.co.uk

Fun with Fudge by Anna Smith



CHAIRMAN'S 'BLOG'

"April hours bring forth showers"

"April weather, rain, and sunshine both together"

Well, the weather certainly was not listening to old sayings this year.

With an April so cold and dry everything in the garden looked parched. Certain plants kept going, the Anemone nemorosa continued to put on a lovely show particularly when the sun shines.



Anemone 'Blue Boy', Cerinthe and Omplaloides 'Cherry Ingram'
Anemone Blue Beauty



Anemone ranunculoides pleniflora and Saruma henryii

Inside, the seeds in the propagator germinated quickly. I've an abundance of salvias, mostly from my own gathered seed.

Now I use old envelopes for storage. Collecting seed is easy; making a note of what is in what envelope is easy, if you remember to write on the outside of said envelope. Often, I don't have a pen to hand outside, so I am always going to remember, right.... Wrong. We have a get out clause here, any plant we do not know the name of it is instantly referred to as a Nagushum bush, if you tell folks with enough conviction, you get away with it.

Beware buying any Nagushum plants from the plant sales table or is this just an April fool.

I have also dealt with the first of the lily beetles!!!

"Change not a clout, Till May be out"

"Who doffs his coat on a winters day, Will gladly put it on in May"

The village school has always held the tradition of celebrating May Day. Country dancing and Maypole dancing in a normal year on the village green, and it is usually cold.

I always smile when I remember the small boy who went home and told his parents that Mrs Foster was teaching them 'Pole Dancing'.

So, the forecast promises some rain, and rain it did, 23mls, a fraction under an inch fell in one day.

Oh, it was glorious, but still too cold, I was bringing Dahlias in and out of the greenhouse until the second weekend and then I had the confidence to let them start to harden off.

The unnamed seedlings are becoming easier to identify and now I am down to two trays of Salvias, I do not know which are white and which are pink, but I can live with that.

Searching for plant labels online I came across a seed company I had not heard of before hidden among all the usual popular ones. Looking through their catalogue I found some interesting seeds that I could buy by weight or count, my selection, at no more than 99p a packet! Consequently, more seeds arrived in the post two days later. Did I mention I really could do with a bigger greenhouse?

What is looking good in May.

I love the Californian/Pacific coast iris. Several years ago I found them reliable plants on my heavy clay and fantastic in dry shade. Their flowering period only lasts for a few weeks but always at a time when perennial colour is in short supply.



Californian Iris /Pacific Coast Iris

Agnes James (white) and Iris innominata 'Spinners' (yellow)



Pacific Coast Iris
Pinewood Sunshine (yellow)
Pinewood Sunshine (close up)
Broadleigh Nancy

We were talking the other day about hearing the Cuckoo and fear its several years since we have.

The swifts have arrived but no sign of the swallows yet.

We now approach May 17th the magic day for the easing of more restrictions.

Plant and seed catalogues put to one side and the ever-popular Yellow Book is now the choice for browsing. Like all other charities the NGS are desperate to get visitors into gardens and raising vital funds. If you can please support the gardens in your area. Look online for details as until June 21st a lot of gardens may be pre booking tickets.

I must find gardens that are happy for my pooch to visit; unfortunately, she has developed a liking for plant labels so it is a good job that she looks cute.



Signing off now as the printing deadline is fast approaching.

Rainfall to date 21st May 97 mls just under 4 inches.

“Barnaby bright (June 11th), All day and no night”

“St Barnabas, mow your first grass”

Maybe June will bring the summer with it.

Anna

ANNA'S OPEN GARDEN DETAILS

Green Wicket Farm

Bitteswell, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4LR

Created in 2008 on a working farm with clay soil and a very exposed site. Many unusual hardy plants along with a lot of old favourites have been used to provide a long season of colour and interest. Anemone nemorosa, Pacific Coast iris and Salvias are of particular interest. Formal pond and water features.

Surrounded by pasture land it is not unusual to share your visit with the animals raised on the farm. With post and rail fencing the boundaries blend into the landscape giving an open feel. Paths of grass and gravel make it easy to wander throughout the whole garden which wraps itself around the house. An extensive range of plants are grown that thrive in the challenging conditions, many propagated for sale on NGS days.

Sunday 11th July 2pm - 5:30pm

Pre-booking available through the NGS website <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/30100>

For this open day you can pre-book your tickets in advance, but it is not essential. You can just turn up and pay on the day.

Refreshments:

Cream teas.

Admission:

Adult: £4.00 Child: Free

JAMES' & EMILY'S OPEN GARDEN DETAILS

Old Park Barn

Dag Lane, Stoke Goldington, Buckinghamshire MK16 8NY

A garden of almost 3 acres made from a rough field over 20 yrs ago. Near the house (not open) a series of terraces cut into the sloping site create the formal garden with long and cross vistas, lawns and deep borders. The aim is to provide interest throughout the year with naturalistic planting and views borrowed from the surrounding countryside. Beyond is a wildlife pond, meadow and woodland garden.

We created a garden from a rough field of just under three acres starting over 20 years ago. Near the house a series of terraces, cut into the sloping site, become the formal part of the design with long and cross vistas, lawns and deep borders with drifts of perennials, specimen shrubs, trees, clematis and climbing roses. The aim is to provide interest throughout the year with naturalistic planting and views borrowed from the surrounding countryside.

Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th July 2pm - 5pm (also on Sunday 27th June 2021 from 2.00pm for HPS Group members – see article below)

Pre-booking available through the NGS website <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/35007>

For this open day you can pre-book your tickets in advance, but it is not essential. You can just turn up and pay on the day.

Refreshments:

Home-made teas.

Admission:

Adult: £5.00 Child: Free

WHAT'S GOING ON IN MY GARDEN?

I am encouraging the next generation of Hardy Planters. Spring has arrived and there is lots of colour now from the spring bulbs and Easter is fast approaching. My assistant gardener, Freddie, aged 4, he is in my bubble! has been busy looking after the wildlife and making his own Easter garden in a container.



The mini wildlife pond has a liner cut from an old compost bag. The first one leaked so this photo, upper right, shows the second attempt. Freddie really enjoys giving the stone bird bath a jolly good scrub and refill. The plants in his mini garden include Cyclamen, Primrose, Saxifrage, Mascari, Moss and Ivy. The hard landscaping was his own work with some help and advice on planting.

Chris Mense

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COACH TRIPS

We did ask Linda Kier to investigate rearranging the cancelled coach trips from 2020 but with all the uncertainty it was almost impossible to get anyone to commit to a date.

Instead we have asked Linda to investigate a visit to Burghley Walled Garden, not by coach but in members' cars.

Watch this space for developments!

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SMART PLANTS

Stuart and Anita Smart have supported our Plant Fairs over many years. Their nursery is just up the road from where we meet in Moulton.

They will be opening their nursery when they are allowed – in the meantime they can be contacted through Facebook under Smart Plants or can be emailed if you want any plants and to discover the opening hours.

Telephone: 01604 454106

For your Satnav: NN3 7JB

<https://www.facebook.com/SmartPlantsNorthampton/>

eMail: smartplants@hotmail.co.uk

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MORE FROM JAMES' & EMILY'S GARDEN

Firstly, a reminder of the visit to James and Emily Chua's Garden at Stoke Goldington for HPS members

Date: Sunday 27th June 2021 from 2.00pm

Location: Old Park Barn, Dag Lane, Stoke Goldington, Buckinghamshire MK16 8NY

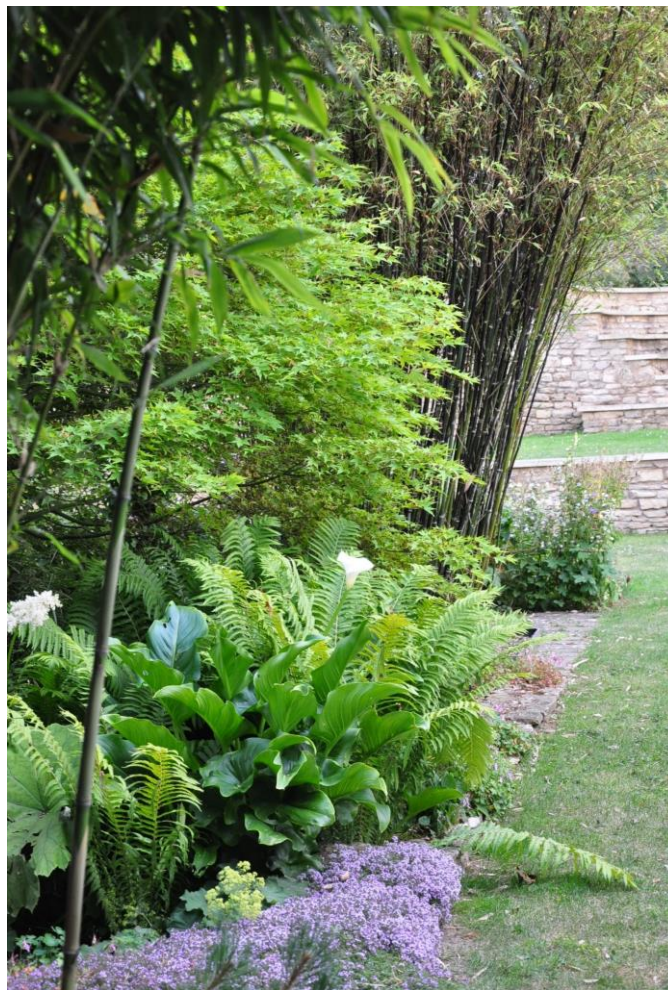
Cost: £5.00 – pay on arrival (tea and biscuits extra - £1)

4m North of Newport Pagnell on B526. Park on High Street. A short walk up Dag Lane. Very limited disabled parking for two cars near garden via Orchard Way. Partial wheelchair access. More details above for NGS visit.

SLOW GARDENING

We both find it very satisfying making and growing our garden from scratch, caring for and nurturing plants, trees and shrubs, seeing them establishing themselves in our garden over the past twenty-three years. We think it is the journey of making a garden that interests us both, always looking forward to new ideas, projects and plants, and looking forward to the next season hoping the plants will do better.

Here are a small selection of pictures taken last summer, before, during and after the open days for the NGS .



NEAR THE HOUSE



UPPER LAWN BORDERS



THE POND

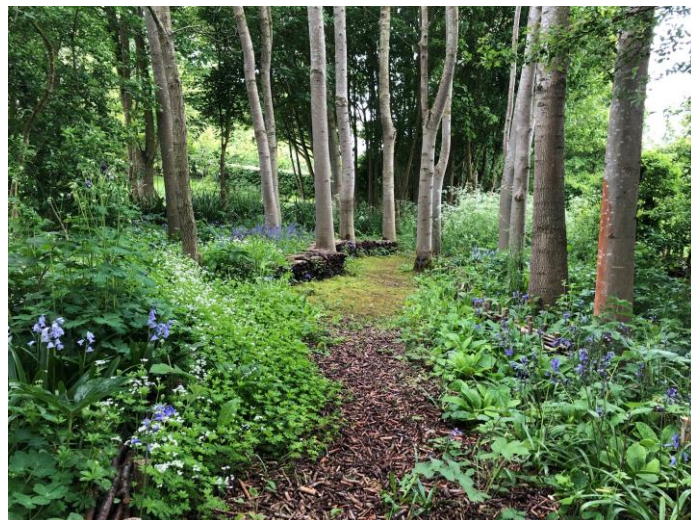


MEADOWS





WOODLAND



FROM THE EDITOR'S GARDEN

Attempts over the years at producing compost to mulch our poor clayey soil using 'Dalek' composters have not achieved very much. They are very slow to develop and impossible to turn in the way you are supposed to when full. When it comes to emptying them it is difficult as the hatch is too small and it is back breaking work! Although they are situated down the side of the house they are not very pretty.



So Peter has a new toy! A HotBin! We fell for the RHS Garden magazine offer of 10% off and purchased a mini-bin. We thought we would not have enough material for a full size one as it needs feeding every other day.



We have set it up by the greenhouse behind the trellis so it is quite out of sight.

There are some very good YouTube videos to give advice on getting it going and with the addition of a hot water bottle within five days

it was up to full running temperature – 40-60°C.

According to the advertising it should take three to six weeks to produce something useable. We had to leave it five weeks as some blue tits were feeding their brood in a nest box in the ivy three feet away and we did not like to interrupt them.



The result was some well-rotted compost very accessible through a large door. It was a little wet but left to dry it was very useable.

We have also collected some powerful looking leachate through the blue cap which will be used as fertiliser when watering around the garden.

We are careful not to throw away much food but all the vegetable trimmings, banana skins, tea bags, etc., going in to the HotBin has made quite a difference to the black bin collection!

So we can recommend it although it is quite an initial outlay of cash. You will also need a paper shredder as shredded paper and card is a major constituent with grass cuttings and other green material from the garden. Also required is composted bark to keep the mixture 'open' – buy it from your garden centre as HotBin's charge is ridiculous!

I think we can all agree that this Spring has been a cool one and everything in the garden has been slow to take off. Some say we are two weeks behind where we usually are. It is mid-summertime and the heating cut in this morning!

This has been particularly evident in our new beds where growth has been very slow to take off. As expected some of the plants in the new raised beds at the front of the house have not survived the drowning they endured with all the heavy rain earlier but we are pleased with the results so far.



The Aubretia and Campanulas show up well and the Sambucus threatens to grow too large but the Lavatera did not survive the flood.



I had overlooked how tall the Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster' grows and it will hide the Buddleja behind. A strong candidate for moving to one side next spring, perhaps to screen the water butt.

The new hosta beds were really slow to take off but are now going strongly and the slugs have not found them so far.



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Would you write a small piece about your garden and submit a few photographs for the interest of the members for the next newsletter? Please!

**HARDY PLANT SOCIETY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE GROUP**

OFFICERS, POSTHOLDERS & COMMITTEE

- CHAIR: Anna Smith 01455 552646
- VICE-CHAIR: to be appointed
- HON. SECRETARY: Jan Craig 01604 740401
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- PROGRAMME SEC'Y: Kate Brown 01604 706248
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- PLANT FAIR
- CO-ORDINATOR: Jan Craig