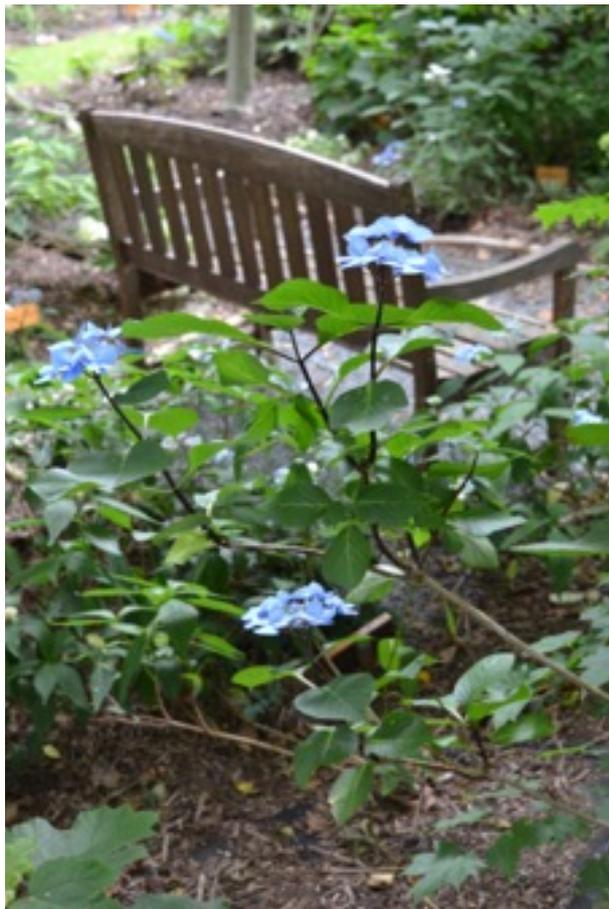


## Shade Monthly.... September 2016

Yet another appeal for items. As we move towards the winter months re-live the high points of your gardening year by telling us about them. Just write it down and send it to [wasjsime@gmail.com](mailto:wasjsime@gmail.com), preferably with a couple of pictures.

(1) Plant of the Month: *Hydrangea serrata* 'Shirofuji'

Whilst hydrangeas may flower more profusely with a little sun, they prefer a cool site and many will flower adequately in quite deep shade provided they have some summer moisture. The bigger species (*H. heteromalla*, *H. aspera* etc) make excellent subjects for the understory beneath the high deciduous shade of mature trees. Even *H. macrophylla*, which is often seen in full sun in sea-side plantings, can look stunning in the gloom. I enclose a photo of one of my current favourites, *H. macrophylla* 'Zorro', which has the added advantage that the sterile florets turn a stunning jade-green as they age.



*Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Zorro'

However, any shade bed, no matter how small, has room for one of the smaller varieties of *H. serrata*. This species is not grown as much as it should be in spite of several articles in the gardening press over the years pointing out its advantages. I hope the most recent, in 'The Garden' by Maurice Foster, which has some stunning photos, will galvanise some interest. They are all good, but *H. serrata* 'Shirofuji' is particularly suited to a small shade garden. Firstly it is small, no larger than 18 ins high. It has pure white, fully double sterile florets which show up in even the darkest corner. It is hardy, reasonably vigorous and takes cuttings very easily, so you can even consider it as an edging plant. Unfortunately there are only four suppliers listed in the 'Plant Finder'. But it is well worth seeking out.



*Hydrangea serrata* 'Shirofuji'

## (2) Campanulas in the Shade Garden

Campanulas and their relatives (*adenophora*, *codonopsis* etc) provide good subjects for shade. Here Gillian Regan talks about some of her favourites.

Some campanulas are among my favourite plants for shady places. *Campanula latiloba*, both blue and white, not only provides colour in July but also slowly spreading evergreen ground cover which looks good all winter and it doesn't self seed. *Campanula latifolia* is another very good plant producing tall spikes of blue or white flowers which have just finished flowering. However it does seed around but I haven't found it a nuisance.



Campanula latifolia



Campanula 'Swannables'

Probably my favourite is Campanula 'Swannables' which starts flowering towards the end of the month with lovely lavender bells and continues for weeks. It does tend to spread so may need some controlling but there are far more invasive campanulas than this.



*Campanula latiloba*

(3) Nice Thugs: *Lysimachia clethroides*



The Wikipedia entry for *L. clethroides* says

‘The native range of this plant is China and Japan. It is also found in Russia, Korea and North America. It is present in damp woodland margins, in wet ravines and forests, in sunny grassy hills and mountain slopes at elevations of 300–2,100 metres’

In other words, it is a thug with designs on world domination and thrives in almost any condition except the very dry.

In a rich, moist soil in the sun, the underground stolons will spread vigorously, thrusting up single stems topped with bent spikes of tiny white flowers. Very pretty, but very invasive. In shade, in a drier (but not bone dry) soil it is slower to spread and can be easily kept within bounds. Under these conditions it tends to flower a little later than in the open, usually in August, when it is a great addition to the shade garden in which flowers are starting to get scarce. The pure white tassels show up well in the shade when the canopy is at its densest.

#### (4) Climbers for Shade: Smilax (Greenbrier)



*Smilax* sp. CC6826



*Smilax walteri*

*Smilax* is a genus of scramblers and twining climbers with about 350 species. They are found throughout the tropics and sub-tropics with some species reaching into the temperate zone. A few of these are reasonably hardy in the

UK. They are monocotyledons, placed in their own distinct family the smilacaceae, but are closely allied to the lily family.

Throughout the world they have considerable economic importance. The roots of many are eaten in China, the roots of others used to make root beer in the USA (Sarsaparilla). The young shoots are eaten raw and cooked, and they provide ingredients for herbal medicines in many countries.

The flowers are unimpressively greenish and relatively small. They are dioecious, needing both male and female plants to produce the relatively large, red or black berries. They are grown primarily for the bright glossy leaves and the interesting tangle of fresh, young stems that they produce. They have never been popular in cultivation in the U.K with fewer than 10 nurseries offering any of the species. We have a couple of plants grown from seed from Chris Chadwell's collection CC6826. They are about 5 years old and have made vigorous, slightly thorny plants climbing to about 6 ft so far. They have not flowered yet. Some of you may remember from the August edition last year that Walt grows *S. walteri*, which he had as a gift from Dan Hinkley. I enclose photos of both.

Both of us have found that they do well in any good, well drained soil that does not dry out in the summer, although I have the suspicion that they may be able to cope well with less ideal conditions. They may not be stars, but they are very interesting and make a good talking point with visitors.

#### (5) August Notes from Seattle



Pyrola Chlorantha



Mimulus lewisii

Summer is finally here but tolerable with morning marine air, heating up with the sun breaking out after lunchtime. Many plants have come into flower much sooner this year than normal. That should mean earlier fruit set so as to get a jump on seed collecting and cleaning. However, some were ahead of their normal pollinators and so set little fruit as a result. I noticed this happening in the Oemleria and Mahonias in particular.



*Leptarrhena pyrolifolia*

My wife and I took a hike in the North Cascades and came across some natives that would be garden-worthy if they are not already in the local specialist plant societies.

Pyrola chlorantha or Green Wintergreen is a quiet shade loving plant of the coniferous and mixed forests found in both humusy soils and boggy conditions. Much more colorful is Mimulus lewisii which can range from pink to bright rosy red. It prefers moist conditions that get at least some direct sunlight but will spread happily in dappled light. Playing upon the name of the first genus, was Leptarrhena pyrolifolia or Leatherleaf Saxifrage. Still blooming, the upright spikes of pink flowers caught the eye. Even out of bloom, the deep green, toothed evergreen leathery leaves would stand out in any garden.

Many of the hydrangeas are slowly fading from their original intensity but are still putting on command performances. My entry is dominated by a large container of Hydrangea macrophylla 'Lemon Daddy'. It began with white mop-head flowers that played against the lime colored foliage. As the season progressed, the blooms turned a vibrant pink which called forth many a comment, both good and bad. Now,



*Hydrangea mac.* "Lemon Daddy"

*Hydrangea serrata* 'Ben'

the oversized blooms are fading to a grayish tone and pulling down the branches to attempt a graceful exit.

On the other hand, my small *H. serrata* 'Beni' is still coloring up to become a red toned beauty under a large *Osmanthus decorus*. The *H. serrata* var. *preziosa* 'Pink Beauty' is another of those late to color up. With our naturally acidic soils and it being under a large *Thuja plicata*, it needs yearly dressings of dolomitic lime to maintain its pinkness. Powdered lime or limestone chips are also given to the hellebores which seems to help strengthen them as I haven't had any fungal problems for many years. I say this because I often don't get around to clipping out the old dead leaves and spent seed heads in a timely fashion. Signing off for now!  
Walt

#### (6) Available Seed

If you are a paid up member of the Shade and Woodland Plant Group and would like any of the seeds listed below, please send a SAE to S.J.Sime, Park Cottage, Penley, Wrexham LL13 0LS.

If you have woodland seed to donate, please send it to the same address.

*Vancouveria hexandra*

*Mitella breweri*

*Jeffersonia diphylla*

*Tiarella polyphylla*

Beesia calthifolia  
Podophyllum auranticaule  
Podophyllum tsayuensis  
Sinopodophyllum hexandrum var. chinense  
Triosteum erythrocarpum  
Triosteum pinnatifidum  
Actaea rubra  
Diphylleia cymosa

(7) Name this Plant: S\*\*\*\*\* H\*\*\*\*\*

'Rhizomes robust, ca. 5 mm in diam. Stems 0.5-1 m tall, gray-brown pubescent. Petiole 3-12 cm, pubescent; leaf blade cordate, 6-15 × 5-13 cm, both surfaces pubescent, base cordate, apex shortly acuminate. Pedicel 2-3.5 cm, pubescent. Calyx lobes ca. 10 × 7 mm. Petals yellow or yellow-green, cordate-reniform, clawed, ca. 10 × 8 mm. Stamens overtopping ovary; filaments ca. 2 mm; anthers oblong, with connectives slightly extended beyond anthers. Style absent; stigma decurrent along ventral surface of carpel. Fruit follicular, 6-8 × 4-6 mm. Seeds deltoid-obconic, ca. 3 mm, densely transversely rugose. Fl. Apr-Jul. Dense forests, valleys, stream banks; 600-1000 m. Gansu, Guizhou, Hubei, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, Sichuan.'



The solution to last month's puzzle was *Jeffersonia diphylla*... and yes, I did miscount the number of letters... sorry!

This is a charming woodlander. Although fleeting, the white flowers are charming and the 'mini-beerstein' seed pods are unique. This system is very efficient at scattering the seed, so if you want to collect it it is better to pick the fruits before they open. I just squeeze them gently, and if they start to split, cut them off the stems.