

INTERNATIONAL
DENDROLOGY
SOCIETY

**This article first appeared in
the IDS Yearbook for 2018:
<https://www.dendrology.org>**



YEARBOOK 2018

Baden-Baden, southwestern Germany : 12–15 April	
HENRI SPEELMAN	117
Crete, Greece : 28 April–5 May	
GLYN CHURCH	122
Jersey, Channel Islands : 16–20 May	
HELEN SENIOR	129
St Paul's Walden Bury & Knebworth, UK : 23 May	
BETTINA METCALFE	135
Northern Italy : 18–22 June	
STEPHEN JURY	137
Armenia and Georgia : 18 September–4 October	
SETH RATCLIFFE	144
Mexico : 30 October–16 November	
ROBERT WILSON-WRIGHT	160

THE IDS AROUND THE WORLD 175

Far south coast of New South Wales, Australia	
STUART READ	176
The north coast of New South Wales, Australia	
PHILL PARSONS	181
Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula, New Zealand	
PETER COOKE AND DYLAN NORFIELD	187

STUDY DAYS 193

Nantes, western France : 20–22 April	
PHILIPPE DE SPOELBERCH	194
Corrour Estate, Scotland : 9–10 June	
TOM CHRISTIAN	198
Hydrangea, White House Farm, Kent : 4 July	
HARRIET TUPPER	200
Winter trees, Yorkshire Arboretum : 14–15 November	
ANTONIA JOHNSON	206

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Reviews	221
Recent botanical and dendrological publications	230
Membership changes	242
Index	243



Hydrangea

On 4 July 2018 a group of members gathered in Kent for a study day at White House Farm near Sevenoaks, the home of Maurice Foster, to learn about hortensias. HARRIET TUPPER writes about the highlights of the day.

'*Hydrangea macrophylla* is the most boring...' So began Cor van Gelderen's talk at the study day. That had been my own opinion exactly as I looked at the programme but, barely drawing breath, Cor went on to dispel all such thoughts as he showed us how the range has widened. His nursery, Esveld at Boskoop in the Netherlands, holds the Dutch National Collection.

208

There are two sections in the genus *Hydrangea*—*Hydrangea* and *Cornidia*. We only considered the former with its six subsections. We were fortunate to have Maurice Foster to introduce us to the subject and later to be able to visit his amazing garden to see the plants we'd been studying. Maurice is well known as a breeder as well as a grower and one of his best known cultivars is *Hydrangea aspera* 'Hot Chocolate' which has dark-coloured leaves and bright-pink flowers. We were given reprints of his articles in *The Plantsman* on '*Hydrangea aspera* and its relatives' (Foster 2014), '*Hydrangea involucrata* and its cultivars' (Foster 2015) and from *The Garden* on *Hydrangea serrata* (Foster 2016). These together give a great deal of information on cultivars and their cultivation and are a very useful reference.

The day started with Maurice talking us through the classification by Elizabeth McClintock (monograph of 1957), with comments on the *Hydrangea* subsections' key features, before going into detail with *Hydrangea serrata*. The six subsections are: *Americanae* which includes *H. arborescens* (e.g. 'Annabelle'), *H. quercifolia* and *H. cinerea* (this last not worth growing); *Asperae* being *H. aspera*, *H. involucrata*, *H. longipes* and *H. sikokiana*; *Heteromallae* which are *H. heteromalla* and *H. paniculata*; *Macrophyllae* which are *H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata*; *Petalanthae* which are *H. angustipetala*, *H. scandens*, *H. scandens* subsp. *chinensis*, *H. hirta*, *H. lobbii* and *H. lutevenosa*; (*H. scandens* has expanded considerably with introductions from China); and finally *Calyptranthae* which only has *H. anomala* within it. In brief, key points were that *H. quercifolia* is not completely

photograph © Harriet Tupper



Opposite, *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Sunset' has upraised florets prior to the flowers opening fully.

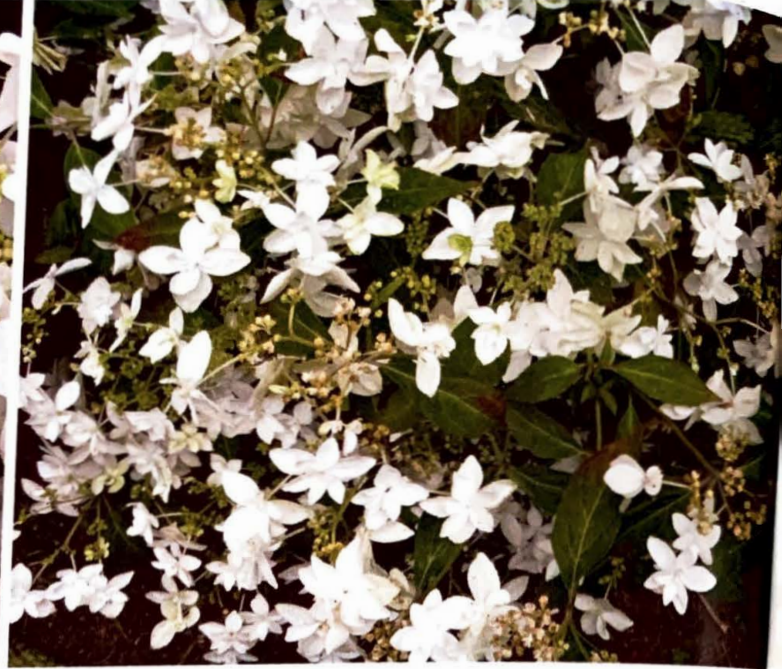
Right, Cor van Gelderen of Esveld nursery, Boskoop in the Netherlands where he holds the Dutch National Collection of Hydrangea.

hardy whereas *Hydrangea heteromalla* is tough and comes from a high altitude. *Hydrangea aspera* can grow, like *H. heteromalla*, tall and big, and the Villosa Group within *Hydrangea aspera* is the toughest. *Hydrangea involucrata* is shade tolerant with *Hydrangea involucrata* 'Viridescens' being the most shade tolerant. *H. involucrata* has bracts enfolding its buds. McClintock also put *H. sargentiana* in *H. aspera* as a subspecies. This has the largest leaves of any hydrangea and both leaves and stems are hairy. The main part of Maurice's talk covered *H. serrata*, and as many important cultivars have come from Japan, we also learned a little Japanese: Shiro means white, Beni is pink or red, Yae is double, Temari is mophead. As you may imagine, we were shown many photos of wonderful hydrangeas of endless variation, white, pink, blue, double, lacecap, etc. For advice on the best, please refer to the articles mentioned above.

209

Cultivation

Maurice sows seeds the week after Christmas in a propagator in his cellar with artificial light so that he can give the seeds 14 hours of light. Normally you would sow in April. Don't cover the seed. Don't overwater and beware of damping off. Maurice doesn't prune *Hydrangea serrata* forms except old wood at the base when the plant is older (sometimes up to 15 years), using shears if they get too leggy. With *H. paniculata* you can control flowering by pruning lightly in January for flowers in July or hard in March to delay flowering. Mulch is vital to keep moisture in but be careful what you mulch with. Mushroom compost will turn blue flowers to pink or red and if your water supply is alkaline, next year your flowers will be pink or red, not blue. If you are deadheading blue flowers, leave them under the bush to feed back the aluminium that makes them blue. Calcium, in alkaline soils, locks in the aluminium so you get pink. The enemy of hydrangeas is tree root competition.



Above, left, *Hydrangea serrata* 'Fuji-no-Taki' and right, *Hydrangea serrata* 'Shirofujii'.

Below, Cor van Gelderen talking to IDS members at the end of the *Hydrangea serrata* walk.

Opposite, *Hydrangea heteromalla* Bretschneideri Group flowers throughout the season and has fine peeling bark as it matures.

photographs © Harriet Tupper



Returning to the now not-so-boring, *Hydrangea macrophylla*, Cor explained how difficult it was to divide them up—alphabetically, by breeder, by parentage, by purpose (cut or garden flowers). He showed us examples that seemed to be divided by a combination of origin and breeder and their different characteristics. There are certainly a lot of trademarks, such as Dutch Ladies and Japanese Ladies. The ‘Teller’ (lacecap) group from Switzerland with names of birds was recommended although originally bred to be houseplants. The Izo group from Japan are lacecaps with double florets. Others have been introduced by Corinne and Robert Mallet who have the Shamrock Collection in Normandy. There are also species with black stems and others with picotee flowers, in fact there is no end to the possible combinations. Quite a lot of hydrangeas change colour through the season, for example from green to white and back to green again, or including pink in those changes.



photograph © Harriet Tupper

Cor's personal favourites include ‘Ava Maria’, ‘Green Tonic’, ‘Mariesii Lilacina’, ‘Mme G J Bier’, ‘Veitchii’ (these last three are long established), ‘Tovelit’ and ‘Rotkehlchen’. He also introduced us to some new ones — ‘Cabbage Patch’ which seems not to have any flowers at all, ‘Curly Sparkle Red’ (yuck! we chorused) and ‘Horwack’, a red and yellow mix which made me think of how many people plant yellow forsythia next to pink ribes. A warning: Do not plant ‘Endless Summer’—it is always hopeless: wishy washy colour, small leaves and falls over!

The RHS is conducting trials at Abbotsbury in Dorset and in the Savill Garden at Windsor. These are now in their third year and are due to be concluded in 2019. Cor is a member of the assessment team and Maurice an occasional contributor.

Below, Maurice Foster (left) leads the group around his garden to see the *Hydrangea* Collection and many other plants on the way.

After lunch it was time to walk around Maurice's garden at White House Farm where we were able to look closely at many plants that had been mentioned in the morning and to meet a huge number of promising examples currently nameless as they are random seedlings still being considered for possible future propagation. We could also see how on this hot day several of the hydrangeas, for example 'Tiara', were wilting in the hot sun but would recover once the temperature dropped. I don't think any of us will forget the amazing *Hydrangea serrata* walk that went on and on creating a beautiful effect winding through the woodland. It is always a pleasure to visit this garden with so many special plants and trees, almost invariably wearing climbers be it rose, clematis or wisteria, and I admit we did digress from time to time.

There was a small but choice silent auction with proceeds going to The Tree Register of the British Isles. The plant most competed for was the highly



desirable *H. aspera* 'Rosemary Foster', named for Maurice's late wife. This has dark chocolate leaves to set off its rich violet flowers.

The day was beautifully organised by Elizabeth Cairns.

References

- Foster, M. (2014). *Hydrangea aspera* and its relatives *The Plantsman*, N.S. 13, pt 2: 112–119
 Foster, M. (2015). *Hydrangea involucrata* and its cultivars *The Plantsman*, N.S. 14, pt 2: 114–120
 Foster, M. (2016). Like a hover of butterflies. *The Garden* Vol. pt. 7: 56–61
 McClintock, E. (1957). A monograph of the genus *Hydrangea*. *Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci.* 29: 147–256