



Plant Heritage

Surrey Group Lockdown Newsletter

May 2020

Dear All,

I do hope you and your families are well and unaffected by the health implications of the current crisis. My very best wishes to all of you at this most challenging time.

Hasn't the weather been amazing? I've been watering much more than usual for April and have had to hold back from hardening-off those plants which look like they want to go out a month earlier than usual. Just as well, the garden thermometer has not even reached 9°C today. I have had to be careful not to scorch seedlings in the greenhouse and ensure that when they are pricked out, they have a shady corner to recover for a day before being subjected to any direct sunlight.

Whilst I have been playing in the garden, Wendy Bentall and Claire Davitt have been busy raising funds for us by selling plants outside their homes. With the cancellation of our April Meeting and Denbies Plant Fair in May, the outlook for raising funds was looking grim. However, Wendy and Claire have already raised, at last count, £2,800 between them. Yes, that's not a misprint... £2,800! I am dumbfounded and amazed by their hard work and dedication and I am sure you would all like to join me in congratulating and thanking them both.

You will be aware that all flower shows and events for this summer have been cancelled. The RHS are hoping to hold a re-scheduled Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival 10-15th September 2020 but this has meant cancelling the Wisley Flower Show that had been scheduled to take place the week before.

In order to give us all something more inspiring to do over the next few months, we have adapted our *Flower of the Meeting Competition* to take account of social distancing. You can still enter a flower, but from the comfort and safety of your own homes!



To enter please send me a picture of a flower, fruit or seed head from your garden, greenhouse or conservatory to brighten up our lives. Don't forget it's one entry per person please. Email your photo to me by clicking this link: Surreyph@gmail.com (rather than replying to this email).

For each competition I shall ask a guest judge to make the final decisions for us and for this first online competition I am happy to announce that Jill Otway from the RHS has very kindly offered to be our judge. You may not be aware of Jill but she is the driving organisational force behind The RHS Chelsea Flower Show 'Chelsea Plant of the Year' competition. Being bereft of Chelsea as we are this year, I cannot think of a more appropriate judge for our May competition. The closing date for entries is Friday May 8th, so please get snapping. Please make sure that your email includes your name and the name of your plant entry, if known. I will compile all the entries I receive and they will be published, along with the results, on our website [Plant Heritage - Surrey Group](http://PlantHeritage-SurreyGroup.com). No doubt, a selection of the photos will feature in our main 2020 Newsletter later in the year.

And whilst you have your camera/phone in hand, don't forget that our 2020 Photographic Competition title is 'Where did YOU come from?'. Unexpected weeds, plants that have had a sudden change of heart producing blooms in surprising shades and unusual garden visitors better check their appearance for this photographic challenge.

During the lockdown, David has been taking photos each day for his Facebook project "A Flower a Day Keeps the Covid Away". I persuaded him to add them to the Surrey Plant Heritage page too and as a consequence we now have 277 friends and counting!

For those of you who expressed interest in the Surrey Group Dispersed Collection Project, don't worry, we have not forgotten you. Like all our lives, the Project is on hold for a while until we are able to resume our activities.

So my very best wishes to you and all your families, I look forward to seeing your entries to our competition and now more than ever I wish you all Happy Growing,



Right; **Claire Davitt's** Doorstep Plant Sale

Wendy Bentall looks back at her gardening month and shares some tips with us for free! Also, see Wendy's "Doorstep Plant Sale" pictured below.

Early April

1. There may be a frost over the next few nights, so protect seedlings and tender plants overnight - your car makes a good greenhouse!
2. We have had no rain since lockdown - water your garden
3. Squires still has compost - email them

Mid April

1. It is still only April - Beware we could have a frost. BUT, I have planted my tomatoes outside.
2. Beware the box caterpillar is on the move. Inspect your Box plants and if you see the dreaded black and yellow stripe, spray with Ultra Bug.
3. More vegetables on the way, things change daily.

End of April

1. There is no rain due until Monday, keep your plants watered especially newly planted ones.
2. Keep an eye on your roses some have rust and black spot. Spray with an antifungal solution. IF you cannot get hold of this try this, it may work. 6 tablets of aspirin crushed and 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda dissolved in 1 litre of water, spray thoroughly. (NB this seems to be working, I have a rose which suffers from rust very badly and it has not got any worse)
3. Cut the dead heads off your daffodils, but keep the leaves until mid May, after that you can cut them back and clear them away.



“KEEP APART”

Left, **Wendy Bentall's** Doorstep Plant Sale

A Note from your Editor; Plant Heritage Surrey Group cannot be held responsible for damage caused to your car by using it as a greenhouse!