

Jackdaws' Field Nursery

Newsletter for December 2010

This is the first newsletter that I have written for many months - so many things got in the way in 2010, but I hope, as I do every year, to manage one every month through 2011. We have a lot of new lines in production, or nearly so, that there should be plenty to write about. The new catalogue will be in the post within a fortnight, but in the meantime there is plenty to tempt you on this list. The catalogue will indicate items that are new to the listing and I plan to re-introduce the system that marks items on the availability list that are not in the catalogue. There are always items we catalogue that will never appear on the availability list (because they sell out in advance) and there are always items on the availability list that are not in the current catalogue (for a variety of reasons) so you do need to consult both to get the most from our range.

Hydrangea macrophylla 'All Summer Beauty' is a pink mophead that will repeat flower during the growing season because it will flower on sideshoots of the current season's growth, whereas all the older varieties will only produce flowers at the end of shoots which arise directly from buds formed in the previous year. It is not the only new variety that has this ability, but it is the only one that is not subject to PBR. The advantage for both the grower and the gardener is that the plants can be pruned as needed to contain their growth without the risk of losing a year's flowering. What a common question it is from the public: "Why does my Hydrangea never flower?"

During 2010 we reintroduced **ferns** to our range. I am not going to pretend that we propagate these (the Dutchman who does produces 44 million annually so why try to emulate that?). The most important production tip is the to keep them shaded and not too hot, but there are other factors which are important to some varieties, particularly wet/dry tolerance and pH. Please ask if you need some further guidance - a cribsheet is in preparation. If there are other types that you would like to grow I can send you the full list that is available to us.

We can offer **Clematis armandii** and **C. a. 'Snowdrift'** for April delivery, but we need the orders for these as soon as possible. These are traded items and because they grow so fast in the spring and are prone to damage when handled it is vital that we hold them for as short a time as possible so we will only be able to supply those that are pre-ordered.

Anisodonta x hypomandarum has larger flowers, which are purple veined and deeper pink in colour than *A. capensis*. It is not really hardy (Z9) but is so fast growing that it will make a good size in a season, and in the right, dry and sheltered, spot it will flower almost continuously.

A hardiness chart is available, from www.jackdawsfield.co.uk and by email as it is a while since I sent one out, and I do refer the USDA ratings often in these notes (and maybe doing so even more after the two winters we have had and the one we have yet to come through). I can fax or even post a copy, but if you are not receiving this by e-mail I would urge to consider it as an option. Even with the best of intentions it is not easy to give the same level of service by fax or post and the difference will become more marked, as we plan to e-mail more pictures with the lists

A small list of **surplus stock plants** is follows the liner list. As ever they are priced to clear, and so are good value for money. Do read the comments as not all are suitable for all purposes. Please note that we need to deliver these sooner rather than later.

We haven't grown **Holodiscus discolor** for many years, but it is a very good plant - a medium-sized, upright, deciduous shrub topped by white Astilbe-like flowers in early summer. The foliage is attractive as the leaves are soft and lobed (like an oak leaf).

Philadelphus delavayii is a 'once seen, never forgotten' variety, picture attached. It may be a bit large for many gardens at 2m tall, but the white flowers have purplish nodding stalks and are borne in clusters giving a stunning effect.



Euphorbia characias 'Portugese Velvet', has soft velvety foliage and the well-coloured flowers. It does not grow as large as some of its kind, less than 1m, making a compact dome of foliage. Pictures on the left and right.



Tanacetum densum 'Amani' is rated as Z7 which is not something you would expect from its appearance having very soft, divided (in fact pinnatisect) leaves. I think winter wet would be more of a threat to it, but is a pretty and very tactile plant.



Philadelphus delavayii is a 'once seen, never forgotten' variety, picture attached. It may be a bit large for many gardens at 2m tall, but the white flowers have purplish nodding stalks and are borne in clusters giving a stunning effect, as you can see on the left

I wrote two years ago about a Vinca that we couldn't name, but it was too pretty not to propagate and we have now identified it as **Vinca major 'Jason Hill'**. It has dark green foliage to about 20 cm and the flowers are like blue velvet. A picture is attached, but it doesn't capture the intensity of the flower colour.







