

Hazel Kaye

Hazel Kaye now lives in Bakewell, Derbyshire but was formerly an active member of the Nottingham Group and, until 2008, ran a plant nursery in Rearsby. Together with Jill Robinson, she helped to promote the Group by displaying hardy plants at local shows. She also gave well-received talks and, as you will see below, writes beautifully about plants and gardening.

About Hazel Kaye

We have failed to unearth any articles about this plantswoman and long-time member of the Nottingham group of The Hardy Plant Society - so we have commissioned one! Watch this space!

Campanula latiloba

The Bulletin of the Hardy Plant Society 1984 - Volume 6 Number 4, by Hazel Kaye

Campanulas did not feature much in the gardens of my childhood. Apart from a few undernourished specimens of *C. persicifolia* in my grandmother's cottage garden, which I recall not for their simple beauty but for the way the milky sap exuded from their battered stems as her tortoise bulldozed his way through them, they were not familiar to me. When, in my teens my parents moved to a garden where campanulas along with many other new and interesting herbaceous plants abounded, I was introduced to a family of plants which has fascinated me ever since.

The white form of *Campanula latiloba* quickly became a firm favourite. It completely filled a long narrow border in a semi-shaded, north-facing garden with its luxuriant foliage making an impenetrable weed-free cover. During the summer it sent up its stiff flowering stems with their many stalkless, flattened bells illuminating its dark space for several weeks. In the winter, its rosettes of leaves turned to a brilliant lime green when the plants had become lifeless and bare.

Later on when we grew up and left home we took with us great clumps of it to plant in our own gardens and it still flourishes in my own.

Other members of the *C. latiloba* tribe that I have grown include C.l. 'Highcliffe' which has outstanding deep blue flowers, the whole plant being taller and larger than its relatives. There is an excellent stand of this plant in John Treasures' garden at Tenbury Wells. C.l. 'Percy Piper' flowers prolifically but is paler in colour and C.l. 'Hidcote Amethyst' though an

interesting mauve-pink colour in my experience is more difficult to establish and has a weaker constitution than the others. All seem to thrive best in conditions in which I first met the plant - moist, semi-shade.

To my surprise and my mother's great amusement *Campanula latiloba alba* appeared on the HPS list of plants at risk. Although with its constitution and habit I find this hard to understand. Even Graham Stuart Thomas describes it as rare. He should have words with my mother.

A Case of Mistaken Identity

Hardy Plant Society Nottingham Group 25th Anniversary booklet. 1975 - 2000 by Hazel Kaye

Hazel Kaye now runs her own nursery at Rearsby as you all know... But she has had her troubles with plants, poor woman! Read on.....

You know the feeling, unpacking the long awaited parcel newly arrived from that special nursery, carefully removing the treasures from their cocoon of newspaper, polythene and moss, mentally noting how small they are for the amount you paid, but "Never mind", you say, to yourself, ever the optimist." They'll soon grow, and they look healthy enough!". You take them to their allotted space, cosset them in, protect them from the ravages of frost, dogs, cats, mice, birds, slugs and greenfly, visit them daily, marvel at the unfurling of leaves and flower buds until finally the day arrives when you round the corner in high expectation and ...horror of horrors!... there, masquerading as the plant you so longingly chose from that glossy catalogue is a usurper, a changeling, in short not the plant you ordered at all! A mistake has been made.

During the past four years while doing battle with the likes of twitch, bramble and all the other nasties that want to live in my garden, this mistaken identity syndrome has befallen me in a uncommonly regular way. Since this is the Hardy Plant Society Newsletter I won't mention the yellow-berried *Pyracantha* that produced red ones, not only on the first plant to arrive but also on its replacement the following year; or the fourteen English rose bushes, all of one variety, which were planted to make an informal hedge, but of which seven turned out to be a completely different variety and had to be replaced, leaving the so-called hedge looking like the crenelations on a mediaeval castle. No, I'll just refer to the *Aruncus* which turned out to be a pink *Astilbe*; the oriental poppy, Mrs Perry, subtle salmon-pink - just what that corner needed - which turned out to be a blowsy double salmon-red looking for all the world like the skirts of a Toulouse Lautrec can-can dancer, the *Euphorbia niciciana* which turned out to be that thug *E. cyparissias* and which I'd already spent two seasons trying to eradicate unsuccessfully from a previous planting!

Then there are those mistakes that crop up when you sow those fascinatingly unusual-sounding seeds. That hallowed institution the R.H.S. seems to delight in popping in the unexpected. (I secretly wonder if they let their students loose in the seed-packing

department. You can just imagine it, can't you, "A dash of this and a few of those". Just like some exotic Cocktail!) For *Alyssum saxatile* 'Citrinum' I had the ordinary bright yellow kind. 'Eryngium maritimum' came up as *E. tripartitum*, *Veronica exaltata* as *V. longifolia*, *Calceolaria integrifolia* as *C. biflora* and so on. The trouble is that if you are growing a plant for the first time and you acknowledge that of the two parties in the transaction you are the more modest in your knowledge, you do rather go on believing those promising little specks of green in the seed pan to be what you want them to be. Indeed sometime, as in the case of some *Nomocharis* which I grew, you don't really know what the seedlings should look like anyway, so you nurture fondly anything which looks like the result of successful germination. You guessed, what came up weren't *Nomocharis* at all, but it wasn't until I'd grown them on and potted them into 4" pots that I recognised their true identity.....Silver Birch seedlings!

Oh well! I suppose the Trades Description Act could be brandished but since the so-called experts find it difficult to agree over the true identity of some plants we wouldn't get very far with that line. I must say in all fairness, that, where commercial nurseries have been involved, they have been only too willing to replace mistakes when they have been reported.

It's a pity about the yellow-berried *pyracantha* which finally did turn up. The puppies played tug of war with it as soon as it produced its first yellow berry!

The Ones that got away. "Oops!"

The Nottingham Group of the Hardy Plant Society, Autumn/Winter Newsletter 1997/97 - Issue Number 8, by Hazel Kaye

If, like me, you keep an inventory of new introductions to the population of plants in your garden, you will doubtless know the awful feelings of guilt at the countless hoard which vanish without trace into the mulch around their labels.

How much worse then is the guilt felt when a potentially exciting new plant appears of its own free will in our plot, startling you with its novelty, its potential as a marketable commodity, and your potential popularity among your adoring, envious gardening chums, and you subsequently lose it through some quirk of neglect, over enthusiasm or freakish weather. Perhaps my advanced age or normal gardening pose - bottoms up - has brought more than my fair share of such responsibility into my field of vision.

Firstly there was a plant of *Geum x borisii*, grown from seed, which appeared as a reluctant runt. It later transformed itself into a beautiful scarlet-flowered plant with the most delicate primrose coloured foliage, a lovely colour combination. It survived several seasons, long enough at least for divisions to be given to delighted friends. I even have a tantalising reminder of it to punish me when hunting through my slide collection, but the plant is lost

without trace. After this came the variegated *Potentilla* 'Miss Willmott' and *Eryngium planum*, both of which after careful isolation of the variegated sported shoot survived unvigourously for two or three seasons and then, despite numerous attempts to propagate them flatly refused and turned their vegetable toes up!

Potentilla 'Flamenco' normally a brilliant red with a centre like navy blue and gold antique needlework, sent up a flower of palest lemon with crimson veins and a neat crimson-laced edge to the petals. For those familiar with herbaceous *Potentillas*, a bit like *P.* 'William Rollinson' but the colours reversed. Like the numbskull that I am I marked the shoot by wrapping one of those wire ties that come with the roll of polythene bin liners around it. The gentle breeze turned into a howling gale and the stem snapped off at the wire tie immediately losing any potential seed. The decapitated stalk was then tied to a small cane to mark which part of the plant to propagate from a basal cutting the following spring. The neighbour's cat thought that I had provided a whisker slicking post and uprooted both it and the attached plant with its vain preening. Another treasure bit the dust. One survives..... just.

For the last five years I have cosseted an ungrateful wretch of a plant of *Geranium maculatum*, normally a delight with its almond pink flowers floating over neatly marked foliage in May/June. This plant has the usual almond pink flowers but its foliage is pure limey yellow, like *Geranium* 'Ann Folkard' but the pink is much less strident. At the last count in spring I had managed to create five separate plants. When I walked past their place in the border this summer they had disappeared under the cover of some extremely lush deadly nightshade, the gift of some passing bird. I hardly dared to look. Not a sign of life. This one, however, has done the vanishing trick before and I won't be sure of its fate until next spring when it will throw up more of its weedy yellow leaves and I'll have to at least look excited!

Worse still is the responsibility customers transfer to me when they arrive with their one and only surprise novelty and ask me to keep it going for them. On one occasion it was the rapidly decaying remains of a variegated biennial *Verbascum*, root, leaves and flower stem. After successfully rooting one or two unlikely side shoots which were slightly green but which subsequently failed to grow on I thought that all was lost. However, in desperation, I had saved the seed from the few productive seed capsules on the stem and amazingly some of the progeny exhibited the variegation of the parents when they appeared next spring. I don't recall in E.A. Bowles' writing that he found growing new plants such a fraught phenomenon. Perhaps because so many of his survived he was much more attentive to their needs or perhaps he simply didn't write about the ones that got away.

(This article first appeared in the inaugural edition of the Rutland Group's Newsletter in Autumn 1995)

PULMONARIA - 'Hazel Kaye's Red'

Pulmonarias by Jennifer Hewitt - The Hardy Plant Society - May 1994

Extremely effective in flower and leaf. It is vigorous and spreads rapidly but very closely, producing masses of stems so that at its peak the clump is virtually covered in red to pinkish-red flowers with dark calyces and long styles. The 18-22cm (7-9in) stems are fairly upright and the cauline leaves, the later basal ones, are medium green with many bright pale green spots and blotches, adding to the bright effect. The summer leaves widen abruptly at their bases with blades about twice as long as they are wide, and petioles longer than the blades.

Note: This plant was last listed in the 2015 RHS Plant Finder.

HELIANTHUS 'HAZEL'S GOLD'

John Davies former National Collection Holder of Helianthus and Heliopsis wrote of two plants with special significance for him. A plant named Helianthus 'Loddon Gold' but with an extra row of petal making it a triple. He renamed it (with permission) as 'Hazel's Gold' after Hazel Kaye, whose nursery was the original supplier. This plant went to the R.H.S. trials where the name was accepted.

The last two catalogues from Hazel Kaye's Garden Nursery did not list either Helianthus 'Loddon Gold' or H.'Hazel's Gold', assuming she was given a plant of the latter by John.

The Nursery had a listing for Heliopsis 'Loddon Gold' - there is a Heliopsis var. scabra 'Light of Loddon' so there may have been a mislabelling of plants or a printing error.

Note: plant available from RHS Wisley, Harlow Carr and Rosemoor Plant Centres