



July 2020: Special Edition 14

Dear Members,

Here we are in July – where does the time go! What started off as a project to give you something to read during lockdown has now reached Edition 14. Thanks to everyone who has contributed, and I hope you enjoy the read and the quizzes.

This week we follow Chris Young's article on Delphiniums, which his article on Begonias, our weekly quiz, and some information about more garden invaders. If you have anything to share, photos of your gardens, cartoons or Did You Know? facts, please send them to kateawilkinson@hotmail.co.uk

Happy growing!

Kate Anthony Wilkinson (Chair)

PLANT FACTS: BEGONIAS



Following on from last week's article on Delphiniums, we now look at Begonias, another speciality of BLACKMORE & LANGDONS Ltd www.blackmore-langdon.com, which is based in the Chew Valley and grow the best begonias in the world! (LAHS Members get 10% off home grown plants on presentation of membership card!).



The *Tuberous Begonias* bearing truly enormous blooms, are probably best when grown in large pots. Take great care not to knock off the buds and to keep the plants well caned and tied-in for support.



Remove all the female flowers, which form each side of the larger male flowers, and are easily identified as they have little "wings" behind the developing females which, if left to grow on, would become seed pods, taking away strength from the massive double male blooms which are the ones we require.





Water and feed well, using a proprietary liquid feed (higher potash, later in the season to prevent bud-drop and to increase the intensity of the superb colours).



Late into Autumn, a “corky” layer of cells (known as the abscission layer) will form between the corms and the main stems, thus causing the stems to drop off from the corms. Don't be alarmed! This is quite normal.



This then leaves us with the large corms to dry-off and store over winter. Bring into a frost-free space. During mid to late February, start the corms into growth again in good, clean potting compost (also likewise with *Dalia Tubers*). Later pot them up into larger pots and grow them on, continuing to give frost-free protection until the end of May, when they can go outdoors for the Summer.



Keep a constant watch-out of vine weevil grubs which will go underneath the corms and nibble off all the feeding roots, causing the plant to collapse, just when coming into the best flowering potential. Apply a proprietary control into the potting compost to eliminate this hazard.



Photos (from Blackmore & Langdon):

1. *Eva Grace* – a glorious pink with a bloom 8 inch diameter.
2. *Cordelia* – pretty white ground picotee with a bloom 6 inch diameter.
3. *Zulu* – rich crimson with a compact shape and blooms of 7 inch diameter.
4. *Golden Hind* -beautiful pale yellow begonia with deep slightly frilled blooms of approx. 8 inch diameter.
5. *Yellow Ground Begonia* (picotee double) – yellow ground cover and picotee markings.
6. *Ophelia* -pendula begonia creamy white shading to a rich apricot.



LAST WEEK'S QUIZ:

Answers – Top Flowers

1. Roses
2. Lilies
3. Tulips
4. Daffodils
5. Sunflowers
6. Orchids
7. Carnations
8. Bluebells
9. Freesias
10. Poppies

THIS WEEK'S QUIZ: FLORAL SYMBOLISM

Various folk cultures and traditions assign symbolic meanings to plants. For example, orchid means refined beauty, shamrock – good luck and primrose – eternal love. The rose however has varied meanings depending on its colour.

Match the 8 shades of rose to their meanings.

Red	Dark Pink	Orange
Burgundy	White	Pink
Lavender	Blue	

1	True love
2	Desire and passion
3	Love at first sight
4	Grace
5	Purity, innocence, virtue
6	Gratitude
7	Unconscious beauty
8	Mystery, attaining the impossible

GARDEN INVADERS!

Over the last few weeks, we have covered a number of garden invaders including Japanese Knotweed (bad news) and Spanish Bluebells (personally I like them!).



The Plant Alert scheme www.plantalert.org has been established by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland and Coventry University to try and find the “new” Japanese Knotweeds and Himalayan Balsams of the future, before they spread and damage the country.



Gardeners are being asked to look out for any plant with vigorous growth, prolific self-seeding or longer flowering periods. Invasive



plants are species from abroad which become a major problem because they compete with our native species and have no natural predators.



Although these plants may not be native to Britain, in many cases they are still available to buy and can add some interest and colour to gardens ... but need to be kept under control!

The top 10 plants which they suggest we weed out are:

1. Green Alkanet (photo previous page)
2. Three-cornered garlic (previous page)
3. Himalayan honeysuckle (above)
4. Felen Arlanddail Marddanhalen
5. Snowberry (opposite)
6. Japanese knotweed (see Ed.11)
7. American skunk-cabbage (!) (below)
8. Mexican fleabane
9. Salmonberry
10. New Zealand pigmyweed (opposite)



DID YOU KNOW.....?

If you are a collector of a particular species of plant, you could apply to be recognised as part of the National Plant Collection. Founder in 1978, Plant Heritage has become the leading plant conservation charity for examples that have been collected, bred or grown in UK gardens. There are now more than 650 National Plant Collections across the country being cared for by people who grow and nurture specimens because they are passionate about protecting the diversity of the nation's flora.

See: www.plantheritage.org.uk