



Dear Member

I hope that you, your family and friends are safe from the effects of Covid 19. Whilst the impact of confinement can be unsettling, it is also an opportunity for we gardeners to spend more time in the garden, no matter how big or small the patch is. The weather is fine and gardens are still recovering from a very wet winter. An early job has been to deal with shrubs that have succumbed to the wet and cold including, for us, replacing a favoured Weigela. Spring bulbs are better than ever and it is uplifting to see them in full flower – some of our favourites being *Tulip clusiana* 'Cynthia' and *T. backeri* 'Lilac Wonder'. The contrast in colour, height and form is so attractive, and they do well in troughs as well as in the border. Whilst stunning in their first year we will be feeding them to ensure they bloom well in 2021. Before that the annual battle with celandines, ground elder, bindweed and other weeds continues.



April is also a time to get early vegetables germinating and then planting out, though protection against frost is important. Jenny is in charge here and has tomatoes, cucumbers and squash growing nicely on window sills and in the greenhouse, though they will remain protected until late May. The first batch of broad bean (Express) and peas (Hurst Green Shaft) are already in the garden.

The RHS magazine, 'The Garden', this month extols the benefits of gardens and fresh air for mental and physical health well-being; so get out and enjoy it (though always adhering to Government Guidelines). Confinement is an opportunity to spend time in the garden or even tending window boxes (whatever you have). For HPS members it is also a time to encourage friends and family to enjoy the health and relaxation benefits of a garden and maybe to recruit new members. *(Mike Maunder)*

Virtual Plant Sales Table

We are planning to continue with our Group Plant Sales as many of you may have plants to sell. This is open to all members who would like to offer their plants for sale to other Hampshire members. The first list of plants offered is attached to this Snippets email, along with instructions on how the plant sales table will work. As usual, 25% of the sale price will go to Group Funds, although some of you may like to donate all the money from the sale of your plants to the HPS Hampshire Group. *(Becky Getgood)*

Hampshire Hardy Plant Group Website

A new website is under development and available for you to look at <http://hants-hardy-plants.org.uk/>. During the Covid-19 restrictions we would like to feature some virtual garden tours on the website. Our first tour is looking at some of the more unusual plants in Peter and Cindy Schofield's garden. If you have a collection of current photos of your garden or plants that we can show, please let me know.

We are also running a monthly photograph competition with two categories: (1) the best plant photo and (2) best garden composition. The closing date will be the 14th May and the best photographs will be featured on the website.

If anyone is interested in submitting photographs for the virtual garden tour and/or the photograph competition please contact me at Martin@wardco.co.uk or 02380 614321 (*Martin Ward*)

Chelsea – The Show Must Go On!

As you will all have seen, the Chelsea Flower Show, along with pretty much everything else is off. So when you are growing an awful lot of plants just for that wonderful week in May - what do you do?

Carry on of course!

Without a doubt, our group of plants for this year are the best we've managed and I'm really looking forwards to seeing them flower. The plan is to stage a mini Chelsea exhibit in the greenhouse we use to grow them - I will share some pictures after the event. I'm even hoping that some of the lockdown restrictions will have lifted by the third week in May - if they are - you'll receive an invite to come round and see.

Chelsea is also where the Delphinium Society has its main fundraiser by selling lots of packets of lovely delphinium seeds. If you like some you can order from here <https://delphinium-society.co.uk> Elsewhere you will see that we have a good few delphiniums left over for sale and I will keep them growing until we can arrange a handover. They're about to go into three litre pots so will make a great addition to your garden.

I have also been invited to speak at a virtual flower show. So if you'd like to watch me make a loon of myself take a look here <https://www.virtualflowershow.uk>
Please try and join and support our nursery folk in these challenging times.
Whatever you do, be safe - very best. (*Mark Lyman*)

Conservation Group

Hello from Olenka 😊

Did you know that the HPS has a [National Conservation Scheme](#). The Hampshire Conservation Group currently has many plants that are not grown by the National Scheme. Hampshire HPS has traditionally sourced its own rare plants and these need to be introduced and adopted to the National Scheme over the next year. Please could you propagate some of the plants so that these can be taken to the National meeting at the beginning of October? Bring your plants to the rearranged Hampshire Conservation meeting on 12th September. (*Olenka Snell*)



Open Gardens

April 25th Peter and Cindy Schofield This has been cancelled but please have a virtual tour of some of the plants in his garden on the new HHPS Website. [Peter's Virtual Tour](#).



Jovellana violacea

June 21st Valerie and David Menzies planned opening is still going ahead. However, that depends on any further information from the Government nearer the time.



Membership

Snippets is sent to everyone on our membership database. Some people were not able to renew before our meetings were cancelled. If you have not renewed your membership for 2020 please contact me at, email Roret.blue@gmail.com or tel: 02380 557409. (Roret Blue)

Newsletter

The closing date for contributions to the Summer Newsletter is 22nd May. With all that extra time on your hands why not write an article for the Newsletter - what projects have you been doing in the garden, what plants survived or died in the wet warm winter? All contributions gratefully received. martin@wardco.co.uk

If the Covid-19 restrictions are still in place the summer issue will be posted. To be sure that you receive your copy, please let Roret Blue know if your address has changed.

Contributions for the Chairman's Snippets are also most welcome, closing date 16th May. (Martin Ward)

Snippets

Becky's Jobs for April into May

- Sow Half Hardy Annuals such as *Tithonia* and *Zinnia*.
- Sow tender vegetables such as Runner and French Beans, Squash, Courgette, and herbs such as Basil, under cover for planting out when all risk of frost has passed mid to end of May.
- Take softwood cuttings of *Hydrangea*, *Penstemon* and *Fuchsia*.
- Prune early flowering shrubs such as *Forsythia* and cut down shrubs grown for winter stem colour such as *Cornus siberica* and *Rubus cockburnianus*.
- Lift, divide and replant congested clumps of spring bulbs after flowering such as Snowdrops and Daffodils.
- Start to acclimatise plants overwintered in the greenhouse such as Citrus and Salvia cuttings by lifting outside during the day.
- Clean coldframe and greenhouse glass.
- Sort out supports for climbing annuals - both veg and flowers!
- Weed, weed, weed!

Snippets from Roret

As we seem to have more time at the moment, what about:

- Getting the compost heaps/container/etc organised. Very therapeutic, too. Lots of advice online on how to do it.
- I didn't think of this in time and at the moment I can't get it or even have it delivered, compost! Anyway, changing the compost in the containers or refreshing it is a time-consuming job but worth doing. The plants will appreciate it and so will you later on.
- I made the mistake of buying plants in pots made with coir and planting them out in them! I lost a few, unfortunately. I realised too late that the coir pots are too thick and compact for the roots to go through, and therefore the plants died. I still like buying them but remove the plant before planting it out in the garden/container. I could put the coir pots in the compost, but instead, I decided to use them to cover the draining holes in pots - stops the soil from getting out and I find that it keeps the containers moist for a bit longer.