



# National Sweet Pea Society

Registered Charity No: 226802



***2021 Autumn Bulletin***  
*Including important information  
regarding 2022 AGM  
and Exhibitions*

# Roger Parsons Sweet Peas

Introducing

## Riviera Series

Early flowering multiflora grandiflora. Varieties released for the 2022 season.

A series with strong colours and long flower stems.



White, mid blue, navy  
blue, fuchsia pink, dark  
maroon and bright scarlet.



VISITEZ  
TE D'A  
AUX TRAINS ET LES AUT

Pre-mixed mixture also  
available in 10 seeds or  
50 seeds packets



# NATIONAL SWEET PEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity No: 226802

## AUTUMN BULLETIN 2021

Patron

Alan Titchmarsh MBE VMH DL

Editor of the Bulletins and Exhibitions Schedule:

Graeme Hollingdale  
[graeme@graemehollingdale.com](mailto:graeme@graemehollingdale.com)

General Secretary:

Carole Tate  
07961 477 137  
[caroletate10@gmail.com](mailto:caroletate10@gmail.com)

For all membership related enquiries (including Societies):

Julia Beardmore  
07997 950 014  
[julia.nsps@outlook.com](mailto:julia.nsps@outlook.com)

Website: [sweetpeas.org.uk](http://sweetpeas.org.uk)

Facebook: For the Love of Sweet Peas incorporating the National Sweet Pea Society

Twitter: @SweetPeaSociety

The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and may not necessarily coincide with the opinions of either the Society or the Editor

© Copyright 2021 NSPS

## **Dates for your 2022 Diary**

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Sat 5 March          | <b>NSPS Spring Social &amp; AGM</b><br>Chase Hotel, Nuneaton             | (See Roger's article)                    |
| Wed 29 & Thu 30 June | <b>Early National Exhibition</b><br>RHS Gardens, Wisley                  | Members' Competition<br>Display & Bureau |
| Sun 10 July          | <b>Chiltern Regional Sweet Pea Society Show</b><br>Lacey Green Bucks     | Members' Competition                     |
| Sat 9 – Sun 10 July  | <b>Late National Exhibition</b><br>RHS Gardens, Harlow Carr              | Members' Competition<br>Display & Bureau |
| Wed 20 – Sun 24 July | <b>RHS Tatton Show</b>   | Display & Bureau                         |
| Fri 29 – Sun 31 July | <b>Northwest Regional Sweet Pea Society Show</b><br>Astley Park, Chorley | Members' Competition<br>Display & Bureau |

## **Editorial**

Thank you once again to all those of you who have helped contribute to this edition of the NSPS Bulletin, by way of articles, photographs, letters, suggestions and proof-reading.

As you remember me saying in previous editions, I am very happy to receive articles in any form whatsoever in order to produce the best possible publications for our Society and members. However, if you are using any form of digital device to type and send, here are a few helpful (for both of us) tips.

The font I use in the Bulletins is “Times New Roman” for no particular reason other than I think it looks good and is easy on the eye. For headings I use font size 16, centred, bold and underlined, with the name of the writer (if appropriate) centred underneath. This and all other text, is size 11. Very occasionally I use size 10 if I have to squeeze something in and/or it means an article does not have to spread just over to a second page. Text inside boxes etc will be different of course.

Please note the change of email address for all things relating to membership; Julia has an update for you all on page 19. The new one is [julia.nsps@outlook.com](mailto:julia.nsps@outlook.com)

If you are going to use formatting of any description (I prefer you not to because 9 times out of 10 I have to delete it and reinstate anyway) then normal spacing (ie none) and straight edge both ends please. (I think this gives the finished article a much more pleasing and professional look) There are occasional breaks with this rule, for example bullet points and lists.

By far the most frustration is from the use of language. I have my Word application set to English (UK) for obvious reasons. I am amazed how often this gets automatically re-set back to (US) simply because one of you has used it in error to type your article. Please go back and reset it now.... Open Word, click on the Tools menu, then find in the drop-down list, Language. Click this and the box that opens should list at the top English (UK) followed by English (US) and then all the other possible languages. Highlight the correct one but do not click OK just yet! Instead, click the Default option button. A message then appears asking you to confirm that you would like this to be your default language. Then click Yes and then OK. Phew!

Finally, if you use a PDF file format, it locks in your text, photos, fonts, formatting, in fact everything. This is great when you send documents for printing or for viewing on all sorts of different devices because it means it will not spill over into extra lines or pages and basically look terrible to read. How it looks on my iMac will be the same as your Windows PC or phone for example. However, you will be the only person who can then edit it. The only options I have when attempting to edit your text, enlarge a photo, move things around is to start again from scratch – which is okay for a short article but not for a longer one with tables and/or photos perhaps. Please send photos separately to the article, but please rename them to something obvious ie “John Smith pic 1 Best vase in Show”. And preferably in .jpeg format. I have loads of photos called either **image1** or **IMG\_01576.JPG** which is very confusing for a simple soul like me!

As I always mention, if you are not happy with the contents or have strong views about anything or everything connected with the Bulletin or the Society then please either contact your Secretary directly and/or submit your copy to me. Thank you for your support and enjoy the articles!

### **Deadline dates:**

For the **2022 Spring Bulletin** by **2<sup>nd</sup> January** please.

For the **2022 ANNUAL** by **31<sup>st</sup> January** to Caroline please.

For the **2022 Autumn Bulletin** by **4<sup>th</sup> September** please.

## **District Representatives**

I have not been informed of any changes in the list since the 2021 Annual was published, so we therefore have vacancies for the following areas: Avon, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Devon (North and South) Durham, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Mid-Wales, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Scotland, Staffordshire, Surrey and Warwickshire. If you would like to volunteer, or would like further information please contact Carole Tate the General Secretary, details on page 3 and in the Annual etc.

## **Annual General Meeting 2022**

Roger Parsons

Writing this at the beginning of September, your General Committee is planning to hold a traditional Annual General Meeting next year. This will be at the Chase Hotel, Nuneaton, on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022. In these uncertain times, it is of course entirely possible that our plans may have to change but, in the meantime, please put this date in your diary. We are aiming to provide a full programme of speakers and there will also be the Spring flower show, which has become such a popular and attractive feature of the day. The room we use at the Chase Hotel has plenty of space for social distancing and ventilation.

Formal notice of the meeting, including confirmation of the details, will be included with your Spring Bulletin.

## **Oasis and Exhibitions**

Graeme Hollingdale

In this issue, you will note that there are many articles referencing using alternative materials for staging, other than the Oasis which we have all been using for decades however, it contains micro plastics and so is not biodegradable. This may well come as quite a surprise to some but most of us have been aware of this for many years and been troubled by this fact, but as there was no real alternative (apart from reeds of course, which very few of us have ever tried and indeed, unless you have them growing on your land or that of someone who will allow you to harvest, it is illegal to cut and use) we continued to use.

Due to pressure, the manufacturer has been working hard in recent years to come up with far more eco-friendly products and have been reasonably successful, however the RHS has decreed that Oasis is now banned from all shows staged on their premises, including the latest versions which are already a significant improvement, which is however completely understandable. However, we need an easy to obtain and use, cheap alternative product, especially for staging up to 15 stems in a 2-inch vase! Although we are but a tiny fraction of the global problem of using plastics, we have to do our bit and hopefully the RHS will also use its influence in the horticultural world to stop importing flowers for its shows by airfreight and in plastic pots, which arguably does far more damage than Oasis!

As we have enjoyed (and very much hope to continue doing so in the future) using RHS locations and events for some of our exhibitions and displays, we must abide by the rules that are put in place. Please see further articles on these subjects and please share with me for the Spring Bulletin (deadline as above) all your thoughts, experiences and suggestions regarding staging materials and show locations (remember, apart from the location, we must have a show manager or small team in place in order for them to happen; please consider offering and sharing the load, rather than just suggesting venues!)



## **English Sweet Peas The Scent of Summer**

Over 200 varieties in stock: –

Wide range of Exhibition Spencers  
Grandifloras - Heirloom and Modern  
Dwarf and Intermediates  
Lathyrus Species

[www.englishsweetpeas.co.uk](http://www.englishsweetpeas.co.uk) for Images

Buy online, by phone or write to English Sweet Peas,  
Agricultural Research Station, Woodham Mortimer,  
MALDON, Essex CM9 6SN 01621 858868

## Letters to members of the Society

*(Please send your correspondence through to Julia [Membership Secretary] Carole [General Secretary] and/or me for this section of the Bulletin. We also welcome follow up answers, suggestions etc from all our members.)*

Hello (name withheld)

I hope you are keeping well. The seeds which you sent to me have been flowering for weeks now so I have had a good chance to study the blooms.

You reported that your 'Cupani' kept throwing "mottled", off-colours. Each year you removed these and only saved seeds from the plants which looked like 'Cupani' but the next year you still had a percentage of "mottled" plants. I have now identified the reason for this.

I grew your plants alongside 'Senator' for comparison. It is evident that your 'Cupani' is in fact heterozygous for the flaked gene, so a proportion of flakes appear in the next generation from the seed you save. I have plants with wild type colouring modified to display light, medium and dark flakes. The light flakes in your mixture are identical to 'Senator'. The dark flakes suggest a small, plain 'Earl Grey'. I should try to fix the medium and dark flakes, but they are notoriously difficult to fix compared with light flakes.

It will not be possible to "mend" your 'Cupani' so that it breeds true from seed. It is the nature of a heterozygous plant that you will always get the flakes appearing. I would be happy to send you some fresh 'Cupani' seeds if you wish. This is a rare example of a new mutation, albeit one which has occurred in the past and was first reported in 1818. I am very grateful to you for bringing it to my attention.

With best wishes Roger Parsons

### NSPS Medal - awarded July 20 – 22 1939 to WILLIAM KENT of OULTON GRANGE

Correspondence between Carole & Roger (NSPS) and Christine Montagu

I was able to find your email address from the National Sweet Pea Society website. I hope you do not mind me writing to you to try to find out how my grandfather came to be the recipient of an award from your society. I have inherited a rectangular gold coloured medal in a little box, and a silver fluted vase both of which were awarded to William Kent, my grandfather, on 20 July 1939, and inscribed as such.

He was a keen grower of sweet peas, and I know he exhibited at Southport Show and possibly Shrewsbury as well. Is it possible that the Society still holds the records which show details of how he won this honour in 1939? I would be most grateful for any information you may have. He lived in Oulton and Stone, Staffordshire.

Christine



The NSPS did have rectangular medals which were awarded to growers, often for 12 vases of 15 stems of sweet peas so your grandfather must have grown several hundred sweet pea plants. I will forward your request to Roger Parsons, who holds the Archives to see if he can confirm the awards were from our Society.

I am sure they are lovely mementos for you to keep.

Carole

Thank you for your enquiry about your grandfather's medal and vase. I have more information than I can usually provide to people on such a matter.

The National Sweet Pea Society held a show at Stoke-on-Trent on 20th-22nd July 1939 as part of the larger Stoke-on-Trent Show. Prizes would have been awarded on the first day. Mr William Kent of Oulton Grange, Stone, Staffs is listed as a member of the Society for that year alone, so he probably joined in order to compete at the show. There is a list of results which show your grandfather won classes 4, 6, 31, 33 and 34 but I do not have a schedule to tell us the class requirements. It is likely that classes 4 and 6 are multi-vase classes and the medal and vase are for one of these, or both. The other three classes are likely to be for a single vase with a specified range of flower colours.

I have now had the chance to read the newspaper report which you kindly sent and have matched this with the results in the Sweet Pea Annual. These show that the Six vase class for which your grandfather won the gold medal was class 4 and the Three vase class in which he came third was class 5. So, to win class 4 required him to stage 6 vases, each containing 15 stems of a single variety, so six distinct varieties. There were 20 entries in classes 4 and 5 so strong competition.

Roger



NATIONAL SWEET PEA

HELD in conjunction with the St. Louis Horticultural Society in Forest Park, on July 20, 21 and 22, the National Festival for Plants' Provincial exhibition was a success. The "size and quality of flowers were considered," but, possibly, the weather was the "the most important factor." The weather was very hot and humid, and the plants were not able to stand up in the heat to make locomotion possible. The weather was not consistent. Practically every entry was very poor, and the number of staging were very few. The exhibitors and proprietors of the show were not satisfied with the St. Louis Society, and received great pleasure in the beauty and the variety of the plants, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

In the open section, Messrs. E. W. Kline and Co. secured the premier award with a fine and well-grown specimen of *Asplenium nidus*, six feet by six feet; Mr. T. J. Weaver, Boston, came second, and Mr. W. J. Ziegler, third. In the closed section, Mr. W. H. Bostick, of St. Louis, received the first award for four blossoms, the President's Plate, BOSTICK AND SON, in fact, was the only exhibitor in the

In the open amateurs' section, the Society's Gold Medal and first prize were won by Mr. W. HARRISON, Tunton, for twelve vases of Sweet Peas; Mr. N. M. RICHARDS, Denbigh, was placed second, and received a Silver-gilt Medal; Mr. W. COAS, Banchory, third. For six vases of Sweet Peas, the Gold Medal and premier award were won by Mr. W. KENT, Gullion Grange, Stone, who was followed by Mr. RICHARDS and Mr. HARRISON. The best three vases were staged by Mrs. N. M. RICHARDS, Mr. HARRISON

second, and Mr. W. KENT, third. Competition was quite good in the District Class, which requires six vases of Sweet Peas each, and Mr. W. KENT was the first prize in each section. For the County of Staffordshire, Mr. W. KENT was the most successful competitor, followed by Miss P. A. HARRIS, Mr. G. BUNNELL, Esq., Mr. W. HARRIS, second prize, and Mr. W. MARTINEAU, Buxton, the second. Mr. E. LAIDLAW, Hull, was most successful among northern contestants, and won the first prize in the C. C. C. Section, in the Walsall first class. Mr. W. T. TEARE, Dorking, second first prize, in the Southern

The popular colour classes of Sweet Peas were well filled. Mr. W. H. Harewood won first prize in the pink, maize, cream, scarlet or orange, blue and any other colour classes. Mr. J. Knag had for a white, and for a

leven-year variety). Mr. W. Clegg won in the senior class, Mr. J. E. Clegg in the Pieced-edge class, and Mr. J. T. FAIRBURN in the Pieced-quilt class.

Mr. F. STEPHENSON, and Mr. J. D. HUNTER, Bayberry, were the most successful in the small growers' class, the former winning the first prize and the latter the second and the former a Gold Medal. Mr. J. FAIRBURN of Mr. W. K. KENT's class took two première awards in the same class.

For a dinner-table decoration of Sweet Peas, Mrs. J. H. COOPER, of Colne, Shropshire, Miss MARY BROWN, of Colne, and Mr. H. M. BROWN were also first prize winners. *Loc. cit.* you obtain a small bouquet of Sweet Peas.

For their handsome handbags, MRS. ROBERTSON, of Southport, and MRS. BETTYE AND ROBERTSON, of Southport, also won a Gold Medal, and also the Large Gold Medal of the year.

Mr. J. H. COOPER, of Southport, also won a Gold Medal for his Sweet Peas.

Firstly, may I thank you both so much for the trouble you have taken to send me information about my beloved grandfather's sweet pea growing days. He was extremely proud of the vase and the medal (photos attached) which have been passed down to me. I find it fascinating that he joined the society in 1939. I am gradually trying to piece together a timeline. Certainly, the family believes that he entered a number of competitions over the years, in part because the prize money came in very useful to augment the family income.

He also gave me an exercise book with cuttings and photographs. From your research I know now that the cutting (attached) was from 1939 (the year is not mentioned in the write up). The details may be of interest to you for your archives? I hope the resolution is good enough; please let me know if you would like me to resend.

Thank you very much for your help, especially when you are busy staging shows at this time of year.

Christine

## **Calling all Exhibitors!**

Message from our Chairman, Phil Johnson

As you will be aware by now, your committee has agreed to hold the Early National at RHS Wisley and the Late National at RHS Harlow Carr in 2022. You may also be aware that RHS have banned the use of traditional Oasis blocks as a staging material at their own shows. We had hoped that this would not apply to our shows held in their gardens. However, we were recently informed that this ruling would also apply to NSPS shows as well as to the National Dahlia Society and others.

The RHS decision to ban the use of Oasis and similar products relates to it not being biodegradable and containing micro-plastics, which of course is far from environmentally friendly. Whilst your committee appreciates and is aware of this aspect of our preferred staging material, we had hoped for a further year's grace to experiment further with alternative staging materials.

We have discussed a range of options for next year's shows and have today (21<sup>st</sup> September) agreed to continue with our original plan of venues and dates, however we will not be able to use the traditional Oasis that we have been using for many years now.

Opinions were also sought from several prominent exhibitors beyond the Committee, most of whom were strongly against holding shows in 2022 where Oasis could not be used. However, a majority of Committee members have voted to stage shows at RHS venues in 2022. I know this issue will divide opinion and I wish that a more satisfactory outcome could have been reached, but a decision has had to be made.

We have been in touch with the Oasis company and currently they have a Fibre Floral product available that the RHS are happy to accept. However, several members have trialled this product and found it unsuitable for Sweet Peas. But, there is light on the horizon; another of their products called Terrabrick, which we hope will prove to be more useful has also been developed and is being sold in a few countries (notably the USA) already. Terrabrick has yet to be launched in the UK, but we are told it will happen “soon”. Hopefully, this product will be available before the shows.

Please look out for further updates through our website, facebook and twitter pages and feeds. We will all be working hard in the meantime, in order to come up with other alternatives that may work, not only for the experienced exhibitor (who are used to using Oasis) We are particularly aware that for those who may be new to showing might need extra help and guidance, I am sure Committee members will be available to offer advice and assistance before and/or during staging time. Your committee is confident that we can still hold two amazing shows, just staged in a slightly different way!

Whilst I believe that it is important that NSPS is seen to be looking to the future with its use of staging materials – I just wish that we had a little more time!

## **The John Bishop Memorial Medal**

Graeme Hollingdale

As you will all be aware, the NSPS executive and committee are empowered to bestow one, some, many, or no awards each year to members who have fulfilled various criteria for certain awards. Recommendations are sought each year and co-ordinated by the general secretary and chairman (although if one, or both, have been nominated then it becomes very complicated) Secret votes are then collated, and often individual phone calls are required to make sure that if ties in the voting do exist, then majority decisions can be agreed. It can be a difficult situation to navigate when one or more of the committee are in line for awards, in order to keep these secret.

I became a little suspicious that something might be afoot earlier this year, ahead of when we would normally meet for the AGM and when the recipients of said awards would be announced; however, as the AGM had to take place via zoom and only for the official business which had to be done, matters were even more complicated than ever. However as other things filled the mind, I quickly forgot and moved on.

So, as we came to the end of judging at The Early and knowing that I had a deadline of noon before having to leave in order to refresh and re-load my car with all the correct gear for an afternoon and evening Orchestral job in North London, which meant that I couldn't stay as I normally would for the official prize giving, I was kept busy on various duties to assist the show manager (always very happy to do so of course) and then the chairman with setting up the alternatives to oasis display (that was a dispiriting exercise I can tell you, as very few of the options we had would even work in the slightest)

I was summoned into the awards area of the marquee to be greeted by our President John Carrier, who proceeded to make a short speech to the few still assembled (apparently John made the special effort to arrive early in order to do this; thank you John, very much appreciated) and present me with the John Bishop Memorial Medal.



It was a thrill to be nominated and then awarded the above medal (I found it quite hard to take a photo to make the inscription even slightly legible) for simply doing what I can to assist in the smooth running of our beloved and friendly Society. The fact that good friend, champion of the NSPS, near neighbour and founding member of the Chiltern Sweet Pea Society's name is on this award, makes it even more special to me.

This medal now proudly sits on my desk to the left of my iMac, where I spend an inordinate amount of time typing away (especially on Society business!) So I am constantly reminded of the NSPS's history and the need to keep us all focused whilst we face so many challenges to continue through this twenty first century. Thank you all who have helped, supported, encouraged, argued with me (so, discussed with passion) provided material for my editing jobs and last year the virtual show. It is no secret that I struggled a little mentally through the dark days of last year, whilst my livelihood (and to be honest, life itself) was destroyed by the combination of Covid and Government policy, so this award was particularly welcome this year.



Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking(!)

## **Report from the Classification sub-committee**

Roger Parsons

1. The 2021 novelties were assessed and allocated to the following colour categories:

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Allan Hodgson        | 5 maroon                      |
| Chrissie             | Semi-grandiflora              |
| Ella Mountbatten     | 16a bicolour                  |
| John Markham         | 14 orange red                 |
| King's Ransom        | 12 orange                     |
| Lynne and Chris      | 10c cerise pink (provisional) |
| Nightingale          | Modern Grandiflora            |
| Three Times as Sweet | Old-fashioned (provisional)   |
| Ullswater            | 9b pale blue (provisional)    |

2. Syd Dunscombe a 2020 novelty was confirmed as 14 orange red.
3. A review of other cultivars has meant that Lake Windermere, currently 9 dark blue, will be moved to 16a bicolour and Roy Phillips, currently 3a scarlet, was considered to be 3 cerise.

## **The Henry Eckford Memorial Medal Display in Wem**

Phillippa Cooper

When the RHS Malvern Spring Festival had to be cancelled I turned my attention to the Wem display. Although I had been in contact with the Wem Town Hall since the Autumn of 2020 it was not until the start of June when we were able visit the gallery area in person. It was then that I realised my A4 text panels would be dwarfed by the surroundings! The staff at the Town Hall were extremely helpful coming up with the final Victorian themed design for the text panels and mounting everything onto foam board for me.

Despite the rather variable (!) weather throughout the Spring I was pleased when 13 out of the 14 varieties of Old Fashioned blooms reached their peak at the start of July. As in previous years I found Henry Eckford more troublesome.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July I prepared the display, including 12 vases of individual varieties. I was pleased that it created a great deal of interest with people popping in to see what was happening.



The Mayor of Wem, Councilor Peter Broomhall, officially opened the display on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>. It was lovely that many of the Eckford Sweet Pea Society committee members were able to attend. Barrie Eckford brought along a selection of the medals and awards that had been presented to Henry Eckford throughout his career. These certainly greatly enhanced the display.



John and I returned to Wem the following week to produce a second floral display (The Eckford Sweet Pea Society show was always the third weekend in July) Despite the display originally being scheduled for two weeks this was altered to include all of August. I have been delighted by the positive comments, phone calls and also the publicity generated for Wem.

*Ed A more detailed report will appear in the 2022 Annual. We, the members of both the NSPS and the ESPS owe Phillipa and John a huge vote of thanks for all their efforts in keeping Old Fashioned sweet peas very much in the forefront of our minds and especially in connection with Wem. Subsequently, we are delighted to thank the Eckford Sweet Pea Society of Wem who are sponsoring the new 6 vase distinct classes (at both the Early and Late exhibitions) for Old Fashioned cultivars.*



## **CSPS SHOW Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Chris Gray (Show Manager)

Best Vase, Medal

Kathy Gray for her vase of 12 Gwendoline

Best Exhibit, Rosette

Derek Chapple for the Red Kite Class

Most points trophy (classes E - P)

Graeme Hollingdale

Wessex Trophy (small growers)

Jenny Morgan for her vase of Karen Louise

Chiltern Challenge Trophy

Kathy Gray

Everyone who took part or just visited, enjoyed a very successful and wonderful covid compliant show. We thank you for your support and welcome you in 2022 on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July to the Chilterns.

(For comparison purposes, the Chiltern show had entries 82, the Early National Show 153, the Late National 81 and the Northwest Regional, 88)

## **From your Membership Secretary**

Julia Beardmore

Our current bankers have informed us that they are to start applying Bank charges which takes effect from 1 November this year. We have previously enjoyed free Banking on a Community tariff. The charges applied are for Manual transactions, which includes cheques received for your Membership. It will cost 40 pence for each cheque we pay in; this is on top of a monthly charging tariff. We will not be charged for any automated payments; these are payments you make online.

I am making a request that when you renew your Membership, could you make a direct payment into the Society's Bank account. I am also happy for you to scan and email your completed Membership form to me, this will also save the cost of postage. All the details for renewal are on the renewal invite. I understand that not everyone is able to do online banking and that is okay, however it is rapidly becoming the norm. As I write this in September, the Society's Treasurer is currently exploring a new Bank who we are hoping will be able to offer more competitive Banking facilities.

**Can I ask everyone to amend my email address to [julia.nsps@outlook.com](mailto:julia.nsps@outlook.com) with immediate effect.** The reason for this is that the @blueyonder address is being bombarded by scammers and will be closed down as soon as possible.

## Earliness in Sweet Peas

Roger Parsons

Early-flowering in Sweet Peas arises from the ability of plants to initiate flowering on shorter daylength. This is popularly supposed to be about 10 hours of daylight for Winter-flowering cultivars, compared with about 12 hours for Summer-flowering cultivars. It is an unstable character, as with the Spencer flower form, so reselection is necessary from time to time in order to retain earliness. A good account of the origin of different early-flowering strains is given in Hammett (2000).

Earliness has arisen in a variety of different places so it appears that the mutation for early-flowering has occurred more than once. Ball (1930) provides a most detailed account of the origin in the USA. The first cultivar recognised as early flowering was 'Blanche Ferry', introduced by seedsman D M Ferry & Co. in 1889. This arose from perhaps unplanned reselection of 'Painted Lady' by a quarryman's wife in New York state over several decades to produce a strain which was considerably earlier than 'Painted Lady'.

It is a sign of those times that we know the stock was found for D M Ferry & Co. by W W Tracy, Sr. but recording the name of the good lady who did all the work was of no importance.

Planned selection for earliness now began when W Brotherton, an employee of D M Ferry & Co, spotted a few plants in 'Blanche Ferry' that were even earlier. This was introduced by Ferry in 1895 with the unimaginative name of 'Extra Early Blanche Ferry'. Rival firm W Atlee Burpee & Co trumped this with the introduction in 1898 of 'Earliest of All' followed in 1902 with the preposterously named 'Extreme Early, Earliest of All', selected in California by Thomas Gould.

All these had the same pink / white colouring of 'Painted Lady'. A colour break in 'Blanche Ferry' occurred with the introduction in 1894 by Peter Henderson & Co. of the white-flowered 'Emily Henderson'. Ernst Benary in Germany introduced 'Mont Blanc' in 1900 selected from 'Emily Henderson' which was as early as 'Earliest of All' but white-flowered. From these beginnings, it was then possible to develop a range of other colours by crossing with summer-flowering cultivars. A later evolution came when crosses were made with Spencer cultivars to produce Early Spencer cultivars.

All these developments can trace their origin as early-flowering back to 'Blanche Ferry'. Much of the expansion of colour range arose from Anton Zvolanek. His accounts of the origin of his cultivars were immodest, sometimes conflicting and, to a modern reader, sometimes unbelievable.

There may however be some truth in an article published in *The Florist's Review* on 13 April 1899 that he spotted an early-flowering plant in 'Lottie Eckford' which was selected and then crossed with 'Blanche Ferry'. Elsewhere, Carl G Engelmann of Saffron Walden, Essex, found in 1903 an early-flowering mutation in 'Captain of the Blues' which he claimed as the origin of a strain which he developed. These were not popular in the UK, nor were the Telemy strain developed by the Rev Edwyn Arkwright in Algiers.

The origin of Arkwright's strain is unclear but they had notably narrower leaflets. It is a reasonable assumption that neither Engelmann's nor Arkwright's strain played any significant part in the origin of the Early cultivars we have today.

By contrast, the Australian cultivar 'Yarrawa' has had a huge influence on today's cultivars. It arose independently in 1908 as a mutation in a Summer-flowering Spencer. This was in the New South Wales garden of a Mr. J Young and it was introduced by Arthur Yates & Co. in 1912. Kerr (1917) worked in the USA for Atlee Burpee and said of his crosses: "Since the introduction of 'Yarrawa' I have used it almost exclusively...". In fact, Australian cultivars of 1912-1932 relied significantly on American cultivars just as much as American cultivars relied on 'Yarrawa'.

The Gawler cultivars we know today arise from this fusion of cultivars from the two continents. Considerable breeding of early-flowering cultivars has taken place in Japan in recent decades but the origins of these are in relatively modern American cultivars.

So, we can say with certainty that the early-flowering character arose independently at least twice in 'Blanche Ferry' and 'Yarrawa'. It may also have arisen in part from early-flowering mutations in 'Captain of the Blues' and 'Lottie Eckford'.

#### References:

Ball, G J 1930. Better Sweet Peas. Florists Publishing, Chicago.  
Hammett, K R W 2000. Early Flowering Sweet Pea Strains, in NSPS Centenary Celebration 1900-2000 p.23-32.  
Kerr G W 1917. Sweet Peas Up-to-Date. Edn.4 Atlee Burpee & co, Philadelphia.  
Morse L L 1917. Field Notes on Sweet Peas. Edn.2 C C Morse & co, San Francisco.

## **Cupani's wild Sweet Pea**

Roger Parsons

'Cupani' is often stated to be the original Sweet Pea introduced in 1699 and this is quite wrong. I have a letter from Peter Grayson which explains the origin. Peter raised and in 1993 introduced 'Cupani's Original'. The name got shortened to 'Cupani' about 5 years later when one of the commercial seed packet companies started selling it. It has the flower size, flower number and vigour of an Eckford Grandiflora. Peter named it because he recognised that it is more primitive than 'Matucana' so thought it must be the same as the original introduction of 1699. Up till then, 'Matucana' was generally thought to represent a wild Sweet Pea. Peter was wrong because collections from the wild in Sicily are far more primitive than his 'Cupani's Original'

I sell three distinct taxa which all have the same flower colour and form, typical of the wild Sweet Pea:

**'Matucana'** is a Spencer throwback, has longer stems than Eckford varieties, is taller and more vigorous and it reliably produces four flowers per stem. Flowers are larger than Cupani.

**'Cupani'** or **'Cupani's Original'** has longer stems than the Wild Sweet Pea, is intermediate in height and vigour between wild plants and 'Matucana' and reliably produces threes, with occasional fours. Flowers are larger than the Wild Sweet Pea.

**The Wild Sweet Pea** - my stock was collected from the wild in Sicily in 1974 and came to me via Keith Hammett. It lacks vigour and is almost semi-dwarf. There are normally two flowers per stem, occasionally threes.

There was a second collection from the wild in Sicily in 1979 which John Macefield distributed to the trade as 'Cupani' until he realised that 'Cupani's Original' is not Cupani's original introduction. The current situation in the world seed market as I understand it is:

If you buy 'Matucana', you might get 'Matucana' or you might get 'Cupani', depending on where you buy it. It is still mistakenly advertised as the original introduction of 1699.

If you buy 'Cupani' or 'Cupani's Original', you might get 'Cupani' or you might get one of the wild collections, depending on where you buy it. It is still mistakenly advertised as the original introduction of 1699.

If you buy the Wild Sweet Pea, you should get the 1974 collection.

Remember Eckford's varieties were called Grandifloras because they were recognised as larger and better than what had gone before. In the 1840's, Carters introduced 'New Purple' with typical colouring but larger flowers. So, we can be confident that the two wild collections in the 1970's represent the original wild Sweet Pea introduced by Cupani.

An academic point is we don't know whether the seeds sent out by Cupani in 1699 were harvested from the wild. He first mentions the Sweet Pea in 1695 in a list of plants newly discovered in Sicily. Perhaps he grew the wild Sweet Pea in his monastery garden for a year or more to produce the seeds which were sent out.

# **Stepping up with Shows and Displays in 2021**

Julia Beardmore

After being locked down for the majority of 15 months from March 2020 and almost all shows being cancelled, it was good news when I received details that the RHS had made the decision to go ahead with RHS Tatton in July. The NSPS Early show at Abingdon and the Late at Harlow Carr were too going ahead; finally we had news that our North West Regional Show at Chorley was to be held and that they were increasing from a two to a three day show.

Stepping up a few gears after so long without events was both exciting and a little scary, all these shows taking place in a little over just a five-week period. The RHS Tatton from build-up to the final day being eight days in length.

Having a very late Spring, I wasn't expecting to have anything to show at the Early, however we had some lovely warm weather in June, so I was able to cut, transport and stage some entries in the decorative classes. It was good to meet up with Society members again; there was such a great atmosphere at the show. The benches looked good, although a few less entries than previous years (a sign of the current times perhaps?) but nevertheless a very good show. We ran our Society Bureau and had a tiered display of Species, which created much interest with the general public and society members, along with a good level of sales of the merchandise.

Two weeks later it was off to the Late at RHS Harlow Carr, which was held in their new Marquee set in the Gardens. This time round we were able to catch up with many Northern members who were again able to enjoy a good show. The Marquee was a great success. Our Bureau was incredibly busy at this event; Harlow Carr advertise well in advance our show, which encourages the Public to visit. We enrolled a good number of new Members, and bunches of Sweet Peas were selling as quickly as we could produce them. The Eckford of Wem display was also very popular.

One week later and it was the build-up to RHS Tatton. As the weeks leading up to this show got closer it was getting quite scary for me as I was taking over the reins from the master, Tom Atherton to manage the show. This could not have been done without the great teamwork of volunteers and of course Tom was there to help and advise.

We had some challenges; the first one being the new type of floral foam AgraWool, which is the only one which the RHS were allowing for floral decorations. We had a number of practice sessions with the floral arrangers down in Tom's polytunnel beforehand and I'm sure we all are in agreement; it is a very difficult product to use and is very time consuming for staging displays of sweet peas. The RHS had a new portal for registering volunteers' admission to the show; it had to be done to manage COVID 19 regulation and had many frustrating flaws to overcome. Then there was the weather; we experienced the hottest few days of the year, which as we all know, is not ideal for our delicate sweet peas.



Despite the challenges, we were awarded a Gold Medal for the stand plus a further award for the Best Display in the Marquee. The public were wowed with our stand, which was photographed constantly. We had a really good footfall and with the amount of seed sales, Northwest gardens should have some fabulous displays of 'peas next year; we certainly shared our knowledge with many people.



As we finished the Tatton show on Sunday 25 July, it was only 4 days to our final show at Chorley Flower Show where we hold our Northwest Regional Show. As we have both a Display stand and members' exhibits it's full on for Show Manager, Carole Tate and myself as Show Secretary, but again we had a wonderful team of volunteers, Mavis, John & Tricia, Peter, Nicky, Sarah, Liz Ross and Liz Farley, to assist with the staging.

Chorley Flower show didn't make any stipulations on the use of Floral Foam, however, we decided to use more vases and bowls with water storing gel beads and some chicken wire in the top. The central top tier arrangement was staged with various sizes of vases to get the semi-circle arrangement of Sweet Peas. We were delighted to be awarded a Gold Medal Award.



Once again we had another busy Bureau. A separate article will be written on the exhibition. Carole and I would like to thank the Judges and Stewards.

We have seen an increased level of visitors to our Bureau this year, which I believe is down to the public's increased interest in gardening during the pandemic. We gained a good level of new members at the shows, and hope that we can continue to welcome new members to the Society.

My thanks go to the supply of quality flowers from Kevin Preston from Carnforth and John Rowlands from North Wales, Matt Lloyd from Blackburn and Catherine Bromley whose *Latifolius* took centre of the Display stand and all who brought flowers and foliage from your gardens.

We have a great team of volunteers who arranged and staged the stands and manning the Bureaus at Tatton and Chorley. I would also just mention that you are the people that make it all happen and you are a great bunch of people!

*Ed A huge thanks to Julia, Carole, those mentioned by name above and all those unnamed others who have helped in whatever capacity to put on shows and displays in the name of the NSPS and other regional and local societies' shows, exhibitions and displays across the country. They certainly helped to bring back normality into our lives and to promote our favourite flower. Thank you all.*



## Matthewman's Sweet Peas



David Matthewman has been growing and showing sweet peas for over 40 years.

Recent introductions, raised by David, include Harrogate Gem, Night Sky and Together – all fantastic new varieties, grown in Yorkshire.



Matthewman's Sweet Peas brings quality sweet pea seeds from an expert, award winning grower to exhibitors and gardeners alike.

Visit [www.sweetpeasonline.co.uk](http://www.sweetpeasonline.co.uk) for our full range of sweet pea seeds, or contact Matthewman's Sweet Peas Ltd, 0121 706 7833

## **Update on Schedules & Nationals Exhibitions 2022**

### Schedule sub-committee

With thanks to Gill and Brian Thompson for hosting, the above sub-committee who met on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to discuss many things all connected with the exhibitions that the NSPS run each year. We reflected on the last couple of seasons with specific attention to changing patterns of entries and types of Lathyrus that are being grown and entered in the shows. Members present apart from the above were Caroline Ball (chair) Graeme Hollingdale (schedule editor/scribe) and Darren Everest; apologies had been received from Phil Johnson and Roger Parsons, who had sent ahead written comments for us to consider. We also had plenty of data supplied by the general secretary to assist us. The results of this comprehensive review were submitted to the general committee ahead of the meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September, with all the proposed alterations subsequently being agreed unanimously.

Venues, and the looming issue of not being able to use oasis becoming ever more of a possibility was also uppermost in our minds. Darren being a very active member and exhibitor of the National Dahlia Society was able to give us some very useful inside knowledge about how this had been affecting the national dahlia shows, held on RHS premises.

When you receive your schedules, you will notice that the entry form has had a makeover. Due to the amount of information now required, instead of one side of B4 size as it has been for many years now, it will be a folded A4 sheet, blank on the rear, for you to duplicate (or download from the website) in order to send your entries through and provide all the information in one place. Significant differences reflect our and society in general's accelerated changed behavior over the recent period; for instance, sending entries via email, paying entry fees direct via BACS, assisting members who wish to donate any prize money they win back to the society (a very big thank you to those who have been doing so, especially this year) enabling prize money to also be paid direct into your accounts instead of using cheques (which now not only incur postage costs but also bank charges) and expressing permission to have any award cards that you may win, also to be sent electronically.

One recurring issue that continues to cause frustration, particularly to organisers and managers of the shows is the number of exhibitors who fail to abide by the entry deadlines and rules.

It is very true that managers are always as flexible and helpful as they possibly can; please remember that sending entries after the deadline and/or continually making alterations even up to the day when staging your exhibits, is immensely time-consuming and frustrating and disrupts carefully thought-out plans. It is also very helpful that if you know you are not able to exhibit an entry that you previously hoped to, informing the show manager as early as possible that you have pulled out of that class can be incredibly helpful. If this is you, then please do as the majority do and enter well ahead of the deadline, all the possible classes that you would hope to be able to stage.

We are all growers ourselves and obviously understand the effect of weather on our temperamental flower, however unless you have personally overseen running even a local show, then you will not necessarily appreciate the headaches that can be caused. Entry fees are not high and in most cases these days, if you stage an entry, in most classes (if your entry is deemed by the judges to be worthy and conforms to the schedule of course) then you will receive at least a third-place prize. None of us grow and exhibit our flowers to earn money, we do it for pleasure, a challenge and to enjoy that competitive spirit up against our fellow enthusiasts in a friendly environment. Plus, we get to bask in that indefinable pleasure from having the public admire all our hard work and who knows, we may even pick up a trophy or a piece of cut glass.

Several regulations (or show rules as they are often referred as) have had to be clarified or adjusted. Please particularly notice regulations 5, 6, 9, 22, 23 and please also note the general information listed at the bottom of the list, as this has also been adjusted.

In order to reflect the continuing increasing popularity of the alternative types to Spencers to be grown and be exhibited, more decorative classes will allow these types to be used alongside each other; there is a new six vase distinct class for recognised Old Fashioned cultivars kindly sponsored by The Eckford Society of Wem and entitled “The Val and John Good Class” (recognising the amount of work that has taken place over many years to re-invigorate popularity of these lovely types of sweet pea that has gone on in and around that town which has so much affinity with Henry Eckford) and a new three vase distinct class for Modern Grandiflora and/or semi-grandiflora cultivars, kindly sponsored by Phil Johnson.

In view that our classification list now includes novelties of the Modern Grandiflora/semi-grandiflora, not only are they eligible in the seedling class but now also in the Unwin and Alsen (novelty) classes.

A “watch-list” has been produced in order to keep a close eye on those classes that are regularly not attracting any entries or only ever the occasional one, for possible deletion in future years. Several single vase classes and notably class 14 are under review. As we have over recent years added several additional classes to reflect trends, we must be mindful that other classes may need to be culled.

\*Please note that these alterations publicised in this article were agreed before we became fully aware that oasis might possibly not be allowed to be used in 2022. If this happens, then obviously further revisions and clarifications will have to be produced.

Specific class adjustments, typographical errors corrected, new classes added etc:

## **SPECIAL AWARDS**

It was clarified that cultivars eligible for the COLLEDGE PRIZE (best vase of a Lavender) can be from classified list classes 8 (Lavender) and 8a (Lavender flush)

## **SPECIAL CLASSES**

CLASS C will be a new class (open to all) for 6 vases distinct, not more than 9 stems in each vase (Spencers)

CLASS D will be a new class (open to all) for 3 vases distinct, not more than 9 stems in each vase (Spencers)

CLASS E which was the old class C (ALSEN NOVELTY) will allow novelties listed in the 2022 classification list as Grandiflora or Semi-Grandiflora types to be entered

CLASS F which was the old class D (UNWIN) will additionally state NO STAGING MATERIALS to be used (as was the E R Janes vase in 2021) and will also allow cultivars classified as Grandiflora and/or Semi-Grandiflora types to be entered

CLASS G which was the old class E will be renamed “**The Society 20**” – suggestions please for a better title – the old name is to be moved to the decorative division at the request of the family of Frances Williams, as she was not a lover of vase exhibits!

## **DIVISION 6**

CLASS 51 will be a new 6 vases distinct class (not more than 12 stems in each vase) for recognised Old Fashioned cultivars.

CLASS 56 will also be the new 3 vase distinct class not more than 12 stems, for Grandiflora &/or Semi-Grandiflora cultivars.

The numberings in this division would now be from 50 – 60 as a consequence of these additional classes

## **DECORATIVE DIVISION 7**

The class numberings will now be from 61 – 68

CLASS 61 is to be standardised in both shows to require 25 stems

CLASS 63 The TOM BAINES class is to have the words “suitable for a christening” and “accessories allowed” to be deleted

CLASS 65 in the Early Show, the CORNISH BOWL is to have the cultivar *Maudie Best* deleted as it was actually introduced by Charlie Malin and never should have appeared in this list (a mystery as to how this came to happen many years ago!)

CLASS 65 in the Late Show, the YORKSHIRE BOWL is to emphasise that seedlings are not eligible as named cultivars (ie in commerce) must be used and named

CLASS 66 the DRIFTWOOD class is to be renamed the FRANCES WILLIAMS MEMORIAL CLASS

As a trial, we are going to allow all forms of Lathyrus Odoratus in the decorative classes in this division only, except where there are specifically forbidden ie Classes 61 and 65.

## **Introduction of Sweet Peas into New Zealand**

Roger Parsons

In “*Lathyrus: The Complete Guide*”, published earlier this year, I briefly refer to when Sweet Peas were introduced into some countries. For New Zealand, I simply say that Sweet Peas were grown in the Dunedin area by the 1880s, perhaps earlier. Information has now come to light which shows the Sweet Pea was introduced into New Zealand much earlier than previously known. I am grateful for information on this to Dr Keith Hammett but primarily to Claire Bibby of New Zealand, whose great, great grandfather Edward Bibby (1829-1901) was a friend of William Colenso (1811-1899).

British explorer James Cook reached New Zealand in October 1769. He was the first to circumnavigate and map New Zealand. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the country was regularly visited by explorers, missionaries, traders and adventurers. In 1840 a treaty was signed between the British Government and Maori chiefs which brought New Zealand into the British Empire. Pressure from settlers to acquire land led to frequent warfare between the Maori and settlers between 1843 and 1872. We now have evidence that Sweet Peas were introduced into New Zealand by the 1840s.

William Colenso was a botanist and Christian missionary who visited the Maori of the Hawke’s Bay area in the early 1840s. When travelling to Mahia, his diary records for 15 December 1843: “At 4pm we descended to the seaside, where we halted by a stream to roast a few potatoes. I was gratified to find the English Sweet Pea (Painted Lady, var.) flourishing luxuriantly in this solitary spot, when or how introduced must be quite conjectural” (Colenso Society 2019).

Few white people had visited the Hawke’s Bay area prior to 1843 and those who had are recorded in Reed (1958). The first of these was Barnett Barnes in 1829 but the person who stands out as a possible source of the Sweet Peas is Frederick Wilhelm Christian Sturm (b.1810-11 d.1896), an Austrian naturalist who settled on the Mahia peninsular in 1839. Sturm walked from Mahia to Wellington and back in 1839-40. He made the same journey in 1842, returning in 1843. On both occasions he would have walked along the coast past the area where Colenso found his ‘Painted Lady’ (Sturm 2018).

Sturm settled with a Maori named Ani Hinetai, who died in 1842 giving birth to their daughter, Elizabeth. Following this, he wandered about, making various journeys in search of curiosities. “He collected botanical specimens and planted seeds as he travelled”.

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1s27/sturm-friedrich-wilhelm-christian>

In 1846 or 1847 he settled with another Maori woman, Hinerakau (Henriette) and became a horticulturist at Nuhaka (Sturm 2018). From 1865, he settled as a nurseryman at Clive specialising in top fruit. He discovered a species of Cabbage-tree at Lake Waikaremoana and took seeds to grow at his nursery. It was named in his honour by William Colenso as *Cordyline sturmeii*.

Colenso himself was a remarkable person and a summary of his many achievements and failings can be seen at

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1c23/colenso-william>

The Colenso sweet pea sighting was authenticated by viewing a copy of his original diary entry courtesy of the Hocken Library, Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand and the account of Sturm's travels was viewed in a copy of original documents of his testimony in the 1887 Porangahau Land Hearing, which is included in Sturm 2018 as an appendix.

So Sweet Peas appear to have been introduced into New Zealand from very early times. Claire has also found a reference in the Otago Witness newspaper of 16 August 1851 which says that Sweet Pea flowers can be kept in bloom all winter.

#### References:

Colenso Society 2019 The Early Journals, the Missionary Years 1834-53 :164-165 diaries of William Colenso transcribed by the Colenso Society, New Zealand.

Kenicer, G & Parsons R 2021 *Lathyrus: The Complete Guide*. Royal Horticultural Society, London.

Otago Witness, Issue 14, 16 August 1851, :2

Reed, A H 1958 *The Story of Hawke's Bay* :40 AH & AW Reed, Wellington, New Zealand.

Sturm, L 2018 *Forgotten Footprints FWC Sturm: Naturalist, Botanist & Nurseryman*: 12-13, 30, 37, 46, 89 Self-published, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand.

# Early National Exhibition Audits 2021

## The Early Show Frost's Garden Centre, Abingdon 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Carole Tate & Chris Gray

| No | Name of Cultivar  | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | unplaced | Total | Colour            | Class |
|----|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|    | <b>SPENCERS</b>   |     |     |     |          |       |                   |       |
| 1  | Gwendoline        | 4   | 2   | 1   |          | 7     | Pale magenta      | 4a    |
| 2  | Anniversary       | 3   | 1   | 2   | 1        | 7     | Picotee           | 15    |
|    | White Frills      | 3   | 1   | 2   | 1        | 7     | White             | 1     |
| 4  | Jilly             | 4   |     |     |          | 4     | Cream             | 2     |
|    | Sir Jimmy Shand   | 3   | 1   |     |          | 4     | Fancy             | 16    |
|    | Windsor           | 3   | 1   |     |          | 4     | Maroon            | 5     |
|    | Mrs Bernard Jones | 2   | 1   | 1   |          | 4     | Rose pink         | 10b   |
| 8  | Karen Louise      | 2   | 1   |     |          | 3     | Lavender          | 8     |
| 9  | Bristol           | 2   |     |     |          | 2     | Pale blue         | 9b    |
|    | Evie Jones        | 2   |     |     |          | 2     | Magenta           | 4     |
|    | Leominster Boy    | 2   |     |     |          | 2     | Orange pink       | 13    |
|    | Mary Priestley    | 2   |     |     |          | 2     | White             | 1     |
|    | Pink Pearl        | 2   |     |     |          | 2     | Pale pink         | 10    |
|    | Queen of Hearts   | 2   |     |     |          | 2     | Fancy             | 16    |
| 15 | Eclipse           | 1   | 1   |     |          | 2     | Mauve             | 7     |
|    | Millenium         | 1   | 1   |     |          | 2     | Red               | 3b    |
|    | Naomi Nazareth    | 1   | 1   |     |          | 2     | Pale blue         | 9b    |
|    | White Supreme     | 1   | 1   |     |          | 2     | White             | 1     |
|    | Fields of Fire    |     | 2   |     |          | 2     | Red (Scarlet)     | 3a    |
|    | Gilly Norah       |     | 2   |     |          | 2     | Salmon pink       | Nov   |
|    | Alan Titchmarsh   | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Rose Pink (creme) | 11b   |
|    | Ballerina Blue    | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Blue              | 9a    |
|    | Bills Choice      | 1   |     |     |          | 1     |                   |       |
|    | Charlotte Emma    | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Rose Pink (white) | 10b   |
|    | Grandma Butt      | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Magenta           | 4     |
|    | Gwawr Cymru       | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Picotee (creme)   | 15a   |
|    | Happy Birthday    | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Orange Red        | 14    |
|    | Harrogate Gem     | 1   |     |     |          | 1     |                   |       |
|    | Honeymoon         | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Lavender (Flush)  | 8a    |
|    | John William      | 1   |     |     |          | 1     |                   |       |
|    | Judith Wilkinson  | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Magenta           | 4     |
|    | Lady Nicholson    | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Fancy             | 16    |
|    | Memorial Flight   | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | White             | 1     |
|    | Mr P              | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Fancy             | 16b   |
|    | Oban Bay          | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Blue (Pale)       | 9b    |
|    | Solitude          | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Lavender          | 3     |
|    | Southbourne       | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Pale Pink (white) | 10    |

| No | Name of Cultivar      | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | unplaced | Total | Colour              | Class |
|----|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| 15 | Joe Jess              |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Orange              | 12    |
|    | Laila K               |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Cerise pink         | 10c   |
|    | Mollie Rilstone       |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Picotee (creme)     | 15a   |
|    | Our Harry             |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Mid blue            | 9a    |
|    | Sally Maitland        |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Magenta             | 4     |
|    | Somerset Lady         |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Magenta             | 4     |
|    | Tutti Frutti NT       |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Fancy (striped)     | 16    |
|    | Winston Churchill     |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Red (Crimson)       | 3b    |
|    | Just Julia            |     |     | 1   |          | 1     | Mid blue            | 9a    |
|    | Patricia Marilyn      |     |     | 1   |          | 1     | Pale Pink (white)   | 10    |
|    | Precious              |     |     | 1   |          | 1     | Rose Pink (white)   | 10b   |
|    | Olivia Grace          |     |     |     | 1        | 1     | Blue (Dark)         | 9     |
|    | Seedlings             | 2   | 1   |     |          | 3     |                     |       |
|    | TOTALS                | 59  | 25  | 9   | 3        | 96    |                     |       |
|    | <b>NON SPENCERS</b>   |     |     |     |          |       |                     |       |
| 1  | Prince Edward of York | 2   | 1   |     |          | 3     | Red/Pink            | OF    |
| 2  | America               |     | 1   | 1   |          | 2     | Red flake           | OF    |
|    | Black Knight          |     |     | 1   | 1        | 2     | Dark maroon         | OF    |
|    | Mrs Collier           |     |     | 1   | 1        | 2     | Cream               | OF    |
|    | Chrissie              | 1   |     |     | 1        | 2     | Lavender            | SG    |
|    | King Size Navy Blue   |     | 2   |     |          | 2     | Navy Blue           | SG    |
| 7  | Dorothy Eckford       | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | White               | OF    |
|    | Henry Eckford         | 1   |     |     |          | 1     | Orange Scarlet      | OF    |
|    | Countess Cadogen      |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Violet/Light Blue   | OF    |
|    | Senator               |     | 1   |     |          | 1     | Maroon/Violet flake | OF    |
|    | Miss Willmott         |     |     | 1   |          | 1     | Orange pink         | OF    |
|    | Scarlett              |     |     | 1   |          | 1     | Red                 | Gr    |
|    | Creme Eggs            |     |     |     | 1        | 1     | Cream, Violet edge  | Gr    |
|    | Cupani                |     |     |     | 1        | 1     | Maroon/violet       | OF    |
|    | Sicilian Pink         |     |     |     | 1        | 1     | Pink bicolour       | OF    |
|    | Total Non Spencers    | 5   | 6   | 5   | 6        | 22    |                     |       |
|    | Mixed Vases           | 8   | 6   | 4   | 4        | 22    |                     |       |
|    | Total Vases           | 72  | 37  | 18  | 12       | 139   |                     |       |
|    | Decoratives inc Bowls | 13  | 8   | 3   | 1        | 25    |                     |       |
|    | TOTALS                | 85  | 45  | 21  | 14       | 165   |                     |       |

**The Late Show RHS Harlow Carr, Harrogate 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

Carole Tate

| No                  | Name of Cultivar            | 1st       | 2nd       | 3rd      | unplaced | Total     | Colour            | Class |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------------|-------|
| <b>SPENCERS</b>     |                             |           |           |          |          |           |                   |       |
| 1                   | White Frills                | 5         | 3         | 1        |          | 9         | White             | 1     |
| 2                   | Gwendoline                  | 6         | 1         |          |          | 7         | Pale magenta      | 4a    |
| 3                   | Pink Pearl                  | 3         | 1         |          |          | 4         | Pale pink         | 10    |
| 4                   | Karen Louise                | 2         |           |          |          | 2         | Lavender          | 8     |
|                     | Queen of Hearts             | 2         |           |          |          | 2         | Fancy             | 16    |
|                     | Betty Maiden                | 1         | 1         |          |          | 2         | Fancy             | 16    |
| 7                   | Happy Birthday              | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Orange red        | 14    |
|                     | John Williams               | 1         |           |          |          | 1         |                   |       |
|                     | Kippen Cream                | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Cream             | 2     |
|                     | Marjorie Carrier            | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Orange pink       | 13    |
|                     | Mary Priestley              | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | White             | 1     |
|                     | Naomi Nazareth              | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Pale blue         | 9b    |
|                     | Parsifal                    | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Lavender          | 8     |
|                     | Patricia Marilyn            | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Pale Pink (white) | 10    |
|                     | Promise                     | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Fancy             | 16a   |
|                     | Sir Jimmy Shand             | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Fancy             | 16    |
|                     | Windsor                     | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Maroon            | 5     |
| 18                  | Heaven Scent                |           | 1         |          |          | 1         | Pale Pink (creme) | 11    |
|                     | Mumsie                      |           | 1         |          |          | 1         | Red               | 3b    |
|                     | Seedlings                   | 3         |           |          |          | 3         |                   |       |
|                     | <b>TOTALS</b>               | <b>33</b> | <b>8</b>  | <b>1</b> |          | <b>42</b> |                   |       |
| <b>NON SPENCERS</b> |                             |           |           |          |          |           |                   |       |
| 1                   | Mrs Collier                 | 1         | 1         |          |          | 2         | Cream             | OF    |
| 2                   | America                     | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Red flake         | OF    |
|                     | Cupani                      | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Maroon/violet     | OF    |
|                     | Miss Willmott               | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | Orange pink       | OF    |
|                     | Romeo                       | 1         |           |          |          | 1         | White/blue edge   | Gr    |
| 6                   | High Scent                  |           |           | 1        |          | 1         | Cream/lilac edge  | SG    |
|                     | Wretham Pink/Janet Scott    |           |           | 1        |          | 1         | Pale pink (white) | OF    |
|                     | <b>Total Non Spencers</b>   | <b>5</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b> |          | <b>8</b>  |                   |       |
|                     | <b>Mixed vases</b>          | <b>5</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>13</b> |                   |       |
|                     | <b>Total vases</b>          | <b>42</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>61</b> |                   |       |
|                     | <b>Decorative inc bowls</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>6</b>  | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>20</b> |                   |       |
|                     | <b>TOTALS</b>               | <b>51</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>81</b> |                   |       |

## Other Species at the Early National 2021

Photo's c/o Caroline Ball, captions c/o you know who

Whilst the exhibitors displayed, the manager managed, the judges deliberated, the stewards recorded and the public admired and inhaled, other forms of life was spotted in and around the marquee in deepest Oxfordshire!

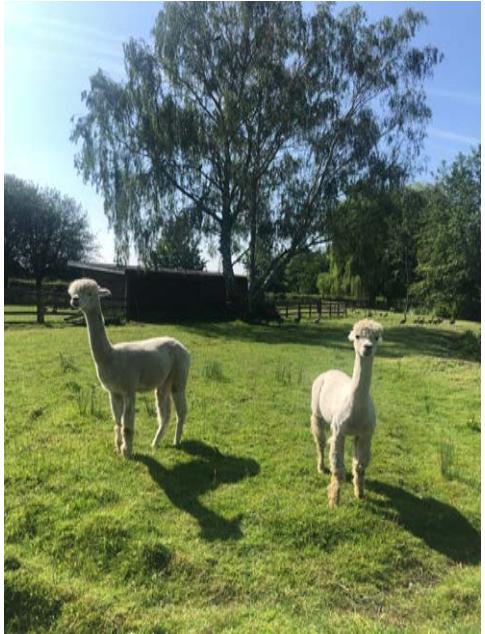
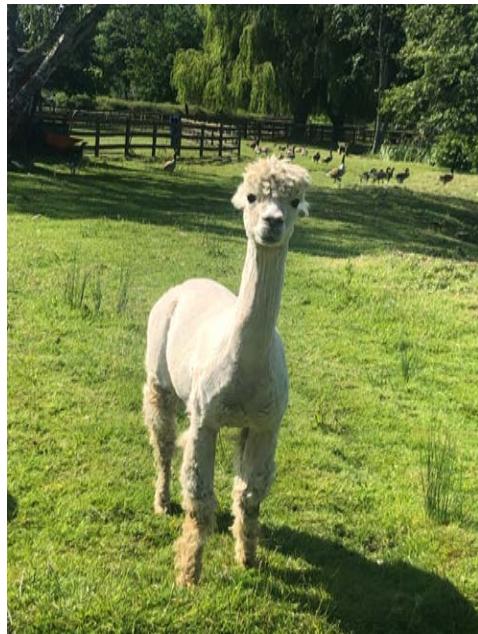


Security hard at work #1



Security hard at work #2





Allarm(a) calls for tired exhibitors?



The Killer Rabbit of Caerbannog? (If you know, you know!)

## **Have you Discovered.....**

Roger Parsons

Two websites which may be of interest to members:

<https://www.rpsweetpeas.com/epithets/> has details of around 7,200 Sweet Pea epithets (names) from the past 320 years. These can be downloaded as a spreadsheet, and it is hoped that people will find this useful as a reference. The term epithet is used for its specific meaning under the International Code governing the naming of plants. Recognised cultivar names are highlighted in bold type. Alongside the epithets are details showing:

1. Which *Lathyrus* species the epithet refers to.
2. The flower form. For Sweet Peas these may be Spencer, Semi-grandiflora or Grandiflora.
3. The earliest publication identified which includes this epithet.
4. The raiser and/or seedsman introducing this cultivar.
5. The year when introduced to general cultivation. Cultivars introduced after July of a year have the following year listed.
6. Height. Most are tall but some are semi-dwarf or dwarf.
7. Leaf form. Most are unijugate (two leaflets plus tendrils) but some are multijugate (many leaflets and no tendrils).
8. Flower number. Most are pauciflora (four or less flowers per raceme) but some are multiflora (more than four flowers per raceme).
9. Petals. Most are simplex, with typical pea flower form. Some have additional petals and are termed duplex.
10. Season of flowering. These are approximate but indicative.

A second downloadable file on this web page gives mini biographies of all raisers. Details of epithets and raisers are incomplete so please let Roger Parsons know of any errors and omissions. A third file lists the sources used in compiling this register. Again, it is incomplete so please let Roger know if you have access to any source not listed, particularly very old seed catalogues.

## **Grasspea.net**

For decades now, research has been carried out on *Lathyrus sativus* to make it safer and more productive as a food crop and for animal fodder. A good new website brings together those working on the species, so much information on it can be found at [www.grasspea.net](http://www.grasspea.net) This species has dozens of common names around the world but was traditionally known in the USA as the Grass Peavine. Modern researchers have shortened this to Grass Pea, a name traditionally used in the UK for *Lathyrus nissolia*.

## **Alternative Staging Methods**

Contributions from various members

### **1. Possible Alternatives to Oasis?**

Brian Thompson

This subject has been brought to my attention due to learning that the RHS are banning the use of oasis from all of their sites and shows.

I have been showing sweet peas since the mid 60's when oasis was unheard of in the north of England where I lived, so I learned way back then how to display sweet peas using reeds/rushes; unfortunately, even those cannot be foraged for anymore. However, there are still a number of options that can be used until hopefully, Oasis or another manufacturer will bring out an eco-friendlier substitute, so here goes with just a few.

I once visited a Scottish National and they were using heather in their vases; I had a go and although it wasn't as good as reeds it was a good substitute. Once again, this cannot be foraged from the wild but if you grow your own it is a good alternative. One of my fellow exhibitors who also lived in the Lake District, successfully used apples, cut and shaped in a similar way to how we use oasis. I have tried it and it does work remarkably well. I made a hole through the apple so that water could be absorbed to keep the apple moist. It's a bit time-consuming but definitely OK.



I followed the apple trial using a courgette (see photos above, the left hand one using an apple, the right a courgette) which are also readily available. I left my experiments in the apple and courgette for 2 days and they lasted well. To sum up, we can find alternative solutions to oasis if we must and are both creative and open-minded. I am sure members of the NSPS will not only come up with many more alternatives and ideas but hopefully use every opportunity at shows and other events at any relevant venue, to give demonstrations and have discussions on this subject.

The final picture shows (left to right) stalks in an apple, in water, and in a courgette.



## **2. Really?**

Anon

Andy rang up the Askham Bryant floral dept and they suggested using these with moss and chicken wire. One of the reviews suggested they could be used unravelled, as anti-slug and snail barriers! (A1SONIC® Copper Pan Scouring pad)



---

## **3. Notes on alternative staging materials**

Alison Shreeve

So far, I have used 4 different materials readily available. I used the stems of Lathyrus Latifolius without the seed pods which were too heavy. The stems are probably a little thinner than Odoratus and I placed 15 in a vase. I had a couple (literally) of sweet pea flowers and used these and other flowers to test the longevity in the mediums used.

**NB none of these mediums can be topped up with water, once staged as it moves the stems!**

**Damp Sand.** Fill vase with dry sand and then water until soaked but no water sitting on the top of the sand. This was by far the best. Stems held well over several days and the flower lasted for two days. Stems could be readjusted to a certain extent. The third photo is after 5 days!



**Rice** (raw, uncooked) This swells of course, so would have to be pre-soaked. Staging was possible and stems held, but after 2 days began to smell unpleasant. Flowers survived OK.



**Polenta** (raw) This was not too bad but more difficult when placing more stems as they shifted a bit more. This of course expanded over the top of the vase, so created a mess! It too was unpleasant after a couple of days.

**Red Lentils (raw)** It held stems until it swelled too much. Would need some pre-soaking and I suspect would not support 15 flowering stems for long.



**Apple (raw)** I used a windfall apple – these will not be available of course in July! It was easy to pierce with a skewer and appeared to keep relatively fresh. The water in the vase was touching the apple and if you made two holes topping up would be possible.



**Potato (raw)** This was difficult to cut and shape to the vase (see photos above) and almost impossible to get a skewer in. It might have been the variety of potato of course! However, it did hold things in place. As with the apple, topping up is feasible.



### **Summary:**

Damp sand is the best so far but needs further trials with blooming stems and finding the optimum grain size. The sand I used had been in a tin for about 40 years, labelled 'Show Sand' – it came from my partner's parents and is very fine and very dry. I suspect horticultural sand will be coarser and might not work as well, but that's my next step. Builders' sand is also on my horizon.

With both the apple and potato I used lavender stems. These are thinner than sweet peas of course and making more and larger holes might cause the medium to break up. Neither smelled too bad after a couple of days but the dahlias I put in did appear to be limp after one day, so I'm not sure about the watering properties of these two mediums.

## **Postlude (a personal view)**

Graeme Hollingdale

There is no doubt that we have moved into a different period with the NSPS. Generally, membership numbers have continued, albeit at a slower rate, to decline. There are fewer exhibitors staging at our (and other) shows. Methods we have become accustomed to using in order to stage our blooms are having to be rapidly revised.

With the whole country seemingly to be in a more stressful state than before the last round of general elections, including the outcome of Brexit (whichever way you voted, the reality is far from what was promised – we shouldn't be surprised though, given our track record with promises from successive governments) and of course Covid. Undeniably all of these must take a proportion of blame.

However, we as individuals can collectively support each other and I really hope we all continue to uphold the values we have enjoyed throughout the long history of the NSPS. We have always been very proud to be members of our correctly self-entitled, "Friendly Society"; with our compassion, support and non-discriminatory attitudes towards everyone connected with us.

When we last asked you, our fellow members, to complete a questionnaire about our future, one of the most desired aspects was to have more meetings and activities take place at a local level, as the AGM and Exhibitions by their very nature, are further away from the majority of us and significant travelling is necessarily involved.

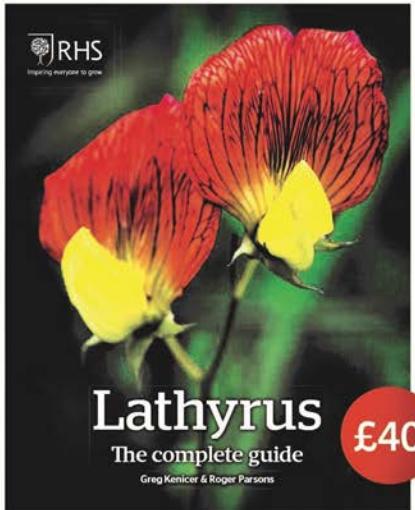
From the information I have to hand, there are four main areas where this is happening: in the Chilterns, the Northwest, Wales and Yorkshire. If there are others, then please send me the information so that, through the Bulletins, we can spread the word. As mentioned on page 6, we do have a significant network of District Reps (there are a few vacancies) please continue your proactive work in the areas where you reside, in order to give the wider membership (and new members still to join) more local events. Plus, let me know what is going on so that I can publicise in the Spring Bulletin. With the issues surrounding alternative staging materials, this is even more important this year.

# Lathyrus

The complete guide  
by Greg Kenicer & Roger Parsons

This latest horticultural monograph reveals the fascinating horticulture, botany and history of sweet pea and its many attractive relatives

- ＊ All 150 species described
- ＊ More than 500 sweet pea cultivars and 25 other *Lathyrus* cultivars illustrated and fully described
- ＊ The botany and classification of the genus, including its world distribution and habitats
- ＊ Advice on cultivation and other ways to use sweet peas and *Lathyrus* in gardens



Available from RHS Garden bookshop at Wisley and online at:  
[rhs.org.uk/shop](http://rhs.org.uk/shop)

**T: 01483 211320 E: [mailorder@rhs.org.uk](mailto:mailorder@rhs.org.uk)**

Also available from the RHS, *Hedera: the complete guide*, *Wisteria: the complete guide* and *Colchicum: the complete guide*