

From the editor

During my career in education I was lucky enough to spend a year in Colorado on a Fulbright Exchange. Living and working at 8,000 feet in the Rocky Mountains was wonderful – sunshine 300 days a year, wildlife including black bears and mountain lions, ski resorts and sand dunes literally up/down the road. Apart from family and friends, what I missed most about the UK were Radio 4 and, because in high mountain desert little grows without intensive watering, which was severely restricted, having a garden and talking plants with fellow enthusiasts.

In the debate on public service broadcasting, the BBC's mission is much quoted: 'to enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain'. It seems to me that the goals of the Hardy Plant Society are much the same. Through the Society we have many opportunities to learn from the knowledge and experience of experts both amateur and professional, and to meet with other Hardy Planters, picking up useful tips and sharing know-how, or to simply enjoy ourselves!

In addition to talks, garden visits, Specialist Interest Groups and much besides, the HPS Horticultural Advisory Service offers advice on specific questions. Here's some feedback on the service:

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My agapanthus are settling in well, but these at Pine Cottage Plants are mouth-watering!

'Thank you very much for so thorough and thoughtful a reply to my query.'

'Your answers are just what was needed.'

'What wonderful service and knowledge. You've saved me hours of work.'

After a long spell as co-ordinator of the service, keeping discreetly in the background, as she retires Judy Harry must surely come into the limelight for our thanks.

In this edition we start by looking at gardening on a grand scale, and later in a tiny space. Yes, size does matter, largely because more space means the chance to grow a greater variety of plants. And what a selection of exquisite and/or versatile, useful, unusual and curious plants are here – all good doers, of course.

Most readers will be used to working with (or despite) the temperate climate of the UK, so the thought of making a garden in Russia is mind-blowing. Just think of the winters! Our introduction to private gardens in Russia opens

up a little-known world beyond the usual tourist trail.

As always we are grateful to all who contribute to the journal: writers, photographers, advertisers who support the publication, nurseries who let us use their images, and proofreader Sandra Hartley, without whom my standards could so easily slip.

On a personal front, the "greening" of my front garden is under way. Gone are the gravel and rocks which covered all but the drive – low maintenance certainly, but also guaranteeing low spirits. Now the borders are marked out and there's the beginning of a lawn. The neighbours are very pleased too.

I've been searching previous journals, books, catalogues and websites to choose must-have plants which will join those waiting in the wings, grown from HPS Seed Exchange seed. Key phrases in my search are "exposed site", "wind-tolerant" and "hardy". It's the start of the transformation to a proper, hardy-planterly garden! 🌿