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**CORNWALL GROUP
NEWSLETTER FOR
March 2017**

Spring has burst into the garden here. Snowdrops have been amazing and I hope some of you have managed to get to the events inspired by the white insanity. Hellebores seem to be going from strength to strength, the first *Pulmonaria* are in bloom and yesterday I found my first *Epimedium* flowers. Daffodils are to be seen everywhere. A field at the bottom of the hill is glowing like a shaft of sunlight in the rain, and causing traffic to slow as it passes. Spring events are coming thick and fast and I have included a number from further afield for those who are feeling adventurous. Events at Rosemoor are always worth a visit and last time I heard anything the RHS were expecting the new exhibition space to be ready. I have also included some details about the Wisley Spring Fair in case anybody feels like travelling. This is a new event and it should be a good one. The Autumn Flower Show has become a gigantic affair and this one looks set to follow its lead.

So far the Spring weather has been entirely as expected, that is to say completely unpredictable. I paid a visit to John and Gilly Mann a few days ago and their garden was looking beautiful in the early sunshine, the Hellebores at their very best at the end of February, new flowers looking rich and bright in the dappled light under the trees.



***Helleborus x hybridus* at
Higher Truscott.**



***Helleborus x hybridus* with
its sinister colours...**



...and dark eyes.

John told me that his first Hellebores were obtained forty years ago, before the modern strains were developed. He planted a few in his garden and immediately fell in love with them. He has been raising seedlings ever since and the garden is alive with drifts of the dark colours. John says he likes the sinister colours best, but there are also some amazing pink, white and spotted plants among them and he has developed a fondness for the doubles. I started a bit later than John, but in the 1980's I collected together those Hellebores that were available. A white flowered plant from Blooms of Bressingham came to me as 'colchicus' which was a nonsense name, but it is still the earliest flowering plant I have. It has a small, rather ugly flower that we would have called white back then. I also got a plant labelled *H. purpurascens* which prospered for many years in an earlier garden. Now we recognise it as a form of *H. x hybridus* called 'Early Purple'. I was overjoyed when I managed to get a division from Michael Wickenden at Cally Gardens before he passed away last year. He had been keeping it going all that time. I bought a few seedlings from Julie Morss in Dorset, one that I call "Dark Pagoda" was the best of the dark flowered plants I had at the time. There were fabulous stories about black hellebores and I bought one from a nursery in Scotland which shall remain nameless. For my £1.25 (it was a lot of money back then) I got a germinated seed in a 3" pot. It didn't survive.

At the end of the decade the Plantsman Nursery in Dorset closed down and Eric Smith's hybrids were made available in the closing down sale. Jim Archibald had been dividing them to bulk them up, a very slow process with Hellebores. He said that once he had divided them, they could take up to three years to settle down again. I bought 'Cosmos', 'Miranda' and a plant from the Zodiac strain in the final sale (before I ran out of money). Years later I was able to buy a plant of 'Pluto' as well but as far as I know they were never offered for sale again. Unfortunately I lost 'Pluto', but it is still grown at Rosemoor. I hope they realise how important it is.



Helleborus x hybridus
"Colchicus".



Helleborus x hybridus "Dark
Pagoda".



Helleborus x hybridus 'Early
Purple'.



Helleborus x hybridus
'Cosmos'.



Helleborus x hybridus
'Miranda'.



Helleborus x hybridus
'Pluto'.

While I was playing around with Hellebores, delighted to produce any seedlings at all and always bearing in mind Graham Thomas' assertion that there is no such thing as an ugly Hellebore, Helen Ballard and her husband had started a revolution. Realising that high quality Hellebores would never be raised from division she worked on developing seed strains that could be relied on to produce quality plants. She had spent decades breeding mother plants with bright clean colours and clearing out the muddy colours and spots. Her plants were a revelation but they had been a lifetimes work and by the time she started to distribute them she was ready to retire. For a few years she distributed seed of her best colours and when she retired she sold off all of the mother plants. Sadly the originals seem to have died out, but I know there are still a few of her seedlings around.

In Kent, Elizabeth Strangman had introduced two double flowered forms of *H. torquatus* that she called 'Dido' and 'Aeneas'. She used them to breed a wide variety of colours with both single and double flowers. When she retired Thompson and Morgan took over her strains and have continued to develop the Double Queen strain under her supervision. Hugh Nunn picked up where Helen Ballard left off and used the best of her seedlings and others available at the time, to develop the Harvington strains of Hellebores. For the last twenty years these have been the foundation of the modern enthusiasm for Hellebores. For the first time plants were available in bright colours as well as doubles and anemone flowered forms.



Helleborus x hybridus
'Harvington Apricot'.



Helleborus torquatus
'Aeneas'.



Helleborus x hybridus
'Harvington Yellow'.



Helleborus x nigercors .



Helleborus x hybridus
'Ashwood Blue'.

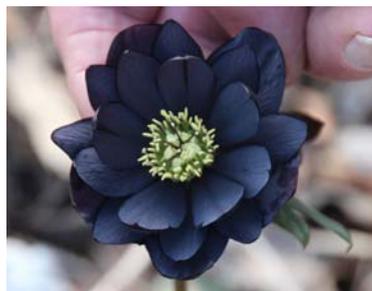


Helleborus x ericsmithii
'Pirouette'.

The peak of Hellebore breeding in this country has been reached by John Massey and his team at Ashwood Nursery. They have been working to improve the colour range of their seed strains and selecting for larger, rounder flowers. If you get a chance to visit Ashwood Nursery in the early spring it is well worth going. You will find the most amazing plants available, and you will leave happy and penniless. Believe me, I have done it many times. The 'Ashwood Hybrids' appear at the RHS spring shows and they are always show-stoppers. They demonstrate what can be achieved by a dedicated specialist breeder.

While these developments were going on, the large commercial producers were looking at ways of breaking into a lucrative market. They looked at micropropagation but discovered that *Helleborus x hybridus* did not respond well. It turns out that adult plants have a complex interaction with soil micro-organisms (mainly fungi) and they are almost impossible to sterilise sufficiently to establish them in culture. When placed on the culture medium, the fungi become rampant.

Producers turned their attention to hybrids between *H. niger* and either *H. argutifolius* or *H. lividus*. The hybrids are possible, but the seeds develop rather poorly. If they are germinated in sterile culture they can be micropropagated by the thousand and plants can be grown on rapidly and reliably. They look good in the early months of the year, but I find them short lived. The strains tend to become rather 'tired' in sterile culture after a couple of years, so the names change quite frequently. *H. x nigercors* was the first to be produced, and was available before the advent of tissue culture. My favourite of them has been *H x ericsmithii* 'Pirouette', a complex hybrid raised by Robin White. It is a dull colour, but it is one of the few that I find reliably perennial.



***Helleborus x hybridus*
'Tutu'.*****Helleborus x hybridus* John
Mann's double black.*****Helleborus x hybridus*
'Phoebe'.**

Using the same technique of germinating sterilised seed on a nutrient gel under sterile conditions, producers have finally managed to mass produce *H. x hybridus*. They use the best available seed strains and hope that the resulting plants will be worth having once they are grown on. The first of them to come onto the market was 'Tutu', a rather ordinary dull pink anemone flowered form. It was ordinary, but it was cheaply available by the thousand. The next wave of hybrids became available last year and included 'Phoebe', a reasonably good pink spotted double. These plants are not yet as good as the best of the seed raised hybrids, such as this double black seedling in John Mann's garden, but they are improving every year, and it is only a matter of time. I think it will be a sad day if these identical plants replace the excitement and variability of modern seed strains, but I think it is inevitable. Two decades ago micropropagation made double primroses easily available and it almost destroyed the breeders, who could no longer sell their surplus seedlings to pay their way.



***Helleborus* 'Madame
Lemonnier'.**



***Helleborus* 'Ice n Roses
Red'.**



***Helleborus* 'Anna's Red'.**

The most recent developments have made full use of sterile culture to produce and propagate new hybrids. The first of them to make a major impact was *Helleborus* 'Walhero' WALBERTONS ROSEMARY. It is a hybrid between *H. niger* and *H. x hybridus*, something that had only been achieved once or twice before the advent of high tech culture methods. It is vigorous and completely sterile, so it flowers from the start of the season in January right through to the end of spring with flowers that still look good into May. This year has seen the launch of 'Madame Lemonnier', a seedling of the same hybrid, raised in France. It has enormous flowers with a very firm texture. It looks as though they will last in good condition for many months. It is one of this years exciting introductions and, dare I say it, "In your Garden Centres now!"

A couple of years ago Rodney Davey started to introduce his new hybrids, raised in Axminster. He isn't declaring their parentage (understandably) but they have beautifully mottled evergreen foliage. To my eye the best of them is the first, 'Anna's Red' with large red saucer shaped flowers. It made a big impact at the RHS spring show three years ago and is now widely available.

My final selection is 'Ice n Roses Red', one of a group of "Ice n Roses" cultivars, but although they are all remarkable, it is the red one that is outstanding. My best guess is that it is a hybrid between a red *H. x hybridus* and one of the stem forming species, possibly *H. argutifolius* but as with all of these patented hybrids, reliable information is hard to come by. These are exciting and sometimes incomprehensible times for Hellebore growers, but among the wonders available we should still make space for the seed raised *H. x hybridus* forms which continue to improve and are still the foundation of new developments. Without breeders developing them, the modern wave of micropropagated hybrids will run dry.



Helleborus x hybridus
Golden Sunrise Strain.



Helleborus x hybridus, a
selection of John Mann's
seedlings.



Helleborus x hybridus
double green.

LAST MEETING

All About Hostas. by Peter Savage.

This month we were pleased to hear from Peter Savage of Bowden Hostas. He has kindly sent us this summary of his talk.

Thank you for asking Bowdens to speak to your February meeting it was a real pleasure to meet you all. Bowdens have been supplying Hostas for well over 25 years and started as I explained purely by accident when a friend of Roger and Ann Bowden died suddenly one October leaving his wife with the problem of what to do with a collection of well over a 1000 plants. Roger and Ann homed the plants until spring time when they intended to dispose of them however when the Hostas started to grow they became hooked on the wide variety of plants that they had been looking after and decided to keep them. From that beginning Bowdens has grown. Roger and Ann, who in 2003 were just on 70, decided to sell the Hostas business to their middle daughter Ruth and her husband Tim Penrose. Tim has continued to expand the business and in 2007 became a royal warrant holder for the supply of Hostas to Prince Charles.

Over the last 40-50 years many growers including Bowdens have been very busy hybridising Hostas and they are now available in a wide variety of sizes from mini at 100mm across to giant at over 2m diameter. The variegations and leaf shapes now available mean that there are Hostas suitable for all locations from full sun to deep shade and we like to say that Hostas are shade tolerant rather than the widely held belief that Hostas are shade loving.



Hosta 'Blue Mouse Ears', a
mini Hosta.



Hosta montana.



Hosta 'Bridal Falls' a lovely
large/giant Hosta.

I said that Hostas were a great hardy perennial and a very easy plant to look after, however one Hosta called White Feather is not one of them. Gardeners who had bought White Feather (normally newspaper mail order offer) in our experience regretted the choice. The plant looks stunning when it emerges in the spring however generally after only a few days the leaves collapse. The plant simply cannot make enough food to keep itself going, quite often the plant will grow new leaves later in the season but they will not be the stunning white colour more often a yellow green.

Of course you can hardly mention Hostas without the words Slugs and Snails being uttered. These can be an issue but it shouldn't stop you from growing Hostas. If you do have a slug/snail problem (believe it or not some gardeners don't have any trouble from them) try growing the plants in pots, a lot of people find that it's so much easier to control the pests this way. When you have finished potting up, pop two or three slug pellets at the top. But remember it's only two or three not a huge handful. If the plants are already in your garden start putting out slug pellets this month, February. Don't wait until you can see holes in your leaves, it's too late then. Again use the pellets very sparingly.

One of the more obscure facts about Hostas that I mention was that you can cook with them and I have reproduced the recipe that I showed. I understand that it goes well with Fish (Bonito), if you do try it please let me know how it tastes. Not certain if this recipe relies on *Hosta montana* or if any hosta will do.

Cut off fresh leaves (preferably *H. montana*) just above the crown.

Wash them well, and cook in boiling water with a little salt for 1/2 minute to 1-1/2 minutes. Drain well in a colander.

Cut the leaves into 1 to 2 inches. Serve them with mayonnaise, your favourite salad dressing or soy sauce with grated ginger or dried bonito flakes.

I hope that you all have a good gardening season, do pop in and see us in Sticklepath. It's only a small deviation off the A30. Coming from Exeter turn off at Whiddon Down or from Cornwall turn off at Okehampton and follow brown tourist signs to Bowden Hostas. To avoid disappointment if you are looking for a specific Hosta do ring before hand to ensure that we have it in stock. The nursery is open April 1st to August 31st 10-5 Mon to Sat also as part of the National Garden Scheme there are 4 open days 10 & 24 June and 8 & 22 July. If you do go to the Chelsea Flower Show come and say hello. Our display this year will be built around the Australian State Coach from the Royal Mews.

Peter Savage
talks@bowdenhostas.com

The "Three Stems" competition showed off the best of early spring. Peter Watson won with his group of Camellia flowers in perfect condition. If anyone recognises the red cultivar, please let us know! Tricia Howard came second with a selection of snowdrops. 'Alan's Treat' is a particularly good green-tipped cultivar. 'Trumps' is a distinctive modern one and 'Ketton' is an old and excellent cultivar with large flowers. Peter Howard came third with a selection of spring flowering shrubs. A good blue Rosemary was shown up well by the precocious lime flowers of *Ribes laurifolium* all rounded out with the scent of *Sarcococca confusa*. Other notable plants on show included a lovely deep pink form of *Ipheion uniflorum* from Jo Waterhouse, the first *Anemone blanda* I have seen this year, from Peter Waterhouse and a lovely plate of Hellebores from John Mann.



1st. Peter Watson
Camellia 'China Doll'
Camellia 'Anticipation'
Camellia (red)



2nd. Tricia Howard
 (l-r) *Galanthus 'Ketton'*
Galanthus 'Alan's Treat'
Galanthus 'Trumps'



3rd. Peter Howard
Rosmarinus 'Fota Blue'
Sarcococca confusa
Ribes laurifolium

The winners of the "Three Stems" competition for 2016 were announced. Joint first were John Mann and John Sirkett, with Jo Waterhouse in third. Do consider bringing something in for the competition, It is always nice to see what you have in the garden on the day, it doesn't have to be rare to be lovely! Just write your name on the back of a bit of paper by your vase, so that we know whose they are.

Some pictures of entries through the year from the winners below.



John Mann
Narcissus cyclamineus
Narcissus 'Little Gem'
Narcissus 'Mite'



John Sirkett
Galanthus reginae-olgae



Jo Waterhouse
Aconitum carmichaelii
Colchicum speciosum
Salvia patens

It was really lovely to see Janet Dale and her snowdrops at the meeting. She always seems to come up with something new and wonderful. *Galanthus 'Madelaine'* caused a lot of interest with its delicate yellow markings, and there were some beautiful plants of 'Sandersii' that were almost shining and golden. I went away with a plant of 'Ruth Birchall', the tallest snowdrop I have ever seen!



The display table was packed with spring flowers. I especially enjoyed seeing *Cyclamen coum* in a bright assortment of colours and leaf patterns. *Camellia 'Macdonald's Seedling'* is

the richest single red I know and well worth finding space for if you enjoy some rich colour after the pale beauty of winter (that means mist and rain). It was a delight to see *Leucojum vernum* in flower. They don't start to show above ground until the temperatures begin to rise and the days start to lengthen, so they feel like the new season has started.



Cyclamen coum



Camellia 'Macdonald's Seedling'



Leucojum vernum

OTHER EVENTS LAST MONTH

Snowdrops kick off the gardening year and there are plenty of events throughout the country for enthusiasts.



Myddleton House snowdrop sale.

Snowdrop sale. Myddleton House, Enfield. 28th January 2017.

Shortly after Christmas I start to get itchy for snowdrops. I watch the buds push up in the garden, and I mark all the snowdrop events down in my diary to work out which I can get to. The sale at Myddleton House attracts most of the specialist snowdrop nurseries and most of the specialist buyers, including a strong contingent from Europe (mostly Germany). Driving along the M4 and M25 watching the spray splash up from the road and smear across the windscreen things didn't look good.

Fortunately the sun appeared just as the sale opened and feverish hands started to twitch. Hot chocolate and bacon butties hastily swallowed (on special offer for the day in the cafe) and the crowd approached the snowdrops, who were trembling. Business is brisk. An hour later and it is done. Tables are standing emptied and everybody is slightly shocked. The record for the day went to 'Joe Sharmon', a yellow flowered version of 'Trumps', selling at £400 a bulb. I gave it a covetous gaze but moved on. In a couple of years the price will fall to a more accessible level and it will still be just as beautiful.

"No" I always say "I'm not obsessed with snowdrops". It's all comparative. Some weren't able to walk away from 'Joe Sharmon' as easily as me. Four hundred pounds for a snowdrop, that's insane. I could have a new *Aspidistra* for that!

I haven't helped my case have I.



Myddleton House.



The pond.



The rock garden.

Myddleton House, Enfield. 28th January 2017.

Myddleton House was the home of E. A. Bowles, author of the 'My Garden in...' series of books, which are still a fascinating read. He also wrote 'Crocus and Colchicum' and contributed the chapter on snowdrop cultivars to Sir Frederick Stern's 'Snowdrops and Snowflakes'. His garden is maintained by Lea Valley Water who use the property as their offices. In the last few years the garden has been restored and brought back to life after several decades of decline. If you find yourself in Enfield it is well worth a visit, there is a small museum, cafe, greenhouse and it is all free (small charge for parking on some days). The house itself is not pretty in the conventional sense but it stands in the heart of Enfields extensive green space. The stone 'dock' beside the pond is one of many curious features that Bowles reclaimed from demolition works in the area and installed in the garden. The old Enfield Market cross found a new home at the centre of a knot garden when it was removed from the market place in 1904. The rock garden has recently been unearthed from decades of neglect, but the hybrid snowdrops that have naturalised over it have been allowed to remain. In the middle of February this area is a carpet of white. In the last few years a new greenhouse has been built, following the design and footprint of the original, and a pair of lead ostriches that once stood on either side of a bridge over the New River, are now to be found in the museum.



Lead ostrich.



The greenhouse.



Enfield Market Cross.



The pond at Wisley.



Pond below the Alpine Bank.



Purple seedling of *Hamamelis vernalis*.

Wisley. 28th January 2017.

I have to drive past Wisley to get home and although it isn't technically one of last months events, I hope you will excuse a few pictures.

It comes as a shock to find an inch of ice on the ponds, even in the afternoon. The bright stems of the *Cornus* made the scene glow but increased the wintery feel of the garden. The

alpine bank is still slumbering, waiting for some warmth. Surrey is delightful but it is cold. There is a great collection of Witch Hazels in the gardens and it is well worth a walk around to find them. I was especially taken with this purple seedling of *H. vernalis* but I also liked the hybrid 'Gingerbread'.

Most of you will know that the old exhibition 'tent' from Chelsea Show was recycled to become the events space at Rosemoor. A new building has been erected at Rosemoor, so I was amused to find that a chunk of the dear old tent had been attached to the Glasshouse Cafe at Wisley to increase the space!

The garden is filled with the scent of *Daphne bholua* and I was very impressed with 'Limpsfield', a selection from Robin White. It has more foliage than 'Jacqueline Postill' and looks much healthier as a result. By comparison poor old Jacqueline looks like she has answered the front door in a hurry, wearing a dressing gown and slippers that have seen better days.

The Alpine House makes a good bolt-hole from the chill wind, and *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* draws attention to the fact that spring is approaching, even in Surrey.



The Glasshouse Cafe.



***Daphne bholua* 'Limpsfield'**



***Tecophilaea cyanocrocus*
Storm Cloud Group**



**Hellebore day at Bosvigo.
Helleborus 'Anna's Red',
lower right.**



The sale.



The last few.

Bosvigo Hellebore Day. 18th February 2017.

A beautiful morning for the Hellebore sale at Bosvigo. As always the queue started early and there was a large crowd assembled when the gates opened at 10am. Once again Wendy Perry had put together a collection of the best *Helleborus* seedlings and there were also many beautiful plants to be seen in the approach to the nursery through the woodland walk. They were joined by a spectacular display of spring bulbs, *Crocus tomasinianus* 'Roseus' particularly caught my eye, underplanting a group of deep red Hellebores.

Business was efficient and enthusiastic and after an hour the stock was seriously depleted. I was particularly impressed with a group of deep yellow flowered seedlings with golden nectaries, much richer in colour than previous yellow seedlings, and often with a scarlet flash at the base of the tepal. *Helleborus* 'Anna's Red' was also very popular, the large red flowers are enhanced by strongly mottled foliage. Raised by Rodney Davey in Axminster it is one of the best hybrids introduced in the last couple of years and makes a fabulous evergreen foliage plant even when out of flower. I was also attracted to some lovely green flowered seedlings and a few that were dusky slate-blue.

It was a lovely morning, and I hope a lot of money was raised for ShelterBox.



Helleborus x hybridus
Yellow.



Helleborus x hybridus



Helleborus x hybridus Slate-blue.

COMING EVENTS

If you know of events coming up that might be of interest to the members please let me know so that I can include them. cornwallhps@gmail.com

Hardy Plant Fair. Saturday 6th May 2017.

Note from Charlie.

Date for your diaries. I know it only seems 5 mins since we held the last one but organisation is well on for the next. I am looking for a volunteer who uses the new Waitrose east of Truro by the Park-and-Ride to:

- a) ask if we can put a banner up at their site the weekend before the sale and:**
- b) if that's possible, do the putting up and taking down of the banner.**

Failing that, do they have a notice board that a poster could be put on and would anyone be prepared to do that?

We need to do a lot better with publicity. Numerous people turned up on the Sunday last year and others missed it completely. It's down to you as I am never around on the run up so know I won't be able to do more than the two banners I currently do.

West Cornwall Spring Show.

Marazion Community Centre. Friday 3rd March, 11-6. Saturday 4th March 10-4.

The first Horticultural Show of the season is usually quite astonishing. Expect flowers of all sorts and schoolchildren making miniature gardens out of plasticine and root vegetables. It is usually very inventive.

Cornwall Garden Society Lecture.

The Alverton Hotel, Truro. Tuesday 7th March, 7.30pm.

Nick Morgan talks about "The New Glasshouse at Wisley".

Trethorne Leisure Park, Launceston. Wednesday 8th March, 2.30pm.

Nick Morgan talks about "Making the best use of a small greenhouse".

See the website for details. www.cornwallgardensociety.org.uk

Rosemoor Spring Flower Competitions.

Saturday 11th March 11.30-4.00pm, Sunday 12th March 10-4pm.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Falmouth Spring Show.

Princess Pavillion, Falmouth. Saturday 18th March, 10-5. Sunday 19th March 10-4.

Falmouth Show packs a display into the hall and has a selection of nursery stands and exhibitors around the bandstand. Perfect for an early spring walk on the beach as well.

Cothele Daffodil weekend.

Cothele, nr. Saltash. Saturday 18th March 11 - 4, Sunday 19th March 11 - 4.

Guided and self guided trails of the daffodils in the garden, and displays by Ron Scamp and Fentongollen.

See the website for details. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cothele

Devon Plant Heritage Plant Fair.

Tavistock Pannier Market, Sunday 19th March, 10 - 3pm.

See the NCCPG (local groups) website for details. www.nccpg.com

Hardy Plant Society Early Spring Plant Fair.

East Lambrook Manor, Saturday 25th March.

See the website for details. www.eastlambrook.com

Daffodil Show at Trelissick.

Trelissick, nr. Truro, Saturday 25th March, 10.30 - 5.30, Sunday 26th March 10.30 - 5.30.

See the website for details. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/trelissick

Wisley Spring Plant Fair.

Friday 24th, Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th March, 9.30 - 4.30pm.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Early Daffodil Competition, Wisley.

Tuesday 28th, Wednesday 29th March in the glasshouse.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show, Vincent Square.

Tuesday 28th March 6-9pm, Wednesday 29th March 10-5pm, Thursday 30th March 10-5pm.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Visit to Lamorran gardens, St. Mawes, TR2 5BZ.

Thursday 30th, March, 2.00pm.

Cornwall branch of Plant Heritage have invited HPS members to join them in a visit to the gardens at Lamorran, meet at the entrance at 2.00pm. There will be a small admission charge.

Alpine Garden Society Show, Rosemoor.

Saturday 1st April 2017.

The largest Alpine Plant show and sale in the south west. New venue at Rosemoor this year.

See the website for details. www.alpinegardensociety.net

Cornwall Garden Society Show, Boconnoc.

Saturday 1st April 2017. Sunday 2nd April.

Cornwall's largest show and plant fair.

See the website for details. www.cornwallgardensociety.org.uk

The Daffodil Show, Wisley.

Tuesday 11th, Wednesday 12th April in the Pinetum Marquee.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Coach Trip to Rosemoor

Saturday 13th May.

Goonhavern Garden Association have organised a coach trip to Rosemoor in May and have invited our members to come with them. This is an excellent and inexpensive way to visit this beautiful garden at the peak of early summer, the £14 cost includes travel and admission.

Have a word with Sue Lake at the next meeting, or phone her now (01872) 540395. They need to confirm numbers with the coach company in March so please don't delay.

See the poster attached to this newsletter.

Please check details for yourself before setting out, and good luck with the RHS website which has become almost unusable in recent years!

**Please would you let me know of any garden shows, open days or other events that may be of interest to our members so that I can include them in the next newsletter.
All other content gratefully received.
cornwallhps@gmail.com**



Primula 'Ken Dearman'.



Primula 'Gilded Garnet'.



Primula 'Purple Storm'.

Nina Peternooster sent this note about her double primroses.

I was very lucky as a child. I had a grandmother who was a baker and another who was a florist. To this day flowers, tea and cake are important to me! Mind you, the tea and cake has to be earned by gardening. Whether it is weeding, pruning or even double digging!

But what set me on my present course was buying a pretty lilac primrose from a very old nurseryman in Dorset, *Primula 'Lilacina Plena'*. It started a love affair and now I have about 50 different double and laced primroses. A combination of both is even better, such as 'Elizabeth Killelay' and 'Gilded Garnet'!

Growing double primroses is a bit of a challenge. They can be temperamental as well described by Margery Fish, but if they like your soil, you mulch well and divide, the rewards are worth the work. I dig up plants to spend a week gracing the dinner table or a bunch of stems in a vase on my bedside table. The waft of their scent while drinking tea and eating cake outside on a warm spring afternoon is a true delight. I have a few photographs for you. *Primula 'Purple Storm'* is a new arrival, released by Barnhaven a couple of months ago.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 1st March 2017. 7.00 for 7.30pm.

A visit from Bob Brown of Cotswold Garden Flowers talking about "Garden Worthy Ferns".

Bob is a fascinating and engaging speaker and I am sure he will bring some very interesting plants with him.

Guests and visitors are always welcome at the meetings (£3 on the night) and this should be a very special meeting. It would be nice to have a packed hall so feel free to bring a friend.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Wednesday 5th April 2017. 7.00 for 7.30pm.

Talk by Roger Turner from Gloucester, "Lust and Loveliness in the Garden".

Wednesday 3rd May 2017. 6.00 for 6.30pm.

A visit to Shirley and Ray Clemmo and their garden, Sibby Cottage, Tregrehan Mills.

Please let me have any items that may be of interest to the members so that I can include them in the next newsletter.

News items, upcoming events and photographs especially cornwallhps@gmail.com welcome.

Please let me know if I drop any clangers!

John Sirkett