



# NEWS SHOOTS

From the FRIENDS of THE BOTANICAL GARDENS SHEFFIELD

## Plant of the Month

Peer through the glass of the Pavilion's central dome and you will see the extraordinary gynea lily, *Doryanthes excelsa* (below), in bloom, with its cluster of bright red tubular flowers atop the 20 foot stem which has emerged 16 years after planting.



Thanks to Vic Bryant, Rod Egglestone, Kay Keeton, Peter Kohn, Jill & Elin Sinclair, Susan Turner, Sharon Watson and everyone else who helped with this month's News Shoots. Do tell us what you'd like to see in future editions.

Contact our Chair Jill Thompson by email on [welding.thompson@gmail.com](mailto:welding.thompson@gmail.com) or write to her at 4 Park Lane, Sheffield S10 2DU.



## Message from our Chair

What an amazing Spring we're having! Is it because we have more time and smaller spaces in which to appreciate every petal? At home the wonderful Spring show of primroses and *Brunnera*, *Leucojum* and *Erythronium* is slowly giving way to those later delights: *Trillium*, *Camassia*, and one of my favourites, Fair Maids of France *Ranunculus aconitifolius*. The *Stewartia pseudocamellia* I planted last Autumn has sailed through the Winter, so I'll keep you posted on its progress.

Time for a grovel. I've been sharing with you that the spear lily in the central dome of the Pavilions has flowered. *Doryanthes* .... well, there are only two species in the genus and in my emails I plumped for the wrong one. The one we have is *D. excelsa* and no, it doesn't droop over either! (For more, see the item, left).

Meanwhile, things at the Gardens are looking up. The gardeners are working their normal schedule again and some of our volunteers are able to get back for a few hours each week. Hopefully, a few weeds will be disappointed.

Back in the "Editorial Office" we've been delighted with your messages of support and encouragement for News Shoots. Many thanks for the photos of your own gardens and the Botanical Gardens. Keep them coming! You also sent in some splendid articles and we shall be featuring those over the coming months.

Till next time,

Jill Thompson

## Garden books

Christine Rose recommends *The Brother Gardeners* by Andrea Wulf. "It's subtitled *Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession*. I learned so much about the intrepid plant hunters of the 18th century, how botany became so important and the impact their work still has on our own gardens. A well-researched and very entertaining read." To order a copy, we hear good reports of online bookstore Hive: [www.hive.co.uk/](http://www.hive.co.uk/)

Send us short reviews of garden-related books you'd recommend, and we'll share some of them next time.

## Online gardening

For anyone pining for the cancelled RHS Flower Shows, Liz Godfrey and others have recommended the RHS's planned 'virtual' Chelsea 18-23 May. For more details see: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/virtual-chelsea>

Lucy Jones reminds us we can send in short videos of our gardens to Gardeners' World. Full information is here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/send/u44012869?ptrt=https://www.bbc.co.uk/gardenersworld>

Brenda Zinober recommends getting involved with Plantlife's 'Every Flower Counts' citizen science survey, along with 'No-mow May.' See [www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/)

Rene May suggests the virtual tours being provided by the National Gardens Scheme: <https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/>

If you're missing the Gardens, one of our gardeners, Paul Martin, has posted several videos on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChiXKSGfOZdR5Ra2KBXBHPQ> or search YouTube for 'A Little Tour of the Big Bear Pit.'

## Jobs for the month

- 1 Prune Spring-flowering shrubs to shape, removing any crossing branches.
- 2 Give recently planted perennials and shrubs a weekly soak.
- 3 Deadhead tulips and give them a liquid feed.
- 4 Divide hostas.
- 5 Get in supports for tall perennials.
- 6 It's not too late to plant summer vegetable seed.

This list was inspired by Martin Fish's blog. Get lots more tips and ideas at [www.martinfish.com](http://www.martinfish.com)

## National Euphorbia Collection

*By Don Witton*

I usually open my National Euphorbia Collection for the National Gardens Scheme and yesterday should have been my first group visit. Instead, I wandered around my Firvale allotment with a camera to share some plants that are looking good:

*Euphorbia* 'Redwing' - small (18in) evergreen form that will cope with more shade than most. The leaves redden up in the winter.

*E. mellifera* - evergreen shrub up to 8ft from the Canary Islands. The flowers have a rich sweet honey smell (pictured below left).

*E. marginaliana* - a rare evergreen shrub from southern Europe up to 5ft. At its best May.

*E. epithymoides* 'Midas' - deciduous, grows into a neat mound up to 2ft and is smothered in brilliant acid yellow flowers in April/May (pictured below right).



## Where to get plants

As well as our own plant sales, regularly advertised in Jill's e-bulletins, here are some other ideas:

Bents Green Nurseries have compost and a big selection of veg packs. Phone 0114 230 4101 or [www.bentsgreennurseries.co.uk](http://www.bentsgreennurseries.co.uk)

Pictorial Meadows have a great selection of wild flower seeds. They don't need special soil conditions and come with explicit instructions. 0114 2677635 [www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk](http://www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk)

The therapeutic garden charity NurtureNature in Wortley offers a Click & Collect service. See <https://nurturenature.org.uk/2020/04/29/plants-for-sale-responding-to-covid-19/>



## Magnificent Devon magnolia

by Ken Thompson

Bearing in mind that we all need cheering up, I'll be sharing a few words about my favourite Devon gardens over the coming weeks. I hope you'll be inspired to visit as soon as all this is over.

Overbeck's near Salcombe must have one of the best views of any garden and a super collection of magnolias, among them a fine specimen of *Magnolia campbellii* which you can see in the middle of the picture (above left). Planted in 1901 the tree was felled by a gale in 1999, but after a bit of pruning and propping it made a full recovery and now looks as good as ever; it's since been propagated as an insurance. *M. campbellii* is very variable, and the Overbeck's tree, with its beautiful deep pink flowers, has long been recognised as a particularly fine example. In 2006 it was formally named as a distinct cultivar, 'Overbecks'.

Above right, Overbeck's in August. Below, *Gladiolus tristis*, *Darmera peltata* and *Paulownia tomentosa* in the Botanical Gardens.



## From Members' Gardens

From top: *Aquilegia* 'Spring Magic' is Rod and Caroline Egglestone's flower of the moment.

Lucy Jones shares *Erythronium dens-canis* 'Snowflake' and *Primula auricula* 'Curry Blend' from <https://darcyeverest.co.uk>



