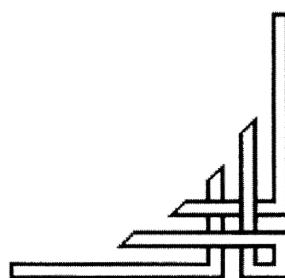
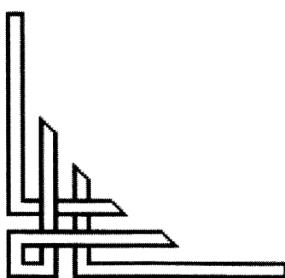




National Sweet Pea Society

Registered Charity No: 226802

2023 Autumn Bulletin





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NATIONAL SWEET PEA SOCIETY

Registered Charity No: 226802

AUTUMN BULLETIN 2023

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

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Dates for your Diary

[correct at the time of editing]

Weds 8 Nov 2023	Committee meeting via Zoom (With a “meet your committee” invitation to D Reps, beforehand. For info, please contact Roz Warley, D R’s Co-ordinator)	Committee members only
Weds 14 Feb 2024	Committee meeting	Committee members only
Saturday 2 March	NSPS AGM & Spring Social Via Zoom	All paid up members
Wednesday 24 April	NSPS Committee meeting Face to face meeting, venue tbc	Committee members only
Sunday 23 June	Chiltern Sweet Pea Society Show Lacey Green Bucks	Members’ Competition
Weds 26 – Thurs 27 June	Early National Exhibition RHS Hilltop, Wisley	Members’ Competition Display & Bureau
Sat 13 – Sun 14 July	Late National Exhibition RHS Bridgewater Gardens Worsely	Members’ Competition Display & Bureau
Weds 19 – Sun 23 July	RHS Tatton Park	Display & Bureau
Fri 26 – Sun 28 July	North West Regional Show At Chorley Flower Show	Members’ Competition Display & Bureau
Thurs 15 – Sun 18 Aug	Southport Show	Display & Bureau
Wednesday 11 September	Committee meeting via Zoom	Committee members only
Wednesday 13 November	Committee meeting via Zoom	Committee members only

Introduction/Editorial

Once again, thank you very much to everyone who has contributed to this edition; be it with fully illustrated articles, scraps of information or proof reading. Every little helps as someone once said; I cannot produce these publications without you all.

Just a timely reminder, particular if you use a Windows computer, that the automatic updates often reset your default language when using Word to type messages/articles etc, back to US English. I only have to import a single article from one source and the draft I am working on suddenly throws up some unusual spellings (which is what alerts me to the issue!) When in Word, go to the Tools menu, then Language. Highlight UK English, click OK and you will be given the option to set this as your default – please do (unless you regularly need to use US English of course!) Also, I do prefer text without embedded tabs, spacings etc and ALWAYS send photos separately but with appropriate file names.

Enjoy this edition and get your copy ready for the New Year and the Spring Edition.

2024 Deadline dates:

Spring Bulletin	by 31 December please.
ANNUAL	by 30 January to <u>Caroline</u> please.
Autumn Bulletin	by 9 September please.

Erratum in the 2023 Annual

Caroline Ball

The Executive Committee also known as the Trustees of the Society.

The Exec/Trustees comprise the following officers of the committee:

President	- Roger Parsons
Chairman	- Alison Shreeve
Vice Chairman	- Graeme Hollingdale
Treasurer	- Caroline Ball
Secretary	- Carole Tate

Plus 3 elected members of the general committee.

For 2023/2024 the elected members are:

Janet Bulstrode (who has now sadly resigned from her general committee and executive roles), Gill Hazell and Phil Johnson.

The Annual 2023 omitted Phil Johnson in error. Apologies for any inconvenience caused by this omission.

NSPS Speakers list

Alison Shreeve

This year we have had several enquiries from horticultural societies for someone to speak about various aspects of sweet peas. We have a couple of regular hotspots in the North West, Yorkshire and Chilterns areas where we have a few people happy to organise a talk or a workshop and these are very popular.

In the flowering season it is wonderful to take along a selection of blooms and base the talk around these in a fairly informal manner, inviting questions from the audience. In the winter it is possible to run workshops on sowing and caring for your sweet peas, but also to base a talk around aspects of growing, showing, displaying and hybridising, or indeed their history (including historical figures like Henry Eckford, which Philippa Cooper in particular, does so well. Providing you have some good images to illustrate your points these talks can be just as informative and interesting for both specialist and/or general audiences.

The Society would really like to hold a list of Speakers so that we can direct enquiries coming through the website and in person at shows, to those most sensibly located to deliver a talk. This would fulfil one of the main aims of the society, to promote knowledge of *lathyrus* species to a wider audience.

If you are willing to add your name to a speaker's list held by the Society please contact the general secretary Carole Tate with your name, contact details and location with a general distance you are willing to travel to provide a talk or workshop. Local societies are happy to pay for someone to inform and entertain them.

The Society also holds a blank template for PowerPoint slides and can help with putting together an illustrated talk if you don't have the resources to do this. Please let us know and we will do our best to facilitate what you have in mind.

If you would like to discuss this with a member of the committee, please do contact us via the information in the Annual. It is great fun to share your love of Sweet Peas with others who are always amazed by this wonderful flower. If you are unsure whether you can do it, just have a go! If you are a regular speaker, please do let us know your details and we will be able to direct enquiries appropriately.

Container Growing

by Carole Tate

Sweet peas can be very successfully grown in containers; in fact, I grow all my non *lathyrus odoratus* species (annual and perennial) in tubs. I would like to pass on a few hints and tips which work for me.



Recently planted and in full flower examples of container grown species

1. The container needs to be of sufficient volume for the number of plants, with a minimum size of 20 litres. Sweet peas have a large root system and can easily become pot bound. As a guide, Spencers need 7 litres per plant and old fashioned 5. If you have a 40 litre tree tub you can fit in a maximum of 6 spencer plants, 8 old fashioned and 6/8 species depending on type.
2. Ensure the container has sufficient drainage holes in the base and place a layer of coarse aggregate (not limestone) to cover the bottom, approximately 2-3 cms deep.

3. Use a nutritious growing medium with good moisture retention properties. I use a 50/50 mix of good garden soil and general-purpose compost, adding controlled release fertiliser and a handful of chicken pellets. Fill the container to within 5cms of the rim and top off with neat compost which will act as a mulch and help retain moisture.
4. Use the same timescales and method for sowing the seeds as you would if planting in the ground. Ensure the seedlings are pinched out (hopefully showing chunk side shoots) and hardened off, before planting out.
5. A support structure is of course required and can be trellis or netting if grown up a fence or wall. Some strings or twigs may be necessary to train the immature plants onto the trellis to start. The most common supports are canes of sufficient length determined by the types of plants. These can be placed around the rim and tied together to form a wigwam. Garden twine is then spiralled round the canes, tying in about every metre to form a stable structure that withstands wind and rain. However, the more vigorous growing cultivars can form a dense head at the top. To avoid this, a metal ring, slightly less in diameter than the container, can be fastened to the top of the canes, and twine wound round the canes to create a cylinder shape. This will contain the growth more effectively than a wigwam.
6. Keep well-watered. Make sure there is good drainage and water every day that it does not rain. As the plants become fully grown the foliage deflects the rain so they may still need watering, even if raining.
7. Keep the roots cool by placing other pots in front so the pots are not in direct sunshine.



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8. It is essential to remove flowers as they appear to keep continuity of flowering. Either pick for display or dead head. A general tomato feed can be used when flowering.
9. If you want to collect seeds, identify a plant and let it flower and go to seed early in the season. The seeds will then be better quality, rather than from those continually picked throughout and collected at the tail end of the season.
10. Look out for slugs and snails, I find them under the rim of the pot, also guard against mildew and greenfly.
11. Perennials and other tall species can be cut back on a regular basis and will regrow from the side shoots.
12. Enjoy your sweet peas and lathyrus species.



Non- Peat Compost

Barrie Eckford

The genesis of this article began when it became known that peat-based composts will not be available for retail, in England, for garden & allotment use, during 2024.

I took my interest in what the producers of composts were going to offer, to an international agricultural and horticultural exhibition in the county of Cheshire, during that hot September of 2022. Having spoken to the representatives of the major & regional producers of alternatives to peat-based composts, some of which had potential (such as wool) which was for me, too expensive to pursue, as there was the cost of delivery to account for in addition to the basic minimum order.

Having come away with many catalogues and leaflets, my view was and still is, as I write this article during January 2023, that the trade has not yet, fully resolved the issues of alternatives to the versatility of peat-based composts.

To take the decision to remove myself from the likely claims by the alternative peat-based producers with their “ours is the best”, I purchased four blocks of Coir, which is a natural organic fibre (*made from the husks of coconuts*) when, once water was added, made up 75ltrs. of friable & comfortable to handle, medium for cuttings & setting seed. The need to add a suitable fertilizer to ensure sustained vigorous growth is not essential initially, yet as coir has no natural stimulants, would also add to the cost. My experience is that (thankfully) there was no need to additionally add vermiculite/perlite to aerate, maintaining warmth and drainage.

The fear that coir would dry out quicker during the growth of sweet peas was unfounded and overall, became the justification for my decision to be at the cusp of change brought onto us gardeners in England in 2023. I set my seed of Spencer & Victorian cultivars on 4th February, placing them on top of walk-in wardrobes. By the 13th, 85% had germinated, so I brought all 11 trays down and placed them into the outside “cabin”, which is unheated; this after a good watering of the coir of course.

By the first week in March, I was pinching out the tops of the peas, checking on the moisture rootrainer books to find the root systems looking healthy and reaching the base of each cell. During the Easter week the ground had finished being prepared, so with the weather becoming fine, this is when the planting occurred, placing the three cultivars of healthy plants 30cm apart, with twenty-five in each parallel row. The coir still had its friability three months after sowing. So much so, I am confident to use this medium again, especially as it was so clean (being free of all pests etc).

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As I eluded to earlier in this piece, although I was intending to add nutrients later, in fact this was not needed, as the watering of the coir was all it took to ensure vigorous root growth with many side shoots to choose which haulm to send up each cane. My Victorian cultivars also were ready to place in my large plastic handled containers.

I always like to have my peas in place by the Easter week, whenever it falls, to await the pea weevil, which to my surprise that by 7th June this year, still had not appeared. My plants are as healthy than any I have grown for many a year; the inclement weather having avoided the Northwest of England for many weeks. The plants at present range in height from 60 to 75cm and are producing stems with one and two buds showing, with the first threes & fours emerging.

All in all, the choice of using Coir was a decision made that I shall confidently repeat for the 2024 season.

Report from the Classification Sub-committee 2023

The sub-committee met at Bracklesham Bay on 14th June 2023.

Those present were:

Keith Brewer, Jim & Mary McDonald and Roger Parsons.

With apologies received from Phil Johnson.

2023 Novelties:

These were inspected and allocated to colour categories as follows:

‘Crown Princess Victoria’ - Old-fashioned

‘George McAra’ - 3b crimson

‘Ian Myers’ - 7 mauve

‘John Warren’ - 1 white

‘Lilibet’ 7a - pale mauve

‘Melanie Jane’ - 11b rose pink on cream (provisional, pending further comparisons)

‘Platinum Jubilee’ - 16 striped

‘Platinum Sensation’ - 9c blue flush

‘Seabrook’s Fantasia’ - 5 maroon

‘Serenity Remembered’ - 2 cream

‘Summer’s Day’ - 9b pale blue

‘Sweet Caroline’ - Old-fashioned

‘Terry Davey’ - 7 mauve

Discovering ‘America’

Roger Parsons

No, nothing to do with Norse Vikings or Christopher Columbus, this is about the revelation that there are two Americas. Before you hasten to tell me these are North and South, I am referring to the fact that there are two different cultivars in circulation, both named ‘America’. Which is the genuine one?

The RHS Trials at Wisley in 2022 included an entry of ‘America’ from Jim McDonald, which I declared to be ‘Queen of the Isles’ rather than ‘America’. So, in 2023 this was grown again alongside a stock of ‘America’ from Phil Johnson and ‘Queen of the Isles’ from myself. All three were identical. Let’s call it cultivar A for now. Both Jim and Phil declared cultivar A to be the only stock of ‘America’ they had ever known.



Cultivar A

This reminded me of an occurrence in 1996 when Ted Andrews, Keith Hammett and myself were being shown round Unwins' trial grounds by David Kerley. David showed us their stock of 'America' and proudly announced that Unwins were about to reintroduce it in their autumn catalogue to commemorate the centenary of its introduction. He was dismayed when all three of us immediately said "that is not 'America'". What Unwins had as 'America' was cultivar A.

So, Ted, Keith and myself all knew a different cultivar as 'America'. Let's call it cultivar B for now. This has duller colouring than cultivar A, slightly smaller flowers and most significantly includes side notches in the standards. Cultivar A has no side notches. Cultivar B has excellent provenance. For the 50th Anniversary of NSPS in 1950, a display of old-fashioned cultivars could only be achieved by importing 13 cultivars from Ferry Morse in California. There were none available in the UK. 'America' was one of these.¹ In 1965, Turrall described all the old-fashioned cultivars he had been able to collect including the 13 from Ferry Morse. He described 'America' as having side notches.² Turrall's stock was passed to Keith Hammett who has since supplied seeds to me. Cultivar B is the only stock of 'America' I have ever known.

Although cultivar B was not grown in the 2023 Trials, I took along cut flowers for the panel to compare. The task now facing the Trials panel was to decide which of the two cultivars is the genuine 'America' and which an imposter. I found an illustration of 'America' in Vaughan's 1897 seed catalogue, a year after they had introduced it. There are no side notches. For a description, we turned to Alvin Beal's 1914 description of all known cultivars.³ His records were chosen because of the scientific approach taken to describing each cultivar. He describes 'America' as the largest of the "red-striped" cultivars and as having red pedicels. There are no side notches. It is described by Morse as the brightest of this category.⁴ 'Queen of the Isles' by contrast had blooms of moderate size, a notched top, narrow pointed leaflets and wings more purple than the standard.

When we compared cultivars A & B with Beal's description, cultivar A ticks all the boxes for size of bloom, absence of side notches, red pedicels (green in cultivar B) and colouring. Our findings were so conclusive that I had to admit the cultivar Turrall, Hammett and myself, among others, have always understood to be 'America' is in fact an imposter. With such impeccable provenance, how can this have happened? Looking at seed catalogues from the 1920s and 1930s, Ferry Morse did not sell 'America' as a separate cultivar. They only sold Old-fashioned Mixture, which would have been a blend of old-fashioned cultivars. At least two other wholesalers, Bodger Seeds and Waller-Franklin, were selling 'America' as a single cultivar.

‘Queen of the Isles’ was a redundant cultivar by 1914 and there is no further mention of it in catalogues until Peter Grayson included it in his Autumn 1995 seed catalogue. He had been selling ‘America’ for several years. Peter had a reputation for “re-discovering” old cultivars and my hunch is that on learning from the 1995 Trials that his ‘America’ was apparently incorrect, he looked out an appropriate name and called it ‘Queen of the Isles’. Unfortunately, the original ‘Queen of the Isles’ had too many differences to any existing cultivar.



Cultivar B

So, if cultivar B is not ‘America’ nor ‘Queen of the Isles’ what is it? To my eye, it is pre-grandiflora in form being more primitive than cultivars of the 1890s and 1900s because of its smaller flowers, side notches, lack of vigour and fewer flowers per raceme. I have carefully compared it with contemporary descriptions, especially Beal, and cannot attribute it with certainty to any of them. The closest would be ‘Invincible Striped’, introduced by Carters in 1880. However, it is not fully compatible with descriptions of ‘Invincible Striped’ so for the time being I have continued to sell it under the name ‘Turrall’s America’.

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The question arises as to which ‘America’ was awarded the AGM at the 1995 Trials and the result is inconclusive. Photographs held by the RHS show blooms with the bright colouring of cultivar A but the side notches of cultivar B. Ted Andrews was a member of the Trials Panel in 1995 suggesting cultivar B was grown. The entry had been supplied by Robert Bolton & Sons who probably bought their stock from Bodger Seeds. Since cultivar B is no longer being sold as ‘America’, the 2023 Trials Panel was happy to recommend that ‘America’ should retain its AGM.

References:

1. C W J Unwin 1951 Those Grandifloras. 1951 Sweet Pea Annual :53-56 National Sweet Pea Society.
2. J F Turrall 1965 The old Sweet Peas. JRHS :23-29
3. A C Beal 1914 Classification of garden varieties of the Sweet Pea. Cornell University Bulletin 342: 215-360 Ithaca, New York.
4. L L Morse (ed.) 1917 Field Notes on Sweet Peas edn.2. C C Morse & Co, San Francisco.

The RHS Lindley Award

The prestigious Lindley Award is for the best educational exhibit shown at all of the RHS shows during the year. In March 2023, the NSPS were presented with the Lindley Award for our stand at RHS Tatton in 2022.

Phillippa Cooper, Julia Beardmore and Carole Tate, who were significantly involved in this and other displays on behalf of the NSPS, are pictured here, proudly showing our lovely crystal vase at a Committee meeting, earlier this year.



Sponsorship 2025

Running Sweet Pea shows is one of the objects of the Society and they are a hugely popular way for the Society to promote our wonderful flowers. Anyone reading the show schedule will see that some of the classes are sponsored but not all of them. You could get involved by sponsoring a class from just £10 (this would be for a single vase class), the minimum donation for sponsorship is the total prize money for the class plus the cost of any special prizes. Classes available include vases, decorative, Old fashioned and species. If you wish to, you could set your own prize money amounts (see for instance class D in both shows and classes 31, 62 and 65 in the Early).

This could make a wonderful gift for a loved one who has everything, a memorial or even a treat for yourself. Depending on the class sponsored you would have the opportunity to rename it, have your sponsorship acknowledged or you could choose to remain an anonymous sponsor.

As the 2024 exhibitions schedule has already been agreed and printed, we are looking for new sponsorships from 2025 onwards. If this is something you would like to explore further, please contact Caroline Ball or Carole Tate to discuss.

Gift aid

Caroline Ball

The NSPS is a registered charity, and as such can benefit from government aid to boost the level of your donations by 25% - that is 25p for every £1 you donate. This helped Society funds to the tune of c£2000 in 2023.

Signing a gift aid declaration costs you nothing and anyone who is a UK taxpayer can do this, so long as the income and/or capital gains tax you pay exceeds the amount of gift aid the Society can reclaim. Gifts include things like your membership of the Society.

Please do complete the form to enable the Society to maximise the funds available to promote our wonderful flowers by doing things like putting on shows, providing educational and historical information at events, producing our informative publications and running Sweet Pea Trials.

Please note, you must let the Society know if you are no longer a UK taxpayer.

You can find the form on the NSPS website in the members area or email/phone Caroline Ball or Julia Beardmore for a form.

The Journey to becoming a NSPS Show Manager

Laurie Burrell and Roger Dix

After moving into our present bungalow in late summer of 1976, I purchased a packet of mixed sweet peas to grow up the chain link fencing that surrounded our back garden. Being total novice, I planted them straight into the prepared soil in a narrow flower bed bordering the fence and after germinating the seedlings started to grow up the fence by attaching themselves to the chain link for support. They completely covered the unattractive fencing and the various cut flower stems provided beautiful sprays in the house for my wife. The neighbour who owned the land behind our garden planted leylandii trees completely across behind our property and very close to the boundary fencing which ended my opportunity to grow sweet peas.

Many years later after I retired from being a local councillor in 2001, I managed to secure an allotment in Shepperton and started to grow vegetables which proved very popular with my grown-up family, until I became aware that my adjoining neighbour grew sweet peas on cordons very successful for showing locally. He spent hours tending the some 200 plus plants but very rarely spoke to other members of the allotments or gave advice to anyone on what to do when growing sweet peas.

I purchased a book called 'Sweet Peas an essential guide' by Roger Parsons via the internet and began the process of preparing my allotment for sweet peas and installing canes to grow them up. When my seedlings were ready to plant out I followed my neighbour's timings and process of tying in the plants. As soon the stems came into bud and started to flower 'Brian' my neighbour came across and said, 'Not bad you have done well, but they are not of a show standard' I just replied, 'I will get there one day'.

I later joined the National Sweet Pea Society and met Roger Dix the Middlesex District Representative who became my mentor. I later moved to another larger plot on the site; sadly Brian passed away with terminal cancer the following year.

Roger encouraged me to enter the Early National Show at Abingdon in June 2021, and my four entries gained two second prizes and two third prizes which I felt was a small tribute to everything I had learnt from watching Brian. Caroline was the Show Manager aided by Roger Parsons and Graeme Hollingdale. I could only spend one day at the show due to family commitments, but during my time there I became aware of the friendly way everyone welcomed new members to the show and the society.

Mr Colin Squire, Chairman of Squires Garden Centres lives locally to me, and we have become friends through various community activities and groups. At one meeting he asked me if I could use my influence in the NSPS to encourage the society to stage their Early Show at his Shepperton garden centre. I pointed out that I was only a member and didn't have much say in the running of the Society. I spoke to Roger Dix the District Representative, and he suggested that I put the idea to Caroline which I did some weeks later. She agreed to put the offer from Colin to the General Committee for consideration as a future venue for the Early Show.

The committee agreed for Caroline and Graeme to meet with Roger Dix, Colin and me to discuss the possibility of staging the show in Shepperton in 2023, following the 2022 Early Show at Wisley. I arranged for the site meeting to take place some weeks later at Shepperton Garden Centre and after visiting the site Caroline and Graeme expressed concerns over the marquee size of 90' x 30' as it was felt that it wouldn't cope with the number of potential entries.

The National Rose Society Annual Show was due to take place a month or two later and I suggested that Caroline visited the event to judge whether the marquee would suit the NSPS needs. (The marquee which was erected for that Rose Show, is another story) Caroline visited the show on the Sunday and formed the opinion that it would do if we could use an additional space at short notice if required. The next matter to arise was who would undertake the role of Show Manager, for without one Shepperton would be out of the question. I felt, to save the day for Colin, I would volunteer to undertake the role if Roger joined me, as joint show managers. The Society accepted this and so began the planning for the Early Show in 2023.

To reduce costs, it was agreed to use the same marquee which would already be set up, ready for the National Rose Show, for the following weekend of Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd July. Roger and I, as total novices, began the process of allotting of responsibilities; he would take on logistics and I would be responsible for administration of the show and entries. Several evening meetings between us over the next 12 months took place with input and guidance from Caroline and Roger Parsons on the processes of running a successful Early National Show.

Friday 30th June was the great day for exhibitors to arrive to set up their exhibits overnight, ready for judging the next day. We had fourteen exhibitors with 116 entries. Several members struggled to exhibit at the show due to the terrible weather encountered for growing and exhibiting sweet peas.

Our members turned up trumps by supporting the show and putting together a fantastic collection of vases and bowls on the display stands. The two days were very successful, with visitors being amazed by the quality and quantity of the exhibits.

Roger and I as show managers, thoroughly enjoyed the experience of joining together to stage a friendly and successful NSPS Early Show; it being our first attempt as show managers to run the event on behalf of the society. Our thanks to everyone who gave their advice, help, and exhibited at the event without you we would have struggled.

We would both recommend members taking on the role if the opportunity arises as everyone in the society who has had the experience of running a show will help you to succeed from the first day you start.

Staffordshire and the West Midlands

Phillippa Cooper

Starting on a positive note, in what has been a very difficult year to report on, I am very pleased to say that the talks that John and I do remain popular. It may well be due to the distribution of old-fashioned seeds at the end of the presentation we do! My hope was to increase the number of novice entries at Wem. Although we did have many more novices entering in 2023, only one was due to our talks. The information evening given in Wem certainly did have a positive impact on the number of local growers (more information in my Wem report). I am also delighted to say that we did have a considerable number of visitors to Wem who had attended one of our talks. Although many had success with their plants, they did not feel confident enough to exhibit. Maybe that will happen next year, let's hope so!

Something that has taken me by surprise, is that I am still getting people commenting on the interview given for Gardeners' Question Time, which was recorded way back in March. I do hope that it will lead to greater interest in the old-fashioned cultivars.

On a rather less positive note, my old-fashioned plants were the worst ever. Some never actually thrived at all; I removed those well before any shows. I had sown the seeds in the Spring as usual. I am not sure if it was due to the very hot spell we had early in the season. The Spencer plants that John grows were not affected in the same way even though we only have a fairly small garden.

Sadly, I wasn't able to enter the Early National and did not have 12 decent stems of any one cultivar for a vase at Wem this year. The few blooms I had were only suitable for mixed bowls and some special classes. The only highlight was my bowl of *Lathyrus* species which did cause a great deal of interest. As these are grown in containers they weren't adversely affected by the weather or soil conditions. I spent a great deal of time discussing *L. sativus*, *annuus*, *tingitanus* etc! I just hope that 2024 produces some better results.

Wem 2023

Phillipa Cooper

I will be writing a full report on the show for the 2024 Annual; however I would like to share a few highlights from our second show to be held at Wem Town Hall.

We were pleased to welcome growers from Wales and the North West along with our wonderful local Shropshire growers. A particular success leading from the reintroduction of the show and the information evening given in 2022 was the increased number of novice entries. That is a very positive sign for the future.

I must mention Clive Payne, a local grower based in Wem who exhibited for the very first time this year. Clive told me that he had been inspired to grow old fashioned varieties and brought along his blooms on the Friday and asked if they were good enough to exhibit. They were really superb and he was able to enter 7 vases of single cultivars. Such was his success that he was awarded the Archie Silvester Perpetual Trophy for the most points by a Shropshire grower. Not bad in his first year of growing! I am encouraging him to enter multi-vase classes next year.



Clive Payne, first time exhibitor

Many congratulations also go to Matt Lloyd of Lower Darwen for his success on his first visit to Wem. Matt and four other members of the North West NSPS team supported Wem this year. Matt won not only best vase in Division 2 for his display of Daily Mail but judge Dave Torrington described it as “a cracking vase” and decided it was the Best in Show. Matt richly deserved being awarded The Bronwen Eleanor Perpetual Challenge Cup.



Matt Lloyd with his superb vase of Daily Mail

Finally, I would like to thank our friends from Wales who supported us again this year. In particular, congratulations go to Dei Williams of Bala. Having met Dei at the Royal Welsh in 2022, I had hoped that he would be able to exhibit at Wem. In fact, he swept the board in Division 4, having the most points, most first prizes and the best vase. It is wonderful to have new exhibitors providing such amazing blooms for our show benches.



Dei Williams of Bala

Message from your Membership Secretary

Julia Beardmore

The relaunch of the Society's website at the end of 2022, enabled Members to join online and also renew their annual membership through the website. I want to remind you that if you renewed or joined this way, most of you will have a recurring payment set up through PayPal for the first week in January each year, so your payment will be taken care of.

If you want to check on PayPal, from the menu, select the settings ICON > Payments > Automatic Payments > you should see National Sweet Pea Society > you will be able to view the details.

For those members who do not want to make online payments, it is perfectly acceptable, to continue to forward your payment to me or transfer to the Society's Bank account; please do also send me a quick email to advise that you have made the payment as on occasion, it can be difficult to decipher similar names. Also, please don't forget to update me with any changes to your home address, telephone numbers or email addresses.

AUTUMN BULLETIN 2023

This has been a very different year for me as Membership Secretary, getting to grips with the new system of payments and allowing members into the Membership Area hasn't been the easiest. I find that not everyone has been able to follow the auto-generated link through to register, which, I have to assume, along with other emails sometimes going into your "junk or spam" inboxes. I can see from my end there are a number of members who are not fully registered. Please send me an email if you haven't got access to the Members' area yet, and I will send you a link to follow through. I can also manually add in a member, who has not joined via the website.

You may recall that when we first announced the new website, we emailed you by Mailchimp. As we do want to communicate more with you, and it is our intention to make more use of Mailchimp for informative purposes. Do not worry, as there is no way we wish to bombard you with frequent emails; the messages will be used to keep you updated about the National Sweet Pea Society and local events, also to inform you of presentations to be given by volunteers on our website. I'm working on how to get the best use of this system, I, along with another couple of volunteers just need to gain more confidence in using it. Remember that there is always the option to opt out of Mailchimp if this isn't something for you.

In the Members' area, you will find all the recent publications (as downloadable PDF files) and some useful articles. We would also welcome interesting articles and news items from members so we can keep the site updated and relevant at all times; this includes video clips on anything Sweet Peas if you have them. Remember that my contact details for anything NSPS related is via Julia.nsp@outlook.com



The image shows a seed packet for 'Owl's Acre Sweet Peas'. The packet is rectangular with a decorative border. At the top, the text 'Owl's Acre Sweet Peas' is printed in a serif font. Below this is a detailed illustration of a sweet pea flower. Underneath the illustration, the text 'OWLS ACRE SEED' is printed. A vertical list of bullet points is located on the left side of the packet, detailing the product's features. At the bottom, there is a call to action to visit the website and order online.

- Professional quality sweet pea seed for exhibition and garden.
- A wide selection of Spencer, Heirloom, "Winter Sunshine™", "Spring Sunshine™" and dwarf varieties.
- Annual & perennial Lathyrus species.
- Fill your garden with scent and colour! Other unique ornamental seed also available.
- Order online today, Postal orders also accepted—see website for details
- email: seed@sweetpea-seed.com

Visit our website at
www.owlscareseeds.co.uk
Browse our wide range of sweet peas and order
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Pollinators (the cause of rogues?)

Roger Parsons

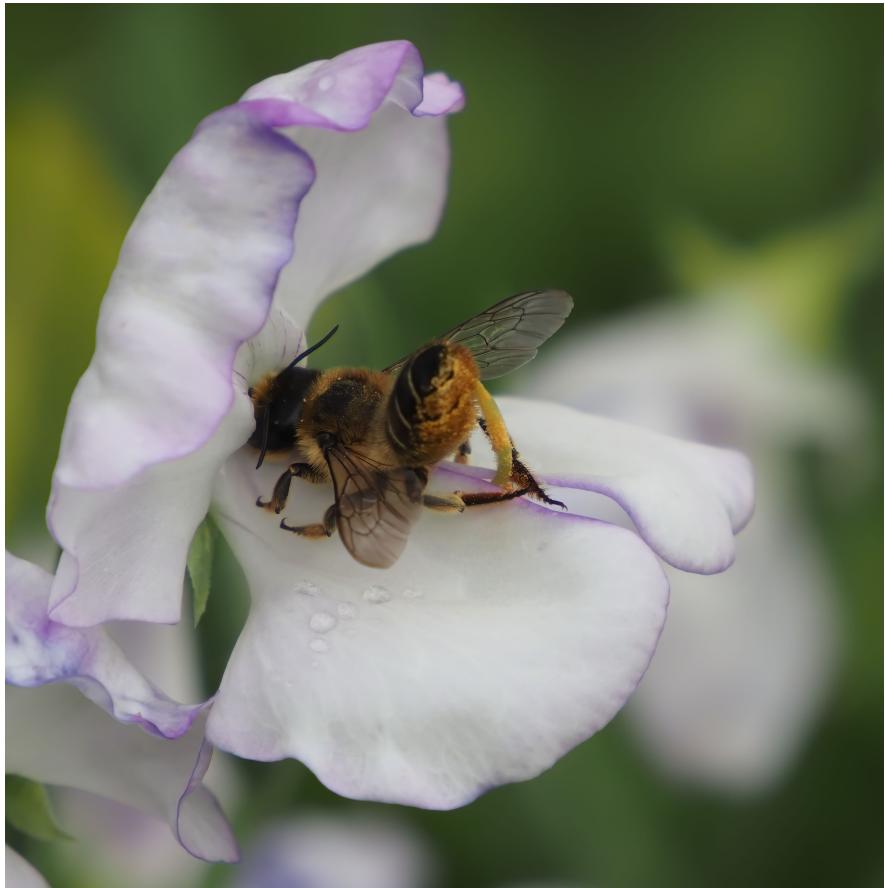
Several seedsmen, including myself, alongside growers and exhibitors have seen an increased number of rogues appearing in their rows in recent years. It is not immediately apparent why this should be happening or why the appearance of rogues should vary from year to year. Variation in the amount of accidental cross-pollination might be explained by insect activity and several insects have been suggested, without evidence, as causal agents, including Pollen Beetles and Hoverflies.

Few species of Bee can cross-pollinate Sweet Peas. It has long been known that Leafcutter Bees, species of *Megachile*, can do so. They simply cut their way into the keel. They famously ruined the Sweet Pea seed production industry in British Columbia a century ago. Bumble Bees have also been known to barge their way into a keel because of their weight. The lighter Honey Bees cannot do this so take no interest in Sweet Peas.



A Bee on a Sweet Pea at the RHS Wisley trials in 2023

This summer I was independently sent two pictures of Bee activity on Sweet Peas. It was immediately apparent that these are not Honey Bees but they look to me like both could be the same species. One of the pictures was sent by the RHS from the Trials at Wisley. The other came from John Rieley who lives near Hayward's Heath. The Sweet Peas in both pictures are clamped keel varieties.



John's picture of the Bee on 'Albutt Blue' (above) was posted on a facebook group by my entomologist neighbour and was identified as the Patchwork Leafcutter Bee, *Megachile centuncularis*. This species is common and has been recorded in most of Great Britain, particularly in the south, so may well be the reason for cross-pollination when it occurs.

We know that Sweet Peas will have already self-pollinated by the time the flower opens, so the risk of cross-pollination remains very low. Nevertheless, it is frustrating for both seed producers and their customers when rogues appear.

NSPS Awards Questionnaire

Laurie Burrell

The NSPS scheduling committee are considering the future of crystal glassware 'Special Prize' awards which are currently presented to winners of some classes and sections at the Early and Late NSPS Exhibitions. These awards, along with various trophies and cups are presented at the beginning of the afternoon session, after the Judging has been completed. Members who have been successful in winning these awards greatly appreciate receiving these to commemorate their achievement at the National events.

In recent years it has proved a difficult task for the committee to secure a regular supplier of these trophies at reasonable cost, which also have the NSPS logo engraved. Logistics is a further challenge as we need to collect them from the supplier and then deliver the crystal glass to the appropriate show manager(s).

Although this incurs a considerable cost to the society the committee feels it is a worthwhile way of promoting the society to the wider public at our shows. Some regular winners have commented that they would like to have the option of an alternative, as they have collected a number of these crystal awards over several years of successful exhibiting.

Selecting a suitable trophy, cup, or plate to suit everyone's choice is quite a challenge for the committee, and it was decided that some options should be put members in the form of a questionnaire for members to express their views as follows: -

1. Continue with engraved crystal glassware (such as vases, tumblers, bowls)
2. Change to framed certificate with the Sweet Pea logo and Show details.
3. Change to a National Garden Voucher.
4. Discontinue awarding Special Prizes altogether.
5. Identify an alternative option of prize to suit all tastes, specify the option and consider the logistics and sourcing the item(s).

I would appreciate your responses within 14 days of receiving the Autumn Bulletin. Please email the number of your choice and any additional views to laurie.burrell48@gmail.com

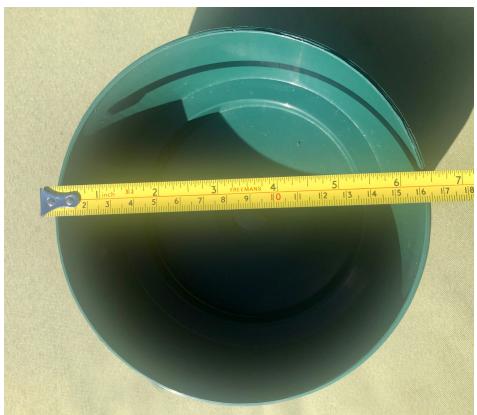
The results will be collated and published in the Spring Bulletin.

Containers for Decorative Arrangements

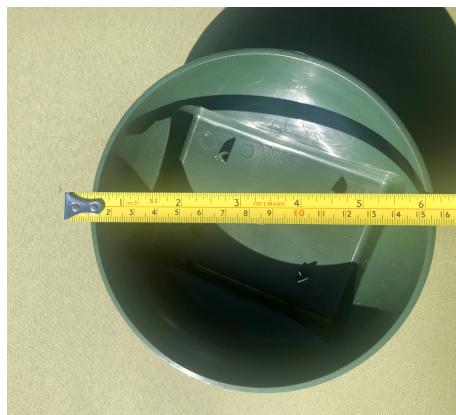
Caroline Ball

Ed, this is an edited and revised version for the 2024 season!

Sourcing the small green 'bulb' bowls for decorative arrangements at the national shows has become more difficult. Therefore, it has been decided that the bowls will be replaced in ALL classes at the 2024 nationals with similar sized saucers; these were used for many of the classes at the 2023 Nationals with great success, so this should be of little surprise. The saucers do have the advantage of being less intrusive containers thereby allowing more innovative arranging techniques to be used in the decorative classes.



'bulb' bowl



'saucer' bowl



Examples of the mechanics which can be used with the saucer shaped 'bowls'

Saucers are so much more suitable containers for smaller flowered species and old fashioned varieties, however they do still work really well with Spencers. Of course, more care will be needed in topping up the exhibits in the much shallower saucers during the show, so do please ensure your exhibits are well watered at the point of staging. There is nothing to stop you adding another receptacle inside the saucer to hold water should you be using for example chicken wire as your mechanics. Here are some photos to illustrate.



All three Latifolius exhibits using saucers



A close up of an exhibit in a saucer



Examples using saucers and bowls

As with any decorative exhibit, please be guided by the schedule and the show managers as to which container to use, no matter which show you are entering!

NATIONAL (& Regional) SHOW AUDITS 2022**Early 29 & 30 July RHS Gardens Wisley**

Compiled by Liz Harvey

No	Cultivar Name	1st	2nd	3rd	unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
	Spencers							
1	Anniversary	8	3	1		11	White with pink edge	15
2	Gwendoline	7	1	1		8	Pale magenta pink	4a
3	White Frills	4	2	1		6	White	1
4	Jilly	4	1			5	Cream	2
5	Just Julia	3	2	1		5	Mid blue	16
6	Naomi Nazareth	3	1	1		4	Pale blue	9b
7	Sir Jimmy Shand	2	2	1		4	Striped	16
8	Somerset Lady	3		2		3	Magenta	4
9	Mary Priestley	2	1	2		3	White	1
	Mrs B R Jones	2	1			3	Rose pink on white	10b
11	Daily Mail	1	2			3	Cerise pink	10c
12	Judith Wilkinson	2				2	Magenta	4
	Millennium	2				2	Red (crimson)	3b
14	Our Harry	1	1		1	2	Mid blue	9a
	Ruby Anniversary	1	1			2	Red (crimson)	3b
16	The Princess Royal *	1		1		2	White	1

17	Alan Roberts	1		1		1	Striped	16
	Clotted Cream	1			2	Cream	2	
	Evie Jones	1			2	Magenta	4	
	Hero	1		1	2	Dark blue	9	
	Honeymoon	1		1	2	Lavender (flush)	8a	
	Joejess	1		1	2	Orange	12	
	Pink Pearl	1		1	2	Pale pink on white	10	
	Platinum Jubilee	1			1	Striped	16	
	Purple Pimpernel	1			1	Bicoloured	16a	
	Queen Of Hearts	1			1	Striped	16	
	Serenity	1			1	Lavender	8	
	Solitude	1			1	Lavender	8	
	Southbourne	1			1	Pale pink on white	10	
	Windsor	1			1	Maroon	5	
31	Dawn Everest		1		1	Novelty	-	
	Eclipse		1		1	Mauve	7	
	Grandma Butt		1		1	Magenta	4	
	Lady Nicholson		1		1	Striped	16	
	Lizanne Davies		1		1	Novelty	-	
	Margaret Hastie		1		1	Striped	16	
	Mark Harrod		1		1	Red (scarlet)	3a	
	Patricia Marilyn		1		1	Pale pink on white	10	
	Sunset		1		1	Striped	16	
40	Karen Louise			1	1	Lavender	8	
	Night Sky			1	1	Striped	16	
	Valerie Harrod			1	1	Orange pink	13	
	Seedlings					No entries		

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Total Spencers	60	27	4	0	91		
Non-Spencers						No entries	
Mixed vases	4	3	2	1	9		
Decoratives (inc bowls/saucers)	10	4	2	2	16		
Total	74	34	8	3	116		
* The Princess Royal was exhibited under a trade name as Gardener's Jubilee							

Late 9 & 10 July, RHS Harlow Carr, Harrogate

Compiled by Carole Tate

No	Cultivar name	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
	Spencers							
1	Gwendoline	4	1	1		6	Pale magenta	4a
2	Anniversary	2	2			4	Picotee	15
	Sir Jimmy Shand	2	2			4	Fancy	16
4	Karen Louise	2		1		3	Lavender	8
	White Frills	2		1		3	White	1
6	Honeymoon	2				2	Lavender	8a
	Mary Priestley	2				2	White	1
	Pink Pearl	2				2	Pale pink	10
	Southbourne	2				2	Pale pink	10
10	Jilly	1	1			2	Cream	2
11	Elizabeth Shorthouse			2		2	Rose pink	11b

12	Alice Hardwicke	1			1	Orange red	14
	Chris Harrod	1			1	Blue	9b
	Daily Mail	1			1	Cerise pink	10c
	Dalesman	1			1	Blue	9
	Eclipse	1			1	Mauve	7
	Evie Jones	1			1	Magenta	4
	Ian Myers	1			1	Mauve	7
	Mary Mac	1			1	Cream	2
	Melanie Jane	1			1	Rose Pink on cream	11b
	Mumsie	1			1	Red	3b
	Mrs Bernard Jones	1			1	Rose pink on white	10b
	Naomi Nazareth	1			1	Pale blue	9b
	Oban Bay	1			1	Pale blue	9b
	Queen of Hearts	1			1	Fancy	16
	Somerset Lady	1			1	Magenta	4
	Terry Davey	1			1	Mauve	7
28	Alec Cave		1		1	White	1
	Ballerina Blue		1		1	Blue	9a
	Gardeners Jubilee		1		1	Fancy	n/c
	Lady Nicholson		1		1	Fancy	16
	Platinum Jubilee		1		1	Striped	16
	Seedling	1			1		

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	Non-Spencers						
1	Cupani		1		1	2	Maroon/violet OF
2	Dorothy Eckford	1				1	White OF
	Jack Ellis	1				1	Maroon/violet MG
	Little Red Riding Hood	1				1	Red/white MG
5	High Scent		1			1	Cream/lilac edge SG
6	Painted Lady			1		1	Pink/white OF
	Total Spencers	38	11	5		54	
	Non-Spencers	3	2	1	1	7	
	Mixed vases	7	5	4	6	22	
	Total vases	48	18	10	7	83	
	Decoratives (inc bowls/saucers)	12	9	8	10	39	
	Total	60	27	18	17	122	

28 - 30 July 2023 N W Regional Show

By Carole Tate

No	Cultivar Name	1st	2nd	3rd	unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
1	Mumsie	2			2	4	Red	3b
2	Mrs Bernard Jones	2			1	3	Rose pink	10b
3	Lady Nicholson	2				2	Fancy	16
	Wiltshire Ripple	2				2	Fancy	16
5	Sir Jimmy Shand	1			1	2	Fancy	16
6	Chris Harrod	1				1	Blue	9b
	Daily Mail	1				1	Cerise Pink	10c

	Elizabeth Shorthouse	1				1	Rose Pink	11b
	Gardeners Jubilee	1				1	Fancy	n/c
	Kippen Cream	1				1	Cream	1
	Pips Maroon	1				1	Maroon	5
	Valerie Harrod	1				1	Orange pink	13
	White Supreme	1				1	White	1
	Windsor	1				1	Maroon	5
15	Just Julia		1			1	Mid blue	9a
	White Frills		1			1	White	1
	Tom Atherton		1			1	Fancy	16
18	Anniversary			1		1	Picotee	15
	Route 66			1		1	Fancy	16a
20	Gwendoline				1	1	Pale magenta	4a
	Bristol				1	1	Blue	9b
	Ian Myers				1	1	Mauve	7
	Seedling				2	2		
	Non-Spencers							
	Flora Norton			1	1	2	Pale blue	OF
	Dorothy Eckford	1				1	White	OF
	Jack Ellis	1				1	Maroon/violet	MG
	Black Knight		1			1	Dark maroon	OF
	April in Paris				1	1	Creme - lilac edge	MG
	Total Spencers	18	3	2	9	32		
	Total Non-Spencers	2	1	1	1	5		
	Mixed Vases	7	1	1		9		
	Total Vases	27	5	4	11	47		
	Decoratives (inc bowls/saucers)	14	12	10	17	53		
	Total	41	17	14	28	100		

Comment on the National Exhibitions 2024 Schedule

Graeme Hollingdale (editor)

You will all have received your 2024 Exhibitions publication alongside this edition of the Bulletin and will no doubt have immediately noticed many significant changes to the schedules. I will attempt to highlight some specifics and the reasoning behind them.

The most important thing to emphasise is that schedules are forever evolving and have to respond to changes in the popularity and exhibiting habits of the times we are in. Apart from the occasional experiment, no changes are ever made without consulting the data from several previous years National shows. Your committee wishes to continue to encourage competition and high standards; after all, who really enjoys winning from little or no competition? If you do not agree with any decisions that your committee have ratified, then please, through the pages of the Bulletins (via me, the editor) and/or correspondence through the general secretary.

Headlines:

1. Significantly reduced single vase classes.
2. An Open to all (Div I) mixed bowl appears for the first time.
3. The Seedling division has been deleted.
4. The 9 vases of 12 stems for growers of not more than 400 cordons has been deleted.
5. Division IV (renumbered) has been reverted to 100 cordons after an experimental period at 120.
6. Class numbering has been streamlined to reflect the division they are in.
7. All bowl classes are to use the ‘saucer’ (see reprinted and revised article on pages 27/28)

In more detail:

1. After many seasons in which single vases (mixed excepted) in almost all classes throughout the divisions have been few and far between, the significant decision has been made (in order to boost competition and encourage more exhibitors to stage in the multi-vase classes) to have just a single class in each division. Exhibitors, if they wish, may enter more than one vase if of a different cultivar. The exception to this is in Div I, where we have class 6, the Hammett class/cup for Fancy cultivars.
2. The committee agreed after receiving many approaches, to add an Open Mixed Bowl. It is numbered class 5 in Division I, ie open to all. It is also unusually to be “any number of stems”.

3. Historically, there were several classes in the old Div II for Seedlings, entries of Spencer cultivars have continued to dwindle. Several years ago, the criteria for awarding the trophy for best seedling was adapted to include an entry from any class in the whole show. So, Spencer seedlings can still be staged in any class (that allows) in the show. Recently, due to the popularity of the Modern Grandiflora/semi-grandiflora types, an extra class had been introduced; this class remains but has been transferred to the Special Classes section. All vases of seedlings (of whichever type of Odoratus) will still be eligible for the trophy.
4. For decades now, the nine-vase class for growers of 400 and under cordons has been low on entries, with many shows not having any, or just the occasional one. Every year this has been discussed in the sub-committee, where they have always decided (because of tradition and the challenge involved) to retain the class. Finally this year, the decision was ratified by the full committee to delete this class. Any grower in this division can of course still enter single, three and six vase classes (along with a mixed vase and bowl) but can also 'stage up' a division, or any of the special classes.
5. We now have six Divisions plus a reduced Special Classes section. The old Division V has been reclassified as IV and the number of cordons grown has reverted to what it was for many decades, 100, as the experiment of 120 had not improved competition. It was agreed that those growers who had perhaps grown 120 could either attempt to grow a few more for division III (200) or reduce back to 100 and be encouraged to grow more non-spencers.
6. All the class numbers have been streamlined, hopefully making far more sense to the exhibitor and show manager(s).
7. You will notice that all classes which have the term "bowl" somewhere in their description or title, will from 2024 be staged in the small "saucer" instead. Please see the reprinted and revised article on pages 27/28.

Obviously there are one or two other tweaks, so do make a point of carefully studying the new schedules; if there is anything that you would like clarification about, then please do contact the Show Manager(s) concerned, or the committee, through your General Secretary. We, the committee are looking forward to seeing a competitive series of shows over the coming seasons. If the schedules need adjusting then rest assured, we will always be open to feedback and suggestions. I also draw your attention to the article on sponsorship (where you can have added to the schedule a class, or classes to your own specifications!) on page 16.



Matthewman's Sweet Peas



Summer's Day

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Can you Help with YouTube?

Alison Shreeve

Your committee is dedicated to making the Society a great community to belong to all year round, not simply in the summer months when our lovely flowers bloom! To this end, we are looking for somebody to help us manage videos, specifically through YouTube. We are assured it is a simple task, to set up a private account so that we can access videoed talks and presentations through the members' area of the website via a link.

This means that we can put together some interesting resources which can be made available through the winter months when people are planning the next growing season. The current committee don't feel they have the resources to be able to manage the YouTube side of the website.

Can you help? Or do you know someone who would be happy to manage this? We do many things but really need to work with someone else (not currently on the committee, who are all very busy on the Society's behalf) on this aspect of the society's work! As volunteers, we are all fully committed to many things, so we are hopeful that one of our members, or one of their family or friends, will be kind enough to help. Please contact the Chair, Alison Shreeve, a.shreeve1@btinternet.com if you would like more information or to have a chat about this. I look forward to hearing from you.



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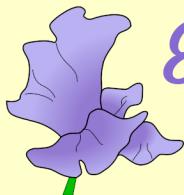
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