

From the editor

Few of us, or our plants, can have been unaffected by the frosts, snowstorms and intense cold in the first months of the year, and when this 'proper winter' is over there'll be a lot of catching up to do in the garden. But when, after some horticultural hard labour, you finally sit down and put your feet up, there's plenty in this journal to exercise the mind and feed the spirit.

Hardy Planters, like estate agents, must consider location, location, location to grow the right plants in the right places. In this edition our President, Roy Lancaster, takes us to his Hampshire garden and on his travels in England and to Madeira; we hear from members gardening in Britain's extreme situations: Jeremy Spon in the parched far South East, and Judy Harry in the wet and windy Hebridean North West.

Further afield, Gill Regan takes us to the Caucasus, where huge variations in altitude and geology mean an enormous variety of flora, many of which we can grow. With a grant from the Society's Kenneth Black Bursary Scheme, Rebecca Hilgenhof went to the Andean cloud forest in Colombia in search of passion flowers, with an eye on species which are largely unknown in the UK but which could perhaps grow in our temperate climate.

Until Sergey Kalyakin wrote about contemporary private gardens in Russia [*From Russia with passion*, Autumn 2016], few of us had probably thought about which plants thrive in a truly Siberian climate. Here, in *Honour of Russia*, we learn that around a thousand cultivars of *Phlox paniculata* are known, and over 500 are in widespread cultivation: a passion indeed.

Rosemary FitzGerald challenges us to consider the impact we gardeners have on precious habitats and biodiversity; Derek Cooper invites us to look at plants in an analytical way and considers how we "see" them; and Gerry Parker invites us to have a go at breeding new plants.

The *How plants work* series came about after a reader suggested that most of us could do with a course in, or revision of, basic botany. Our thanks to Gail Summerfield, who stepped up to the plate and has given us some understanding of how plants work and the practical applications as we gardeners work with them.

So, relish getting back to hands-on gardening, delight in your plants, and enjoy a wonderful spring and summer.

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HPS Photographic Competition, Category 2: a plant grouping, border, garden view or HPS event.
Winner: Kelly Baldry – Spring border, Hugglescote Surgery