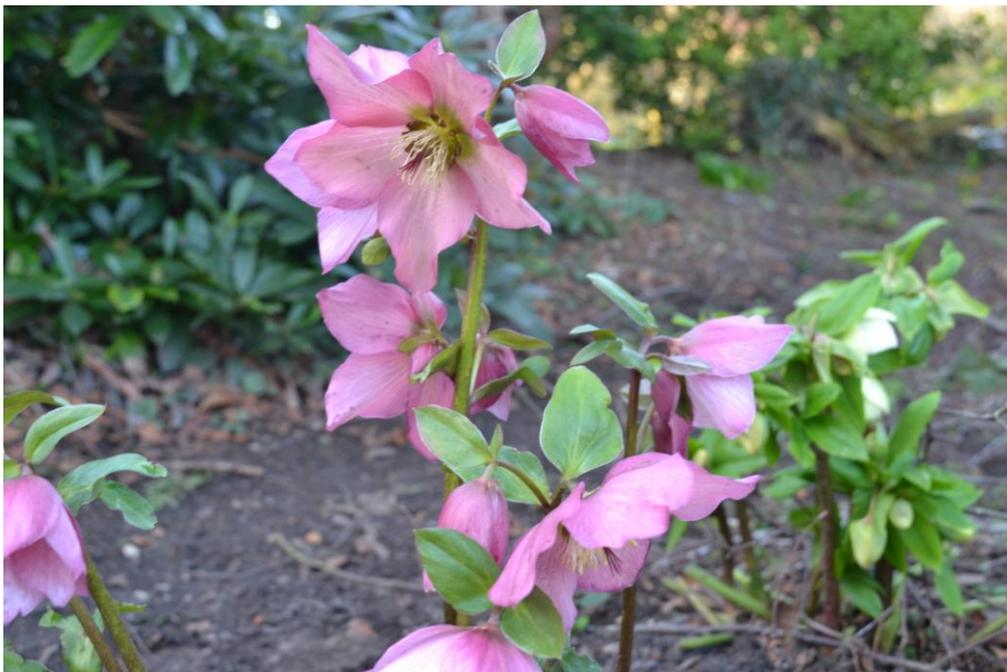


## Plant of the Month: *Helleborus* 'Walberton's Rosemary'

Joe Sime



There are lots of really good hellebores available these days, many of them such as the Ashwood Hybrids unencumbered by varietal names. The joy is in the variation between the individual plants rather than uniformity. However 'Walberton's Rosemary' deserves its own name as, being sterile, all plants are produced by tissue culture and are absolutely true to type. This is probably the most easily available of the hybrids between *H. niger* and *H. x hybridus*. It is a cross made by plant breeder David Tristram between *H. niger* 'Potter's Wheel' and a reddish flowered form of *H. x hybridus*. It has inherited the large, outwards facing flowers of the former and the colour of the latter. Its great strength is that being completely sterile it just goes on flowering rather than setting seed. With luck it will be in flower from late January into April.

It is also a tough customer, full of hybrid vigour. We bought ours in 2010 and planted it out in what was then an area of open shade recently created by the harsh winter cutting back several tender understory shrubs. Over the years these grew back and I forgot about the hellebore. I rediscovered it this November, still growing away in spite of the competition. I thought it deserved better and moved it to an open but shaded spot amongst other hellebores, and it has responded immediately with a good flush of flowers that started at the beginning of February. They are not cheap, but worth the money I think.

# 'Not Another Hydrangea'

Joe Sime

[Only one contribution this month (thank you Helen), and so 'Not another hydrangea'!]

Taxonomists divide the genus *Hydrangea* into two sections. Section *hydrangea* includes most of the horticulturally important plants. They are characterised by being mainly deciduous shrubs or trees, with thin textured leaves and narrow, pointed floral bracts. They come from East Asia and North America. The other section is *cornidia*. The plants are evergreen with large leathery leaves. They are mostly scrambling climbers, with rounded floral bracts which form a rosette (involucre) around the flower bud. They come mostly from Central and South America.

It is important to realise that none of these characteristics are by themselves sufficient to classify a plant. There are evergreen plants, climbers and plants with an involucre in section *hydrangea* and at least one member of the *cornidia* in East Asia. There are only three members of the *cornidia* in general cultivation. All three are evergreen, scrambling, vigorous climbers. *H. serratifolia* is one of these.



The name is a problem. Firstly people confuse it with *H. serrata*, a shrubby species with many varieties in cultivation. Secondly the leaves are not at all serrate. But if you can forgive it this, it is a fine, evergreen climber for a north or east facing wall or for the bole of a large tree. It comes from the Andes in Chile and Argentina and is hardy in our corner of North Wales. I have two clones, one since 2002 and the other since 2007. Both are thriving, covering walls, fences and growing up an oak tree.

The photos are fairly old, but clearly show the flower buds and the flowers. Unlike most hydrangeas there are no sterile florets, but the powder-puff of fertile ones is very attractive. If allowed to run along the ground the plants will root, thus making propagation easy.

I am surprised that such an easy and attractive climber is not grown more.



# Look What Happens When You Venture Outdoors

*Helen Mount* has been out amongst the arums.

At the AGM of the HPS Variegated Group a couple of years ago members brought plants along to show and share information with the rest of the group. Among those were a variety of arums brought along by Joe Sharman of Monksilver Nursery. He showed us quite a selection of variation in leaf form and size as well as variegation patterns, many of which had been given names that can be sourced in the RHS Plant Finder.



While looking round the garden a week ago I spied what I can only describe as one of the thugs starting to appear. *Arum maculatum* (also known colloquially as cuckoo pint, cuckoo flower, Jack in the Pulpit and Willy Lily among others) is “an abundant plant of woods and hedgerows” (Mabey 1996). Too abundant if you ask me as it proliferates wherever one seed has been dropped by the birds/rodents and where one bit of broken rhizome has been missed. It spreads freely and has the infuriating habit of appearing in the middle of some delicate spring treasures like *Galanthus*, small narcissi or *Crocus* which it proceeds to overpower. It has large shiny, spear-shaped green leaves that are sometimes speckled with black (see Figs. 1a & 1b) and

these are followed by a pale green sheath, hooding the purple or cream spadix and finally the spike of bright orange-red berries.

Why have I mentioned all this? Joe’s information focussed on the fact that *Arum maculatum* appears to have been hybridising with its attractive relative, *Arum italicum* subsp *italicum* ‘Marmoratum’. This latter plant was introduced to this country several centuries ago and has dark green arrow-shaped leaves heavily marbled with white or cream, usually with a distinct leaf margin in green. It can also do a ‘takeover bid’ if allowed to seed and spread but is such a good foil for many plants in the spring garden that it is allowed to stay, or should I say I couldn’t get rid of it even if I wanted to.



Fig.2a



Fig.2b



Fig.2c



Fig.2d

On my wanderings I discovered, like Joe, that there were some interesting variations. Fig. 2a shows a fairly typical clump of *A. italicum* with quite immature leaves marked with white/silver. Fig. 2b has a particularly long, pointed leaf which is showing a greater proportion of creamy markings. In Fig. 2c the leaves remain pointed but the paler markings are beginning to look yellow and this is even more noticeable in Fig. 2d. All these are variations within *Arum italicum* subsp *italicum* 'Marmoratum'.



Fig.3a



Fig.3b



Fig.3c



Fig.3d

However, looking further there were even more variations to be found. Fig. 3a gives a strong indication of the *Arum maculatum* parentage with its large hastate leaf and black spotting yet it has started to develop white/silver variegation like *Arum italicum*. Fig. 3b displays even more variegation on the *A. marmoratum* leaf with Fig. 3c offering another alternative. The final image Fig. 3d looks like it is an *Arum italicum*-shaped leaf but with a distinctly

different colour from either parent in that it is more of an olive green. It also appears to have both silver and gold markings but as it is an immature plant I've dug it up and put it in a pot to see what matures.

When Joe put one or two of his *Arum* plants into the plant auction at the AGM there weren't any takers as these plants obviously need a lot of space away from anything precious and most people know their tendency to want to do a takeover. However there is room in wilder bits of the garden and it makes for an interesting walk about when there isn't much else to look at in February.

Ref; Mabey, R. – Flora Britannica, 1996 – Sinclair Stevenson, London

## Available Seed

If you would like some of the seed offered below, please send a SAE to S.J.Sime,  
Park Cottage, Penley, Wrexham LL13 0LS.

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

*Arisaema taiwanense* f. *cinereum* BSWJ3602

*Arisaema candissimum*

*Cardiocrinum giganteum* var *yunnanaense*

*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*

*Fritillaria camschatcensis*

*Gentiana tibetica*

*Incarvillia delavayi*

*Iris douglasiana*

*Iris hookeri*

*Iris setosa* var. *arctica*

*Iris* sp. Trout River

*Lilium lijiangense*

*Lilium lophophotum* (large flowered)

*Lilium mackliniae*

*Lilium mackliniae* from Nagaland

*Liriodendron tulipifera*

*Notholirion bulbifera*

*Notholirion macrophyllum*

*Primula veris* hybrids

*Primula vialii*

*Pterostyrax corymbosa*

*Sisyrinchium macrocarpum*

*Tricyrtis hirta*

*Trillium albidum* ex cream form

*Trillium chloropetalum*

*Trillium chloropetalum* ex red form

*Clethra monostachya*

*Hydrangea aspera* ex 'Bellevue'

*Hydrangea heteromalla* Bretschneideri Group

*Hydrangea paniculata* ex 'Tender Rose'

*Hydrangea serrata* subsp. *yezoense*

*Kirengeshoma palmata*

*Rhododendron yakusianum*

## Name this Plant

Joe Sime

Name this Plant: H\*\*\*\*\* v\*\*\*\*\*

*'Herbs caulescent; caudex branched. Flowering stems 10-85 cm, long stipitate-glandular. Leaves: petiole long stipitate-glandular; blade rounded-cordate, orbiculate, or oblong, often ± polygonal, deeply (5-)7-9+-lobed, 3-26 cm, base cordate to nearly truncate, lobes ovate to triangular, margins dentate to serrate, apex obtuse to acute, surfaces glabrous or long stipitate-glandular. Inflorescences dense to diffuse. Flowers: hypanthium radially symmetric, free 0.2-0.5 mm, white or pink, obconic or subglobose, 1.5-3.6 mm, usually long stipitate-glandular, sometimes sparsely long-stipitate or glabrous; sepals erect, green-tipped, equal, 0.5-1.7 mm, apex rounded; petals often coiled, sometimes reflexed, white, linear, lanceolate, or oblanceolate, unlobed, 1-3 mm, margins entire; stamens exerted 2-2.5 mm; styles exerted 1.5-2.5 mm, 2-4 mm, to 0.1 mm diam. Capsules ovoid, 3-6.4 mm, beaks divergent, not papillose. Seeds dark brown, fusiform, 0.5-0.9 mm. Rocky outcrops, central and eastern USA.*

Last month's plant was *Chrysosplenium davidianum*. This is a well behaved ground cover plant for moist shade, forming a carpet of neat green leaves and producing yellow/green 'flowers' in the spring.



### From the editor...

Joe Sime

In these cold dark months it is difficult to fill these pages. Please sort out some photos from last summer, scribble a few words and tell us about gardens you have visited or plants you have admired in the last year. Send contributions to [wasjsime@gmail.com](mailto:wasjsime@gmail.com).

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/HPS-Shade-Woodland-Group-849344638531856/>

*SHADE MONTHLY* is compiled by Joe Sime  
and this web-friendly version was produced by Tony Bays.