



Floral Fantasia

The new display area at the RHS Hyde Hall garden in Essex has been a popular visit destination in these post-lockdown days.

One of the attractions has been the colourful display of 'Floral Fantasia' which is incorporating the work of breeders of new pot and bedding plants. This year some of the plants have been produced from the Fleuroselect trials of Rudbeckia, both seed and vegetatively propagated.

Starting in 2018 with initial garden ideas and some commercial backing, Peter Seabrook has masterminded the development of a large-scale, colour, bedding garden on the RHS site. He has brought in several companies who would like to cooperate with the aim of creating a 'shop window' for flowering plants especially new forms and varieties.

Last year, Peter re-purposed plants used at other exhibitions to produce a fantastic display and at the Spring Conference at Peterborough in January, gave us all a brief 'virtual' walk through the garden with a presentation of beautiful images. The pdf copy of his presentation is available on

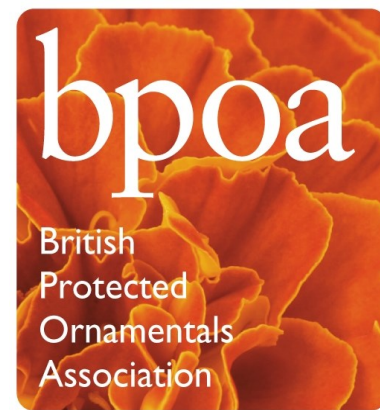
the website downloads page. This year, Fleuroselect has proclaimed 2020 the year of the Rudbeckia and arranged trials of 50 seed



raised and 36 cutting-raised cultivars at six sites around Europe including RHS Hyde Hall & Harlow Carr (read more @ fleuroselect.com) Many of



these are now gracing the gardens at Hyde Hall and will be flowering in the next few months for trade and gardener visitors to admire. Despite lockdown, they have managed to plant the trials and then, following some bad weather, Peter took the trial out again and re-planted it in the ground.



Growing together™

July 2020

Defra Peatlands survey

We have become accustomed to being surveyed and 'question-aired' as an organisation. Often with little feedback and explanation of the action that is subsequently justified by the enquiry.

This complex area is being studied by Defra with a wide ranging review of the issues involved. After many years of debate on the use of peat in horticulture and the need to reduce/ replace it as a growing medium, the industry can only expect a continuing pressure to stop peat use. So this enquiry, particularly Q12- *How should government ensure that a successful horticultural industry can operate without peat?*- can be no surprise.

The, government-supported, sustainable growing media research gives testimony to the long-standing and sincere efforts of the industry to take all the necessary measures to facilitate the change to peat-free media. With the competition for wood-fibre resources and costs, both material and environmental of importing coir, some support for the extra costs to industry is needed to balance the environmental 'public good'.



Spring Conference 2021
20th January-
NFU Stoneleigh

Chairman's notes

The memories of the last 6 months will not only stay with me for the remainder of my life but the tales and effects of 2020 will stay with my children too. It seems as we emerge from lockdown and normality begins to return, whatever that is, we now have the time to analyse how we have fared during this extraordinary period. The effects on the Hardy Nursery Stock, Herbaceous and Cut-flower sectors initially resembled the entire industry: devastation and worry. They have managed, however, to keep waste to a minimum and sell their crops later; trade seems to have caught up and, in some instances, even overtaken 2019. The bedding sector winners are those that already had contracts with the supermarkets, that never closed and had a captive audience. The rest of the sector were faced with huge losses in March and then massive supply chain and production issues due to social distancing for the remainder of the season. Some have branched out into the world of home delivery and Click & Collect which has helped but will never make up for the loss of production and sales that we'd normally see. So it is a real disappointment

that the Government has announced that there is to be no financial assistance for the sector. I know that the fight will continue and it is by no means the end; we will continue to work with all the trade bodies on your behalf and update you as soon as there is news.



James Alcaraz

Some of you may know that I was an early casualty of the Covid19 situation and, sadly for the moment, I have left the bedding sector. After the initial shock had subsided and the realisation that I would make a lousy plumber, one option briefly considered at the time, my wife encouraged me to start a new business focusing on

specific areas within horticulture. We are now working with some fantastic HNS nurseries who are keen to expand their product ranges and systems, whilst she is looking after some enormous gardening projects.

Having reported these personal changes to the BPOA management committee, I am pleased to report that their desire for me to continue as Chair was unanimous, albeit I now have to pay for the privilege. In line with plans set out at the AGM in January, now is the time to ally ourselves with the other industry sectors and act upon the desire to broaden membership to include non pot & bedding nurseries. Needless to say, I will be asking my new customers to join the BPOA without delay and hope that this will be the start of a strengthening membership for the BPOA.

We would like to thank Will Lamb and the team at Baginton for all their loyal support and hard work over the years. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

Keep safe, keep well but most importantly keep in touch.

James Alcaraz

Peter Seabrook /BPOA Bursary 2020

This year's bursary winner is the HNC & HND class in horticulture at Argyll College, Lochgilphead (14 students) under the tutelage of



Amber Crowley

Amber Crowley who has made the application on their behalf.

"They are working extremely hard, many of them under quite challenging circumstances, to gain their qualifications so that they can start work in the horticultural industry.

As our students are dispersed over a wide area, from Inverness to Leeds, Dundee to the Isle of Arran, and many places in between, we do not get an opportunity to all get together and visit commercial establishments to see first hand the production of UK ornamental crops."

They intend to use the bursary to go on a field trip, now delayed to next spring, to visit commercial

nurseries. Several of them are particularly interested in plant science and hope to go into the ornamentals research. Others have aims to produce crops either as propagators or suppliers to garden centres.

From 2020 the College will offer a specialised Production Horticulture route for HNC and HND level and several of the students have chosen to take this route.

As work experience placements are difficult to find in their area the opportunity to visit leading horticultural establishments will give the students a greater insight into this industry sector.

James Pike

James Pike recipient of the Peter Seabrook/ BPOA bursary in 2019

"Receiving this award was fantastic news last January. I'd already committed to take time off work to study for an RHS level 3 award and although I knew being a mature student wasn't going to be easy in terms of time commitment it was a huge help to get the bursary.



The course was both interesting and useful for my work. I work on a retail nursery. We grow most of the plants we sell but buy in a fair bit too. Sometimes when you work in the same place doing the same thing time after time you don't always think about alternatives. Studying gave me a greater awareness of many things including looking after hardy ornamentals.

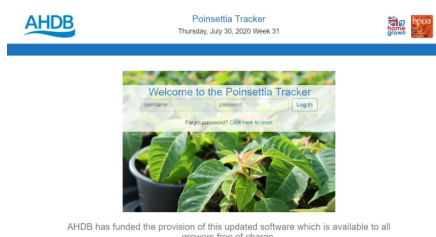
We grow bedding and perennials, but not many woody plants, so learning about pruning and feeding was useful. I have also followed up my studying with helping run some trials at work on peat reduction. We grew identical cutting raised pelargoniums in 100% peat (which we'd never normally use) and also in increasing diluted mixtures using wood-fibre. Throughout the growing period we monitored root development, relative chlorophyll levels and bud and flower count. These trials showed that peat reduction up to 50% has no detrimental effect on growing bedding plants and in many dilutions shows a strong positive in terms of root development and final flower count. As peat reduction is a huge issue for horticulture this trial is very relevant.

Going back to college as an adult after having worked in Horticulture for over ten years was a great experience. If I'd done it at 18 in would have been wasted on me, but at 30 years old and with hands on experience, adding some formal learning to the knowledge I already had, made the time commitment totally worthwhile."

James Pike

Poinsettia Tracker

A new AHDB funded and BPOA hosted poinsettia graphical tracking tool has just been launched.



Based on industry standard graphs, this tool is designed to be intuitive and easy to use, allowing growers to track growth and record cultural events (like PGR applications and changes to heating set

points) that impact plant height, to assist in the management of crop development in relation to retailer product specifications. Data can also be shared with any one in who has a login. The poinsettia graphical tracking tool is free to all growers to use on phones or any device that has an internet browser.

Poinsettia Tracker is available for use now via the BPOA website at <https://www.homegrownplants.org.uk/poinsettia-tracker/>

Podcasts

The idea of podcasting came from Wayne Brough who has also chaired our efforts to date. The initial episode was taken from the start of the Covid19 instigated need to find marketing outlets for the produce when the garden centres closed in late March.



BPOA Home Grown
Growers Podcast

tres closed in late March.

We discussed the challenges of setting up direct marketing operations and online ordering and then when garden centres opened again in England, we talked about the sales post-lockdown. Finally, we enlisted the help of Neville Stein and Greg Hill to consider the business planning for the second half of the year.

They all run for about 20 minutes and you can listen to them here by following this link or wherever you find your favourite podcasts:

<https://www.homegrownplants.org.uk/podcast/>

Spring Conference 2021

The 42nd BPOA Annual General Meeting & Spring Conference will take place on Wednesday 20th January 2021 at the NFU Conference Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TZ - to include:

- * Plant Health/ passports/ biosecurity
- * Use of UVC to protect plants
- * Shelf life : effect of induced moisture stress? (Retail speaker/ academic)
- * Carbon footprinting/ net zero target-(possibly MPS or a Dutch speaker)

Discussion forum

What do you want to talk about?

This spring we have had requests for a grower discussion group on the Covid19-inspired business situation and we set up a Facebook group on the BPOA page : https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=bpoa_homegrownplants%20growers%20discussion%20group

This had relatively low uptake and has not been used by many members. We subsequently arranged for Microsoft Teams to be organised for the Technical Committee members, initially. This was extended to around 40 members. This means has been used sporadically but has not been taken up by the majority of members to ex-

press their ideas and opinions as was originally envisaged. In addition, we have used Zoom as a means of holding virtual committee meetings, conference with APHA and podcast interviews. This works very well and allows all to share their desktop with files, presentations and suchlike.

We have recently been asked for a webbased store for second hand equipment and structures. We are looking into the possibilities of cooperating with a trader who could provide this service for us but it would be possible to host this on our own website. Let us know what you think...



Due to the desire to maintain the social distancing regime, the need for more meetings arranged on Zoom and Webinars has been recognised as essential to the continuation of our normal programme of events.

Currently there are plans to present a webinar on growth control (PGR selection and use of water deficit irrigation) by Jill England ADAS and Mark Else EMRS on 24th September (6.30-7.30pm).

As there will be no official poinsettia trial meetings this year, a podcast will be released on 24 November (recording date to be confirmed) by Andrew Fuller, Graeme Edwards and Wayne Brough to look over the new coloured poinsettia varieties received this year.

Following a request from the technical committee and yet to be confirmed, there will be two P&D webinars from ADAS as part of the new BPPC project on aphid control and disease control in autumn bedding crops. The dates of these events are to be confirmed.

Wayne Brough

Baginton & BPPC

Sadly, one of the most regrettable developments as a result of the trade problems this spring has been the announcement that Will & Caroline Lamb have been forced to close Baginton Nurseries at the end of next month. The main impacts of this announcement are the loss of a central grower site and meeting/discussion centre for the BPPC project. In a review of the current situation there will be an opportunity of looking at other options to continue the work of BPPC which has been focussed at Baginton.

NFU Energy have done some provisional measurements of air movement there pre-lockdown and some of the new BPPC work packages were planned to be staged there. However, there was already less central trial work planned and more regional workshops.

Air Movement – A new site, with similar facilities and growers interested in

air movement has been identified and will be the new location for the work.

Management of conventional chemistry – The EAMU phytotoxicity work is being undertaken at ADAS Boxworth this year because of nursery access restrictions due to Covid19, however we anticipate that last 2 years will be staged on a commercial nursery so that growers can attend a P&D event on site.

Spray application – This work is planned in association with Coletta and Tyson with an associated grower event.

HNS species suitable as bedding/pot plant products - This work is planned to start in 2021 and we already have offers of suitable sites.

Evaluation of new varieties of coloured poinsettias – Bridge Farm/ Neame Lea have kindly agreed to run a trial with less reporting and will accept visits subject to site Covid policies

Growing media & Best practice adoption – will start in 2021 based on regional sites.

Chris Need



BPOA is a specialist producer group of the NFU

British Protected Ornamentals Association
PO Box 691
Chichester
PO19 9NA



Tel. +44 1163 180587
Email bpoa@btconnect.com
Web www.bpoaonline.co.uk
HG www.homegrownplants.org.uk