

Plant of the Month: *Dicentra* 'Amore Pink'

Joe Sime



I bought this charming little plant from a nursery at our local group's spring plant fair. It is one of two plants in the 'Amore' series developed by Terra Nova Nurseries in the USA. The other variety, 'Amore Rose', has deeper rose-pink flowers. I can find no details of the parentage, but they have developed a winner.

It is a small plant, growing to about 6 ins high, forming a mound of fine, feathery, glaucous foliage, above which dangle pretty, light pink flowers. However, unlike other dicentras which flower in spring and then start to die back as the summer progresses, this little beauty has stayed around, flowering continually, and coping well with the hot dry weather which the genus generally hates. It is at the edge of a woodland bed, in decent soil and fairly shaded, being on the north side of a large western hemlock. As a new planting it has been given the odd drink during the worst of the drought, but otherwise left to its own devices. I am hoping it will bulk up quickly so that I can spread it around.

***Aconitum lycoctonum* subsp. *neapolitanum*:**

Joe Sime

This is a plant with many attractive pale yellow hooded flowers, but at almost 5 ft, it is a floppy mess unless you have the time and patience to stake it. A few years ago a wise gardening friend, seeing my plants sprawling over the path suggested that I try growing it under a shrub. The following spring I dug up some seedlings from the aforementioned path and planted them in the midst of a large shrub. It was an inhospitable place and they grew only slowly, but this year, as you can see from the photo, they finally reached the concept our friend had. I will certainly be using the trick to add summer interest to more understory shrubs.



Hydrangeas yet again:

Joe Sime

[Joe says: *the only way to stop this is to start sending in contributions...*]

The extremely hot, dry weather has allowed me to make some observations on the performance of the various species under these conditions. Firstly a word of warning, this is not a scientific study. Various plants are sited in different parts of the garden with differences in shade, underlying moisture and root competition from trees etc. However, I think most of the conclusions are valid.

By far the poorest performance is from *H. serrata* cultivars. The leaves droop, and if not watered quickly, although the leaves recover, the flower stems may wither. This is reasonable given that they come from relatively cool conditions with ample summer rainfall in the mountains of Japan.



H. serrata 'Miranda' giving 'hand signals'

H. macrophylla cultivars are almost as bad, drooping badly when hot and dry, but they seem to recover when watered, without damage. *H. involucrata* is probably the next in line and then *Hydrangea arborescens* cultivars ('Annabelle' is worse than the others). The next most sensitive is probably *H. hirta*, but I only have one sample, and it is under a thirsty acer.

Most forms of *H. aspera* are reasonably resilient however, subsp. *sargentiana* and the two bronzed leaved forms I grow ('Hot Chocolate' and ex Gong Shan) require more supplementary water than the others. The forms of the *H. scandens* complex I grow have been remarkably resilient, especially the evergreen BSWJ 3423. *H. sikokiana* has survived well, without additional moisture, but it is in an area of the garden that is usually damp. By far the most resilient, and surviving without watering have been *H. heteromalla*, *H. quercifolia* and *H. paniculata* varieties. The same applies to all the climbing hydrangeas (*H. anomala* in several forms and the evergreens: *serratifolia*, *integrifolia* and *seemania*). The evergreens normally drop old leaves unnoticed through the year. The drought has caused them to drop a lot of these browned leaves at once, but without affecting the overall appearance. So If you are looking for hydrangeas for a drier garden, start with *quercifolia* and *paniculata* and steer away from *serrata* and *macrophylla*.

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.

The seed below is fresh this year. It will remain available to Shade Group members until Oct 1st, after which it will be contributed to the general seed distribution system. Our seed scheme will restart in November with late ripening seed.

Diphylleia cymosa
Erythronium hendersonii
Meconopsis integrifolia
Meconopsis sulphurea
Meconopsis sulphurea (late flowering)
Paris quadrifolia
Podophyllum auranticaule
Roscoea cautleyoides
Roscoea ex 'Harvington Raw Silk'
Roscoea scillifolia f. atropurpurea
Sinopodophyllum hexandrum var. chinensis
Sinopodophyllum hexandrum var. emodi
Trillium chloropetalum
Triosteum pinnatifidum
Triosteum erythrocarpum
Triosteum ex pink and white fruited form
Trautvetteria carolinensis (Eastern form)
Trautvetteria species from Tennessee

Name this Plant

Joe Sime

Name this Plant X***** S*****

'subshrub, reaching 20–70 centimetres (rarely 90 centimetres) in height, with stems up to 6 millimetres diameter. The leaves are spirally arranged, 10–18 centimetres long, each divided into 5 toothed leaflets, and flowers emerge only from the upper portion of the unbranched stem. The flowers are produced in broad panicles 6–20 centimetres long, each flower small, star-shaped, reddish brown to purple brown, with five petals.

Eastern North America at the edges of streams in sandy soil under a canopy of dappled sunlight.'

The solution to last month's puzzle is *Impatiens omeiana*. This is an excellent, spreading, low growing foliage plant for moist soil in shade. There are forms with silvered leaves, green and yellow marked leaves and leaves with red undersides. All are easy to grow and well worth seeking out.



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SHADE MONTHLY is compiled by Joe Sime
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