



## Summer Newsletter 2026

### Editorial

Barbara Williams, Chair, [b\\_williams15@hotmail.com](mailto:b_williams15@hotmail.com)

Looking out on the garden in mid-April, as the daffodils were going over, brought on a mixture of feelings – regret at their passing, but also joy at the amazing beauty they bring to the garden from January onwards! The genus was well-known to the ancient Greeks and Romans who were particularly interested in its medical properties – historically it was believed to have emetic, purgative and anti-spasmodic properties. The plants became increasingly popular in the 16th century, were formally described by Linnaeus in the *Species Plantarum* in 1753 and by the late 19th century were an important crop, with their cultivation primarily centred in The Netherlands.

I have to admit that Jon is the bulb supremo in our house and has put a huge amount of thought into sequencing the bulbs so that we have a good long display. In many ways, we have Norfolk Plant Heritage to thank for that – the talks we have, the plants that are for sale and the sheer range of expertise and knowledge of so many of our members has enhanced our thoughtfulness about how we approach our garden.

Jon has already started planning next year's purchases, but for me, a total favourite this year was *Narcissus* 'Polar Hunter' which we purchased at one of our talks. An early-flowering narcissus, it has both subtlety, gentle fragrance, multiple blooms and a wonderful luminous quality. There will definitely be more of those next year!



*Narcissus* 'Polar Hunter'

Another favourite for me is *Narcissus cyclamineus* which has those wonderful reflexed tepals, and is a naturally occurring narcissus, native to Spain and Portugal.

On a visit to John and Judy Wilson's garden at Chestnut Farm, we bought *N.* 'Sailboat' which I loved for

its subtlety. We planted it straight away when we got home and it lasted very well for a good few weeks, so providing it comes back next year, that is one to recommend. And during the same visit, Michaela from Jelly Cottage Plants gave us *N.* 'Carisse' which we grew in a pot and which will be planted out in a suitable spot for next year.

The range is simply enormous. For abundance, spreadability, longevity and exuberance, *N.* 'Tête-à-Tête' is simply unbeatable. For delicacy and longevity combined, *N.* 'Thalia' performs extremely well and *N.* 'Golden Ducat' has come back year after year, although it is tall with a heavy flower, so can



*Narcissus* 'Golden Ducat'

collapse a bit in strong winds or rain, and sometimes needs a bit of protection. With so much choice, perhaps we should do what the garden designer Sean A. Pritchard suggests in his book *Outside In* – create a storyboard of your favourite narcissi and mix and match until you find the most pleasing combinations!

(All photos taken by Barbara Williams unless otherwise stated)

### Membership Matters

Linda Hall, Membership Secretary  
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A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Anita Goodenough (Swaffham) and rejoiner Miss Elizabeth Osborne (Kings Lynn). Our membership now stands at 195.

It is with sadness that I report that member Kathleen Maule, wife of Nick Maule, recently passed away. Over many years Kathleen and Nick organised the annual Norfolk Plant Heritage holidays - many of us will have very fond memories of those. Our thoughts are with Nick.

### The PH National Collection of *Sarracenia purpurea*

Paul Katz, Plant Heritage National Collection Holder, writes about these extraordinary plants:

My collection consists of a family of temperate, carnivorous, bog plants, that need a dormancy period of below 10°C for 3-4 months of the year, so the climate of the UK suits



*Narcissus* 'Sailboat'

them. Here's a simplified outline of what is a very complex taxonomy, before looking more closely at some interesting facts about the subspecies. So please stay with me.

*Sarracenia purpurea* is made up of 2 subspecies (*S. purpurea* ssp *purpurea* and *purpurea* ssp *venosa*), and 2 named varieties (*S.venosa* var. *montana*) the mountain pitcher and (*venosa* var. *pallidiflora*), an anthocyanin free/all green form. The third subspecies (var. *Burkii*) was given single species status by Robert F. C. Narzi, Frederick W. Case Jr and Robert Case in 1999 and was renamed *Sarracenia rosea*.



*S. purpurea* ssp *venosa* var. *montana*

*Sarracenia purpurea* ssp *purpurea* is the most northern of the subspecies, found widely across Canada and northeastern parts of the United States. Then there seems to be a crossover point in New Jersey where the northern species meets the southern *venosa*, producing intergrades between the two subspecies. Genetics from both subspecies can produce quite vigorous plants.

Then, in the southernmost states, resides the larger *Sarracenia rosea* with its massive hoodslip (part of the trapping mechanism) and pastel-coloured flowers. There's an exception of two small populations of *S. venosa* in Tattnall and Evans Counties, Georgia. These are stunning, heavily veined plants, very reminiscent of *S. var. montana*, which is a whole other story.....



*S. rosea* f. *luteola* (flower form)  
Photos provided by Paul Katz

The northern species are incredible plants, able to survive temperatures of -23°C and -40°C when insulated by snow. Unlike any of the other taller sarracenia species, *purpurea* keeps its waxy, leathery pitchers over winter, which often blush with anthocyanin red pigment over winter. Both are a protective screen against the harsh weather and winter sun. Sphagnum bogs also help insulate rhizomes and efficiently provide hydration and oxygen to the plant.

*S. purpurea* ssp *purpurea* was used as powerful herbal medicine by the native Americans across the northeastern United States and Canada and is still used in complementary medicine today. Its strong antiviral, diuretic and digestive properties, saw it used as an effective treatment for renal, diabetic and respiratory conditions, and even the prevention and cure of smallpox in the 19th century.

*S. purpurea* subsp and *S. rosea* are essentially known as pitfall traps. They release a small amount of nectar to entice insects which unsuspectingly slip into the rain filled pitchers and drown, unable to get out because of downward facing hairs

and slippery surfaces inside the pitchers. The plants release digestive enzymes into the rainwater, helping convert their prey into fertiliser – a genius adaptation for plants living in an environment often void of nutrition in the substrate.

If that wasn't enough, *S. purpurea* ssp *purpurea* also has a kind of symbiotic relationship with a mosquito larvae called *Wyeomyia smithii*. The plants let them live safely inside the rain filled pitchers, and in return, they help mineralise its prey.

Plants located in different counties across the US, tend to have developed different genetics, isolated in their own ecosystems. Many of the southern *venosa* have their own traits and are often identifiable to people with experience. Loss of habitat and poaching have led to their extinction at many sites. It's estimated that fewer than 5% of sarracenia species are left in the wild. Such a rare and other-worldly plant really does need our protection.

## Read all about it

### National Collections News

#### New Plant Heritage National Collection in Norfolk

Dr Anne Ashington, PH National Collections Co-ordinator

The collection of Norfolk Snowdrops at the Sandringham Estate was given full Plant Heritage National Collection status in March by the Plant Heritage Collections Committee. The majority are planted through the woodland garden and can be viewed by the public from Spring 2027.

This collection, the idea of Jack Lindfield Head Gardener at Sandringham, includes snowdrops bred, found or named after someone, something or somewhere in the county of Norfolk. There are around ninety snowdrops which meet these criteria and at the last count thirty-nine were in the collection. Jack is keen to record the story behind each snowdrop. Some are well known such as the *Greatorex* doubles bred by Hayrick Greatorex in Brundall.

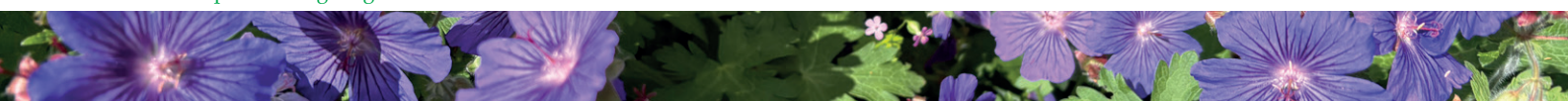
Galanthophilic Brian Ellis, who played a significant role in setting up the collection with Jack, outlines the history behind two lesser-known Norfolk snowdrops:

"In 1993, Rob Marshall was snowdropping in an extremely overgrown, abandoned churchyard near Aylsham with his friend Nigel Chadwick. Nigel spotted the first known snowdrop with a creamy colour making it look quite different to nearby *G. nivalis* and it remains a highly desirable form named *Galanthus nivalis* 'Chadwick's Cream'. The flowers are quite full and when they open the outer segments are shaded cream but over time fade to white whilst the inners have a lemony yellow apical mark. It has proven to be slow to increase and not easy to chip so it remains a rarity.



*Galanthus nivalis* 'Chadwick's Cream' photo Brian Ellis

"Many people grow *Galanthus plicatus* 'Diggory' which was found at Warham. But in 1992 several galanthophiles,



including Dick Trotter's daughter Elizabeth Parker-Jervis, found a quite similar snowdrop there although somewhat smaller in stature. It has the same seersucker texture to the outer petals but a different inner mark and Elizabeth Parker-Jervis suggested the name *Galanthus plicatus* 'Fatty Puff'.

### RHS Sandringham Flower Show 2026

Hopefully, as many of you as possible will be able to come to visit the RHS Sandringham Flower Show – dates are in Kathy's Programme Round-Up. We shall be in the marquee, along with PH national collection holders from other parts of the country. We are still finalising the details, but we know that Jane Steward (*Mespilus germanica*) will attend, as will Graham Last (*Salvia microphylla*). Simon and Anne Harrap (hardy Gunnera) have an exhibit elsewhere in the marquee, so will also be on hand as will Richard Clarke (Eucomis). All committee members will be there at some point during the week to work alongside our volunteers. Our exhibit will take the form of a garden and all PH Norfolk National Collections are likely to be represented, with the exception of colchicum and snowdrops, which we hope will be able to be represented photographically. The exhibit will be curated and assembled by Carl Harder and Ian Roofe.

### Norfolk Plant Heritage Gala – April 2026

Barbara Williams, NPH Chair



Daisy Roots Nursery

And what a gala it was! Our two speakers were Keith Wiley, from Wildside Garden in Devon, whose talk was entitled *Spring at Wildside*, and John Grimshaw, until recently Director of the Yorkshire Arboretum. John's talk was entitled *Rites of Spring*. We had two nurseries in attendance



Twelve Nuns Nursery

– Twelve Nuns and Daisy Roots with a wonderful display of unusual and beautiful plants. And the good news was that Daisy Roots Nursery booked the final space at our May Plant Fair to replace someone who had withdrawn.

From 1978 – 2003, Keith had been the Head Gardener at The Garden House in Devon and had transformed it from a project described as "unviable" with only 200 visitors a year, into a going concern with over 45,000 visitors a year. When he left The Garden House, it was to begin the dream of his own garden, working with his wife Ros, an accomplished artist.



Keith Wiley

Near Yelverton, Keith bought three flattish fields with a view and set about transforming

the landscape, moving and reusing somewhere in the region of 150,000 tons of soil, transforming the landscape into a living sculpture. Keith's approach was, and still is, experimental and he is definitely not risk-averse! His ideas come from anything and anywhere, from the way tree trunks grow in nature, to the type of shadow a plant will cast on the ground at a certain time of day – a passionate and inspirational gardener, willing to try new and untested ideas. At one point in his talk, he said that he didn't want his garden to be "preserved in aspic". This seemed quite unlikely!

John has had an incredibly varied career, including time spent researching elephants and forest flora around Mount Kilimanjaro, so to detail his many achievements would be a long process. He left his post as Director of The Yorkshire Arboretum in 2024, to become the Editor-in-Chief of Curtis's Botanical Magazine for the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



John Grimshaw

He has also established an online service Trees and Shrubs Online, website <https://www.treesandshrubsonline.org>. John began by stating that he believed spring in the UK was a longer season than in many parts of the world, possibly lasting from the earliest snowdrops to hot summery blooms of late May. The colour of spring was undoubtedly green, illustrated by the many shades of green which we can see as shoots and leaves emerge in the increasing light and warmth of the season.

Both our speakers were very eloquent about looking beyond the plants, for example, at the shade they create, at the combined shapes of the tree trunks, or at the effect of light on the crinkly petals of a narcissus, opening our minds to seeing things more broadly. Truly inspirational.

As always, many thanks to everyone who helped set things up, prepare the lunches, pour the tea and particularly to Kathy Gray, who is the organiser behind the magic!

**Hethersett Plant Fair, May 2026**  
Barbara Williams, Chair

After a week's worth of absolutely dire weather predictions for the precise time of our plant fair, it all worked out fine in the end. The much-needed rain came to many of us the night before, Hethersett Field was not water-logged as we had feared, the nurseries were there and many said the weather was perfect for the plant fair, the volunteers were there and everything went broadly to plan, with just under 700 people attending. As they left, many were asking about the next plant



Susie and Rory from Arcady Nursery

fair in August. Most of the wonderful nurseries who support us were a familiar sight, but the Suffolk-based nursery Arcady, only recently established, was a first-timer. For the first time too, we also welcomed Annie from Daisy Roots, who had attended our gala in April.



The Catering Team – thank you!

As always, a huge thank you to all our volunteers – the organisers, setting up, catering, collecting entrance fees, managing the car parking, providing food and drinks, tidying up at the end, and to all those at

the Hethersett end of things. The Hall and Field provide a fantastic venue for our plant fair and we are grateful to all those on the Village Hall Committee and Parish Council who help to keep things running smoothly.

## Programme round-up

Kathy Gray, Programme Secretary, [kathygrayc@gmail.com](mailto:kathygrayc@gmail.com)

Hello and welcome to the latest Programme Round-Up. We have a selection of events to take us into the autumn, so, as ever, I hope that you enjoy what is on offer and look forward to seeing you at the various events.

### Thursday, 9th July from 10am

Richard Hobbs's workshop this year is entitled *Can't See the Wood for the Trees*, a tree identification workshop. This will take place at Blacksmiths Cottage Nursery, Langmere Road, Langmere, Dickleborough, IP21 4QA. Please see the letter that was enclosed with the March Newsletter or the website for further details.

### Wednesday 22nd to Sunday 26th July

**RHS Sandringham Flower Show** where we, Norfolk Plant Heritage, have a stand. Wednesday to Saturday 10am to 6pm, Sunday 10am to 5pm.

### Sunday 9th August from 4pm

**Please Note** - this replaces the visit that was to have taken place on 23rd August to Roderick and Caroline Woods

Visit to the garden of Karen Roseberry, Yeoman's Cottage, Low Lane, Rockland All Saints, NR17 1TU. Karen is an artist and graphic designer and this has led her to bring her own style to the garden. Very much a cottage garden, Yeoman's Cottage has exuberant colour-themed borders and some beautiful trees, *Acer griseum* for one.



Photo, Karen Roseberry

Architectural plants include *Tetrapanax papyrifer* and *Dicksonia antarctica*. Karen is growing a number of trees from seed and these are beautifully displayed in their own

*Geranium 'Sabani Blue'*, photo Barbara Williams

mini-arboretum. In the courtyard garden, there are beds of corton steel, providing a good contrast to the more traditional feel of the main garden. So, something for everyone. Just be aware that a fire at the cottage a few years ago means that the renovation work being undertaken may cause a small area of the garden to be out of bounds. After enjoying the garden, wine and savouries will be served. The charge for the visit and refreshments will be £8, payable on the day. Proceeds going to Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis. Ample parking is on the road.

### Sunday 30th August 10am to 1pm

Plant Fair at Hethersett Village Hall and field, NR9 3JJ. Flyers for you to display in your cars etc. are enclosed with this issue. For this Fair we have Richard and Sally Hobbs showcasing the Walled Garden at Little Plumstead and selling plants. There will also be a display by the Alpine Garden Society Norfolk Group. Refreshments will be served as usual and (I say this every time but it's still very relevant) any donations of cakes will be gratefully received. On the field, there will be 20 plus nurseries, including our own stand; once again, plants for our stand will also be gratefully received. They should be well potted and correctly labelled. And don't forget to bring cash for buying that special plant or two or.....not all nurseries have card readers.

### Sunday 20th September at 2pm

At the first of our two autumn lectures, both at Bawburgh Village Hall, NR9 3LL, we will welcome back Andrew Ward of Norwell Nursery with a talk entitled *Success on Sand – how to grow tricky plants easily*. Who of us can resist learning how to do that! Andrew will also bring plants for sale.



Photo, Andrew Ward

### Sunday 18th October at 2pm

Our second autumn talk will be by Joe Whitehead who is now the Head Gardener at Burghley House, although formerly he worked and lived in Norfolk. Joe has always had a love of walled gardens so will tell us more in a talk entitled *Over the Garden Wall*. There will be plants for sale.



Photo, Joe Whitehead

Happy gardening!  
Kathy Gray

**Plants are our passion  
but people make us successful -  
our thanks to all who help and support us.**

Norfolk Plant Heritage

[www.norfolkplantheritage.org.uk](http://www.norfolkplantheritage.org.uk)

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Registered Charity Number 10004009