



# NEWSLETTER

## AUGUST 2021 Number 531

This month's meeting will be held on 26th August at 8pm at the Village Hall, Church Road, Rawreth, SS11 8SH.

Doors open 7:30

Our August speaker was to be Diane Clements but as she still feels unable to travel Ray will be stepping in to talk to us about Crocus with photos he has collected over a period of time.

The AGS are planning a National Show at Hyde Hall on Saturday 23rd October 2021

The schedule will be the same as the Kent Show 2020.

Kit Strange is looking for some willing volunteers, anyone interested please contact Kit.

Email Kit at [kitlins@hotmail.com](mailto:kitlins@hotmail.com)

It has been suggested we have a Christmas party but as our last meeting of the year is November it has been decided to combine a party with the AGM in January, further details to follow.

### The Committee until the next AGM

Chairman	Rod Willett
Vice Chairman	Ray Drew
Secretary	Ruth Jones
Treasurer/Webmaster	Paul Ward
Membership Secretary	Margaret Brine
Programme secretary	Jean Noakes
Show Secretary	Mike Sullivan
Committee Members:-	
Maurice Bacon (Library)	
Sue Willett	
Rhoda Clarke	
Paul Nice (Newsletter Editor)	
Auditor	Robin Alabaster.



Members enjoying the picnic on the 14th at Forge Nursery.

### HOW I GROW CALANTHES.

RAY DREW



After my talk on cultivating *Cypripediums*, I was asked if I could give some advice on growing *Calanthes*. As I said at the start of the Cyp talk, I have a method that works for me, if you are struggling and really want to grow *Calanthes*, it may help you build a method that suits you (this also works for Cyps). This is what I do with pots grown plants:

I use a growing medium of 50/50 cat litter (Sanicat pink, non-clumping), which is the cheap version of Seramis and Melcourt propagating bark (2-7mm). I grow exclusively in plastic pots - 3-5 litre, which means I don't repot for 3 to 4 years unless I can see that the roots need looking at.

I feed with Akerne 'Rain mix', all season orchid fertilizer, made up in rainwater every watering, which is at least once per week and more during really hot weather. One of the biggest problems I have found is root and leaf damage through over-feeding. You can use a conductivity meter to check the strength of the feed, you should aim for a value of 600 - 700  $\mu$ s

Rainwater here has a value of around 50  $\mu$ s, tap water here is around 690  $\mu$ s - so if I make the feed up in tap water, it's already too strong and will damage the roots over time. As an example, Chempak No. 3 (full strength) is around 1700  $\mu$ s. 'Rain mix' in rainwater is around 643  $\mu$ s - so if I make it up per manufacturer's instructions, I don't have to measure it every time. Because the medium is so open and airy, the feed runs through like a sieve, so it might be worth collecting it in a bucket and running it through a few times to guarantee that the cat litter/ Seramis is totally saturated with water/feed. As they are constantly in active growth, too little water is a major problem with this medium (it's very hard to over-water) - too dry for an extended period would result in bud-abortion.

Shading is another consideration. The evergreen types (those which we would normally encounter as temperate plants) need dappled shade, so no direct midday sunshine is a must. Using 'Lux' as a measure of light intensity, outside in the shade gives around 5,000 Lux. Full sun in winter is around 50,000 Lux and full sun in summer is around 100,000 Lux. Plant cells producing chlorophyll are damaged by excessive light and heat as they are programmed to work within certain energy levels. Transpiration increases and leaves can easily become desiccated. Not enough light leads to a lowering of chlorophyll production and a potentially weakened system. Good light levels in late winter are very important as they trigger hormone production, which is essential for healthy growth (which may help with flower-bud production)

*Calanthes* (evergreen types) appear to need a period of cold to initiate good bud formation, so I let mine go below zero centigrade for a period of time, nothing below -2° C or -3° C (if I can help it) and not for too long. Summer is the biggest problem because we can be in the high 20's for days at a time and *Calanthes* don't like to get too hot for too long. I put mine outside once flowering is over; up against a north-facing wall or fence is a favoured spot. I spray them over with a hose to cool them down after a hot day and damp-down the area around them.

Plants from the non-competitive display



CAN ANYONE HELP BRIAN.

I have had this campanula for the last three years unfortunately the label has faded and is unreadable and I would like to know what it is. It was one of those with a tap root so I always watered from below, when it flowered in spring 2020 it looked like it might die so I took seed but that failed to germinate. The pot with the now dead plant was put under the bench and forgotten about, then in the autumn a single seedling appeared which has flowered this year a little. Hopefully by next year it will be on time and full size .

Brian Baker.

**PLANT EXCHANGE.**

This year we will be having a plant exchange, it is on the 11th September at Forge Nursery. For those who have not been to one before we start at 2pm sharp so get there at 1:30 with any spare plants you may have, don't worry if you don't have any. Put your plants on the bench and have a look for any you fancy, then at 2 Ray calls number 1 grab the plant you had your eye on, put it in your box, then line up again for number 2, this goes on until all the plants have gone. 50p to participate, donations of cakes etc. much appreciated.

As you know we have an extensive library. Should you wish to borrow a book you can contact Mo who will bring it to the next meeting for you. The list of books is on the group website.

Contact Mo at [bacon.shirley@yahoo.com](mailto:bacon.shirley@yahoo.com) or ask him at a meeting.

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Show Secretary</b>	<b>Editor</b>
Rod Willett	Ruth Jones	Mike Sullivan	Paul Nice
'Ashtree Cottage'	5 Ballingdon Gardens	3, Bilberry Close	162 Parklands
22, The Street	Sudbury	St. Neots	Rochford
Little Waltham	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	SS4 1SY
CM3 3NS	CO10 2BA	PE 19 7GU	01702 540443
01245 360396	01787 310546	01480 716535	<a href="mailto:paul.nice42@gmail.com">paul.nice42@gmail.com</a>
	<a href="mailto:arjones678@gmail.com">arjones678@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:m.sullivan1103@gmail.com">m.sullivan1103@gmail.com</a>	