



WINTER EDITION 2024

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

BOA is a specialist branch of the NFU Board of Horticulture and Potatoes with administration handled by the British Growers Association (BGA). Andy Smith, with the help of Rachel Kemp and Lyndsay Marfleet run BOA behind the scenes and we owe them a massive thank you for their dedication, professionalism, and knowledge. BGA administer twenty-six edible crop groups and we can draw upon their expertise on how to do, and how not to do, things.



The National Farmers Union (NFU) funding of BOA is detailed in a Memorandum of Association (MOU). The most recent MOU is for the period 01.11.22 to 31.10.25. The NFU have requested BOA financial independence within six years by a reduction in support of £2,000 per annum commencing 1st November 2023. This means support this year to 31st October 2024 drops from £12,200 to £10,200. The NFU continue to make their meeting and conference rooms available free of charge to the association, keeps us informed of all government interference and lets me attend the NFU Board of Horticulture & Potatoes. I thank Lee Abbey (Chief Advisor Crop & Plant Advisor) and Christine McDowell (Horticulture Advisor) for their continuing support.

The reduction in funding creates both opportunities and threats for the association. The opportunity is to expand membership across the ornamentals sector to include cut flowers, Christmas trees and bulbs. With Robin Squance's vision, I'm delighted to welcome our first four cut flower members to the association. We dropped the protected P from BPOA at the AGM on Tuesday 30th January 2024 and are now known as the British Ornamentals Association (BOA).

Membership invoices have been sent out by BGA rather than attached to your NFU subscription which was taken by direct debit annually on 1st

November. Who would have thought that BOA subscription income would have nearly doubled with these changes. Add in two successful profitable BOA conferences, Technical and Poinsettia and a careful cost control, the association ends up with a very healthy surplus in the year to 31st October 2023.

Robin Squance, BOA Technical Chairman, was appointed a Director of Horticulture Crop Protection Ltd (HCP) in February 2023 to represent BOA's interests. BOA invoices for voluntary contributions to help fund ornamentals share of HCP to generate Extension of Authorisation for Minor Uses (EAMU) and Emergency Authorisations (EA) were sent out in January 2024 and then annually with BOA membership invoices. The BOA Management Committee are working on the assumption that roughly half the industry support voluntary HCP payments, and on this understanding with significant help from the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), ornamentals will just pay their £92,000 first year contribution to HCP. If you grew broadacre crops (wheat, barley, maize, rice etc) the chemical manufacturers would pay for this regulatory work as the markets are large and profitable. Ornamentals is such a diverse, individually small market, so we the growers have to fund this work. It's very simple, if you want chemicals, particularly fungicides and insecticides, you need to contribute to HCP via a voluntary donation to BOA. I shouldn't forget Joanne McTigue who does all the EAMU and EA work for ornamentals – Thank you very much.

The Horticulture Development Council (HDC) funded Project PC221 on behalf of ornamentals in 2007. This resulted in a patent for the production of Jasmonic Acid being registered and administered by Lancaster University for twenty years. Jasmonic Acid is used as a seed treatment as a standalone and in conjunction with other products to increase yields. HDC became the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB) which Horticulture and Potatoes levy payers voted to bring to an end in 2021/22. AHDB have just novated the royalty patent agreement to BOA who should receive all payments from end June 2023 to end December 2027. I understand BOA could receive up to £25,000 per annum in 2024, albeit for only four years.



The BOA Poinsettia conference was held at Bridge Farm Group, Spalding on Thursday 23rd November 2023 and was a great success. Thanks go to Poinsettia Chairman Graeme Edwards, his organising team and Andrew Fuller for hosting. Bemisia tabaci was a topic of discussion lead by Rory Paton with Defra currently conducting a review. After the conference, NFU Board of Horticulture and Potatoes Chairman, Martin Emmett, carefully navigated a position whereby the NFU didn't express an opinion on the matter as it clearly had two opposing views where BOA members were opposite to representations from the protected salads sector. I would like to register my sincere thanks to Martin for his support to our ornamental sector, and BOA in particular.

BOA continues to partly fund a Colegrave Seabrook Foundation award and makes a donation to Floral Fantasia at the Royal Horticultural Societies (RHS) Hyde Hall, Chelmsford thanks to Mike Smith and his team of volunteers. Floral Fantasia is there to promote bedding plants to the RHS and the public. I must thank the RHS for their help with this successful project. Sunflowers are to be trialed in 2024.

The Technical Committee under the chairmanship of Robin Squance goes from strength to strength and I sincerely thank him for all his hard work. Robin, Simon Crawford and Chris Need with BGA staff help put together the successful Technical Conference at the NFU HQ, Stoneleigh on 31st January 2024 'Exploring opportunities for the future of Horticulture'. The sell out BOA dinner at the Woodland Grange Hotel, Leamington Spa on 30th January 2024 was where we presented the Alan Henty award (Outstanding contribution to bedding plant industry) to Michael Smith, the Bright Spark award to Mollie Higginson, the Pot Plant Growers award (Outstanding contribution to pot plant production) to Jill England and the Trumpet Blowers award (Contribution to plant promotion in the UK and Europe) to Michael Perry. The Bright Spark Award hasn't been presented for a number of years and was lost. Many thanks to Pinetops Nursery for providing a replacement. Robin has organised many well attended events, leads the BPOA North-West Group and was elected vice-chairman at the recent AGM.

We owe a massive thank you to the industry suppliers who sponsor, exhibit and provide activities undertaken by BOA. In particular, Syngenta Ornamentals, Beekenkamp Plants, Dummen Orange, Selecta, Westland Horticulture, Omex Agriculture, Ball Colegrave/Florensis, Burpee, Bulrush Horticulture, More People, Desch Plantpak, Sinclair Horticulture, H L Hutchinson, Mabon Design, Need Consulting, Four Oaks Trade Show, GASA Group, Biobest UK, Southern Trident, ICL and all those I've

forgotten to mention.

The industry is changing at a speed I've never experienced in my thirty years in horticulture. Retailers going bust leaving nurseries with large debts, Garden Centres buying growers and small specialist nurseries giving up, going bankrupt and growing the best final crop ever, houses.

BOA is an organisation which needs your support. It is profitable and has funds which can be put to good use for the benefit of the industry. It is expanding membership in a declining market. It is collecting and distributing R&D funds to give you vital pesticides to grow good quality crops. It organises technical events and conference for your benefit. It is reaching out to the younger members of the industry and seeking cooperation with the Young People in Horticulture Association (YPHA) and disseminates information directly to membership and via Matthew Appleby, Editor Horticulture Week.

Looking to the future those of us who survive will prosper while many will retire, especially the smaller units, and give up. The government is making life harder for everyone with a high taxation, high regulation economy. Public support is being reduced to agriculture while at the same time grants are available for solar panels/energy systems and Producer Organisations (PO). The edible side of our industry work together and use POs to their financial benefit. Is this something the BOA should look to do?

Finally, I must sadly mention Harry Kitchener who died aged 83 on 11th January 2024 and Bryn Evans who died aged 91 on 7th December 2023. We wish them peace and thank them for their contributions to horticulture. Life is predictable, death and taxes. Don't work too hard and always do things today, rather than tomorrow, which might not come.

Derek Jarman is a Director of Hayloft Plants Ltd (multi-channel retailer & grower of garden plants) and Chairman BPOA (British Protected Ornamentals Association)

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1st February 2024



Tribute to Harry Kitchener

September 1940 to January 2024

After college Harry was employed by the then NAAS as a trainee Horticultural adviser, NAAS then morphed into ADAS and Harry moved into the new advisory service. As with all advisers there were a series of moves to different offices and Harry was seconded to the Channel Island Advisory service- this was a common arrangement in the peak of the ADAS business and the importance of the Channel Island Horticulture industry.

On return from the spell in the Channel Islands Harry was working as a Horticultural advisor out of the Lea Valley EHS, before finally transferring his ADAS career to Boxworth, near Cambridge. By the time Harry had developed his life time interest in Pot plants and for many years was the Secretary to the Pot Plant Association which was later joined into the Bedding groups to form the Bedding and Pot Plant Association. Harry was still a member of the BPOA technical committee at the time of his death. His contribution to meetings and visits over the years was always challenging but inspiring. In the pot plant world, he had been involved in many groups, especially Pot mums, begonia, hydrangea and poinsettia.

Harry always loved travel, both independently and with groups of Growers and Advisors – he went to China to see what the industry was like in 1984. They have never recovered!!!!

Harry was instrumental and supportive of many trips: West and East Coast of the States, Canada, Norway, Poland, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and Holland to mention just a few. He was well known both by the local researchers, Growers and Breeders and maintained the contact network always.



On many of the trips he was often referred to as Col. Mainwaring- and the party would get in line behind him and whistle the famous tune- much to his pretend annoyance.

Harry's particular interest in the last years had been focussed on Pest and Disease control and the use of modern lighting techniques such as UVC as control the issues especially as there were fewer and fewer chemical control being approved. Right up until the last week Harry was arranging a TEAMS meeting with Dutch researchers to look at the use of LED lights and UV outputs to control pests.

Outside work Harry had been a very keen squash player and for many years was part of the Cambridge Morris men troop. Harry was also an avid collector of antiques and foliar editions of book and of course he was regarded as a serious wine buff – he was always very critical of the wines we bought to the table!!

Many of you will remember the arrival of the orange MGB GT at your nurseries or businesses as being the clear indication that Harry had arrived, and you were likely to be abused- in the best of good taste. He was to so many positively a friend and a guide to which you will all emphasise with and be thankful for. He did not suffer fools but would always be willing to help those who listened.

Our memories will be many and perhaps we could come together on a suitable date and place for an industry memorial service- maybe this years' Poinsettia day could be dedicated to Harry's memory.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Can we be positive about 2024?

Absolutely, there are indeed several positive factors unique to the horticultural industry that can be used to overcome challenges and thrive in 2024:

Increased Demand for Green Spaces: The majority of British adults recognize the mental health and environmental benefits of gardens and green spaces. This heightened awareness can translate into increased demand for plant-based products and services, especially as people seek to enhance their living environments with greenery.

Consistent Consumer Engagement: The fact that over two-thirds of British adults visit a garden centre every year highlights a strong and consistent level of consumer engagement with the horticultural sector. This established consumer base provides a stable foundation for businesses to build upon and adapt to changing market conditions.

Resilience to Economic Challenges: Historically, the horticultural industry has demonstrated resilience to economic downturns. Despite fluctuations in economic conditions, people tend to prioritize spending on plants and gardening-related products, viewing them as essential for enhancing their quality of life and well-being.

Growing Sales Figures: The increase in bedding plant sales by 12% in 2023, as reported by the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), indicates a growing market demand for horticultural products. This upward trend in sales figures demonstrates the industry's potential for growth and profitability even amidst broader economic uncertainties.

However, we do face some challenges.

Labour costs and shortages

A recent business survey showed 38.4% of companies thought their main concern was a labour shortage. Almost half of the business owners (49.3%) have offered financial remuneration to aid employee retention.

The two other common answers were both around employee wellbeing. 48.7% of businesses offered mental health support, whilst 48.3% provided flexible working hours.

Skilled horticultural staff are rare you need to look after them, the constant minimum wage rises have affected all businesses, have you been able to increase prices to maintain profitability?

Perennial & YPHA can help with mental health.

Flexible working hours will become more important, you can tap into a different labour market, we offer school hours to some of our employees.

Full-time staff can be offered annualised hours working more in the spring with time off during the rest of the year. Just remember to change the contracted pay period to avoid accidentally paying less than minimum wage.

At our spring conference, Sarah Want from MorePeople talked about staff communication, here are some key points:

- Staff now value training and development more than they did 2 years ago, so why not get your staff to join BPOA groups and committees.
- Only 34% of people changed jobs solely down to money, take this opportunity to talk to your staff it's not all about the money, they just need to feel valued.

Horticulture is already good at retaining their staff – with 50% of people being in roles over 3 years.

Growing is a mix of knowledge and experience, so why not encourage staff to join BPOA meetings and nursery visits.

Energy costs.

This is not going away, not just heating and lighting but adding costs throughout the supply chain. At the spring conference, we had 3 speakers covering climate change, energy efficiencies, and practical energy saving schemes.

Energy group <https://britishornamentals.org/energy/>

Plant health

Border control points

It's hard to find anybody who thinks border control points will work, my guess is they will exist but will be rarely used. We would like reports of crop losses and disruption to pass on as evidence to NFU & HTA.

Bemisia

The spectre of Bemisia is likely to haunt poinsettia growers, it will need careful management with biological and chemical controls. This is a topic we will address this spring, looking for the best Bemisia program to use.

HCP

The ornamental sectors have managed to raise the necessary funds to support the current round of EAMU's. Working with the HTA we have created the HCP Ornamental group to oversee the production of EAMU's for all ornamental groups. Our Crop protection group will have a representative on this group.

Crop protection group

New EAMU's come with many restrictions and situations, so why not join this group we need growers to help us understand what restrictions will work and when they are ridiculous. We are working on exclusion periods and PPE restrictions.

<https://britishornamentals.org/crop-protection/>

Extended producer responsibility

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is new legislation that will mean that businesses who meet certain criteria (known as obligated producers) will be made responsible for paying the full cost of managing packaging waste when it is disposed of, and/ or reporting on their packaging data. Under the legislation, businesses classed as "obligated producers" will take on the full net cost for disposing of each bit of packaging they are obligated for and/or reporting the packaging placed on the market. It is a legal requirement to report this. Defra has announced that the new UK EPR system concerning packaging will be implemented from 2024 (rather than the original implementation date of 2023).

Government [checker](#) if you need to report EPR.

We covered this topic with the help of the NFU, check out what you need to do [now](#).

Peat free

Time to get the crystal ball out, there are plenty of things to consider. DEFRA has a plan but no legislation, it feels like we need an election before anything happens. RHS and National Trust have a personal mission to go peat-free, with a big media presence. Some retailers are racing to be the first to go 100% peat-free.

Imported plants don't have to be peat-free, DEFRA promises action do you believe them? The supply of peat-free alternatives is uncertain. It looks like growers will have to guess the best approach. We are here to help, our spring conference showed there is some light at the end of the tunnel, and we are getting better at producing peat-free substrates.

Join our [growing media group](#)

BPOA AWARD WINNERS 2024



Pot Plant Growers Award—Jill England, ADAS

Jill England is Head of Horticulture at ADAS; a Plant Physiologist and Horticulture Consultant. Prior to joining ADAS in 2007, Jill studied at Hadlow College and Greenwich University (BSc Hons Commercial Horticulture), and at Wye College (PhD: The biology, epidemiology and control of liverwort). Jill's first role on joining ADAS was as Technical Secretary for the BPOA Technical Committee. Subsequently, her main focus has been ornamentals research and consultancy, having led the AHDB/BPOA Bedding and Plot Plant Centre work programme for ADAS since its inception in 2014 until 2023. This work programme included efficacy and crop safety testing of PGRs for use on Bedding and Pot Plants, and Poinsettia; use of glass coatings and spectral filters in bedding plant production; Verbena nutrition; Improving cutting success; crop scheduling (overwintered perennials, coloured Hellebore, herbaceous Salvia, Calibrachoa and Begonia); Crop safety of pesticides with new EAMU approvals; Using cold treatments to advance flowering in coloured Hellebores; Peat free growing media demonstration trials. Other more recent research has included the identification of environmental triggers for Pansy Mottle Syndrome, Hardy Nursery Stock Nutrition; and she fulfilled the BOPP Technical Secretary and lead auditor roles for a number of years. Jill has also been involved in policy work funded by Defra, WWF and WRAP with a focus on supply chain resilience and food sourcing in a changing climate.

Hellebore, herbaceous Salvia, Calibrachoa and Begonia); Crop safety of pesticides with new EAMU approvals; Using cold treatments to advance flowering in coloured Hellebores; Peat free growing media demonstration trials. Other more recent research has included the identification of environmental triggers for Pansy Mottle Syndrome, Hardy Nursery Stock Nutrition; and she fulfilled the BOPP Technical Secretary and lead auditor roles for a number of years. Jill has also been involved in policy work funded by Defra, WWF and WRAP with a focus on supply chain resilience and food sourcing in a changing climate.



Alan Hendy Award—Michael Smith, W D Smith & Son

Michael is the 3rd generation of W. D. Smith & Son a family business based at Wickford in Essex. The nursery has been growing seasonal colour and veg for over 80 years. A few generations of Smiths before that had been market gardeners in the area.

Apart from a year at Bordon Hill Michael has spent all his working life at W. D. Smith & Son.

His father Roland was one of founding members of the Bedding Plant Association and the business have been active within the association through all its name changes. In

2007 Michael joined the BPOA Technical Committee, and accidentally became chair soon after. Michael found being involved in the committee very rewarding, but gave his place to a younger, more hands-on member of the W. D. Smith team in 2021.

A few months later Michael found himself attempting to keep Peter Seabrook's legacy alive as Chair of the 'Floral Fantasia' garden at RHS Hyde Hall. Peter was a friend of the business for as long as anyone could remember and would pop in every week or two for a catch up.

In 2004 W. D. Smith held their first Viola and Pansy Festival, this has become an annual event bringing the industry and breeders together from all around the world to see their independent trial of the latest commercial varieties. The trial is then presented to the public where they get to purchase and vote for their favourites.



Bright Spark Award—Mollie Higginson, New Leaf Plants

Mollie has worked in horticulture for 5 years, working her way up to Sales Manager at New Leaf Plants. She, alongside two other horticultural colleagues set up YPHA (Young People in Horticulture Association) in 2020, with hopes to bring together young people within horticulture. This then continued to grow, now to a membership of 800 strong, and continuing to grow.

"We are so proud of the community we have built. I also sit on the NFU board and HTA council, voicing a young person's opinion on matters that affect our industry. I hope that YPHA can continue to help support our industry and inspire more young people to join horticulture."

Trumpet Blowers Award—Michael Perry



A multihyphenate of the plant world, Michael Perry (AKA Mr Plant Geek) is a TV presenter, speaker, hortpreneur and author of *Hortus Curious*, a visual menagerie of the weirdest and wackiest plant species. Michael got his start in new product development at Thompson & Morgan before quickly working his way up to becoming an authoritative voice knowledgeable in all areas of horticulture. Having presented guest slots on ITV's *This Morning* and Channel 4's *Steph's Packed Lunch*, and regularly speaking at RHS Flower Shows and industry exhibitions across the globe, Michael's focus on the fun side of gardening, with an emphasis on new plants and trends, encourages and nurtures the new generation of gardeners.

PERFORMANCE TESTING OF GROWING MEDIA AVAILABLE TO GARDENERS – AUTUMN/WINTER 2023

Background

Growers are concerned that existing and new gardeners may reduce their spend on plants due to the perceived problems with peat-free growing media. Stockbridge Technology Centre was commissioned to look at this by the BPOA. Growing Media manufacturers now produce an extensive range of peat-free products which are widely available at garden centres, DIY stores, other retailers plus on-line. Currently there is some negativity towards these composts due to their poor performance over the years. Defra have developed a testing protocol to determine the performance of growing media for potting plants and these have started to be used.

Project details

A wide range of peat-free MPC or All Purpose products were sourced from the York area plus from on-line retailers in late summer and autumn 2023. Where products were available at different retail sites then up to 4 bags were sourced. A range of peat reduced products were also purchased and all were compared alongside professional standards (F2 and M2). A total of 87 bags of peat free products were purchased covering 47 products from 31 different manufacturers/retail brands. Nine peat reduced products were also obtained.

The test involved growing petunia and tomato plug plants and planting them into 0.5 litre pots. The petunias were grown for 6 weeks and the tomatoes for 4 weeks presenting typical growing periods. In addition tomato seeds were sown into smaller pots. The tests were carried out in a heated glasshouse at STC.

Plants were assessed for vigour (plant size and foliage colour), fresh weight at final assessment and also root growth. Seed emergence and seedling vigour were assessed for the seed sowing test.

Results

The results are summarised below as the % of plants considered acceptable or better.



Compost type	Petunia plants		Tomato Plants		Tomato-seeds	
	4 wks	5 wks	2 wks	3 wks	2 wks	3 wks
Peat-free	82	77	84	83	90	83
Reduced peat	100	100	100	100	100	100

The project has shown that peat-free composts are generally performing well, but there are still some poor ones on the market. Where 3 or 4 bags were purchased of the same product then there was some variability in performance and more work is required to increase reliability. Poor performance was considered to be due to low nutrient levels in the compost so gardeners must be prepared to use liquid feeds when they see plants starting to go pale.

A full report will be written in the next 4 weeks.

Julian Davies



Hello,

My name is Churchill Nokrach and I am a PhD Student at Brunel University London. I am in Cohort 3 of the UKFS/ CDT studentship.

I am requesting if you could take part in my research and also link me for an interview with vegetables farmers (small, medium and large scales) across the UK within your network.

My research is evaluating the potential of the UK to locally produce vegetable sustainably to meet the home demand. I am expecting to carry out the survey between February and June 2024 and looking at 200 farmers across the UK.

Thank you, Churchill.

Churchill.Nokrach@brunel.ac.uk

SAVE THE DATE

BPOA Technical Conference 2025

Wednesday 5th February

NFU Conference Centre, Stoneleigh and online

Horticulture Crop Protection (HCP) has been working with the BPOA and the HTA together with representatives for growers of cut flowers and bulbs, Christmas trees and forest nursery trees, to ensure the crop protection needs of the whole ornamentals industry are voiced. The aim is for HCP to work with individual sectors to understand pest, disease and weed concerns and to find solutions to manage them. Then, to cost share across the groups as far as possible when making off-label (EAMU) applications. Working with each sector enables HCP to tailor each EAMU to the crop and the situation of growing. For instance, PPE mitigations or exclusion periods can be considered in the context of practicality for workers.

In addition to putting new EAMUs into place, HCP also makes applications to renew EAMUs following a product MAPP number change, this may be a result of a formulation change or following a planned re-evaluation and reauthorisation of the product. HCP can also amend existing EAMUs if they are impractical or if the scope is not adequate. All EAMU applications are formally agreed with the BPOA prior to submission.

HCP was pleased to be invited to present at the recent BPOA technical conference. Please find a couple of slides below; the first gives an overview of the organisations that HCP are now working with. The second gives an overview of how HCP approach the task of obtaining an EAMU on behalf of the Association members.

HCP membership

Vining Crops	Vegetables	Fruit
Cucumber and Pepper Growers Association	Asparagus Growers Association	British Apples and Pears
Tomato Growers Association	Beetroot Association	British Stone Fruit
British Hops Association	Celeriac and Fennel	Cider Apple Growers Association
GB wine	Brassica Growers Association	Blackcurrant Growers
Ornamental Crops	British Carrot Growers Association	British Berry Growers
British Protected Ornamentals Association	British Leafy Salads Association	Rhubarb Growers Association
Horticulture Trades Association	British Herbs Association	Other
British Christmas Tree Growers Association	British Onion Producers Association	Mushroom Growers Association
(Narcissus) Bulb Growers Association	Leek Growers Association	Minor Crop Group (Cereals & Oilseeds)
Cut Flowers Association	Outdoor Cucurbits	Plant Propagators Ltd
	Pea and Bean Growers Association	
	Sweetcorn Growers Association	
	Seed Potatoes	

Note: Major UK crops: grassland, barley, forage maize, oats, wheat, dry harvested field beans, oilseed rape, sugar beet and potatoes (other than seed). All other basic crops are considered minor and may be considered for an EAMU



EAMU Process

‘A year in the making’

Extension of Authorisation for a Minor Use



Information Classification: General

Recent EAMUs secured:

EAMU 2023 2597: Efeckt for control of weeds in bulb cut flower production (including rhizomes, corms and tubers), Christmas trees, field-grown hardy nursery stock, forest nursery, non-bulb cut flowers, pot and bedding plants grown in containers (> 10cm) (including hardy nursery stock).

EAMU 2023 2516: Starane XL for control of weeds in outdoor and protected ornamental plant production.

EAMU 2023 2028: Thiopron for use in ornamental plants: pot and bedding plants grown in containers under or over 10cm, hardy nursery stock, bulbs and cut flowers, forest tree nursery and fruit tree nursery.

To find out more about how HCP work and what is involved in gaining an EAMU authorisation you can take a look at our website:

<https://hcpltd.org/>

We also have a Linked-in site to which HCP will post information on all new EAMU and Emergency authorisations as they are granted.

Jo McTigue

joanna.mctigue@hcpltd.org



Must read

Cost inflation in the Horticulture supply chain: Soaring costs of production over the past two years has meant that some of the UK's leading horticulture businesses have shelved any plans for growth, putting the future of the UK's fruit and vegetable industry at risk. [A new report](#), prepared by Promar International and commissioned by the NFU, found that costs of production have increased by as much as 39% in the past two years. Key inputs including energy costs rising by 218%, fertiliser up 47% and labour costs up 24% are shown to be behind the hike.

Defra Supply Chain Fairness review: The NFU is responding to Defra's supply chain review on the horticulture sector and [wants to hear from growers to help shape its response](#). As promised following the Farm to Fork Summit at No.10 in May 2023, Defra is currently consulting on fairness in the horticulture supply chain to support British farmers and improve food security. Commenting on the review, NFU Horticulture Board chair Martin Emmett said: "I urge all growers to have their say in this government consultation to give us the best chance of enacting much-needed change, including those growers of plants and flowers that supply the major grocery retailers."

Join the NFU Horticulture & Potatoes Board: The NFU is looking for proactive, ambitious and forward-thinking members to [join its national Horticulture and Potatoes Board](#); helping shape future policies impacting the sector and representing members and their interests across the country. With growers facing unprecedented challenges over the last few years from Brexit, Covid, the Ukraine conflict and the subsequent inflationary pressures, the NFU Horticulture and Potatoes Board has a vital role in representing the interests of NFU members.

Policy updates

Energy grants now open to horticulture: The NFU has secured essential energy support for horticulture businesses under the [third round of the IETF \(Industrial Energy Transformation Fund\)](#). In an announcement coinciding with the fairness review into the fresh produce supply chain, the government said 'controlled environment horticulture' would be eligible for phase three of the IETF launching in January 2024. A long-standing NFU lobbying ask, it means that glasshouses will be eligible for a higher tier of government support targeted at high energy use industries. Some £185 million is available under the third round.

Import of treated seed and parallel trade: Following sustained NFU lobbying, secondary legislation allowing a short-term [extension to the availability of crucial crop protection products has been made law](#). The Statutory Instrument regulation, which came into force on 31 December 2023, provides a temporary solution to two issues – the loss of access to seed treated in the EU when post-Brexit arrangements end on 1 January 2024, and the end of parallel imports, the latter of which has happened already and is having an impact on availability and cost.

Plant imports: After extensive briefing by several national board members, The Guardian has written about the impacts and [threats to horticultural businesses of the impending changes to Border Controls](#). At the time of publication, the article was the 2nd most viewed on The Guardian website.

In brief:

Mancozeb non-renewal: HSE have proposed withdrawing approval for Mancozeb, a fungicide primarily used to combat blight in potatoes. The NFU is working with the approval holders to establish possible mitigations for this proposal.

SWS scheme announcement delayed: Defra has postponed its response to the Independent Labour Review until the New Year, with the cabinet reshuffle the likely cause for the delay. The response was expected to confirm a longer term extension to the Seasonal Worker Scheme. The NFU is pushing for a commitment asap, so that business have the confidence to plan for the 2025 season and beyond.

Floral Fantasia Update

The Floral Fantasia displays at Hyde Hall have continued to provide a superb show throughout the year in 2023. The winter/spring displays focused on Polyanthus supplied from W. D. Smith's trials, which involved some overwintered and early spring plantings. Overall the result was magnificent in late March where the Crescendo series was superb but some of the Colibri and Perola series were also performing well. Also of great interest were some new Veristar colours from Rudy Raes and a new series of double flowered polyanthus from Kerley & Co.

On July 4th RHS Hyde Hall hosted an international group of around 90 people for the annual Fleuroselect Convention, which was held in the UK in 2023. Delegates were able to enjoy the displays and particularly the Salvia trial which was looking impressive during the visit despite cool temperatures and showers. Many industry leaders attended the conference and provided positive feedback on the merits of Floral Fantasia to the RHS staff and management team who were present.

The Fleuroselect Salvia trial was assessed by an RHS forum, chaired by Michael Smith of W. D. Smith & Son and the Award of Garden Merit results will be published in a few weeks' time, after ratification by the RHS Tender Ornamental Plants Committee. We will keep BPOA members apprised of the results as soon as they are released. Some of the new interspecific cultivars have performed exceptionally well but also the best of the traditional Salvia splendens have shown their garden value. The People's Choice programme was very well supported by visitors to Hyde Hall and the results are shown below.

1st Salvia farinacea 'Strata'

2nd Salvia greggii 'Mirage Rose Bicolour'

3rd Salvia x hybrid 'Mystic Spires'

4th Salvia patens

5th Salvia viridis 'Bouquet Mixed'

For more details please see:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/Articles/salvia-peoples-choice-winners-rhs-hyde-hall>

Overall, the impression made by the seasonal displays in the Floral Fantasia garden has been very positive with the public often commenting on the glorious colourful plantings. Ceramic patio containers, donated by Woodlodge, have been used to display a wide range of varieties from different breeders who have supported the Floral Fantasia initiative through donations.

The sensitively designed combinations have been a huge success and thanks to Molli Christman for her efforts in this work. Floral Fantasia has clearly demonstrated the importance of seasonal colour in UK gardens and the need to continue to promote it. Autumn plantings are now well advanced with generous contributions from Ball Colegrave and Volmary of various autumn-interest perennials and Cool Wave pansy.

For the summer of 2024 an agreement has been reached between Fleuroselect and the RHS to stage the 'Year of the Sunflower' trials at Floral Fantasia and this will again be assessed for Awards of Garden Merit by an RHS appointed forum. The sunflower trial will focus on new and existing developments in dwarf and semi-tall cultivars up to 1.4 m in height.

The Floral Fantasia Management Group continue to meet regularly to monitor the garden, aiming to maximise the opportunity for all stakeholders. Financial pledges continue to be made by industry groups and companies but more support to develop the garden is still needed. The need for an automatic watering system is clear and hopefully this can be arranged in the coming months in readiness for next summer.

Simon Crawford January 2024



POINSETTIA GROUP UPDATE



I am pleased to provide an update on the activities and progress of the UK Poinsettia Group for the year just gone.

Poinsettia Trial Event:

The highlight of the year was our inaugural Poinsettia Trial Event, which garnered an impressive turnout. We were delighted to see support from Poinsettia breeders, trade exhibitors, and growers from within our group. The event marked a significant milestone as the first of its kind post-AHDB funding. Its success underscores the potential and initiative within our group and BPOA to carry forward impactful projects independently.

The positive response received at the trial event has encouraged us to plan a similar schedule for the upcoming year. We believe that this annual event will serve as a crucial platform for sharing insights, innovations, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders in the poinsettia industry.

DEFRA Lobbying Efforts:

In a significant move, both the Poinsettia Group and individual members actively lobbied DEFRA, collaborating with the BPOA on crucial industry issues. This united effort is a vital step forward, and we hope that the outcomes align with the best interests of the industry. The Poinsettia Group acknowledges the importance of collective advocacy and remains committed to working closely with DEFRA for the benefit of all growers.

Looking Forward:

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, we look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. The UK Poinsettia Group remains committed to fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and advocating for the best interests of our industry.

We express our gratitude to all members for their active participation and contributions throughout the year. Along with the unwavering support of the BPOA and Management Committee. Together, we can navigate the uncertainties and continue to thrive as a united force within the BPOA.

In conclusion, I am confident that the UK Poinsettia Group is well-positioned for future success, and I look forward to working together with all members in the coming year.

Graeme Edwards
BPGG Chairman

Tracking your poinsettia heights

The BPOA [poinsettia tracker](#) is available to use through the BPOA website.

My name is Molly Allington and I am the CEO and co-founder of Albotherm. We are an agritech startup developing a temperature activated shade coating that is transparent when cold and turns white as ambient temperatures increase, controlling heat while increasing light levels by 18% compared to traditional shade products.

The reason I am reaching out is that we are doing some market research into growers' use of shade coatings and wondered if you would mind circulating a quick survey to some of your members. It shouldn't take more than 5 minutes to complete and it would really help us out.

Here is the [link](#) to the survey.



In this edition of the BPOA Newsletter we have TWO very simple requests

Have we got the correct contacts for your business?

Let us know by clicking

[HERE](#)

What do you want to see from the BPOA?

The BPOA is here to serve it's members, so if there are any suggestions, questions or comments about the future activity of the association please let us know

[HERE](#)

Newsletter



2024 Newsletter Schedules & Submission Deadlines

We're looking forward to continuing to bring you the BPOA newsletter throughout 2024. We are always on the lookout for exciting and engaging content that may be of interest to our members. To that end, if you have any news within your business, exciting content or stories, or any other general information that you think may be of interest to the BPOA community please get in touch.

Whilst we can make no guarantees that we will always be able to use your content, every piece of information we receive is still invaluable and helps deepen our understanding of a fast-moving industry.

We are also happy to share with you our 2024 newsletter publication submission dates which can be found below.

2024 Spring Newsletter (May) - Submission Deadline 26th April

2024 Summer Newsletter (August) - Submission Deadline 26th July

2024 Autumn Newsletter (November) - Submission Deadline 25th October

BRITISH GROWERS



British Growers seeks to ensure that the voice of the fresh produce industry is heard in the right places. Our CEO Jack Ward leads our team in voicing Horticulture and Industry issues.

Have you missed some of our industry updates?

Read the latest updates [here](#).



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- Management Committee Meeting—Thursday 14 March 2024 at 3.30pm via Zoom
- Management Committee Meeting—Tuesday 28 May 2024 at 3.30pm via Zoom
- Management Committee Meeting—Wednesday 7 August 2024 at 3.30pm via Zoom
- Management Committee Meeting—Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 3.30pm via Zoom
- Pre-Conference Dinner—Tuesday 4 February 2025 at Woodland Grange Hotel, Leamington Spa
- Technical Conference—Wednesday 5 February 2025 at NFU Conference Centre, Stoneleigh

BASIS & NRoSO

For members who are registered with **BASIS**, there are points awarded for reading the British Protected Ornamentals Association newsletter as follows:

1 September 2023 - 31 May 2024 - Ref CP/130200/2324/g (CP2 - 2 points)

To claim your basis points email michele@basis-reg.co.uk

NRoSO reference NO501376f (1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024). To claim your NRoSO points please contact

info@britishornamentals.org for an application form.

TRADE
MEMBERS

