



Newsletter

MARCH 2020 Number 517

This months meeting will be held on Thursday 26th March 2020 at the Village Hall, Church Road, Rawreth, SS11 8SH.

Doors open at 7:30

Our speaker this month is Dr. Andrew Ward.

Andrew trained as a plant breeder and started 'Norwell Nurseries and Gardens' in Nottingham with his wife Helen 24 years ago. It is a small nursery specialising in choice and unusual herbaceous perennials and alpines. Based around a 1 acre plantsman's garden it holds over 2,500 different species and 2 National Collections, Hardy Chrysanthemums and Astrantias.

The garden has featured in many Country and Garden Magazines and is also included in 'Great Gardens to Visit'.

Andrew's talk is entitled 'Shady Characters' which includes many of the rarer and more unusual shade loving plants.

Early Spring Show 2020

Judging by the crowds it seemed to be a successful Show in its new venue. The only downside I felt was the plant sales area, it was a little cramped but all appeared to manage ok.

Our own members did extremely well, with Maurice winning the 'Geoff Smith Trophy' with his lovely pot of Narcissus and Kris Mee who only showed for the first time in the March Group Competition gaining a First and Second.



Essex Group winners.

	1st	2nd	3rd
Maurice	6	1	3
Robin	2	-	1
Jean	1	2	1
Kris	1	1	-
Phil	-	3	1

Well done everyone.

'Maurice also won the raffle'



At the AGM a member asked 'What defines an Alpine Plant'? The following article may help anyone not sure what to grow and show.

What is an Alpine?

The technical definition of an alpine plant is one which occurs at high elevation and above the tree line. If we, as growers, were to limit ourselves to these plants, we would have a very small number to choose from for our back gardens and greenhouse. The Alpine Garden Society have defined an 'Alpine or rock garden plant' as all plants, including shrubs, suitable for cultivation in a rock garden of moderate size or in an unheated frame or alpine house. It excludes any plant which would not survive an average British winter under such conditions but includes many plants which do not necessarily grow in mountainous regions - so, dwarf, hardy plants.

When it comes to showing plants, suitability comes into play, so we need to modify the AGS definition to say 'wouldn't look out of place on or in a moderate rock garden or pot'; there are plenty of 'big' plants above the tree line on some mountains! 'Over-selected' forms of plants are also excluded; Show Auriculas, Florist Cyclamen, for example (but strangely, we do see a lot of 'double' Hepaticas in the prizes). Ultimately it comes down to what the panel of judges think at the time, hopefully they will follow the guidelines in the show handbook, weigh up the plants on display, use their knowledge of the plants in question and come up with a consistent result by applying an even-handed approach from show to show.

Ray Drew.

Forthcoming Events.

Saturday 28nd March, Kent Show, Sutton Valence School, Sutton Valence, Kent, ME17 3HL

Tuesday 14th April, Epping Group, speaker, Ray Drew Cyripediums.

Saturday 18th April, Essex Group Show, Village Hall, Rawreth.

Saturday 2nd May, East Anglia Show, Framlingham Earl High School, Norwich NR14 7QP

Essex Group Library.

For your information the group has a library, you can view the booklist on the web site www.alpinegardensociety.net/localgroups then click Essex Group, or you can browse the catalogue that Maurice brings each month. If you find a book you fancy you can let Maurice know, give him a call on (01376 583812) quote the title and book number and he will bring your book to the following meeting.



February Competition Winners.
Judged by Ray Drew.

Monthly Competition 2020

Open

maximum size pot/pan 36cm

Class 1 - Any Alpine in flower (excl. bulbous).

Class 2 - Any Bulbous Alpine in flower.

Class 3 - Primula

Intermediate

maximum size pot/pan 26cm

Class 4 - Any Alpine in flower (excl. bulbous).

Class 5 - Any Bulbous Alpine in flower.

Class 6 - Primula

Novice

maximum size pot/pan 19cm

Class 7 - Any Alpine in flower.

Class 8 - Any alpine, separate genus from 7 (if you have entered that class).

Classes 3 and 6
January - Galanthus
February - Narcissus
March - Primula
April - Saxifrage
May - Lewisia
June - Campanula
July - Sempervivum
August - Conifer
September - Alpine in seed/berry or with Autumn foliage
October - Cyclamen
November - Dwarf Shrub or Conifer

Note—one pot/ pan per class

Exhibitors are eligible to show in the novice section and above until they have been awarded an AGS Bronze Medal or have not won the novice section three times. Exhibitors are eligible to show in the intermediate section and above until they have been awarded an AGS Gold Medal or have not won the intermediate section three times.

Chairman	Secretary	Show Secretary	Editor
Rod Willett	Ruth Jones	Mike Sullivan	Paul Nice
'Ashtree Cottage'	5 Balljngdon Gardens	92 Hanging Hill Lane	162 Parklands
22, The Street	Sudbury	Hutton	Rochford
Little Waltham	Suffolk	CM13 2HS	SS4 1SY
CM3 3NS	CO10 2BA	01277 203481	01702 540443
01245 360396	01787 310546	m.sullivan1103@gmail.com	paul.nice42@gmail.com
	arjones678@gmail.com		