



Newsletter

JULY 2020 Number 521

Ruth has heard from the Hall Caretaker that it will not open again for meetings until November, it is therefore highly unlikely we will have any more indoor meetings this year.

The committee is looking into holding a picnic, possibly at Forge, later in the year but this will be subject to current restrictions at the time. They have also proposed that subscriptions will be held over until 2021.

All AGS shows and events are cancelled for the rest of the year and this includes the Mid Anglia Bulb Sale. Our Plant Exchange is also cancelled.

Two new names at the helm of the Alpine Garden Society, Tony Bryan becomes the new Director of the Society on the retirement of Christine McGregor.

Fay Edwards is the new Web and Social Media Editor, those who have watched the excellent virtual lectures By Tommy Tonsberg and Ian Instone will have seen her running these on Zoom.



A couple of pictures from my garden.

Cyclamen hederifolium I've never had it flowering this early before, June. A late flowering dwarf Rhododendron, called I think, R. nakaharae 'Mariko'.

Ruth.

However technical we become please remember that there are members that do not have computers or use Face-book so please do send me articles so I can keep the newsletter going and keep these members informed. Paul.

Robins Pleiones.

Pleiones are Asiatic Orchids each one with a life cycle similar to crocus. They grow from Pseudobulbs which are replaced each year the previous year's pseudobulb dying. They grow in the monsoon regions mostly experiencing a dry winter and very wet summer. They require a dry winter's rest in low temperatures and heavy watering in the peak growing season in June/July, however the compost must always be free draining. The usual compost consists of moss, bark and perlite in equal proportions. The moss used is mostly dry sphagnum wetted and cut into 2-inch lengths, good quality living moss is even better if available. The Bark should be fine and the perlite dust free.

The annual repotting is best done in January, the Pleione cleaned with perhaps an inch or two of the previous year's roots retained to assist anchorage, the top third of the Pleione should generally remain exposed. A few such as Pleione forestii types and its hybrids prefer to sit in moss (living if possible) whilst Pleiones of yunnanensis prefer to sit on the basic compost and then be covered only in bark.

Once in growth Pleiones should never be disturbed as damaged roots will die and cannot be replaced. Initially very little watering is required but as leaves appear watering can be increased with a very low nitrogen feed, once the leaves are fully developed a weak high potash fertiliser should be used.

In the Autumn the leaves will begin to turn yellow/red etc and water should be withheld.

Pests can be aphids on flower buds in some seasons, caterpillar leaf damage, brevipaulus and skiara fly damage to the roots. I use Viresco products to fortify natural defences and Neem oil sprays to the compost plus regular leaf inspections. Some pesticide sprays can cause damage to tender growth so caution is required.



I grew all these plants below from seed obtained from the AGS seed list. All flowered this year from sowings over the last few years. I know some members do grow from seed but if you haven't why not give it a try, there is a large selection to choose from so why not start with something easy and you will soon be hooked.
Phil.



Allium sikkimense
Seed sown Jan 2012



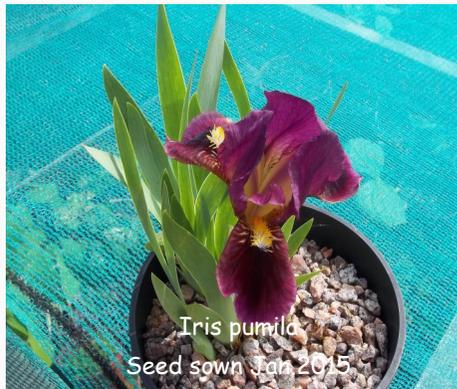
Campanula coruhensis
Seed sown Jan. 2016



Ranunculus Parnassifolius
Seed sown Dec.2012



Delphinium decorum
Seed sown Jan.2018



Iris pumila
Seed sown Jan 2015



Iris taochia
Seed sown Jan 2018

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Early this year Phil Walker set up a Facebook page for the Essex Group. This has been used by several members to highlight what is grown in their gardens to keep our interest stimulated. Ray has posted some of his plants which we normally don't get to see, and anyone who has seen them will be an Iris convert by now!

Most of us are at an age where technology and Facebook are alien, and that was my thought. But there is no denying that this is the way forward and there is an abundance of knowledge to be gained by participation; every single member has something to offer, we are all at the beginning! I urge all to take the time to connect up with our Facebook page so that we can all share information and up to date news about our group activities.
Mike Sullivan

More of Phil's plants.
Seed list and instruction leaflets available from AGS website



Pulsatilla helleri slavica
Seed sown Jan. 2017



Linum arboreum
Seed sown Jan. 2016



Three of Margaret's Campanulas.
Zangezura, bottom left.
Unknown Sp. top left.

C. 'Margaret Brine', bottom right, not one of the easiest to grow.



Chairman	Secretary	Show Secretary	Editor
Rod Willett	Ruth Jones	Mike Sullivan	Paul Nice
'Ashtree Cottage'	5 Ballingdon 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		