

THE SUSSEX NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS

Athyrium Species

Mr N Schroder Haywards Heath

Betula, Eucryphia, Hypericum, Nothofagus, Skimmia

Wakehurst Place Gardens Haywards Heath

Castanea & Tilia Species

Peasmarsh Place Arboretum Rye

Clivia Species

Mr M Jeans Heathfield

Comber Collection, Sussex Heathers

Nymans Garden Handcross

Correa

Judy Clark Hastings

Hebes - Douglas Chalk Collection

Plumpton College Lewes

Hedychium

Andrew Gaunt Chichester

Lathyrus

Roger Parsons Chichester

Mentha

Jean Levy Chilgrove

Myrtaceae (Tribe Myrteae), Gongora Species

Gary and Maria Firth Haywards Heath

Rhododendron (Ghent Azaleas)

Sheffield Park Gardens Uckfield

Stern, Sir F (plants selected by)

Highdown Chalk Gardens Worthing

Stewartia—Asian Species

High Beeches Gardens Handcross

Sussex Apple Cultivars

Brighton Permaculture Trust Stanmer Park, Brighton

Ulmus

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Brighton and Hove Council Brighton



PLANT HERITAGE SUSSEX GROUP

Spring 2017

Number 93



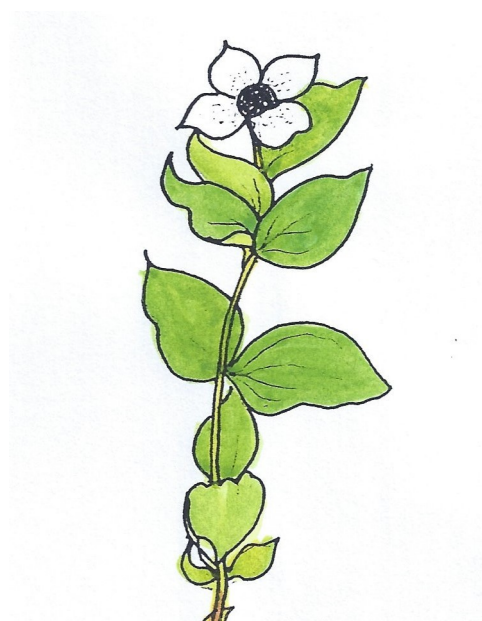
Eriobotrya japonica (Loquat)

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Plant Exchange	Dr Gary Firth

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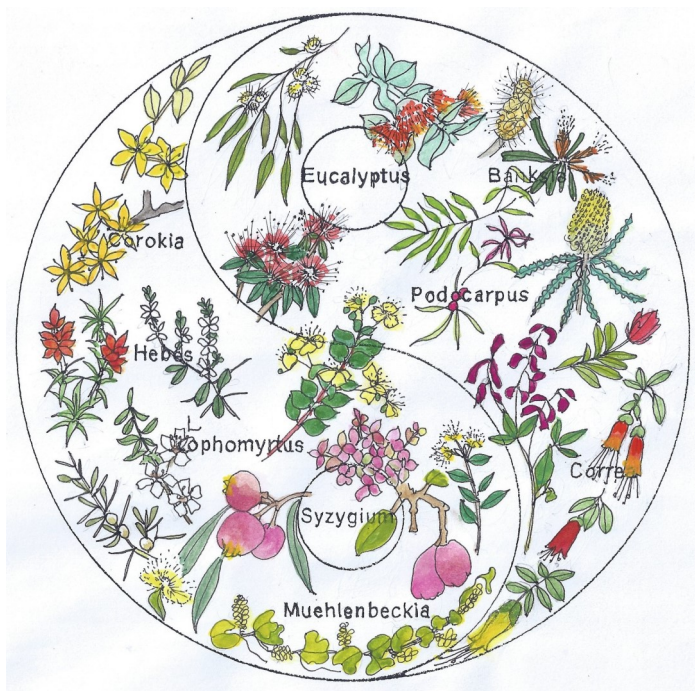
Cornus sericea

All drawings by Jenny Stewart

Chairman's Report Gary Firth

Welcome to the Spring edition of the journal and to the start of another growing season. We have two articles on seed sowing to encourage you to get started if you haven't already done so. We also have news of our Spring lecture when we will be delighted to welcome our guest speaker, alpine horticulturalist James Miller, from the Royal Horticultural Society, who will be giving a colourful insight into the exciting new planting schemes on the Rock Garden at RHS Garden Wisley. He will also give an informative taste of the Alpine Team's collections and an insight into the Alpine Display House at Wisley.

For the first time in many years we will be unable to attend the Parham Park Show in July as a number of us have other commitments. However, we will instead have a small stand at the Garden and Local Produce Fair at Cuckfield Park on the 18th May. Maria and I will again be showing at the RHS Hampton Court Show but this time on behalf of the Australasian Plant Society when we shall be joining with seven other National Plant Collection Holders to put on a 12ft diameter display in the Plant Heritage area of the Floral Marquee. A representation of the design and the plants to be displayed is shown below in a drawing kindly produced by Jenny Stewart.



The New Horizons Appeal of St Catherine's Hospice



Garden and Local Produce Fair Thursday 18th May 2017

We would like to invite you to a mini 'Chelsea' in the heart of the Sussex countryside, an event not to be missed. A select number of stalls are chosen to create one of the prettiest gardening events in Sussex. The money raised goes to St Catherine's Hospice, where free end of life care and support is provided to over 1,200 local people with incurable illness in West Sussex and East Surrey at the Hospice and in their own homes.

Excitingly, the Fair will once again be held in the stunning grounds of Cuckfield Park, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5AB.

This is a prestigious event, supported by established and well respected traders selling specialist plants, gardening products, locally produced food and goods. Last year there were over 45 stalls.

The day begins at 9am when advanced ticket holders arrive for Preview Shopping and a Special Breakfast. Public entry is from 10.30am after the Official Opening, ending at 3.30pm.

The Sussex Group, Plant Heritage will have a stand at this event for the first time.

Australasian Plant Society and Plant Heritage Sussex

30th September: Hastings, National Collection of Correa 10.30 - 1.00

Correas, also known as Australian fuchsias, can bloom from August to March and, fingers crossed, many species in the collection will have started flowering by the end of September. Judy Clark's small suburban garden also contains many other southern hemisphere plants, the majority Australian, but including plants from New Zealand, South Africa and South America.

Judy lives at 36 Collier Road, TN34 3JR for navigation aids. Her house is on the West Hill, 500 m roughly north of Hastings Castle. Be warned, the house numbers go up one side and down the other, but the front garden should be obvious. There is free on street parking in Collier Road and nearby streets. From Hastings station (trains from Victoria, Brighton and Charing Cross) it is approximately a 25 minute walk (including a steep hill), or catch the 28 bus (hourly) from the station to the West Hill and then it's a 5 minute walk.

Please contact Judy at editor@anzplantsoc.org.uk for further details, and to let her know you are coming so she can provide sufficient refreshments!

In the afternoon Dr Owen Johnson, author of the Collins Tree Guide and Arboretum, will show APS members round Hastings Alexandra Park. The tour will focus on southern hemisphere species but will not neglect other interesting trees. Plant Heritage members will be very welcome to join in. A donation to help purchase trees for the Park would be appreciated.



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Correa pulchella orange flowered form

Correa glabra v. glabra

Plant Heritage Seed Workshop

Miriam Jacob

On Friday 16th September 2016 I attended a Plant Heritage Seed Workshop at Wisley. This was led by Heather Cooke, team leader of the RHS Members' Seed Scheme and Lucie Rudnicka. It was a small group of Collection Holders and Plant Guardians that turned up on that wet day. This did mean that we were unable to collect seeds but that did not hinder our interest or enjoyment.

I went along as I wished to improve my techniques in seed collection and storage, having spent many enjoyable occasions sorting seeds for the Plant Heritage Seed Shop and annually collecting my own seeds either for my own use or to send to Janet for the shop. Janet Wright receives seed from members throughout the year. You do not need to sort it just put it into an envelope, well-sealed, with the name of the species. It's helpful to say where you collected it. For instance, my garden, XXX park and the approximate date (September 2017). Plant Heritage seed shop only keeps seed for a year to ensure that it is fresh and likely to germinate.

Of course, the RHS collect on a far larger scale. At Wisley alone there are 240 acres of beds. They sell 75,000 packets of seed a year. So, accuracy is paramount. Every plant must be named with the genus and the species. Since cultivars cannot be guaranteed to grow true to type they are not named. The bed and date collected is also noted. This enables the team to be aware where to go and when to collect seeds next year. All is kept on a database.

After the first removal of leaves and stalks from the seed, the debris is then removed either with a series of sieves which fit into each other. The largest gauge sieve at the top and the finest at the bottom. Or with an aspirator with cups of varying sizes to winnow those seed with a lot of chaff. I could do with one of those for my asters! And as for sieves I make do with the those in my kitchen cupboard.

The seeds then go into the drying room and then into a cold room. In June, they are weighed out into packets and the list is compiled. Members can order seeds from November to March. The seed list can be found at rhs.org.uk/seedlist. There are open workshops at Wisley and Rosemoor for members and non-members. Do go if you can.

COACH TRIP SUNDAY 14th MAY 2017

We shall again be organising a coach trip to a garden of special interest

Pick up at Beech Hurst Gardens, Butlers Green Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4BB

Please contact Maria Firth for Further Details (see page 20)

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BRIEF TRIP TO TEA PLANTATIONS

Peter & Maddy Ward

During our trip to Sri Lanka in November 2016 we visited the southern hill country, the location of numerous Tea Estates. We viewed endless miles of severely pruned bushes up the steep green mountain slopes with plunging waterfalls and some small chunking railways. Most of the workers are still known as “Plantation Tamils” who have been working and living amongst the estates since 1890’s. To visit a factory was a must as Tea is still one of the island’s major exports with a production of over 200 million kilos a year.



In 1769 Cinnamon plantations were established under the Dutch Government by the East India Company. By 1833 this had become unprofitable and the British turned to coffee growing.

Sadly in the 1870’s the coffee plantations were devastated by the insidious fungal disease of coffee blight (*Hemileia vastatrix*): This leaf

virus (left) is popularly known as “Devastating Emily”.

For a short time planters experimented with alternative crops such as Cocoa and Cinchona (for quinine) but this latter failed due to another infestation of *Heloplice antonie*. Bankrupt coffee estates were then snapped up and converted to tea production by pioneering British colonial folk such as Sir Thomas Lipton and James Taylor.



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19th – 25th June: Rose Garden Week – a week of celebrations for the 21st anniversary of our Rose Garden with Elizabethan Mansion tours daily (Mon-Fri), plus half hour guided garden tours, specialist rose plants and gifts for sale. Some of the sculpture exhibits will have a rose theme and Art clubs are invited for watercolour painting classes.

29th June: ‘First-rate Perennials’ Talk – by Val Bourne. This lecture selects some of the best doers in the garden, explains why each one is such a good plant and features Val's personal favourites. Val Bourne is an award-winning garden writer, photographer and lecturer and she gardens organically. Val writes for The Daily Telegraph, Saga Magazine and many others, and also judges the perennial and dahlia trials at RHS Wisley. *TE



14th September: ‘The Curious History of the Cottage Garden’ Talk – by Stephanie Donaldson. National gardening author including her book with Prince Charles, and journalist, best known as former garden editor of the Country Living Magazine. The talk traces the arrival of many of the plants associated with cottage gardens back to when they first arrived in the country. As Stephanie talks, she gradually starts to assemble the plants so that by the time she finishes, it looks like a cottage garden on a table top. *TE

2nd October: National Garden Scheme Open Day– Borde Hill opens in aid of the NGS charity.

www.bordehill.co.uk
01444 450326
comms@bordehill.co.uk

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Garden Events Calendar 2017

24th March: Friends of Borde Hill – private day before the Garden opens to the public for our members and their guests, and the launch of our new souvenir guide book. Non-members welcome if you'd like to join on the day.

1st April: The Garden opens to the public – no joke! Come and see what's new for 2017, including our 'Jewel' Box and the progress of Sophie Walker's new design for the Round Dell.

2nd April: Borde Hill 'Camellia Heritage' Tours – herald the start of the new season by joining camellia enthusiast, Nick Schroder, on a guided tour of Borde Hill's camellia collection. Tours 11am and 3pm.



5th April: Magnolia Talk – 'Magnolias, aristocrats for gardens of all sizes' by **Jim Gardiner**, RHS top expert, 10.30am-1.30pm. To include coffee on arrival, presentation talk and a private tour of the garden highlighting our magnolias.

11th May – 2nd October: Sculpture Exhibition – come and view our amazing array of new artwork from a variety of local artists displayed around the Garden.

27th May: National Garden Scheme Open Day – Borde Hill opens in aid of the Scheme's 90th anniversary, having been an original NGS garden in 1927. You are invited to come in 1920s dress!

The tea "bush" is an evergreen tree *Camellia sinensis* which grows up to ten metres in height in the wild. In the 21st century tea is divided into three types depending where it is grown, the soil and altitude. The type we are most familiar with is black tea.

The factory we visited is labour intensive being little changed since Victorian times. The process from plucking the leaves to final packing takes 24 hours. Pickers select the youngest 2 leaves and terminal bud from the end of every shoot, weekly in the dry season and twice weekly in the wet. These freshly picked shoots are laid out under cover to air dry for a few hours, then crushed for about 30 minutes to release juices and enzymes to produce a period of fermentation. This is terminated by firing in an oven to produce black tea. Despite the country now being called Sri Lanka this major export product is still called Ceylon Tea.



Fuchsia Arauco **Miriam Jacob**

In May 2014 I received a small fuchsia plant from the Plant Heritage Exchange and became intrigued by the name on the label. It had come with a cultivar name I did not recognise and so I embarked on the trail. This has led to re-awakening my interest in research, and my making many new friends throughout Plant Heritage, The RHS and the global network of Fuchsia lovers. Even now, in 2017, I am still learning more about this fuchsia and speaking with an ever-widening circle of plants people.

Although, it would appear that Arauco is its correct name and is the name that it is sold by in Germany, Holland and Belgium, and the name on several databases it is uncertain where precisely it comes from and if it is truly the Arauco, and not the Araucano.

The “florachilena” database only names ‘Araucano F. Phil’ as an endemic fuchsia magellanica.

However, we do know that of the 22 Fuchsia taxa growing in Central, Southern America and New Zealand only two are endemic to Chile. They are the Lyciodes and the Magellanica. The Lyciodes are found in dry desert conditions and are not tolerant of frost whereas the Magellanica are frost hardy and need a humid climate. They can be found in the coastal areas.



Chile is divided into 10 regions from the north of the country on the Peru border southwards. There are three regions which interest us most: Region 8, the Biobio region, Region 9 Araucania and region 10 Los Lagos. All of them are in the Zona Sud (southern region) as the Biobio river which enters the gulf of Arauco in the Pacific at Concepcion marks the border with the Central zone. It marked the frontier between the kingdom of Chile and the lands of the Araucania Indians. These were not incorporated into the state of Chile until the 1880's. The province and town of Arauco is in the Biobio region, Araucania as Biobio and Los Lagos have many fast-flowing rivers flowing into the Pacific. So, one presumes, many good trout fishing rivers.

There is an additional step you can take, which is soaking. Soaking is mainly recommended for legumes, but I've bought tree seeds from a few specialist merchants in the USA and almost invariably they seem to recommend soaking the seeds overnight (I have a collection of jam jars just for this). Dry seeds sown in compost can have difficulty taking up water quickly, but tree seeds are not intrinsically different from the seeds of other plants so there's no reason why the seeds of other plants shouldn't benefit from soaking too.

Experimenting with this has been very satisfying. The look of the seeds after a day or two in water can be a revelation. They become plump and shiny instead of chaffy and half-dead looking and it just seems to me that that's how happy seeds should look. There are practical difficulties with soaking tiny seeds so I tend not to but if the seeds are suspended in a small amount of water and the contents poured over the compost (and perhaps rinsed out to get the stragglers) it still might be worth the trouble. Of course, there's no point if you know the seeds will come up easily anyway, but if in doubt, why not?

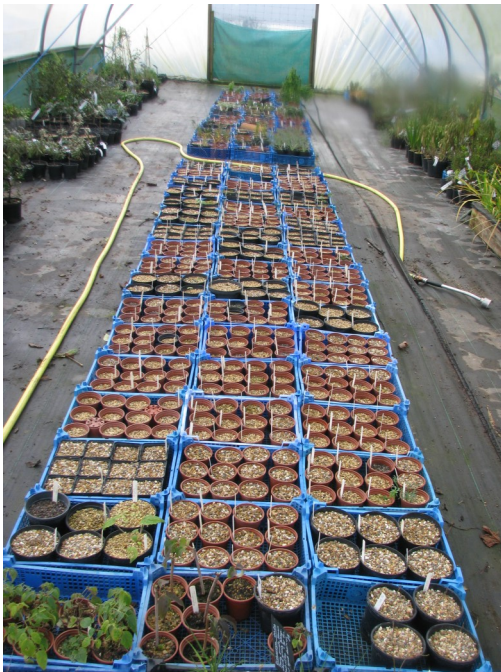


Why Don't Seeds Come Up?

Steve Law

Running a nursery specialising in uncommon plants means I get seeds in from all over the world - from individuals, society exchanges, small commercial collectors, and some well-known merchants, as well as my own collections and I have to say their performance varies enormously. The seeds I collect myself are almost always best, followed by seeds collected by friends - even when mailed half way across the world. The fact that commercial seeds often perform so badly means I've given up on some of the best-known brands.

The obvious explanation for the variation is that the seeds are not stored correctly. If you're used to veg or bedding plants this won't have been much of a problem but with many less familiar plants it is. Most experts say that seed should be stored cool and dry. I keep a lot of mine in the fridge in a Tupperware box with some silica gel, but some species' seed viability is short even if stored correctly (the primulaceae and ranunculaceae are obvious examples). Despite their robust appearance, nuts such as acorns and conkers have a very short shelf life but any plant that comes from a moist habitat such as woods or wetlands is likely to suffer from drying out. If you do grow veg you might have noticed that parsnip and carrot seeds don't perform so well the second or third year and this is true of many of the umbellifers.

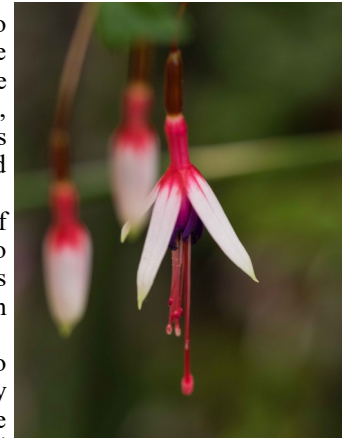


Many plants come up better sown fresh so my solution is to sow everything as soon as possible. Most hardy plants ripen and drop their seeds in summer or autumn, so as far as possible that's when I put them in. Many need cold treatment so I leave them in a sheltered place all winter. It's a very simple system - I almost never faff about with fridges and alternating cold/warm regimes. Even if I get hardy seeds in spring (for example from the S. Hemisphere) I'd sow them then and let them sit all year to come up the following spring. Seed pots don't take up a massive amount of space and all I need to do is make sure they don't dry out or get knocked over or covered in moss or rubbish.

In 20003, Fredrich Maximiliano Schlegel Sachs, who had the Collection prefix FS, gave a specimen to the Chelsea Physic Garden. This plant died in 2006. He claimed he had collected it in the Province of Valdivia, Nr. Las Trachas in the Los Lagos Region. Las Trachas mean "the trouts" and so far, I have been unable to find such a place name.

We also know that due to the geophysical features of Chile many plants can only be found in small areas. So it is quite reasonable to presume that the Arauco is different from the "Araucano F.Phil" but found within the region.

But whether he collected the specimen from the Arauco basin area of the Biobio or further south, it is certainly a very hardy plant and withstands the harsh frost of the North Saxon Plains, loves chalky sea winds, is beloved by tits and other small birds which remove its pests. A joy to behold.



Description

Fuchsia Magellanica "Arauco"

From Arauco Chile.

Date of entry to United Kingdom: 2003

Name of collector: *Prof. Dr. Fredrich M. Schlegel-Sachs. Collection prefix: FS*

Height 210cm

Diameter: 190cm

Flowers hang like lady's eardrops.

White buds turning to: white sepals turning pink; red tube; deep purple petals; reddish purple pistil

Flowering period June to frosts.

Fully hardy



Dates for Your Diary 2017

Saturday 8th April	Sussex Group Spring Lecture, Haywards Heath Town Hall
Fri 5th—Sun 7th May	Plant Heritage members weekend and AGM, Yorkshire
Saturday 13th May	Plumpton College Open Day. See www.plumpton.ac.uk for details
Thursday 18th May	Garden and Local Produce Fair, Cuckfield Park. See page 17
Sat 17th—Sun 18th June	Specialist Plant Society Fair, RHS Wisley Gardens
Mon 3rd—Sun 9th July	RHS Hampton Court Show
Sat 2nd September	Andrew Gaunt's National Collection of Hedychium Open Day
Sunday 3rd September	Sussex Prairies Plant Fair. www.sussexprairies.co.uk
Saturday 30th September	Judy Clark's National Collection of Correa Open Day
Saturday 7th October	Sussex Group Autumn Lecture & AGM. Tom Hart Dyke



PLANT HERITAGE, SUSSEX GROUP SPRING LECTURE

WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY 8th APRIL 2017
COMMENCING AT 2.00PM

AT HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN HALL
(BOLTRO ROAD, HAYWARDS HEATH, RH16 1BA)

SPECIAL LECTURE: [JAMES MILLER](#)

(WISLEY GARDENS)

WILL BE TALKING ON 'ALPINES'

TEA/CAKES

PLANT SALES

RAFFLE

