

Lavant Horticultural Society

'The Garden in Autumn'

Some rather basic notes from Patricia Elkington's talk, 10th October 2018

Patricia Elkington drew on her first-hand experience of these plants in her 3 acre chalk garden near Winchester, [Little Court](#), that she has been opening for the National Gardens Scheme since 1984.

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[Cotinus 'Notcutt's Variety'](#) – grows very big but can be coppiced – it will look sad for a few weeks but then sends up a lot of shoots, some of which need to be rubbed out, so that it does not become too congested.

[Rhus](#) – Stag's Head Sumac – leaves turn bright orange and red, but suckers like mad.

Euonymus

[E. alatus](#) – deciduous; leaves turn rosy-crimson in autumn and red fruits split to reveal orange seeds. Large, shrub, spreading laterally. Strange corky wings often develop on the smaller branches.

[E. 'Red Cascade'](#) – no trouble, does not grow too tall.

Viburnum

[V. davidii](#) – long-lasting blue-black berries – but need both male and female plants – grows rather tall.

[V. frangrans](#) & [V. bodnantense](#) – produces clusters of small flowers in autumn and winter - not for cutting, but very fragrant as walk round garden.

Cotoneaster

[C. franchetti](#) – arching stems & orangish berries, masses of small white flowers in May and leaf colour in autumn.

[C. cornubia](#) – bright red berries

[C. Exburiensis](#) – yellow berries, but difficult to see against background foliage.

[Hydrangea arborescens](#) – very good on chalky soil

The variety usually offered is '[Annabelle](#)', but this is very vigorous with large heads – when these are heavy with rain they droop down and do not rise back up.

[Abelia grandiflora](#) – very good at this time of year – flowers for weeks on end.

[Garrya elliptica](#) very attractive with long catkins, but can grow very large – need to prune after flowering, perhaps half one year, the other half the next, to avoid losing catkins.

Patricia introduced three foliage plants that look good against green foliage background and cope well with a north facing site:

[Lonicera 'Baggesen's Gold'](#)

[Sambucus 'Sutherland Gold'](#) – not very robust

[Osmanthus](#) – evergreen leaves reminiscent of holly.

[Hebe salicifolia \(korimoko\)](#) – evergreen, with cream coloured flowers, unlike most hebes

Variegated holly – can have problems with reversion, where green coloured leaves takes over from the variegated ones – need to cut out all reverted shoots back to the variegated ones.

[Virginia creeper](#) (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) – good autumn colour, but need to take it back every year to keep it in check, otherwise it will get everywhere.

[Pyracantha](#) – available with red or yellow berries – very good for a burglar-proof hedge.

[Clerodendrum trichotomum](#) – exotic fruits in October (bright blue with red calices).

[Clematis orientalis](#) 'Bill MacKenzie'

[Solanum jasminoides album](#) – better growing habit than usual mauve flowered climbing potato. Will be cut down by first frost, but will come to life again in June.

[Miscanthus 'Malepartus'](#) (Chinese silver grass)

[Carex 'Frosted Curls'](#) – goes well in a container.

[Stipa arundinacea](#) – brown in winter, seeds itself copiously.

[Liriope muscari](#)

[Hart's tongue fern](#) – cut off the old fronds in February in order to see the new growth unfurl.

Camomile seat – looks good but completely impractical – you have to keep watering it to keep the camomile in good condition, so it always too damp to sit on.

[Persicaria amplexicaulis 'Rosea'](#) – tall, upright with good spires of pink flowers, but does not need staking

Geraniums – many varieties will now be flowering again, providing they had been cut back after their main flowering season.

Sedum

[Sedum 'Matrona'](#) – purple foliage – easy to propagate – just cut off a stem and put it into gritty compost.

[Sedum 'Iceberg'](#) – white flowers that like to revert to pink.

[Sedum 'Ruby Glow'](#) – very apt name - ruby coloured flowers carried on deep red stems.

[Malva moschata alba](#) – more compact than most mallows.

[Convolvulus sabatius](#) – same family as bindweed – good in free-draining borders – goes well with silver foliage of alpine chrysanthemum, [Chrysanthemum haradjanii](#).

Echinacea – finds these perennials very short-lived.

[Rudbeckia 'Marmalade'](#) half-hardy perennial – flowers for weeks on end – can be grown from seed.

Asters come into their own now – recommended several varieties, resistant to powdery mildew:

[Aster 'Coombe Fishacre'](#)

[Aster divaricatus](#) – exceptional due to its black stems, carrying white flowers. Struggles on chalk, prefers acid.

[Aster frikartii](#) – best known variety 'Mönch', also 'Jungfrau' and 'Eiger'

[Aster 'Little Carlow'](#)

[Euphorbia griffithii 'Fireglow'](#) – apart from its red flowers earlier in the year, the leaves give wonderful autumn colour.

[Chrysanthemum rubellum](#) – reliably perennial – very hardy.

[Cyclamen hederifolium](#) - spreads of its own accord. Also, baby corms can be taken from around the "mother" plant and planted elsewhere.

[Nerine bowdenii](#) – good to have in pots that can be moved into position as they come into flower.

[Colchicum autumnale](#) (*Naked Ladies*) sometimes erroneously called "autumn crocus" – looks nice for 7-10 days but then flowers flop.

[Crocus speciosus](#), the real autumn crocus, is much more robust and flowers for longer.

[Tricyrtis formosana](#) (*toad lily*) – flowers through October and November – prefers acid – does well in a pot.

[Sternbergia lutea](#) – bright yellow crocus like flowers – bulks up well.

[Eryngium 'Silver Ghost'](#) – one of the best sea hollies – biennial, but self-seeds.