Dear friends,

During 2016, in contrast to the trying year France went through, our ‘Shamrock’ garden remained a place of peace and beauty, and was sustained and supported beyond all our expectations. A real turning point was the installation of a car park compatible with the *Jardin Remarquable* label we were awarded in 2015. Tangible support from our members and friends, and the skill and hard work of the unbeatable duo of Henri Guyomard and Dominique Hébert (see page 4) helped solve this long-standing problem.

We are very grateful to the mayor and council of Varengeville, who put up signs showing the way to the collection, and also accommodated our annual sale last April. Slightly lower visitor numbers due to the ‘state of emergency’ were compensated by higher sales of specialised books on hydrangeas, including a small book by Corinne Mallet bought from Editions Ulmer and a brochure on pruning kindly given to us by André Diéval.

A fine late season allowed the pruning necessary for better development of the plants in both the ‘Green Dragon’ wood and the Paulownia garden. Thanks to all the loyal friends who took part in this.

(continued page 2)
Several features on French ‘prime time’ national TV, and another article in Figaro Magazine, once again increased the fame of the collection. The Parks and Gardens Foundation of France generously decided to give us a grant to continue our work of “Preservation and development of hydrangea collections in the gardens of France”.

The Département of Seine-Maritime, which encourages tourism with its Ambassadeur 76 and Jardins Secrets operations, has given us exceptional operating support, particularly for the creation of new flower beds to accommodate the many plants we receive from multiple sources.

Finally, the American Hydrangea Society in Atlanta, whose vice-president Ozzie Johnson has been following Shamrock’s work since 2000, is gratifying us with a renewable sum to finance the translation of our Journals and the Index of Cultivar Names, (2012-2016 edition in preparation).

Here at the beginning of the 2017 season, I wish you ‘Good Gardening’ and hope to see you at ‘Shamrock’.

Editorial continued

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The articles in this journal are published under their authors’ responsibility.
At the Hydrangea 2012 symposium organised by HW² in the superb infrastructure of Terra Botanica in Angers, Sophie Le Berre spoke about trends in the hydrangea market in Japan and the birth of a new segment: the “kokedama”.

Kokedama (苔玉; in English, literally “moss ball” – ed.) is a sort of bonsai created with small plants in a ball of substrate surrounded by moss, able to live indoors or outdoors, depending on the choice of plants.

*Hydrangea serrata* adapt well to being grown in kokedama, with some cultivars particularly suitable for growing as miniature plants.

**About *Hydrangea serrata* ‘Hakuryu’**

The mountain hydrangea (*Hydrangea serrata*) is a cold-resistant plant which prefers to be grown in places with bright shade and moisture throughout the year.

*H. serrata* ‘Hakuryu’ is a plant with very high resistance to cold and heat which is well suited to growing in kokedama. In summer, if the ball of moss becomes too light, simply soak it in water once a day; otherwise watering every two days is enough. This kokedama is very easy to grow, even for beginners.

This hydrangea’s pretty flowers can be appreciated from mid-May onwards. The foliage is resplendent from spring to autumn, but ‘Hakuryu’ benefits from fine foliage throughout the year, although it can lose its leaves in winter.

For city dwellers who do not have a garden, growing the plant indoors like this is a pretty and convenient method which should satisfy a large number of enthusiasts. It is even small enough to take with you on holiday.

For the more enterprising, here is a link to a video showing how to make your own Kokedama:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdI_WiHuEH0

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From top to bottom: *Hydrangea serrata* as bonsai, seen by Jean-Pierre Péan and me on 15 June, 2013 at the Kyoto Botanical Garden during our trip to Japan. The craze for kokedamas was confirmed during our shopping trip in the Kyoto department stores near the central station: some kokedama *H. serrata* we found there. *H. serrata* ‘Hakuryu’ in kokedama placed in a bowl.
The highlight of 2016 was the construction of a 500-square-metre parking space, which was added to the old car park, where access was no longer possible. After brush clearing and wood cutting done by the indefatigable Madeleine Alves, Anne Nicolle, Daniel Kuszak and André Dieval, it was once again Henri Guyomard with his friend Dominique Hébert who worked for twelve days using public works equipment to achieve this successful result. Finishing touches were given by Jean-Marie Rouet, marking out the parking spaces, and Christophe Pannequin, this year’s brilliant trainee, who was in charge of creating an entrance portico and finishing off some of the earthworks. Funding for this indispensable work was provided by many friends, both members and non-members of the Association, in the form of gifts or personal loans. Note that since 2016, thanks to an initiative by our treasurer Henri Pavie, the Association has obtained tax approval, allowing donors to deduct a significant percentage of their donations from their taxes.

On the left, from top to bottom: the car park before work started; Henri Guyomard and Dominique Hébert; Madeleine Alvès and Anne Nicolle; Jean-Marie Rouet and Hervé Lepetit; and our friend Daniel Kuszak. The two large photos on the right show the finished work.
Hydrangeas, particularly *H. macrophylla*, have accelerated in popularity and numbers in the last decade, the impetus being *Endless Summer® The Original*, a remontant cultivar that injected excitement and hope into the genus, first introduced in 2004. Along with ‘Blushing Bride’, *Twist-n-Shout®* and *BloomStruck®,* over 23 million plants have been sold as of December 31, 2016 (…)

Several newer releases include: *BloomStruck®,* a complex *H. macrophylla x H. serrata* hybrid with red stems, petioles and veins, superior dark green summer foliage with red-purple autumnal tints, continuous reblooming, rose to violet-blue mop head flowers, was bred by Plant Introductions, and introduced by Bailey Nursery, in the *Endless Summer®* brand. *Enchantress®,* a ruby-black stem rebloomer, a sport of *Endless Summer®* (verified by DNA molecular markers), is offered by Monrovia Nursery. *Electric Rouge™* (‘KOLMARU’) is a reblooming mop head with reddish pink fluorescent flowers from Ball Oramentals (now Star Roses and Plants) and introduced via the HGTV Home Plant Collection. *Dear Delores™*, a rebloomer, from the Southern Living Collection, lines up genetically with *Endless Summer® The Original* as determined by molecular markers. *Fuchsia Glow™*, a red mop head, from *Garden Debut®,* *Let’s Dance Rave™* and *Let’s Dance Rhythmic Blue™* are 2015 introductions (Proven Winners) described as formidable rebloomers. *Fuchsia Glow™* has been a disappointment in the Dirr garden with no rebloom. Have yet to test *Rhythmic Blue™* but observed *Rave™* with significant rebloom (mop head, deep rose) at Atlanta Botanical Garden-Gainesville in September, 2016. Another 2015 mop head rebloomer is *Diva Flore* (‘Saxdifioros’). Bred by the German nursery, Kuhne Jungpflanzen. Appears to be a compact grower with rose to blue flowers. At the January, 2016 MANTS show in Baltimore, three new *H. macrophylla* crossed my path. *Cherry Explosion®* is a red, single, non-reblooming lace cap from Star Roses and Plants; *Ruby Blossom™* (‘B-003’) is a red, double-flowered mop head with described potent reblooming potential from Star Roses and Plants; and *Tilt-A-Swirl™* (‘QUFU’) is marketed as a rose-red, reblooming mop head with single sepals from Van Belle in Canada. Flowers of *Tilt-A-Swirl™* are similar to those of *Pistachio®*. I have the latter three under evaluation and only *Ruby Blossom®* has rebloomed. Flowers are rose-red, leaning toward red and fully double. One of the prettier doubles I have observed that also has shiny dark green, thick-ish foliage and stout stems. *Cherry Explosion®* has not rebloomed (advertised as not) but produces large, ~half-dollar size sepals, close to red, on sturdy stems clothed with lustrous dark green foliage. Developed by McKay Nursery, Waterloo, WI. From 600 seedlings, tested outside, reduced to 100, then a select few, of which one became *Cherry Explosion™*. The flower color and sepal size remind of the Teller series, all lace caps with bird names, for example, ‘Nachtigall’, (aka ‘Nightingale’, ‘Teller Purple’). Perhaps some of those genetics were utilized in the breeding. I was told that *Cherry Explosion™* was cold hardy in Waterloo and flowered when left outside without protection. Another introduction from McKay and perhaps from this same seedling population is *Grateful Red®* (‘McKRed’), with red (not true) mop head single-sepal flowers. I have this under test and have yet to witness a flower, however, the lustrous dark green foliage is substantial. *Rosy Splendor™* (‘Tinkerbelle’ PP23,748) is another double-flowered pink lace cap from Star. Have yet to acquire. Photos show the double sepals almost hiding the fertile inner flowers. Supposedly it is easy to blue. It should be on the market in 2017.

*: These are not, in fact, *H. macrophylla* but plants derived from crosses, and whose ancestors were *H. ×serratophylla,* that is to say hybrids between the species *H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata.* (Note by Corinne Mallet)


2: renamed ‘BloomStar®’ in Europe (Editor’s note)

**HYDRANGEAS IN THE NORTH.**

Getting blooms in the colder climates.

Tim Boebel, 2011. ISBN 9781 456583460

This interesting self-published book is by a professional gardener in the north of the United States who was tired of not being able to help his customers, disappointed by never seeing their hydrangeas bloom. He experimented in his own garden with a 5-step method (see his website) that guarantees satisfactory flowering. The book includes many photos of cultivars of different species, with an appreciation for each one. It is written in a very free style that is fun to read.
From top to bottom and from left to right: View towards the sea / H. (Asperae) ‘Gong-chan’ / H. (Asperae) sp. / H. glabri folia / view from garden. Right hand page: H. longifolia.
For the past eight years, we have been opening our garden at La Blanche Maison in Urville-Nacqueville near Cherbourg in the Manche department for a few weekends in summer as part of our membership of the “Cotentin Côté Jardins” association. This is always a fine opportunity to make friends - some enthusiastic visitors have already been several times, while it has given others the opportunity to discover the world of hydrangeas for the first time. Following Robert and Corinne’s advice, given the mild seaside climate of the Cotentin peninsula, we have specialised in some of the less hardy hydrangeas: H. macrophylla and especially the large subsection of Asperae. Even in these favourable growing conditions we are not immune to a year with a particularly hard winter, and therefore the risk of losing our frost-sensitive and rare subjects. We have therefore made a list of some 40 of our subjects that are worth protecting. A few years ago, through our friend Jocelyne Masier, we were able to meet and form a partnership with Dominique Poirier and Frédéric Galbadon, enthusiastic and passionate employees of the Cherbourg Parks and Gardens municipal greenhouses. This service has the infrastructure, equipment, and expertise to make backup cuttings with a high percentage of good results; something that is not always easy for some varieties of Asperae. Today each of us has backup cuttings of these plants. My wish was for the town to plant these special subjects in their own sheltered bed, and this will indeed be done soon. Each delicate cutting that we bring back from ‘Shamrock’ is entrusted to the attentions of these plant lovers: the latest, H. Kawakamii from Crug Farm, had almost disappeared. Every visit to these greenhouses is a wonder: it is a real Ali Baba’s cave where we find a collection of tree ferns, coffee trees, the town of Cherbourg’s vanilla collection, palm trees, etc.

Another thing we do during our summer openings is to offer local visitors the opportunity to become hydrangea conservationists themselves. In addition to the cold-sensitive varieties mentioned above, on the suggestion of Robert, we also offer old varieties that have been lost, such as H. ‘Neige Orléanaise’, an old French variety which had disappeared from Europe and was found again in Australia, whose history was reported in a previous issue of this journal. In the space of a few years we have built up a network of about thirty enthusiastic conservationists whose mission is to pamper their young seedlings; most of them live in the Cotentin, as it is of course important to place them in a climate roughly equivalent to ours for the safeguard our hydrangeas. Every year in early spring I ask them about these protected plants, to find out how they are getting on. Many of these friends come back to complete their own collections or simply to exchange views on our favourite plant: in short, a small ‘Shamrock’ within ‘Shamrock’.
In April of 2014 and 2016, teams from the parks and gardens department of Vénosc and the ski resort of Les Deux Alpes installed plantings of hydrangeas at high altitude, assisted by Didier Boos, the president of Hydrangea World Wide and, more recently, of the Hydrangea section of the SNHF (Société Nationale d’Horticulture de France).

Two types of planting were carried out: on the one hand, more sensitive plants, *Hydrangea macrophylla* * and *H. serrata*, in the Vénosc valley at 900m altitude, and on the other hand plants deemed to be harder, in les Deux Alpes at 1650m altitude: *Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Semperflorens’, *H. serrata*, *H. paniculata*, *H. arborescens* and *H. (Asperae)*, some varieties of which are sold for export to eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Canada and the northern United States.

These unusual plantations were commissioned by Pierre Balme, the mayor of Vénosc-Les Deux Alpes; in fact, as he comes from a family of travelling florists who moved to Angers, among other places, in the 19th century, Pierre Balme is particularly sensitive to the history of this part of the Oisans territory which has seen generations of mountain people take to the road to improve the daily lives of their families who stayed behind. These adventurers were responsible for creating some Angers nurseries that are still active: Boos Hortensia, Ernest Turc and Turcieflor-Pierre Turc, but also the Les Hortensias du Haut Bois nursery created by Alain Dussine and since taken over by Ronan Garin. Currently, and after two planting campaigns - waiting for a third in late March 2017 - we can see that at the resort of les Deux Alpes, at an altitude 1650m, brightly coloured *Hydrangea macrophylla* still suffer from spring frosts and flower only modestly: we will have to wait for them to grow enough for their size to allow them a flowering more in line with what one can observe down on the plain. On the other hand, *H. macrophylla* ‘Semperflorens’ flowers correctly, as well, of course, as *H. arborescens* and *H. paniculata*. We need to wait another year to observe the flowering of plants of the Asperae sub-section in the village of Vénosc, at 900 m altitude. Downhill from the ski resort, all the hydrangeas are flowering correctly.

Hydrangeas were planted here in the 1960s, donated by Pierre Balme senior, the uncle of the current mayor and my own grandfather. Some of the owners of these flower beds, after receiving plants from Pierre Balme, have propagated the plants themselves without too much difficulty.

It should also be noted that it is essential to plant the earliest blooming varieties so that the plantings are in bloom during the tourist season (July-August); this remark concerns, of course, the plantings in the ski resort much more than those of the valley.

Note that another close link exists between Angers and Vénosc-Les Deux Alpes: slate has been quarried in both regions and technicians from Angers came to work in Oisans at the beginning of the 20th century.

*: These are not, in fact, *H. macrophylla* but plants derived from crosses, and whose ancestors were *H. ×serratophylla*, that is to say hybrids between the species *H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata*. (Note by Corinne Mallet)
The life of fertile flowers
André Dieval

1: In this *H. hirta* hybrid the fertile flowers open almost all at the same time. 2: In *H. glabripes*, the fertile flower closest to the sterile floret opens first. 3: It is quickly followed by the others. 4: A hoverfly comes to sample the pollen on the flowers of *H. villosa*. 5: The insects have done their job; the flowers have been fertilised. 6: Some flowers are earlier than others to mature. Dry fruits are called capsules in the genus *Hydrangea*. 7: Finally, the capsules open to release their seed. This phenomenon is called dehiscence.
A garden in Ireland: Caher Bridge

Illustrations
In 1996 I bought a derelict cottage in the Burren region of County Clare on the west coast of Ireland. This region is well known for its spectacular limestone landscape and profusion of wildflowers. Many species of orchids, are to be found here along with Gentiana verna and Dryas octopetala often in huge numbers especially in spring. It is a popular destination for visitors who are drawn by the unusual lunar like landscape, the coastal scenery and of course the flowers. It is an unforgiving landscape though with barely any soil covering the limestone, no large trees and a difficult climate. It is described as temperate oceanic, having cool summers and normally mild, wet winters. Temperature extremes are rare with averages in summer being around 14 - 16c and in winter, 4 - 7c, although it does not enjoy the frost free conditions found on other parts of the west coast and frost can occasionally be quite severe. Rainfall is high, on average 250 days and around 1.3 mtrs per year. Our skies are covered in cloud around 50% of the year! It is probably the worst part of Ireland to consider creating a garden!

I started creating a small garden around my house in 1996. There was previously never a garden here. The entire area surrounding the house was originally bare limestone pavement with small pockets of soil in the grykes. These had become colonised by a dense thicket of Prunus and Corylus, a small woodland type habitat.

There was no useable soil on the property so all soil in the garden has been brought in from other areas. Since 1999 around 1000 tons of soil has been imported and all sieved by hand to remove weeds, rocks and rubbish! The entire garden which is now covers an area of approximately 1.5 acres is made of raised terraces and beds built directly onto the limestone and filled with imported soil. Many of the original trees have been retained to create a natural, established feel to the garden. It is basically a shady woodland type garden.

Due to the abundant rainfall, it is normally reasonably wet, but on the rare occasion of more than three days without rain there are problems as the thin layer of soil very rapidly drains. The trees also claim much of the available moisture exasperating the problem. Conditions here are very difficult, unpredictable and variable from year to year. Despite this, I have managed to find a vast range of plants which tolerate the conditions and actually thrive here, and in doing so have created a natural looking garden containing many interesting and unusual plants. There are large collections of ferns, bergenias, hostas, woodland bulbs, primulas, and of course hydrangeas!

Hydrangea macrophylla* has long been grown in the west coast of Ireland, it is one of only a few shrubs which will tolerate the harsh conditions so is used extensively in coastal gardens here. In fact in some areas, it has become so well established in the countryside that it is now a potentially invasive species along with Fuchsia magellanica and crocosmias. Although I must admit I was originally not a particular admirer of hydrangeas, they were an obvious choice for parts of my garden. Now, I have become an addict and am trying to develop new areas specifically for an ever increasing collection.

The H. macrophylla, H. serrata and H. aspera are the most tolerant groups in this location, and are generally, once established very successful here. H. quercifolia is difficult due to low light levels and to excessively wet winters. Frost can be a problem some winters and combined with the extreme wet makes many of the less hardy varieties impossible here. In areas of the garden with higher light levels, paniculatas and arborescens do well and in a few sheltered spots sargentiana also thrives.

*: These are not, in fact, H. macrophylla but plants derived from crosses, and whose ancestors were H. ×serratophylla, that is to say hybrids between the species H. macrophylla and H. serrata. (Note by Corinne Mallet)
Because all the soil in the garden is imported I have full control over the pH. In recent years I have specifically sourced only acidic soil to encourage a greater range of colours. Even with a soil depth of only 30cm overlying limestone it is possible to achieve this. The reason being that with a very high rainfall, any lime present is continually washed downwards. A top dressing of pine needles also helps keep the pH low.

Unfortunately sourcing new and unusual plants in Ireland, especially in the west is not particularly easy due to a lack of specialist nurseries, therefore most of my plants are obtained in the UK.

Some of my more recent acquisitions include *H. aspera* ‘Hot Chocolate’ which is absolutely spectacular with the beautiful dark brown underside of the foliage. The relatively new *H. ‘Blueberry Cheesecake’* is, despite it’s awful commercial name, a fabulous tidy plant with a very long flowering period. *H. involucrata* ‘Yokudanka’, is simply stunning. As the specific name implies, the buds are tightly enclosed before slowly opening to reveal the delicate lace like flowers. It flowers very late in the season here when most of the others have finished.

I am often asked which is my favourite hydrangea, to which I reply ‘all of them’, but a special mention must go to the very reliable *H. ‘Madame Emile Mouillere’*. She flowers almost continuously throughout the year here and a few years ago was in full bloom for an unbroken period of eighteen months! There are very few garden plants that can rival that.

1: Synonym of *H. ‘Cotton Candy’*
All is well here. Business is very good and hydrangeas continue to be hot, especially *H. paniculata* and *H. arborescens*. I have attached a picture of Tom Ranney in his trial field with *Hydrangea arborescens* ‘Invincibelle Ruby’, a real breakthrough plant. We have stopped selling ‘Invincibelle Spirit’ and have replaced it with an improved ‘Invincibelle Spirit II’ (two) that has stronger stems and bigger, brighter flowers (image attached). This year we have also introduced green, white and purple dwarf *H. arborescens* all of which are great for those of us that live in colder climates than France. ‘Fire Light’ and ‘Zinfin Doll’ are our newest *H. paniculata* and these plants are getting very good reviews for their later summer color and their ability to hold up their flowers.

Our *H. macrophylla* breeding program has been making good strides, although we have no new introductions this year. We still do not have the plant that we are looking for; that is a truly reliable zone 5 mop head. We have good remontant plants but we are working to add in improved bud and stem hardiness that will give us June flowers as well as the late summer remontant blooms. We are getting closer. Let’s Dance® ‘Rave’ is in my opinion our best so far. Very good saturated color, very good reblooming and good foliage and stem qualities.

I will send you a catalog but this link will send you to an electronic version that you can view immediately. [http://springmeadownursery.com/catalog](http://springmeadownursery.com/catalog)

*: These are not, in fact, *H. macrophylla* but plants derived from crosses, and whose ancestors were *H. serratophylla*, that is to say hybrids between the species *H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata*. (Note by Corinne Mallet)
About *Hydrangea aspera* illustrations

*Hydrangea villosa* Rehder, n. sp.,
Shrub 1 to 3 m tall, with young branches covered with whitish to fawn down. Leaves elliptic or lanceolate-oblong, acuminate, with cuneate base (...) 10 to 20 cm long and 3.5 to 6.5 cm wide, the upper side a dark greenish-yellow (...), the underside covered with clearly bristled downy hairs forming a whitish felt. Along the ribs the hairs reach 3 mm long and are often (...) fawn coloured. Downy petioles, often dotted with longer tawny hairs. Cyme convex, sometimes flat, covered with downy whitish to fawn hair (...), sterile florets finely petiolate, 3 to 4 cm in diameter, blueish, with four generally crenelated orbicular-obovate sepals (...).

Originally from western Sichuan: Wenchuan district, groves, alt. 1800 m (...); Pan-lan-shan, west of Kuan district, in woods, alt. 2400 m.

Easily differentiated from similar species by its downy hairiness.


1: These are the collection sites of *H. villosa* by Wilson from 1908 to 1910.
In 1825, the botanist David Don (1789-1841) described, in *Prodromus Florae Nepalensis*, the plants collected by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton (1762-1829) during his expeditions to Nepal in 1802 and 1803. Among the new species described are three new species of the genus HYDRANGEA. These are *H. anomala*, *H. heteromalla* and *H. aspera*, the one we are interested in here. F. Buchanan-Hamilton’s specimens have been preserved to this day, but unfortunately, unlike most National Museums, the Natural History Museum in London does not allow free access to its digitized collections. We were only able to collect a small copy of the herbarium specimen of the species type, which does not allow us to study the plant in enough detail; this is why we have provided illustrations of other specimens of *H. aspera* from other collections. However, no other specimen is fully consistent with David Don’s description, a translation of which appears on this page. In it, David Don describes a plant the size of a *Viburnum opulus* (up to 4 m tall), with lanceolate and acuminate leaves, densely tomentose on the underside, narrowly dentate, with branches also tomentose. He describes the inflorescences as diffuse clusters, the sepals of the sterile florets oval, mucronate and dentate. The other specimens of *H. aspera* which we have been able to examine show few or no serrations on the margins of the sterile florets; moreover, some are mucronate, others are not. We also find that the sterile florets of the species type possess five sepals, something which is only found in the plant collected by J.-F. Duthie in 1884 west of Nepal in the far north of India. What is more, J.-F. Duthie’s plant has some fertile flowers with 4 sepals and others with 5, these sepals being mucronate but slightly dentate. Oddly enough, D. Don’s description refers to a length of leaves 7.5 cm long by 6.2 cm wide, while the type specimen has leaves 18 cm long by 5.5 cm wide. The type specimen of *H. aspera* comes from Nepal, but *H. aspera* has also been collected in China, Sichuan and Yunnan, as well as in Vietnam. This species is the typical example of plants from the Asperae subsection.

As usual, Dr. E. McClintock brought together some very different plants under this species name; although they all belong to the Asperae sub-section, these plants were given other specific epithets by those who first described them. This is the case for *H. villosa*, recognized as a species by the botanist Alfred Rehder. The text of his description of *H. villosa* is reproduced on page 14. We may note that Rehder adds that *H. villosa* can be distinguished from other species in this subsection (Asperae) by its downy hairiness, and this is in fact the case when comparing specimens of *H. villosa* with specimens of *H. aspera*. We may also note that the sterile florets of *H. villosa* always have crenulate sepals.
When the species *H. aspera* (7) and *H. villosa* (8) are observed growing in gardens, we note that the port of *H. aspera* is relatively erect whereas *H. villosa* has a much suppler appearance. The inflorescences of *H. aspera* are composed of dark pink fertile flower buds, revealing purple stamens in anthesis, while the sterile florets are tinged with pinkish-white. With *H. villosa*, the fertile flowers are pale mauve before they open, after which they reveal purple stamens, and the sterile florets are mauve. With *H. aspera* grown in gardens, we have observed that the sepals of the sterile florets are only slightly dentate and only slightly or not at all mucronate; They partially overlap one another. In *H. villosa* the sepals are almost always crenate, never mucronate, and do not overlap.

**SHAMROCK DISTINCTIONS 2016**

*H. arborescens* ‘Gloria’ with green flowers. This mutation, which appeared in the *Jardin d’Angélique* in Montmain, was noticed by Gloria Lebellegard. We named it in honour of this great gardener.

*H. serrata* CM 2000/003 ‘Catherine Fauchier-Magnan’. This plant, found in 2000 by Corinne Mallet in the Niigata-ken mountains of Japan, has proved to be very vigorous and hardy in the Shamrock collection. It has been named in honour of a well-known gardener in Geneva.

*H. paniculata* ‘Barberousse’
A plant bred by Michael Dirr in 2000 by crossing ‘Brussels Lace’ with ‘Barbara’. Entrusted to us by Jan Oprins (code 0101) in September 2009, we have been admiring it every year since then. We finally gave it the name ‘Barberousse’ because of its colouring at the end of the season.
New hydrangea cultivars for North America

Denis Bernard

Beginning with *Hydrangea arborescens* - the smooth hydrangea - discovered in a garden in the town of Anna in Illinois, ‘Annabelle’ is probably the most famous and most popular flowering shrub in American gardens. Surprisingly, despite its great popularity, no hybridisation experiments were carried out on this species until the mid-1990s. But now several breeders, both American and European, have decided to work with the species and the results can be seen today with the arrival of several new varieties each year. *Hydrangea arborescens* likes an exposure of sun or partial shade, in rich, moist, well-drained soil, preferably slightly acidic, even if it adapts to most soils. In winter, the shrub freezes almost to the ground; it can be cut back in spring to just above the new shoots, as it blooms on the current year’s wood. The plant gradually widens its territory with suckers: after a few years, if the flowering decreases, divide the shrub early in the spring and replant it in a larger location. Resistant to -40°C USDA Z 3.

*Hydrangea arborescens* ‘Lime Rickey’® (H. a. ‘Smnhalr’ ppaf, cbrf)
A cousin of ‘Annabelle’ with large inflorescences passing successively from lime green to jade green sometimes to whitish green accentuated with pink pollen before returning to dark green as they get older. The flowers contrast beautifully with the dark green foliage. The stems are exceptionally strong and unlike ‘Annabelle’, remain erect even in the worst summer showers. We have seen this plant receive no less than 5 cm of rain in one hour without drooping or sagging. Also very interesting for arrangements of cut or dried flowers. Height: 1.25-1.50m. Breeder: Timothy D. Wood U.S.A.

*Hydrangea arborescens* Incrediball® ‘Blush’ (H. a ‘NCHA4’ ppaf, cbrf)
The very recent hydrangea Incrediball®, now regarded as an improved ‘Annabelle’, is appreciated for its rigid stems and its very large flowers (30-35cm +). The hydrangea arborescens Incrediball® ‘Blush’ adds a new colour to the series, with its huge soft pink inflorescences changing to light green at maturity. If it behaves like its cousin Incrediball®, it will need a few years of growth to show you its full potential with larger leaves and flowers and more robust branches. Personally, I have had to wait 5 years to finally see what I had been promised with ‘Incrediball’, that is spectacular and huge ball-shaped flowers which remain upright. Height: 1.50m. Breeder: Timothy D. Wood, U.S.A. Bronze Medal at Plantarium 2016.
The new invincibelle® series. Breeder: Dr Thomas Ranney

The invincibelle® series now includes five new varieties, all of them repeat flowering, and all with strong stems supporting their inflorescences, thus making their grandmother ‘Annabelle’ proud of them.

*Hydrangea arborescens* invincibelle® ‘Limetta’™ (H.a. NCHA8’ ppaf, cbrf)
Beautiful rounded dwarf variety, with dark green foliage and lime green flowers rapidly turning pale green to greenish white and then returning to green before fading. With its strong stems and compact habit, it is becoming very interesting for small gardens. Height: 75-90cm. Breeder: Dr Thomas Ranney.

*Hydrangea arborescens* invincibelle® ‘Mini Mauvette’™ (H.a. NCHA7’ ppaf, cbrf)
If you like Invincibelle® ‘Ruby’ or ‘Spirit II’ but you are looking for a shorter pink hydrangea, you should consider Invincibelle Mini Mauvette ™. With its height and width of barely 75 to 90 cm, it is a very compact little beauty. A new colour for *Hydrangea arborescens*, in fact its spherical inflorescences begin raspberry pink, then as they age they pass through purplish pink and end up green with purplish tones. Another variety with very dark green foliage, it possesses all the qualities for being grown in containers. Height: 75-90cm. Breeder: Dr Thomas Ranney.

*Hydrangea arborescens* invincibelle® ‘Ruby’ (H.a. NCHA3’ ppaf, cbrf)
The very first red coloured *Hydrangea arborescens*, its flower buds are a rich burgundy red opening in a combination of 2 tones: ruby red and silver pink. Its very dark foliage and strong stems ensure optimal performance both in containers and in the garden. Height: 60-90cm. Breeder: Dr Thomas Ranney. (../ ..)
Hydrangea arborescens invincibelle® ‘Spirit II’ (H.a. NCHA2’ ppaf, cbraf)
This is an enhanced version of Invincibelle® ‘Spirit’ and is its replacement on the market. They say the H. a. ‘Spirit II’ has darker foliage, stronger stems, larger flowers and a more pronounced pink colour, turning green when growing older. Since the introduction of Hydrangea Invincibelle® ‘Spirit’ in 2009, $1 was donated for each plant sold to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. More than $903,000 has been raised on a $1 million target, and the campaign continues with the introduction of H. a. Invincibelle® ‘Spirit II’. Height: 90cm-1.25m. Breeder: Dr Thomas Ranney.

Hydrangea arborescens invincibelle® ‘Wee White’ ™ (NCHA5)
This new variety of Hydrangea arborescens has the potential to revolutionise garden landscaping. It is already being called the little ‘Annabelle’, indeed, it is a dwarf version of the latter, with a mature height of barely 30 cm to 75cm. In addition to its compact stature, its stems effectively support its large quantity of flowers without drooping. Its pure white blooms, in spherical inflorescences, are present from early summer to late autumn. Note also that its flowers start off white but pass with age to green and soft pink hues. Another advantage is that it behaves very well in containers. Height: 30cm-75cm. Breeder: Dr Thomas Ranney.

(The rest of this article will appear in the 2018 edition of the Journal)
**David Wheeler**


During 2016 I kept a watchful eye on the early stages of an important UK hydrangea trial held at two sites: the Crown Estate’s Valley Garden at Windsor and Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens in Dorset, encouraged by the RHS trials team to support organisations and individuals to conduct plant trials beyond the boundaries of the Portsmouth Field at the RHS’s garden at Wisley.

Harvey Stephens, deputy keeper of the gardens at Windsor says, ‘This fresh RHS trial is designed to assess the best of the existing AGM plants alongside a few of the newer cultivars bred for many different climates and ultimate uses.’ Those forming the trials panel are an experienced group who are National Collection holders, head gardeners/curators, representatives of the nursery industry or plantspeople in the media. With so many *Hydrangea macrophylla* cultivars the panels first task was to compile an unbiased list of outstanding tried and tested AGM plants with as many new cultivars as space would allow. ‘It was a tough job,’ says Harvey, ‘but eventually we stopped at 177 *H. macrophylla* cultivars. While some are growing on both sites, most cultivars are unique to one or the other.’

With this significant number of cultivars, the panel had to give careful consideration to which cultivars were selected from the countless series that have sprung up in recent years. Harvey’s particular thanks therefore go to Cor van Gelderen for his efforts to source so many of the newer cultivars from Europe and was delighted to receive plants from the Beautensia, Black Steel, Dutch Ladies, Everbloom, Fireworks, Forever and Ever, Hovaria, Magical, Sturdy, Tellar, Royal Majestic and the River Line series. Harvey notes that the team ‘has kept an open mind on the series developed initially for the pot plant or houseplant market and have included potential candidates that are florally very interesting, but may not have adequate hardiness.’ Only time will tell, he adds.

Windsor is trialling 106 cultivars planted in a dedicated area of the Valley Garden. The site is challenging, says Harvey, ‘while the soil is nicely acidic at pH 5.6, it is very open and free draining and described as Bagshot Sand. The site has quite a variable canopy cover which unfortunately is going to play its part in the final results.’ To assist the judging he separated the mophead and lacecap cultivars and placed the selected plants from each series next to each other. Each cultivar is planted in triangular groups of three. While the trial is still in this very early stage Harvey is nevertheless pleased to report that since planting in spring 2015 they haven’t had any losses. It is still early days, but one or two cultivars that caused the panel some excitement include ‘Colorado’ (‘Raco’) PBR, ‘Jomari’ and ‘KORIA’ PBR.

Meanwhile, at Abbotsbury, where the soil is a neutral pH, curator Stephen Griffiths says, ‘We will wait and see if the true blues emerge at Windsor and the deeper red flowers appear at Abbotsbury.’ For his own personal view, Stephen says that this trial has presented him with an opportunity to improve a once neglected part of the garden and open up a woodland glade with sufficient light levels and passing sun to provide optimal growing conditions for hydrangeas. ‘Here we have gone away from the usual regimented trial plots of straight lines in favour of natural planting groups of threes or fives, which when the trial finishes will integrate the plants naturally into the landscape. Although I did question the idea that the Abbotsbury hydrangea selection would be grown for its red flowers in an alkaline soil as most of the garden overlays a belt of iron ore, which creates an acidic conditions. However, with some field work the selected site soil analysis came back as neutral. Yet only 200m away we have healthy rhododendrons growing, which are of course acid loving.’

The Abbotsbury trial site was planted in the spring of 2015 and, as at the Valley Garden, is destined to run over three years for seasonal assessment. Since then many of the plants have settled in with good growth rates. ‘But not all,’ says Stephen, ‘so I guess this is what we will find across the trial over the next two years.’

From his notes and those of other trial committee members there are already a few possible contenders for an AGM that have shown to have favourable characteristics and stand out from the rest in these early stages. Most of the Abbotsbury trials plants came into flower in their first growing year and lasted through July to September with moderate watering when needed during dryer periods. Some of Abbotsbury’s noted plants are ‘Rotschwanz’ (Teller series) with nice shaped sepals with a strawberry and cream colour combination; ‘Magical Garnet’ (Magical series) with very good all round characteristics and lots of flowers and good strong colour; ‘Kolmaru’ (Magical series) with good dark maroon leaves, improving deep red; ‘For Ever and Ever Together’ (For Ever and Ever Series) with nice compact flowers, good overall shape and attractive dark foliage; and ‘Westfalen’, an old cultivar but still with notably good clear light red flowers, compact strong stems and continuously floriferous. But to echo Harvey’s words, ‘it’s early days yet’.

David Wheeler is editor of the British gardening quarterly HORTUS and grows approximately 200 different hydrangeas in his woodland garden at Bryan’s Ground, near Presteigne, on the border between England and Wales.

* These are not, in fact, *H. macrophylla* but plants derived from crosses, and whose ancestors were *H. x serratophylla*, that is to say hybrids between the species *H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata*. (Note by Corinne Mallet)
Jan Oprins  
Thank you for the information on the US Hydrangea paniculata ‘Barberousse’. Good to hear it’s a nice one at your place, in your climate. Me personally I didn’t follow very much the paniculata’s during past season, too many other things to do (smile). Anyway overhere it was a wonderful Hydrangea year by a rainy spring and summer, than ending dry at the end of the season with wonderful colors. Here we still are working on the registration of all our plants, Hydrangea and others, like for example Harry’s collection. We developed a software package and now some volunteers are putting in all the hand written information and notes, in all his many different shapes and forms, in to the program. This job will at least take till spring next year. In the collection garden we are realizing a thematic garden now, and we hope to finish a rose garden with subject: the history of the Belgian rose, where for we got some financing. The landscapers association will help us to realize it. But in general Hydrangea is still our number one subject. Next year summer time, I hope to come over with my son Wout to Bretagne and Normandie for a tour as I used to do with Harry a couple of times. For sure we will meet then. Also the Belgian Bamboo Society, which I am chairing, want to make a tour in Normandie next spring, for sure not only to look at bamboo but much more at other exotics. We stay in touch. Wish you all the best.

David Wheeler (14 septembre 2016)  
I can’t tell you how very much I enjoyed my time with you and Corinne last week. It was wonderful to see Shamrock looking so well and colourful. Everything about our few days was good - our visit to you, lunch at the cidevre, Bois des Moutiers (fingers crossed for the music school), Constance (please give her my very best wishes and thank her for the time she spent with Michael and me), Le Vasterival - not to mention the terrific dinners we had on our three evenings in Dieppe. I’m glad now to be a fully paid-up member of Shamrock and, who knows, maybe I can come for a day or two to work as a volunteer next year.

Thank you very much for the cuttings, which are looking very perky in my heated propagator. And thanks too for your International Index, which makes fascinating reading and will be a very useful reference tool. I have ordered Michael Dirr’s book, which means I will now have all the best hydrangea books in my library, including those by Corinne, the van Gelderens, Haworth-Booth, Lawson-Hall & Rothera, Boebel and Glyn Church. (Are there others in English I should know about?) And with a hefty French/English dictionary by my side I am making slow progress through the Shamrock journals.

If you get round to sending more cuttings perhaps you could give me some idea of when so that I can make sure I’m here to deal with them when they arrive.

How nice it was to know it was your 30th wedding anniversary (you deserved the oysters!). Hortus is also 30 this year! With very best wishes to you both.

There is new collection dedicated to Hydrangea serrata: “Sous un arbre perché”, a collection/nursery recognised by the official French register of plant collections, the CCVS. Congratulations to Fabrice Gautier and Olivier Galéa for this prestigious CCVS label, which recognises the value of a specialised collection and the work of a «scientific» nature attached to its constitution and its conservation. The recent inventory and identification work published in the CCVS magazine «Hommes & Plantes» will remain in the annals, with more than 50 photos including 45 excellent portraits of cultivars (in 2014 the Belgian magazine «Eden» had limited us to only 25). We should note that an article of this kind is in itself a justification of the essential role that the CCVS plays in the matter of conservation and research into the plant world. Good news: Fabrice and Olivier have agreed to participate in our annual Hydrangea Festival in Varengeville sur mer on 8 and 9 April, so enthusiasts will be able to share their experiences, and discover and even acquire the H. serrata they will be presenting. We are delighted about this.

The sunshine was so violent this summer in the United Kingdom, that our member and friend Roger Dinsdale had to protect his hydrangeas with parasols, hence this rather comical photo!
With the recurrent periods of heat that we have seen in recent years, the question of the best method of watering has become of paramount importance, especially for Japanese mountain plants accustomed to high hygrometry, in particular the *Hydrangea serrata* and their *H. ×serratophylla* hybrids which have a phenotype close to that of *H. serrata*.

It is wise to ensure a good mulching, especially using fresh grass clippings, 10 cm thick three times per season: this mulching will limit evaporation and the soil will remain cool and will better absorb frequent watering. In addition, this layer of grass that protects from drying winds will also be useful to break up the jet of the hosepipe when this is used as a watering method, which is the case at the ‘Shamrock’ Garden.

Assuming that the soil is well drained (which, with mountain plants, is essential to avoid rotting), it is necessary to water often, but sparingly. That is where the ‘four by four’ principle comes in. Four plants are watered one by one, to allow time for the water to penetrate around each one before starting at the first one again. M. Jacques Neilz, who was a young apprentice at the Mouillère nursery, told us that for potted specimens it is necessary to water 3 times so that the water reaches the bottom of the container. In open ground, we water up to 5 times for the smaller plants, and 10 times for the taller ones.

Why ‘with the thumb’? The direct jet of a hosepipe, even at low pressure, touches only one place and generally it is the base of the plant that is aimed at. By putting the thumb (or the index finger) over the outlet of the hose one obtains a wider spray that waters the whole plant including the roots around the perimeter. The spray nozzles sold in the trade are much less convenient!

What can be done with branches that dry out? While watering, one has time to observe the plants, to remove faded flowers, and especially to shorten the stems that have already flowered back to where new shoots appear, in the same way that deutzias, spireas, etc., are cut back after flowering. Thus, the bush will get back its strength in order to bloom again at the beginning of the following summer. The results of this method are really satisfactory, giving plants which form well, in regularly shaped bushes, and have a healthy appearance, even in periods of high heat.

The only precaution for these plants: unlike *H. macrophylla* and *H. ×serratophylla* hybrids with a phenotype similar to that of *H. macrophylla*, which give a “warning” when they are thirsty (by going floppy!), you need to water *H. serrata* and their hybrids preventively and not when it’s too late!

**Hydrangea autumn colours**

Since we have cut back the paulownias at the top of the garden which houses the collection of European varieties ranked by country, many cultivars with ‘mop head’ flowers have revealed colouring which turns red in autumn under the effect of the extra light (see photo on p.1). This is, obviously, a spectacle that should not be ignored.


For *H. serrata* and hybrids with ‘lace cap’ flowers, let us remember the classics: ‘Avelroz’, ‘Kurenai’ (rather difficult), ‘Graysswood’ (to be planted facing east for the best colours), ‘Victoria’, and ‘Sandra’ from the DUTCHLADIES® series.
The Association thanks all members and non-members who have contributed their work or their support in different ways to the upkeep and the future of the Shamrock Collection, including among others all the friends who participated in the smooth running of our annual sale of hydrangeas and in particular the commune of Varengeville sur mer and its mayor Patrick Boulier who kindly made the forecourt of the town hall available to us. Among the team of regular members we should mention Martine Merlin, Bernard Tordeurs, Jean-Pierre Péan, Gilbert Baudoin, André Diéval, Madeleine Alves, Daniel Kusczac, Guy Lahogue, Josiane and Henri Lamache, Jean-Marie and Christiane Rouet, Mariette and Christophe Guichard, Christiane Le Scanff, Anne Nicolle as well as exhibitors Cédric and Marion Basset, Benjamin de Ladoucette, Antoine Brunet and Etienne Lemesle. Special mention to the professionals mentioned on our posters who support us by supplying us every year with plants from their production: Kees Eveleens, Lionel Chauvin, Jean-Paul Davasse, Henri Mercier, Bruno Malinge of “Malinge Horticulture” and especially Jean Renault, always an ardent contributor. For the car park, Henri Guyomard and Dominique Hébert, as well as the shock team who helped prepare the ground: André Diéval, Madeleine Alves and Daniel Kusczac. Thanks to all those who have provided financial support for this operation but wish to remain anonymous. Thanks to Yves and Franck Sagaert who always answer the call in case of need. For pruning and routine upkeep, the team from “La Traverse” educational centre, led by the ever-faithful Marie-Jo Boulanger; the regular Tuesday trio: Jean-Marie Rouet, Christiane Le Scanff and Anne Nicolle, sometimes joined by other friends: Alexandre Bourard, Natacha and Bénédicte. Planting was done by Jean-Pierre Péan, among others. We benefited from a trainee for a month, Christophe Pannequin, who gave us some serious help with his super-performance equipment. Work on the next edition of the International Directory of Cultivar Names has been carried out in collaboration with Jean-Marie Rouet and Roger Dinsdale and our correspondents abroad, among others: Michael Dirr, Tim Wood, Jan Oprins and Ozzie Johnson. Thanks to the American Hydrangea Society (Atlanta) and its president Gloria Ward for helping us with funds for our research and communication work. Still looking abroad, we should not forget our foreign correspondents: Lynden Miller, Jean Astrop, Gillian et Richard Mawrey (Historic Gardens Foundation), Ozzie Johnson, Ishii Chitose, Takaaki Sugimoto, Maurice Foster, David Wheeler, Marc Libert, Mathias Riedel and Siegart Prkno. Our thanks also go to the botanist Jean-Pierre Demoly who kindly took charge of translating the description of H. aspera by David Don. In terms of television communication, we particularly thank Philippe Minot, director of superb videos (Jardins-Jardiniers on YouTube), Jamy Gourmaud (on FR3), Philippe Teyssier on Arte, and Luc Noël whose film on “Jardins et loisirs” was shown again on Belgian TV. Isabelle Lebrun regularly follows us on Radio Bleue, as do the local newspapers. Valérie Lejeune of Figaro has once again devoted an article to us. Lastly, we would particularly like to thank the Fondation des Parcs et Jardins de France for giving us a grant to continue our work of “Preserving and developing hydrangea collections in the gardens of France”. Friendly and grateful greetings to the presidents of other associations we are friends with: Bruno Delavenne (APJHN), Didier Boos (HW² Hydrangea), Françoise Lenoble-Pradine (CCVS), and Didier Wirth (FPJF).
This year, the ‘Shamrock’ Plant Festival took place over the weekend of 30 April and 1 May. Unusually, it did not take place in Bérengère and Bruno Blanckaert’s garden, due to the shooting of a film in the park of Les Moûtiers; our visitors can normally park in the Les Moûtiers car park, but this year this was fully taken over by filming trucks. So, we turned to the town hall of Varengeville whose mayor, Patrick Boulier, generously lent us the town hall forecourt for our event. We are very grateful to him for this. The nurseries of Avettes, Hortensiartois (André Dieval’s), Tous au Jardin, the tree surgeon Emmanuel Gasdon and the Bellet nursery were also present around the Association’s own stands.
‘Shamrock’ Festival 2017

Plant Festival on 8 and 9 April 2017,
33 route de l’Église
Varengeville sur mer,
10 am to 6 pm.

These two days of sales for the benefit of our Association will bring together many new plants, or old plants difficult to find elsewhere but tested over the years in the Collection. Advice on growing will be provided by our members during this weekend. This year we are pleased to welcome Fabrice Gautier and Olivier Galéa, creators of the nursery Sous un Arbre Perché, specialists in the species Hydrangea serrata (see article p.20).

As usual, a lot of installation work takes place from the Friday before it starts, and anybody who is willing to lend a hand will be most welcome.

New introductions or reintroductions in the Collection

H. ‘Blanc bleu’
H. ‘BloomStar’
H. ‘Diva Fiore’
H. ‘Kleiner Winterberg’
H. ‘Magical Pearl’
H. ‘Tea Time Together’
H. ‘Vulcan’
H. arborescens ‘Invincibelle Spirit’
H. chinensis NJM 11.090
H. involucrata ‘Handemari’
H. longipes ‘Trelissik’
H. macrophylla ‘Izu-no-Monogatari’
H. macrophylla ‘Junsui’
H. serrata ‘Aka Tsanayama’
H. serrata ‘Awa Shiko’
H. serrata ‘Hakusen’
H. serrata ‘Iyo-No-Hana’
H. serrata ‘Iyo Temari’
H. serrata ‘Kohkansetsu’
H. serrata ‘Kujû-no-Hana’
H. serrata ‘Kuju-no-Hanabi’
H. serrata ‘Kuro Fune’
H. serrata ‘Seyrio’
H. serrata ‘Murasaki Kobai’
H. serrata ‘Naruko Murasaki’
H. serrata ‘Tosa-no-Nampu’
H. serrata TANGO Series

Visitors’ comments

“It takes your breath away”;
“An extraordinary treat for the eyes”;
Parents to 4-year-old son – “You’re not allowed to touch the flowers, understand?” Us: “There aren’t any toxic flowers here.” Little boy: “Yes, the gentleman’s right” Obviously, we explain. On returning from the visit, the little boy, with the air of a connoisseur: “It’s magnificent”;
“Thank you for this gift: it’s a light garden”;
For the names of plants: “Can’t you give us the secular names?”;
“Oh dear! I’ve taken too many pictures, I’ve pulverised the memory!”

New members

Thomas Boucher
Bruno Caillet
Alain Carlos
Eliane Courant
Marc Delatour
Marie Guérin
Maggie and Jeremy
Hamard
Colette and Dominique
Hébert
Remi Krug
Paul Landais
Claudine Le Gall
Laurence Le Prince
Isabelle Levallois
Antonella and Roberto
Kron Morelli (IT)
Odile R. and Suzel Muller
Clare Perrin
Jérôme Pellissier
Lily Quach
Elise Ragueneau
Aline and François Renard
Philippe de Spoelberch (BE)
Bernard Vacher
Tilena Vlach

Notable visits in 2016

Felix et Annette Stamm (who used to work for Haller and knew Herr Preizig. They have grown the Brugger plant ‘Merkur’; that is probably the origin of the ‘City Line’ plants).

Didier Boos (Hydrangea World Wide : HW2)
Tangi Rabin (Kerdalo)
Marco Cobo (Comillas)
David Wheeler (Hortus)
Diane Strydonck (IDS)