

Chairman's notes

Sandra Tognarelli
CHAIRMAN

Welcome to our new members, some of whom came to our meeting in September. I hope you'll enjoy being members and sharing your enthusiasm for plants with like-minded people.

This year we have been very successful with our three plant fairs, raising £2,467 for the charity (last year we raised £1,813). This was because of the excellent plants grown and donated by members for our sales stand and the huge efforts of the committee and members setting up and manning the stand at each fair. That so many people come to buy plants helps, too. Please keep growing a variety of plants – we will need plenty to sell next year.

Correct identification is important, which is why we give prizes each year to the two RHS students who gain the most marks in their plant identification tests. Anne Folkes presented the prizes at the graduation ceremony in August. It is equally important to label plants correctly, particularly if you are donating them to the plant fairs. I have been approached occasionally by people saying: "That plant I bought hasn't turned out quite like it was described on the label."

Over the winter there is less to do in the garden, so why not help with the Threatened Plants Project? With more than 70,000 plants listed in the *RHS Plant Finder 2011-2012* we have to prioritise those most in need of

conservation and this important project will do that. Annie Head (01932 589651) can give you more information.

The Wisteria Collection at Pyrford, near Woking, is owned by the Surrey Group and we always need members to help with pruning and general maintenance. If you can offer a couple of hours' help, please contact me on 01483 762228.

At our monthly meetings the committee needs help in putting out the chairs and tables - if you can arrive early to lend a hand it would be appreciated. Help is also needed to get the tea and coffee ready for the interval. You can sign up for this at the meetings. The proceeds from any plants you can bring to sell at meetings will help to cover the cost of our speakers. Finally, if you have any gardening books or other items in good condition that would be suitable for our raffle, please donate these.

As you will see in the centrespread, there is a varied programme of talks between now and April, so please bring a friend along to a meeting and perhaps he or she will join Plant Heritage. The Surrey Group was formed 30 years ago and we end the year as eager to preserve plants for future generations as were those founder members.

VISIT In May the Surrey Group went to see the National Collection of Trachycarpus and to visit Ham House, which is just next door

Huge fans

Clare Hogan
NEWSLETTER
EDITOR

The name of the Palm Centre, in Ham, near Richmond, is a bit of a misnomer. It most certainly does have palms – including the National Collection, which was the reason for our visit – but it also propagates and sells phormiums, agaves, olives, bamboos, eucalyptus, cycads, ferns to name but a few.

Martin Gibbons, the owner and holder of the Collection, moved his business on to the site of an old bedding nursery 11 years ago. It has been a good environment for growing plants and has helped the business to thrive.

He started plant hunting trips for palms – to Thailand, India, North Vietnam and China – 25 years ago. Despite the journeys being hair-raising and exhausting in parts, you can understand why he kept setting off with his fellow adventurer, Toby W. Spanner, of Rare Palm Seeds in Munich, from the following description of their 1992 search for *Trachycarpus oreophilus* (the Thai mountain palm).

“What appeared from a distance to be short grass turned out to be 6ft high and studded with huge limestone boulders the size of cars, and always the dilemma was to go around or to go over them. The palms got closer and closer, but they were absolutely on the ridge crest and demanded a high price for access. We aimed for one particular palm whose leaves we could see arising from the far side, and slowly inched our way towards it. The last few metres were over bare rock itself where sharp ridges had been formed by erosion. We slowly made our way towards the crest

*and this tree, but as we reached the edge and looked over, expecting to see a gentle slope on the other face, we saw that the far side was absolutely sheer; a dropped stone would have been in free fall for several hundred feet.”**


Martin has been involved in having four species classified (numbers 2, 3, 6 and 7 in the National Collection list) and has been on expeditions with Toby to see all nine known species in habitat.

That said, it was at Ham that the Palm Centre found an entertaining way to improve on pollination. Using a Frisbee, staff found that collecting pollen on the spinning disc and then blowing it on to the female flowers got better results than the usual hand pollination.

The Palm Centre propagates many of its own plants - we were taken behind the scenes to see the development of *T. wagnerianus*, the Chusan Palm, which tolerates windy conditions because of its stiff leaves. The seeds are harvested in October and left in a cool cellar. In March/April a fungicide is applied and they are put in shredded cocoa fibre at about an inch deep. Kept at a temperature of 23C for three to six weeks, they germinate easily.

And any last advice? Palms can last 100 to 200 years in their natural environment. The secret to their success in tubs, and out in the garden, is to encourage root growth with good amounts of phosphorous.

*THE QUOTATION IS TAKEN FROM PRINCEPES, JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY, OCTOBER 1997, VOLUME 41, NO 4

 There is parking at the Palm Centre and if you combine your trip, as we did, with a visit to delightful Ham House next door, you'll have a thoroughly entertaining day.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROB BESANT



TRACHYCARPUS FORTUNEI



TRACHYCARPUS WAGNERIANUS



Some of Martin's pieces also appear on WWW.PALMSOCIETY.ORG.UK. They read like adventure stories. He has published two books: Identifying Palms; and Palms & Cycads. The Lindley Library has copies of at least one.

THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

- (1) *T. FORTUNEI*: China; best known.
- (2) *T. GEMINISECTUS* (Seven Peaks Fan): north Vietnam
- (3) *T. LATISECTUS* (Windamere Palm): north east India
- (4) *T. MARTIANUS*: India and Nepal
- (5) *T. NANUS*: Yunnan province, China
- (6) *T. OREOPHILUS*: northern Thailand
- (7) *T. PRINCEPS* (Stone Gate Palm): northwest Yunnan province, China. Martin's favourite . . .
- (8) *T. TAKIL*: northwest India.
- (9) *T. WAGNERIANUS* (Chusan Palm): known only in cultivation

To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load
 and bless
With fruit the vines that round the
 thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd
 cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to
 the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the
 hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will
 never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their
 clammy cells




John Keats
1820

Picture perfect competition: the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness

Anne Hare
COMMITTEE
MEMBER

The Surrey Group has organised the Plant Heritage national photographic competition since 2008. It was started in memory of Rachel Thomson, our former chairman. This year only 19 entries were received, eight of which were from Surrey members. The committee has therefore decided to make it a competition solely for Surrey members to be held at our AGM.

The theme for this year is season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. From John Keats' poem, To Autumn, 1820, opposite.


See page 12 for
information
about the next
AGM

THE RULES

The competition is open to all members of the Surrey Group of Plant Heritage. Each member may submit one entry only. All entries must be the entrant's original work. Digital enhancement is allowed. The entry should be ● in the form of a print ● either black & white or colour ● maximum size 25cm x 20cm ● unmounted. Entries will not be returned; they may be reproduced in Surrey newsletters.

SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES

The entrant's name should be written on the back of the picture. Entries may be brought to the AGM on Saturday, December 3, or if you are not able to come along, posted in good time to Anne Hare, 12 Colburn Avenue, Caterham CR3 6HU.

JUDGING

Judging will be by members present at the AGM. Each member may place 10p in a pot labelled with the number allocated to the photo. Each member may place 10p in as many different pots as he or she wish. The winning entry will be the one that has attracted the most money. The money collected will be donated to Plant Heritage

PRIZES

Garden gift tokens: first, £15; second, £10; third, £5. In addition, the winner will be the holder of the Rachel Thomson crystal bowl, when this becomes available later in the year.

Horticultural researchers are taking a fresh look at the benefits of green manures. What are they and why should we use them?

In clover

Clare Hogan

Green manures have become more popular recently as people learn that, for very little work or expense, they add nutrients and organic matter to the soil.

Of course, they're not new, having been used since the Middle Ages. The table that follows will give you lots of practical information but it's worth mentioning the reasons for growing green manures.

They help to stop the leaching of nutrients and can be used in a no-dig system (you cut the crop, leave it as a mulch or you can dig it in). They increase the organic matter in soil, are good fixers of nitrogen, improve soil structure (they can break up soil pans)

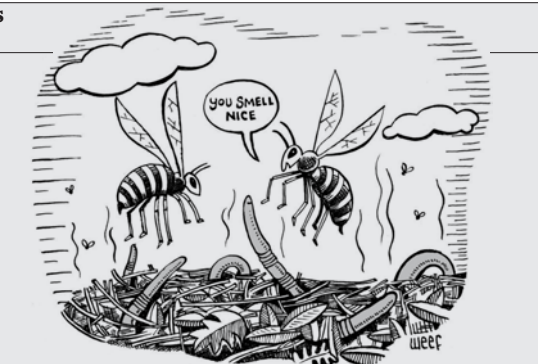
and encourage earthworms. For the wildlife enthusiast, they supply a good source of forage for honey bees at times of the year when flowers may be scarce, they make things easier for bees by having a mass of the same flower in the same place at the same time and they provide a late supply of nectar and may be a welcome alternative to ivy.

If that hasn't persuaded you to think about using them, they are also cheap (and easily found them at garden centres, nurseries and online), the cost of transport is probably equivalent to a couple of stamps, they help to suppress weeds and there is no run-off of chemicals into the local water courses.

Happy growing.

TURNING OVER OLD LEAVES

- If you have a big enough compost area, build a wire cage to keep your leaves tidy (put in four stakes and wrap chicken wire around them);
- Don't let the leaves dry out. Sprinkle them with a little water or turn them every so often to mix wet leaves with dry;
- In small gardens, put leaves into black plastic bags or leaf sacks. Make sure that the leaves are moist; prick holes in the bags with your garden fork for air circulation and leave for 12 to 18 months and you'll have good leaf mould;
- If you shred leaves — by collecting them with your



- lawn mower, for instance — they will break down faster;
- Sycamore, chestnut and beech leaves break down fast; hornbeam, alder and oak leaves more slowly;
- Don't add evergreen leaves. They simply take too long to disintegrate;
- Walnut and eucalyptus leaves contain a substance that inhibits plant growth;
- Use leaf mould for mixing with potting compost, digging into beds and spreading around plants.

ILLUSTRATION: WEEF

Types of green manure

GREEN MANURE CROP	SEASON FOR SOWING	CROPPING TIME	SOIL TYPE	BEE FORAGE	NITROGEN FIXER	OTHER BENEFITS
Alfalfa <i>Medicago sativa</i>	summer	2-3 months	dry	-	yes	Deep rooting, can break up soil pans
Buckwheat <i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i>	summer	2-3 months	light	yes	no	A thick canopied crop that smothers weeds
Caliente mustard	summer/ autumn	2-5 months	most	yes	yes	Can be used as a bio-fumigant to reduce soil-borne disease
Crimson clover <i>Trifolium incarnatum</i>	summer/ autumn	3-18 months	good to light	yes	yes	
Fenugreek <i>Trigonella foenum graecum</i>	spring/ summer	2-3 months	heavy	-	rarely	Good source of organic matter
Fodder radish <i>Raphanus sativus</i>	summer	2-6 months	any	-	yes	
Italian ryegrass <i>Lolium multiflorum</i>	spring/ summer	2-24 months	most	-	no	Fits into any rotation, easy to incorporate into the soil
Lupins <i>Lupinus angustifolius</i>	spring/ summer	2-4 months	light	-	yes	Long tap root breaks up soil pans
Mustard <i>Sinapis alba</i>	spring/ summer	1-2 months	most	yes	yes	Quick crop, easily incorporated
Phacelia <i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i>	spring/ summer	1-3 months	most	excellent	no	Good weed suppression
Red clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	spring/ summer	3-18 months	light to good loam	yes	yes	Good weed suppression
White clover <i>Trifolium sp.</i>	spring/ summer	6-18 months	medium to heavy	yes	yes	Good weed suppression
Winter tares <i>Vicia sativa</i>	spring/ autumn	2-3 months	heavy soil	-	yes	

A visit to Giardini della Landriana, Lazio, Italy

Heaven on earth

Wendy Bentall
PROGRAMME
SECRETARY

The classical Italian gardens around Rome were spectacular in their own way, but where were the flowers? Enter Giardini della Landriana in Lazio. A garden created in 1956 by the Marchesa Lavinia Taverna, ably helped by Russell Page, the English landscape gardener.

The marchesa was no gardener when she and her husband, the Marquis Gallarati-Scotti, acquired the property. The land was bare and riddled with landmines and bombs after the landings on the beaches nearby at Anzio.

Their original intention was to plant a few trees to provide shelter from the sea breezes and shade for the house. But a gift of a bag of seeds, which successfully germinated, turned the marchesa into a passionate gardener.

For a few years she planted enthusiastically and randomly before realising that she needed help. Page was working on a garden nearby and he arrived at Landriana in 1967. The garden needed some strong, well-defined structure. He did this by dividing the garden to give it geometrical lines and define the borders and paths.

When Page returned a few years later he found that the cultivated area had spread well beyond the original garden and the marchesa's interest had spread beyond Mediterranean plants to Australian and Californian plants. The initial scheme had to be reviewed so he designed a straight line of steps along the side of the hill and created an artificial lake.

As the garden developed, the



PHOTOGRAPHS: WENDY BENTALL

marchesa worked assiduously, rethinking certain areas, creating themed areas and more expertly combining shapes, leaves and tones. She died in 1997 but her memory lives on in the garden, which is now sometimes open to the public.

A stroll around this magnificent garden was breathtaking. We entered through a gate in the wall straight into a walk of olive trees underplanted by the perpetually flowering *Rosa Bonica* and edged with *Euonymus japonicus* and *Microphyllum Albovariegatum*.

The garden has 23 defined areas, each leading the eye on to the next through carefully designed vistas or gaps in the hedge: the orange garden, the viburnum garden, the cypress walk, the olive garden, the blue meadow, the white walk ... each one better than and different from the one before.

Having complained that Italian gardens are all hedges, statues and fountains, I loved the little Italian garden with its immaculately trimmed bay hedges, squares of *Euonymus* and *Magnolia grandiflora*. I was

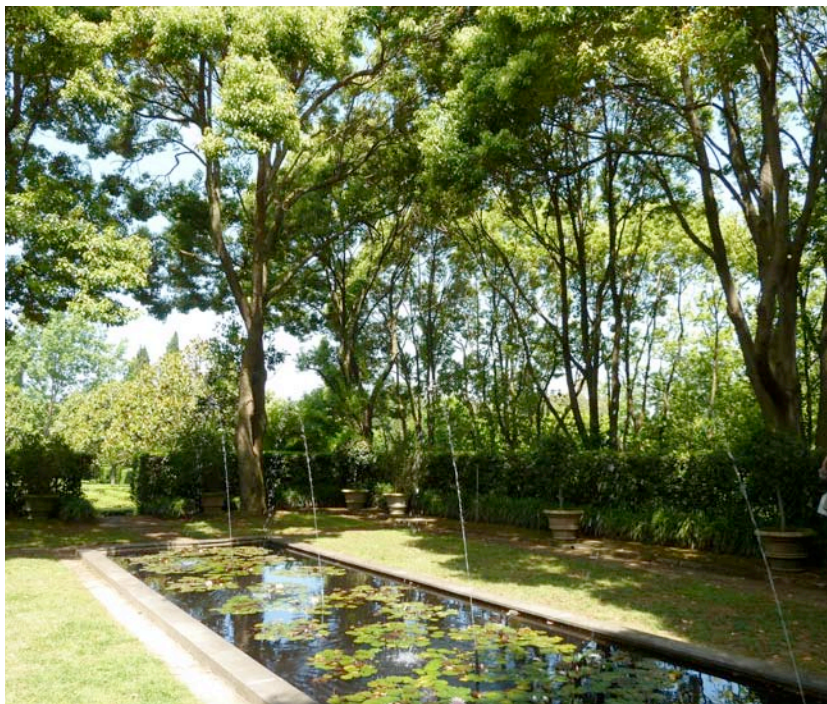
equally impressed by the Spanish pool surrounded by sweet-smelling *Cinnamomum camphora* (Camphor trees), which are huge despite being planted only 40 years ago.

The valley of old roses took our breath away. The luxuriant growth and the perfume from the mostly pink and white roses covered the sides of the valley with sprawling unruly un-named must-have roses.

Some of the flowers were over, so we missed seeing the magnolia corner, the apple garden and the cherry field



La Landriana (Via Camp di Carne 5, Torre San Lorenzo, Colli Albani, Lazio), is open to groups of 15 or more people by appointment only. However, it is open to the public at its three-day fair during the first weekend of May



in all their glory. However, we were not disappointed by the 'Mutabilis' rose valley. *Rosa × odorata* 'Mutabilis' has blooms of no particular merit but it flowers all summer and ranges in colour from pale pink through apricot to deep burgundy. The very large area was underplanted with *Ophiopogon japonicus*, looking like long grass (and it was a miracle, or skill, that it was not totally overgrown with weeds), interspersed with the much-pruned trees of *Melia azedarach* (also known as the bead tree), with the gorgeous *Rosa* 'Belle Lyonnaise', a creamy yellow fading to white, climbing up its trunk.

As if we had not feasted enough we made our way through several other gardens, passing the rather sad-looking hydrangea garden, which was not working because the climate is too dry. Finally, we came to the magnificent grey garden, olive trees underplanted with, among other things, lavenders, rosemary, artemisia and cistus.

Our final stop was to the private garden at the back of the house that was

planted with a mixture of evergreens, *Gleditsia triacanthos* and *Rosa* 'Lady Hillingdon' climbing up their trunks. Here we enjoyed a mouth-wateringly delicious lunch. Bellissimo ...

BOOKS ON ITALIAN GARDENS

You might enjoy reading these until you follow in Wendy's footsteps.

All are available from the Lindley Library, RHS Wisley:

Edith Wharton's Italian Garden

by Vivian Russell

Italian Gardens of the Renaissance

by Geoffrey Jellicoe

The Best Gardens in Italy:

a Traveller's Guide

by Kirsty McLeod

Great Gardens of Italy

by Monty Don and Derry Moore

Talks & Events

2011

OCTOBER

TUESDAY 11 | 10.30AM

Hardy Chrysanthemum Day at Wisley

Displays will include plants from Judy Barker, the Plant Heritage National Collection holder. Presentations in the morning, and in the afternoon an escorted walk to the trials field at Deers Farm, which is not usually open to the public. Included in the trials are more than 100 cultivars from the National Collection.

- Hillside Centre, RHS Garden Wisley

SATURDAY 15 | 10.15AM

TALK

Daisies: More Than You Expect

By Mark Trenear. Hardy Plant Society Southern Counties Group.

- Cobham Village Hall, Lushington Drive, Cobham KT12 2LU

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 6 | 2.30PM

Surrey Horticultural Federation AGM

Followed by A Trip to New Zealand, a talk by Joanne Everson.

- Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane, Mayford, Woking GU22 0NN

MONDAY 14

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

Plants for a Winter Garden

By Patricia Liechti Clarke. Patricia is a self-taught gardener and garden designer. Twenty-five years ago she created a garden from scratch in Amersham, which she opened once a month from March to October for the Yellow Book. Her garden also appeared in the Good Gardens Guide with a star. She has lectured for the past 30 years and now also leads garden tours.

DECEMBER

SATURDAY 3 | 11AM-1.30PM

Plant Heritage Annual General Meeting, seed exchange and winter party

The seed exchange begins at 11 o'clock followed by the AGM at 11.30 and then the winter social. Please bring a contribution for the party, either a savoury item or something sweet. See overleaf for further details.

TUESDAY 6 | 7.30PM

TALK

Flora of the Pacific North West – Alpine areas of Oregon

By Joanne Everson.

- East Surrey Group of the Alpine Garden Society, Christchurch Hall, Epsom KT19 8NE

Visitors £1


The deadline for copy for the spring newsletter is January 31 2012



All Plant Heritage lectures start at 7.45pm; doors open at 7.15pm, at Churchgate House, near St Andrew's Church, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham KT11 3LN
Plant sales at all meetings. Visitors to pay £3 at the door.

This year's Annual General Meeting

The 30th Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Group of Plant Heritage will be held at Churchgate House, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham KT11 3LN, on Saturday, December 3, 2011, at 11.30am

AGENDA The chairman's welcome; apologies for absence; the minutes of the 2010 AGM; matters arising; chairman's report; treasurer's report; election of officers; election of committee; council report; Surrey National Collections; and any other business.

OFFICERS Sandra Tognarelli and David Stephens are willing to stand again as chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and secretary respectively but other nominations may be made.

COMMITTEE All committee members are willing to continue in post. Further volunteers to join the committee are requested.

Members of the committee look forward to seeing you at the AGM and the social afterwards.

PLANT HERITAGE |
SURREY GROUP

Talks & Events 2012

JANUARY
MONDAY 9

Plant Heritage members' evening

Mercy Morris will talk about species conservation; Anne Folkes will review the National Plant Collections in Surrey; there will be the annual quiz (slightly shorter than last time but just as competitive); Anne 01483 538076 would also like to hear from anyone who would like to do a five to ten-minute talk on any plant-related subject.

FEBRUARY
MONDAY 13

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

New Planting: a Prediction of the Gardens and Plants that will Become Iconic

By Andrew Fisher Tomlin. Andrew is a director of Fisher Tomlin, the garden designers; a director of the London College of Garden Design; a Fellow of the Society of Garden Designers; and a trustee of Thrive, the national charity for horticultural therapy. One of his projects is a bog garden for London 2012. His business has recently set up a showroom in Chobham.

MARCH

MONDAY 12

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

Hedychiums

By Andrew Gaunt, the National Collection holder. Andrew started collecting ornamental gingers in West Sussex in the late 1990s when he discovered Hedychium coronarium in flower and was hooked. His collection has grown rapidly over the years and he has built them up to the point where it is now larger than that listed in the RHS Plant Finder.



APRIL

MONDAY 16

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

Early Flowering Perennials

By Rose Hardy from Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants. Rose and her husband Rob started their nursery more than 20 years ago selling plants from their back garden. It is now set in 13 acres of Hampshire countryside.

MID SPRING

Visit to the Wisteria National Collection

At a private house in Pyrford, near Woking. We'll arrange the date once the wisteria start flowering. More information will be given at the monthly meetings or in the chairman's monthly e-mail.

MAY

SUNDAY 6 | 11AM – 4PM

Plant Fair at Denbies Vineyard

Specialist nurseries (more details in the spring newsletter) plus unusual plants grown by Plant Heritage members.
● Denbies Vineyard, Dorking RH5 6AA

WEEKEND 11 – 13

National Annual General Meeting, Lancaster

See WWW.NCCPG.COM for more details closer to the time.

SUNDAY 27 | 10AM – 3PM

Plant Fair at Ripley Village Hall

Specialist nurseries plus amazing teas and cakes ...
● Ripley GU23 6AF

JUNE

Plant Heritage visits

A visit to a member's garden and summer social to be organised. If you would like to share your garden with other members of the Surrey Group please contact Sandra Tognarelli (01483 762228) to discuss what is involved.

Visits to National Plant Collections and other gardens will be organised during the summer months and details will be published in the spring newsletter.

SEPTEMBER

MONDAY 10

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

Late Summer Flowers — Extending the Season

By Marina Christopher, of Phoenix Perennial Plants, Medstead in Hampshire. Marina, the author of *Late Summer Flowers*, trained in botany and marine biology, but escaped from the laboratory to begin her new life as a nurserywoman in 1985. She specialises in unusual perennials and grasses, is committed to growing plants that are attractive to wildlife — especially insects — and is particularly interested in reducing the amount of water used in the garden. She lectures using plant material rather than slides or Powerpoint as props.

SUNDAY 16 | 11AM – 4PM

Plant Fair at Denbies Vineyard

Specialist nurseries plus unusual plants grown by Plant Heritage members.
● Denbies Vineyard, Dorking RH5 6AA

OCTOBER

MONDAY 8

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

Fuchsias

By John Paulding. From a childhood spent on his parents' market garden in Cornwall, John pursued a career in technical education, during which time he spent four years in southern Africa, two of which were involved with a horticultural college and the establishment of a number of small co-operatives. John has been a keen exhibitor of cut flowers and pot plants since the mid 1970s and has particular interests in fuchsias, begonias, geraniums and pelargoniums, and carnations, *Streptocarpus*, plant nutrition and greenhouse culture.

NOVEMBER

MONDAY 12

PLANT HERITAGE LECTURE

To be announced.

DECEMBER

SATURDAY 1 | 11AM – 1.30PM

Plant Heritage Annual General Meeting, seed exchange and winter party



All Plant Heritage lectures start at 7.45pm; doors open at 7.15pm, at Churchgate House, near St Andrew's Church, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham KT11 3LN. Plant sales at all meetings. Visitors to pay £3 at the door.

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It is the proud boast of the RHS that the Lindley Library is the finest horticultural library in the world. But it could improve

Read all about it

Clare Hogan

It is difficult to think how the library could be bettered, but the staff don't think they have quite enough on the shelves and would like to you help.

But how much more do you need if you own thousands of horticultural books – not just in English – and subscribe to more than 500 journals covering gardening, garden design, botany and horticultural science?

On a recent trip around Vincent Square, the biggest branch of the library, the staff explained what they're looking for. They would like to improve their range of:

- nursery and seed catalogues, photographs, postcards, guides of long-forgotten gardens (both in the UK and overseas) and sundries catalogues;
- books on horticulture, gardening, wildlife, soils, pests and diseases, fruit and vegetables, flora from other countries, cookery, floral art, flower arranging;
- and develop their collection of artwork and prints.

So next time you're going through the loft, back bedroom or book cases looking to throw out any of the above, ask yourself if anything would help the Lindley Library's quest.

Horticultural trade catalogues will provide a lot of information

about gardening trends and plant history. Pamphlets and guides, too, are important historical records for historians, researchers and botanists.

A small fire has forced the closure of the Vincent Square branch until at least the new year, however, Wisley and the smaller libraries at Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall and Rosemoor are unaffected.

Of course, they also want you to use their resources. If you haven't been to the library at Wisley, it's right near the tearoom (see below for opening hours), and online they have a terrific catalogue and reading lists on everything from the history of wildlife gardening, to cookery books by gardeners and composting.

They encourage requests (the books are moved from library to library on Tuesdays so get your request in on Mondays if you're in a hurry) and can post books to you.

WISLEY LIBRARY OPENING HOURS

GARDEN LIBRARY: 11am to 4pm daily including weekends and Bank Holidays

SCIENCE RESEARCH LIBRARY:

11am to 4pm Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays; contact the staff for details of appointments

● Winter closure: December 12, 2011 to January 2, 2012

Phone: 01483 212428; e-mail: library.wisley@rhs.org.uk; website: WWW.RHS.ORG.UK

LECTURE Horticulture has long been a passion of the British. Garden centres certainly make money but what about the rest of the industry?

The billion-pound hobby

Clare Hogan

How much do you think the gardening industry is worth to the British economy? We're certainly mad keen on it, but would you be surprised by the figure of £5 billion?

Professor Sir Roderick Floud, Provost of Gresham College, in his recent lecture "The Hidden Face of British Gardening", explained how he came up with that figure. He was, he said, in the early stages of a research project into the garden industry or garden for pleasure. This included large and small gardens, allotments, garden centres, television programmes on gardening, books and magazines, the makers of tools, statues,

gardening machinery, pots and tubs, seed sellers and nurserymen and women and "even the makers of gnomes".

Gardening has been big business since the 17th century so how do we measure its growth and economic importance? Among the thousands of books and magazines on gardening, none considers gardening as an economic activity – the labour and time it takes up, the trades that provide for it, the output of flowers and vegetables.

The Horticultural Trades Association, which represents garden centres and nurseries, says that the £5 billion-pound figure is a quarter of 1 per cent of GDP, which might not seem a lot but our work in the garden or



LIRIODENDRON
TULIPIFERA
(THE TULIP TREE)

AVERAGE (MEDIAN) PRICE OF PLANTS 1730S TO 1890S

DECADE	NO OF PLANTS	MEDIAN REAL PRICES*
1730s	468	£7.08
1750s	241	£4.04
1760s	48	£9.23
1770s	1,048	£3.10
1830s	763	£3.02
1860s	664	£6.46
1870s	49	£9.22
1880s	288	£5.91
1890s	1,057	£8.63

*2009 PRICES



Unfortunately we don't have the space to cover any more of the lecture but you can listen to it, or read it, on the Gresham College website (www.gresham.ac.uk) and type in the title of the lecture).

THE MOST EXPENSIVE PLANTS 1650-1900

YEARS	PLACE SOLD	PLANT	NOMINAL PRICE	REAL PRICE*	% OF GDP PER CAPITA
1650-1699	London	Nectarine 'Elruge'	8/-	£55.62	4%
1700-1749	London	Tulip tree (25')	£21-0-0	£2,975.35	182%
1750-1799	York	Lamia latifolia and Magnolia virginiana	15/-	£75.72	6%
1800-1849	Norwich	Peach, nectarine and apricot	9/9	£39.52	1%
1850-1899	Borrowash	Larix kaempferi (7') and Castanea chrysophylla	£10-10-0	£678.09	27%

*2009 PRICES

Professor Floud has quoted the price at the time and the price as it would be today: he also calculated the price and a percentage of average GDP at the time to give a sense of how buying the plants would have affected an average family budget.

the allotment does not appear in GDP. "Household production" – things we make and tasks we carry out – are not included because GDP counts only the things that we sell. In his research, the economic historian has come up with all sorts of interesting facts and figures:

- A time-use study in 2005 found that people spent 17 minutes a day on repairs and gardening. Repairs are usually carried out in the winter months and gardening in the growing season. Those 17 minutes are also more than the average British adult spends on looking after his or her children.

- We also tend to do more gardening as we get older. People aged 15 to 24 do about three minutes a day; that increases to 28 minutes (or 3.5 hours a week) by the time we reach 64.

- Money also plays its part – we do more as we get richer; three hours a week in the A social class and two hours a week in the E social class. The rich also spend more on paid gardeners.

- It is also interesting to count the cost of the time we spend in the garden. If we add up the value of the time – how much we would earn in that time or would pay someone – that figure would reach £84 billion (for the minimum wage) and £270 billion if we value it at the cost of a paid gardener.

- If you think plants are expensive now, the box above takes a look at the average prices of plants from the 1730s to the 1890s.

Other topics covered in the lecture included the growth of the industry from the earliest nurseries and seed

VISIT In June a bus with the Surrey Group set off for the wilds of Kent to hear of heady adventures in Central America

The world in just one garden

Anne Folkes
NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS CO-ORDINATOR



PHOTOGRAPHS: SANDRA TOGNARELLI

Lullingstone Castle, built in 1497 and standing with its Elizabethan gatehouse in 120 acres that includes a 15-acre lake, was our first port of call.

The original manor house stood here in the time of the Domesday Book, was added to in Tudor times and was largely rebuilt in the 18th century. It was visited by Henry VIII and was a favourite of Queen Anne. The same family has held the property for 20 generations.

We had an excellent guide who gave us the history of the site and the family as we admired the view across the River Darent to Lullingstone Country Park.

Once a medieval deer park and part of the castle's estate, the 460 acres were bought by Kent County Council after the Second World War. The park contains a collection of ancient trees and chalk grasslands with orchids.

We went first to St Botolph's Church. It sits on the lawn of the castle, is framed by magnificent cedars and is the local parish church. The building has Norman foundations but the walls were raised in the time of Queen Anne.

Of interest to gardeners is the Sir John Peché's rebus (a favourite form of heraldic expression used in the Middle Ages) on the rood screen — a peach and the letter É. The monument to Sir

Percival Hart (*d.1738*) is decorated with exotic bamboo shoots and palm fronds.

Next, we were greeted at the castle by Guy Hart-Dyke before meeting Tom Hart Dyke, the National Plant Collection Holder of Eucalyptus spp. He is as exuberant as he was on a BBC TV series on Lullingstone.

We had not gone specifically to see the eucalyptus but the collection is made up of about 100 species mainly collected by Tom in Tasmania in 1999. They had suffered from the weight of last winter's snow but were recovering well. This year Tom gained a silver-gilt Lindley medal exhibiting in the Plant Heritage Marquee at Hampton Court Palace Flower Show for the first time.

We were there to see Tom's World Garden of Plants, which he had sketched out while held hostage during a plant-hunting trip in Central America. It is set within a two-acre walled garden with central beds representing each continent; the beds around the walls hold the species from which the cultivars growing opposite them were derived.

The Australasian area had suffered in the winter but was recovering well and other parts were flourishing. So well, that it was at times difficult to find the gems growing there.

There are two covered areas — the Hot and Spiky house with many unusual cacti and succulents and the Cloud Garden, containing tender specimens and perhaps most fascinating the Museum of Culinary History and Alimentation which included the world's hottest chilli.



LEFT: TOM HART-DYKE TELLS THE GROUP ABOUT HIS ADVENTURES **FAR LEFT:** THE HOT AND SPIKY HOUSE

In the afternoon we went to Great Comp, a garden established by the late Roderick and Joy Cameron from the late 1950s. The curator is now William Dyson, whose nursery is in the garden.

The garden covers seven acres and is built round a 17th-century manor (not open) and is planted for year-round interest.

The planting was more interesting and very colourful. *Phytolacca americana* (pokeweed), which we had seen in the World Garden, was flowering impressively with tall racemes of white flowers that precede the glorious but poisonous purple berries.

Dyson's Nursery specialises in salvias and there were many delightful cultivars for sale. Most of us were tempted to buy but I managed to resist the beautiful but tender varieties with memories of last winter still fresh in my mind. Nevertheless, between us, we managed to fill most of the spare seats on the coach with our purchases.

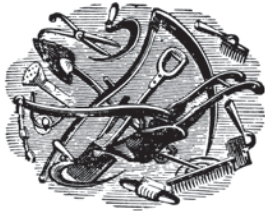
I enjoyed the day but in the words of the Michelin Guide it is "worth a detour" rather than "worth a journey".

Problem whitefly?

There's spraying them with chemicals, hoovering the little blighters and then there are carnivorous plants . . .

Gill Ringrose uses venus fly traps and trumpet pitchers to do away with her pests. Anne Folkes, on the other hand, recommends a sundew, *Drosera capensis*, for helping to you keep your greenhouse free of whitefly.

Society shorts



Making a packet at Hampton Court

The seed shop at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show raised £2,035 for Plant Heritage.

It was the busiest stand in the Plant Heritage marquee – there was a constant crowd around it thumbing through the list and packets. The variety of seeds available was indeed amazing and included many unusual species. A £1 donation is requested for each packet.

Alys Fowler and her entourage, who were filming for the BBC Gardeners' World programme, were among the visitors. Five or six takes were needed before the producer was satisfied and their continued presence attracted yet more customers.

In Surrey we have a seed exchange at our AGM in December and any packets left over are sold at the Hampton Court seed shop.

Please start collecting now and store the dry seed in a paper bag or envelope and bring it to the meeting on Saturday, December 3 at 11am.

The organisers of the seed shop are Plant Heritage members from London and Hampshire. They repack the seed in standard-size envelopes, label and catalogue them. As Alys Fowler repeated, five or six times, "One of the best things about the Plant Heritage seed shop is that you get to walk away with part of a living library."

Anne Hare

Go to the top of the class

As Sandra Tognarelli, our chairman, explains in her opening notes, plant identification is very important to the Surrey Group. Since 1990 we have given a prize of a book plate and RHS tokens to the RHS student gaining the highest marks in the weekly plant identification tests. Initially it was for Wisley only but trainees now study in all four RHS gardens, so we give a second prize to a student from Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall or Rosemoor.

In August I went to the presentation of awards and prizes to the trainee gardeners completing the Wisley Diploma of Practical Horticulture, Special Option Certificates and

Certificate in Practical Horticulture.

This year the ceremony was held in the Bicentenary Glasshouse. The Wisley winner was Ruth Houghton, who will work at a fruit and vegetable nursery in the New Forest while undertaking further studies. The second winner was Francesi Ponziani, who studies at Harlow Carr and will now be working there.

Anne Folkes

Blooming marvellous

A very early year for the main flowering season of the Wisteria National Collection caught out a lot of people. Sadly, several people missed the visits to our collection because of this. The flowers were good and lasted well despite the heat. The unusual weather also meant that many secondary flowers were produced, even on plants that don't usually do this.

The collection belongs to Surrey, so it is rather special. We're looking forward to the autumn colour and then we'll be pruning. Could volunteers please let Sandra or myself (01483 769723) know if you can help out? Thank you to all who support us in this way.

Marian Badger

WISTERIA COLLECTION
CO-ORDINATOR

Why not pencil in a visit to a garden in the east corner of Regent's Park next year ...

Is there a doctor in the garden?

Anne Folkes

The Medicinal Garden of the Royal College of Physicians, on the east corner of Regent's Park, displays more than 1,000 plants used in conventional and herbal medicine.

Plants with known medical value, those connected with physicians and traditional medicinal plants from many cultures are arranged mainly according to their geographical origin.

The college's Grade I listed building was designed by Sir Denys Lasdun, the eminent English architect, and was opened in 1964; the garden was planted the following year and was extensively replanted by Mark Griffiths, a leading writer on horticultural and botanical subjects, in 2005–06.

We had a highly entertaining introduction from the Garden Fellow who, clearly used to teaching medical students, soon discovered the interests of our party, which included two retired doctors, myself, an oncologist, and an anaesthetist, so we were quizzed and teased to the others' amusement. The tour started to the north of the college and moved under beautiful London planes to more newly planted areas with box parterres and, lastly, the sheltered south-facing lawn behind the college. The plants are thriving and well labelled. The tour lasted almost two hours. I recommend a visit because we were entertained and learnt a great deal.

So who is the Garden Fellow? It was none other than Dr Henry Oakeley, the National Plant Collection Holder of the orchid *Anguloa*. He is highly



A YEAR IN THE MEDICINAL GARDEN OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
BY DR HENRY OAKELEY,
THE NATIONAL
COLLECTION HOLDER
OF ANGILOA

knowledgeable about medicinal plants and has produced a delightful little book, *A Year in the Medicinal Garden of the Royal College of Physicians*, with coloured photographs of plants in the garden.

There are garden tours on the first Wednesday of every month from April to September (see www.rcplondon.ac.uk). The garden is also open under the National Gardens Scheme and during London's Open Garden Squares Weekend.

TALKS AT KEW

KMIS Lectures at Kew

On Mondays – when you're not at Plant Heritage meetings – you may be interested in the public lectures given at the Jodrell Laboratory, Kew, from September to April.

Lectures are preceded by short items of interest given by Kew staff and students and member of the public. The main lecture generally lasts from 40 to 45 minutes.

Look at www.kew.org (search for KMIS Lectures) for the full programme.

Council matters

Peter Badger
COMMITTEE
MEMBER

Council met twice this year, on April 13 and July 14. We discussed the following:

FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP: the financial situation has improved over recent years thanks to the hard work of National Office staff and countless volunteers. We are now in a much healthier position and are able to do more to pursue our charitable objectives.

NET INCOME:

Year ended October 31, 2008:
deficit of £69,000
Year ended October 31, 2009:
deficit of £10,023
Year ended October 31, 2010:
surplus of £36,870

On the other hand, membership fell below 4,000 this year and membership subscription levels have remained static for three years. On June 24 we had 3,966 members, with 60 more members recruited at the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in July, the best result there for several years. (It seemed to be easier to secure a membership when the local group had a good programme of activities.)

Council discussed the possibility of raising subscriptions. However, after feedback from group committees, there will be no increase in subscriptions now but probably one next year. By the end of the year the board of trustees will provide a reasoned case for increases that council can consider.

Council also discussed ways of promoting student membership. We

have only eight student members at the moment. Encouraging corporate membership for colleges was one suggestion and sending groups to attend college open days was another.

FUNDRAISING: next year we will receive the third and final donation from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, worth some £20k (£20,104 received this year). The link with the Giveacar (scrap your car and help a charity – WWW.GIVEACAR.CO.UK) has brought in more than £500 for PH. The chairman said that running the cloakroom at the Chelsea Flower Show in May had brought in £4,600 in donations.

AGM MAY 27-29 IN WORTHING: about 60 members attended. The chairman said the event had gone well. Sussex said that they had used a professional organiser to make the hotel arrangements and, as far as they could tell, this had worked out well. Over lunch I heard about plans that the North West Group are putting in place for next year's AGM. It will be based near Lancaster, and they are choosing garden visits in the Lake District area.

PLANT CONSERVATION COMMITTEE: the committee has confirmed its adherence to its scoping principles for collections, for example, 75 per cent of those listed in the RHS Plant Finder as a starting point. Mercy Morris, our plant conservation officer, drew Council's attention to research she had done on "Conservation of species of concern in cultivation", which sets out the role that

Plant Heritage plays, and may play in the future, in the ex-situ conservation of species. Council was told that Kalani Seymour has replaced Sarah Barton as the Threatened Plants Project co-ordinator.

DEMETER SOFTWARE FOR RECORDING PLANTS IN NATIONAL PLANT

COLLECTIONS: a survey of users has shown that they are happier with the latest version of the software. Since then, work has proceeded on Version 3. This is mainly to go with the Windows 7 operating system, but it makes moving your data from one PC to another easier and allows for off-network working. Groups are encouraged to promote it to Collection Holders in their area.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: eight groups had put forward proposals for marking Plant Conservation Day in May, for which a press release was issued. The committee would like useful and interesting stories about plants to be sent in to them, and not just about plants in National Collections. The committee is considering how it can advance the educational role and is thinking about a part-time education officer. An educational consultancy would be asked to identify the best way forward.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE: the committee has been reviewing the biannual Plant Heritage Journal to see if it is meeting our needs. A survey questionnaire on the content of the Journal had been sent out to a sample of 83 members. There was a good response.

SHOWS COMMITTEE: the usual updates on shows were presented to Council and reports on successes given. For example, we learnt of the award for best feature at the show for the PH marquee at Hampton Court, though the individual medal count was down on last year.

LECTURE

Shrubs that Merit Attention

Unfortunately we don't have space in the newsletter to carry a report of the lecture given by Jim Gardiner, the RHS director of horticulture. However, you will be able to read it online . . . it will appear at the end of the online version of this newsletter.

ONLINE

Plant Heritage news

For an update on what's happening at national office, visit the current issue of Newslines on the website WWW.NCCPG.COM

Make the most of your membership:
propagate plants for others and asking
for interesting varieties for yourself

Unusual requests . . .

Anne Folkes
NATIONAL
PLANT
COLLECTIONS
CO-
ORDINATOR

The Surrey Group has continued to support the Plant Exchange and this year we contributed 33 plants of 20 different types. Disappointingly, they were provided by just three members and two National Collection Holders — Martin Einchcomb, the nursery horticultural supervisor at Hampton Court Palace, and Kath Clark, the joint principal gardener at Painshill Park - both of whom are loyal supporters of the scheme and provide unusual plants.

Not every plant we had asked for was available but we received 31 plants for four different members and Martin, for the Queen Mary II Exoticks Collection. Sadly, the Painshill requests have not yet been found.

If you'd like to see the plants that we're looking for or have any to exchange, a list has been added to the

online version of this newsletter (www.nccpg.com and look for the Surrey Group).

The North West Group, which has run the Plant Exchange for the past ten years, has handed the task to Shropshire. The group says it will do just five years . . . We are having a change locally, too. Anne Hare has kindly agreed to take over this autumn.

Please look around your garden and see if you have anything suitable to offer or can perhaps propagate something you received from the Plant Exchange. The rules remain the same — the plant must have no more than two entries in the RHS Plant Finder or no entry at all.

Anne can be contacted via nccpgsurrey2@fsmail.net or 01883 342433. We would be pleased to have more members taking part.

Surrey Plant Exchange 2011

Please send:

1	Acer negundo from wild collected seed	N EAST
2	Acer rubrum from wild collected seed	WORCESTER SUSSEX
2	Alchemilla plicatula	GLOUCESTER WARWICK
3	Cephalanthus occidentalis from wild collected seed	SHROPSHIRE E MIDLANDS SUSSEX
2	Coprosma repens 'County Park Purple' (F)	KENT SUSSEX
1	Datura metel	E MIDLANDS
3	Echeveria 'Doris Taylor'	HAMPSHIRE N WEST E MIDLANDS
4	Echeveria pulvinata 'Frosty'	N WEST NORFOLK E MIDLANDS HAMPSHIRE
1	Erigeron 'Charity'	NORFOLK
3	Erodium ciconium	DEVON E MIDLANDS HAMPSHIRE
5	Euphorbia balsamifera	SHROPSHIRE SOMERSET N WEST NORFOLK KENT
1	Francoa sonchifolia 'Doctor Tom Smith'	DEVON
1	Hymenoporum flavum	E MIDLANDS
1	Pelargonium 'Perschore Princess'	SUSSEX
1	Plectranthus zuluensis 'Symphony'	WORCESTER
1	Pulmonaria 'Rowlatt Choules'	WARWICK
1	Quercus rubra from wild collected seed [possibly hybrid]	GLOUCESTER
1	Salvia coccinea	CAMBRIDGE
1	Sorbus americana from wild collected seed	DORSET
1	Spathodea campanulata	CAMBRIDGE

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome

Mrs Linda Angus <i>Worcester Park</i>	Ms Irena Dean <i>Guildford</i>	Mr Ian & Mrs Christine <i>Lilley Kingston-Upon-Thames</i>
Mrs Patricia Liechti <i>Clarke Milford</i>	Mrs Jean Mills <i>Horsell</i>	Dr Richard & Mrs Gay <i>Condon Little Bookham</i>
Mrs Pauline Jones <i>Cobham</i>	Mrs Lee Jayne Jones <i>Claygate</i>	Mr Robert & Mrs Anne <i>Cramp Reigate</i>
Mrs Fiona Dawe <i>Normandy</i>	Mrs Jillian Doran <i>Guildford</i>	Mr John Parker <i>Bramley</i>
Ms Anita Scammell <i>Guildford</i>	Miss Miriam Maxim <i>Tadworth</i>	Mr James Sinclair <i>Teddington</i>
Mrs Janet Sewell <i>Ashtead</i>	Ms Nicola Holt <i>Kew</i>	Mr Gerald Hollingworth <i>Camberley</i>
Mrs Elizabeth Grout <i>West Byfleet</i>	Mr Peter & Mrs <i>Anne Hills Esher</i>	

You should receive:

<i>Artemisia frigida</i> AGM H3-4	NORFOLK	AH
<i>Aster</i> 'Cassandra'	WARWICK	AH
<i>Begonia arborescens</i>	HAMPSHIRE	ME
<i>Begonia soli-mutata</i>	DEVON	AF
<i>Begonia stipulacea</i> ambig.	CAMBRIDGE	AF
<i>Cornus coreana</i>	SHROPSHIRE	MB
<i>Deutzia maximowicziana</i>	SHROPSHIRE	AH
<i>Echeveria prolifica</i> 'Mexico City'	E MIDLANDS	ST
<i>Erigeron alpinus</i>	HAMPSHIRE	AH
<i>Erysimum</i> 'Bowles's Yellow'	WARWICK	ME
<i>Erysimum</i> 'Bowles's Yellow'	N EAST	AF
<i>Fibigia clypeata</i>	HAMPSHIRE	AH
<i>Forsythia</i> × <i>intermedia</i> 'Josefa' (v)	HAMPSHIRE	AH
<i>Fuchsia regia</i> subsp. <i>serrae</i>	WARWICK	AF
<i>Metrosideros</i> Moonlight = 'Lowmoo'	HAMPSHIRE	MB
<i>Pelargonium alchemillifolium</i>	KENT	ME
<i>Pelargonium</i> 'Orange Fizz' (Z/d)	DEVON	?MB
<i>Pelargonium</i> 'Unique Aurore' (U)	WORCESTER	ME
<i>Phlomis</i> 'Sunningdale Gold'	GLOUCESTER	AH
<i>Plectranthus ambiguus</i> 'Nico'	WARWICK	ME
<i>Plectranthus neochilus</i>	WARWICK	ME
<i>Plectranthus neochilus</i>	N WEST	?AH
<i>Plectranthus saccatus</i>	WARWICK	ME
<i>Primula auricula</i> 'George Swinford's Leathercoat' (Au/B)	N WEST	ME
<i>Primula auricula</i> 'Julie Nuttall' (Au/B)	N WEST	ME
<i>Primula auricula</i> 'Old Black Isle Dusty Miller' (Au/B)	N WEST	ME
<i>Primula auricula</i> 'Woodlands Lace' (Au/B)	N WEST	ME
<i>Primula auricula</i> 'Wycliffe Midnight' (Au/B)	N WEST	ME
<i>Prostanthera nivea</i>	KENT	AH
<i>Pulmonaria</i> 'Abbey Dore Pink'	N WEST	AF
<i>Teucrium</i> 'Winterdown'	WARWICK	AH