

**Plant of the Month: *Deinanthé bifida***

*Joe Sime*



*Deinanthé* is a genus of two species and their hybrid in the family Hydrangeaceae. They are very closely related to hydrangea, differing mostly in two respects: they are rhizomatous, herbaceous perennials and they have large, showy fertile flowers with only a few, if any, sterile florets.

In my experience *D. bifida*, which hails from Japan, is the easier of the two to grow. Both species need summer moisture to do well, however, *bifida* seems to recover more easily from a dry period and be far more vigorous in growth. The fleshy flowers open white from pink buds and what differences there are between collection numbers and named varieties seem to come down to the pinkness of the buds and the degree to which the white petals are left with a pink cast. I grow two forms, one basic one acquired from our local group plant table and the other BSWJ5655 which has pinker buds. The only nursery listed in the Plant Finder to offer them is Crûg Farm. Small sections of the rhizome removed from the edge of a plant root easily, and so if you have a friend with one, this is the most cost effective way to acquire it. They make a bold perennial for part-shade as long as the soil is moist.

The broad foliage is hydrangea-like, but the leaves are split into two at the end (hence the name). A good clump will grow to about 20ins high and 24in across. The relationship to hydrangea is further shown by the fact that the inflorescence occasionally has small, pink, sterile florets. (See photo.)



The related *D. caerulea*, which occurs across Japan and Eastern China, is more easily obtained from nurseries. It has a few named varieties differing in the blue shade of the flowers. Although very attractive, it is quite slow to bulk-up and I have lost a few by planting them out on receipt, i.e. when still quite small. If you buy a smallish sample I would recommend mollycoddling it in a pot for a year or two before putting it out into the real world.

There is a hybrid between the two species which used to be known as *D. caerulea* 'European Form'. This has white flowers with a very pale blue cast. It is much more vigorous than *D. caerulea* and worth growing if you can find it. (It is no longer listed in the Plant Finder.) Crûg Farm Nurseries have re-made the cross and describe a plant, very similar to the original, named *D. bifida x caerulea* 'Blue Blush'.

## Notes from Seattle: *An update from Walt*

I'm behind chronologically but want to share what I found in March at a remarkable home nursery just outside Seattle, the home of Susie Egan. Some of you may know her from a series of lectures she did in 2013 in England and Scotland.

Her garden is on Cottage Lake with a typical Pacific Northwest canopy of large Douglas Firs and other conifers. Our high rainfall leaches the mobile elements and with the coniferous mulch, soils here are on the lean side. With a humid atmosphere in winter and spring, conditions are perfect for the herbaceous wonders she grows both in the ground and in the nursery. Susie has the equivalent of England's National Species Collection of trilliums with every species represented here and most of the cultivars, varieties and forms.

During the blooming season, she and her husband host 'Trillium Teas', an event that needs to be booked well ahead of time. Up to 20 at a time can be accommodated. Teas, fresh fruit, sweets of a wide nature are served on trillium motif chinaware. Susie gives a lecture/Powerpoint presentation on the genus ranging from its place in the plant world to its geographic range to its care and propagation.

She then leads the group through the garden. The paths are wide and level with excellent signage in case someone falls behind taking pictures. At the end, there is an opportunity to purchase a number of trilliums she has grown from seed or divided along with numerous other companion plants.



*Syneileisis aconitifolia*

At any one point in time, only a selection of the 34 species are blooming so other visits would be in order to catch what you didn't see the first time. For details, see [www.cottagelakegardens.com](http://www.cottagelakegardens.com) .



*Podophyllum difforme*  
(Starfish strain)

Some highlights on my visit were to see *Trillium rivale* (now *Pseudotrillium*), *T. kurabayashii*, *T. angustipetalum* and *T. albidum* in full bloom. Her *Syneileisis aconitifolia* was impressive as was the *Podophyllum difforme* (Starfish strain) and *Anemonella thalictroides* beneath *T. sessile*. She also raises a number of hybrids such as *T. sulcatum x flexipes* 'Spangles'.



*Trillium sulcatum x flexipes*  
'Spangles'



*Anemonella thalictroides*  
beneath *T. sessile*

Although I have good sized patches of *T. ovatum*, *grandiflorum* and *luteum*, it's a struggle to get others to take off. Currently I'm also trying to grow *T. pusillum* 'Early Alabama Spring', *T. chloropetalum* var. *rubrum*, *T. parviflorum*, *T. catesbaei*, *T. sessile*, *T. erectum* and *T. rivale*. Placing metal markers is necessary to give a wide berth once foliage has withdrawn for the season. I regularly add decayed mulch to these and other spring ephemerals but I suspect my humus level is still too thin on my sandy soil. Come Spring though, I eagerly wait for their emergence.

## Available Seed

If you are a paid up member of the Shade and Woodland Plants Group and would like some of the seed offered below, please send a SAE to S.J.Sime, Park Cottage, Penley, Wrexham LL13 0LS. Please send any requests before the middle of September as, as usual, all excess will go to the main HPS distribution in October. The Group seed distribution will start again in November with late ripening seed.

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

*Cardamine kitaibelii*  
*Erythronium hendersonii*  
*Rhodotypos scandens*  
*Actaea spicata*  
*Aralia kasuensis* ex CD&R 2289  
*Jeffersonia diphylla*  
*Mitella breweri*  
*Paris quadrifolia*  
*Tiarella polyphylla*  
*Vancouveria hexandra*  
*Ypsilandra thibetica*  
*Podophyllum auranticaule*  
*Podophyllum peltatum* var. *annulare*  
*Sinopodophyllum hexandrum* var. *chinense*  
*Diphylleia cymosa*  
*Diphylleia cymosa* red form  
*Trillium chloropetalum*  
*Triosteum erythrocarpum*

## Name this plant

Joe Sime

Name this Plant: P\*\*\*\*\* a\*\*\*\*\*

'Plants to 3 m. Leaves: petiole 1-6 cm; blade lanceolate to ovate, to 35 × 18 cm, base rounded to cordate, apex acuminate. Racemes open, proximalmost pedicels sometimes bearing 2-few flowers, erect to drooping, 6-30 cm; peduncle to 15 cm; pedicel 3-13 mm. Flowers: sepals 5, white or greenish white to pinkish or purplish, ovate to suborbiculate, equal to subequal, 2.5-3.3 mm; stamens (9-)10(-12) in 1 whorl; carpels 6-12, connate at least in proximal 1/2; ovary 6-12-loculed. Berries purple-black, 6-11 mm diam. Seeds black, lenticular, 3 mm, shiny. 2n = 36. found growing in pastures, recently cleared areas, and woodland openings, edge habitats such as along fencerows, and in waste places.'

The answer to last month's puzzle was *Paris quadrifolia*. The easiest species in the genus to grow, it forms a gradually spreading colony of upright stems with whorls of narrowish leaves. The spidery yellow flowers are interesting if not showy and are followed by big black berries.



### ***From the editor...***

*Joe Sime*

If you enjoy reading Shade Monthly then please send us something to include in it. It need not be very long and can cover any shade-related subject you wish. Please send contributions to [wasjsime@gmail.com](mailto:wasjsime@gmail.com).

*SHADE MONTHLY* is compiled by Joe Sime.

This web-friendly version is produced by Tony Bays.

\*\*\*\*\* The Minutes of the 2017 AGM are appended below. \*\*\*\*\*



# SHADE AND WOODLAND PLANTS GROUP

## HPS Shade and Woodland Plants Group

**Minutes of the Third Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 6 May 2017 at  
Harrietsham Village Hall, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1AP**

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Tony Bays, Heather Booker, Peter Foley, Pamela Harris, Helen Mount, Ann Payne, Sue Pinsent, Joe and Wendy Sime.

### **2 Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM on 21 May 2016**

The Minutes of the 2016 AGM were adopted following a proposal by Margot Grice which was seconded by Sally Adams and carried unanimously.

### **3 Chairman's Report**

The Group is continuing to grow, and we now have 169 members. A few people have left the group, but more have joined, so we have nine more members than we had last year. Many of the new members are in the south of the country which is very encouraging. There are enough of us now, in the south, to make a mini group, and we are looking at possible events.

Mini Groups are being very successful, and a good many meetings and garden visits have taken place.

Our finances are more than secure at the moment, due to the success of the previous meetings. Wilma will be speaking to you about this shortly.

Last year's AGM, attended by 77 members, repeated the success of the first. After the business meeting, there was a general discussion about the newsletter. It seemed that most people prefer the on-line "Shade Monthly", produced by Joe Sime, and it was agreed that it was the best option.

We had a varied and interesting program, which everyone seemed to enjoy very much. After the talk, by Dr Andrew Ward, entitled "Woodland Gems", Joe gave us a short introductory talk about his and Wendy's garden, how he and Wendy had created it and how they continue to maintain it. I was especially interested in their methods of mulching, keeping the ground under a very thick layer of compost, leaf mold, and shreadings. He also explained some of the problems of using landscape fabric.

We then had an auction, a new event which was very successful, with keen bidding taking place for all the plants. And, of course, we had a wonderful plant sale.

After lunch (Joe and Wendy had invited us to have it in their garden, but as the day was rather damp many of us stayed at the hall) we moved on to Wendy and Joe's amazing garden, full of wonderful plants and interesting ideas. I got lost several times, and almost

missed tea, though I was in time for the washing up!

As last year, we had a delightful and friendly day, very ably managed by the committee.

*Proposed by Wilma Keighley, Seconded by Sue Lander, and carried unanimously.*

#### **4 Treasurer's Report**

All members attending had received copies of the accounts before the meeting and copies were available with the agenda. Wilma Keighley thanked everyone for their generous donations of plants for the plant sales as that is why the Group's balance is so good. There were no further questions.

*Proposed by Nigel Parkes Rolfe, Seconded by Janet Rowe, and carried unanimously.*

#### **5 Election of Officers**

*At this point Diana Garner, the Secretary, assumed Chairmanship.*

Standing for re-election as Chairman: Anne Jenner

*Proposed by Sally Adams, Seconded by Sue Lander, and carried unanimously*

*At this point Anne Jenner resumed Chairmanship.*

Standing for re-election as Vice-Chairman: Joe Sime

Standing for re-election as Treasurer: Wilma Keighley

Standing for re-election as Secretary: Diana Garner

*Proposed by Roy Stickland, Seconded by Jan Vaughan, and carried unanimously*

#### **6 Election of Committee Members**

Standing for re-election as Membership Secretary: Tony Bays

Standing for re-election as Committee members:

Peter Foley

Sue Lander

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe

Wendy Sime

Jan Vaughan

*Proposed by Sue Jackman, Seconded by Sue Bosson, and carried unanimously*

Standing for election as new Committee member: Heather Booker

*Proposed by Anne Jenner, Seconded by Brian Dockerill, and carried unanimously*

## **7 Election of Independent Examiner of Accounts**

Graham Rennells, c/o Batchelor Coop, The New Mill, Eastry, Kent CT13 0JW.

*Proposed by Wilma Keighley, Seconded by Jan Vaughan, and carried unanimously*

## **8 Any other relevant business**

A member asked if we could ensure that our AGM did not clash with other events as there was a large meeting in the North today which many members wished to attend. Sue Lander confirmed the AGM next year will be on 31 March 2018 near Coventry in the Bubbenhall village Hall. Bob Brown will be speaking on "Plants that do well in shade but shouldn't". This will be followed by a visit to Brian Ellis' nursery Avondale where we will be able to buy plants and view his National Collection of *Anemone nemorosa*.

Jan Vaughan asked whether an annual paper newsletter would be an asset to the Group, and it was unanimously agreed that members were happy with the annual special edition of Shade Monthly which is sent to all members. A collection of articles, similar to Cornucopia, may be an interesting publication in the future.

Anne Jenner welcomed new members from the South, who were also helping with the teas, and said she would now be able to start a Southern mini group. Sue Bedwell had opened her garden as part of the North of London mini group meeting on Friday 5 May and was disappointed that only a few people attended. Diana explained that as our membership is so widely spaced it is very likely that when you do have a mini group event, you may only get 3 or 4 people attending. For those who have not yet been involved with a mini group, if you want to share a plant that is looking good, or your whole garden with other members, let the Secretary know the time and details of the event and she will pass the information on to all members. If you do have such an event, please let the Secretary have follow up on attendance etc in a short activity report.

Jan Vaughan introduced herself as National Co-ordinator of the HPS Conservation Scheme. She is trying to increase the number of plants and growers in the scheme and emphasised that individuals could also grow plants. Sally Adams asked how the plants would be distributed, and Jan explained they held an annual meeting for co-ordinators and hopefully the plant would be passed via the HPS network. Another question was do you have any mechanism for checking the plant is what it says it is, and Jan said they do the best they can by reference to experts in the field. Jan said they are looking for new plants for the scheme and if anyone is aware of good garden worthy plants which have been performing well but the nurseries seem to have forgotten, email the details to Jan on [conservation@hardy-plant.org.uk](mailto:conservation@hardy-plant.org.uk).

Sue Bedwell thanked the Committee for a well-run event.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.46 am.

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- Our Facebook page can be found at [www.facebook.com/hpshome](https://www.facebook.com/hpshome) and search for the HPS Shade and Woodland Plants Group.