

# Seed exchange 2014 *Margaret Mason*

**Here is the information you need for this year's seed exchange. Please do read this and note the relevant dates!**

**1. Closing date:** The closing date will be, as usual, 30th September, and all seed received by then in good condition will be included. Late-ripening seed may be sent up until 19th October, and this will be included if time allows. There is no point in sending seed after this later date as the seed will have moved on to the packers. You may send late seed the following year marked with the year of collection if you wish (please store it cool and dry; a sealed box in the bottom of the fridge is ideal).

**2. Address:** Please send seed to me, Margaret Mason, at Penhyddgan, Boduan, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 8YH.

**3. Distribution:** Seed will be sent out in the first two weeks of February. The allocation will be 12 packets plus extras (if enough comes in); see order form with December magazine. Random leftover seed will be available in March.

**4.** The success of the seed exchange depends on members sending in seed. Please will as many of you as possible collect seed and send it in! If you are new to this (or just feel in need of a bit of help), you are very welcome to contact me by phone (01758 721577), email ([ziggymen22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ziggymen22@hotmail.co.uk)) or post with specific questions, or send a SAE to my address for a leaflet of tips and guidelines and a sample self-folded, escape-proof packet. You can also find help on the CGS website.

**5. Donors** of 5 or more packets of seed (of different varieties) are entitled to an extra allocation. To claim this, you must remember to include your name and address with the seed! I don't have access to the membership records so just your number is not enough. Also, seed must be viable and identifiable - donations which can't be included on the list because they aren't ripe, have rotted or escaped or are unnamed and undescribed will not count towards the 5 varieties.

**6. Packages** which are underpaid incur a fine and involve me in a 12-mile round trip with very limited timings to collect them: last year there were a lot and I did not have time to collect them all, so please ensure you put enough postage on. Please note that even two or three packets of seed can make an envelope too thick to go through the PO's smaller slit if they all collect at one end, so stick them to a piece of paper to keep them spread evenly.

**7.** It helps me very much if you send smaller packages of seed as soon as it is ripe rather than keeping it till they are all ready and sending huge parcels at the last minute! And do please spare a thought for the poor receiver with all your packaging - occasionally packets are so difficult to open that some or all of the seed is lost at this stage.

**8. Please send** only seed that you and friends, family etc have collected, not commercial seed. If it was not collected in the current year, please mark the packet with the year of collection.

**9. What to collect?** All seed is welcome, but we never have enough vegetable seed and often have too much *Meconopsis cambrica*, and mixed or unspecified *aquilegia*, *digitalis* and *Papaver somniferum*. Separate varieties and colours of these are, however, in demand. As it presents a threat to the native wild bluebell, we no longer include seed of *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, the Spanish bluebell, in the list. *Geranium* and *salvia* can be difficult to collect, so donations of these tend to be small; so the more, the better. Trees and shrubs continue to be popular, and of course anything different or unusual is always especially welcome.

**10. Collecting seed:** Leave on the plant until fully ripe. Tie a paper bag over seed heads of plants which shed seed before it is fully ripe, or have explosive seed distribution mechanisms, e.g. geraniums. You may have to check daily to catch seed at exactly the right moment.

**11. Cleaning seed:** Separate seeds from pods and chaff as far as possible. Leaving it for a few days in a warmish place in a closed envelope or paper bag releases most of the seed. Sieving helps, and for light chaff 'winnow' it by blowing gently across the seed, spread out on a piece of paper. There is no need to remove 'tails' from e.g. clematis or grasses, or other integral parts of seeds, but do try to get rid of the stalks, leaves, detached fluff and bits of seed cases. If you are uncertain as to which bit is actually the seed, send the whole seed head, but ensure it is properly dry.

**12. Packing:** Put each variety of seed into a separate small, but not too tightly packed, escape-proof envelope or packet. Most ordinary envelopes are NOT escape-proof, even those intended for seed, and they leak at the bottom as well as the top. Seal all possible escape routes! By far the easiest way to keep seeds in place is by folding - trap the seeds in the middle of the envelope, where there are no openings, and fold it over as sharply as possible either side and stick or paperclip down. This works, as do 'origami'-style folded packets. Plastic zip-top packets are also excellent for seed which is really dry and not too fine. unless you are sure all your seed is completely dry, use strong paper envelopes for posting rather than bubble-plastic lined ones, as these cause damp seed to rot.

**13. Naming:** If you know the full, correct Latin or common name for the plant, put it on the packet. If you aren't sure, only know the genus (the first part of the Latin name, e.g. *Nigella*) or don't know the name at all, put what you do know plus a few words of description. Flower colour/shape, plant height, leaf shape and anything distinctive about it are the most helpful. A photo, drawing (however rough!) or pressed leaf, if available, can often provide instant identification. One of the biggest identification problems is seeds where just the genus name is given - there are frequently several species or varieties in the genus in cultivation (by others if not by you!), not surprisingly their seeds are often very similar to each other, and if I can't tell which sort it is, it has to go in 'unspecified' or 'mixed', which is unhelpful to those ordering! Three words of description can often sort this out. please contact me for seed collecting/packing fact sheet, either with email address or SAE.**I look forward to you donations! Margaret.**