

This years seed exchange

Margaret Mason

By the time you read this the full new Seed Exchange rules (1) will be on the website, along with (2) seed-saving guidelines, lists of (3) types of seed of which we usually receive far too much and (4) those for which demand always outstrips supply and (5) a list of short-viability seed, which will be updated as other things which should be on it come to mind. Any or all of these can also be ordered from me by post or email - please give the numbers, as above, of the items you require or ask for the whole package (and remember to include your address).

These two options mean that the information is available to everyone and you will be deemed to be aware of it. This is important in the context of sanctions I will in future be imposing for incorrectly completed order forms, and because the incentives for seed donors have changed. The new measures are not unreasonable or draconian and are merely designed, in the case of the sanctions, to save me time when I am under extreme pressure, and in the case of the incentives (donors can now qualify for up to ten extra packets) to make the exchange work better by reducing the amount of unwanted seed and increasing the range of more interesting varieties. All of this is ultimately for the benefit of those who use the seed exchange.

The salient points of the rules will as usual be printed on the seed list when it comes out in December, but this will of necessity be a short version, and donors will need to know about the changes before then, so PLEASE do look up or send for the revised rules.

Short-viability seeds

I am happy to say that several varieties of short-viability seeds have already arrived. Those that are not ordered in advance will be included in the seed list as usual, but you can ask immediately for anything in the list below (they will be deducted from your allocation from the main list). Just send your request with a SAE. (If I don't have the seed you want and the SAE is not used I will keep it for the main allocation.) Other seed may well arrive so if there is anything you want which you know to be of short viability, let me know, and if any comes in I will send you some straight away.

I have been asked for the seed of trilliums, especially *T. rivale*, which I do not have, so if anybody has seed of these please do send it - and if too late this time please remember next year! I also have a request for *Pulsatilla alpina* and astrantia seed, of which there is usually plenty on the main list, but none has come in at time of writing, so although I expect it will have arrived by the time the magazine appears, please send me some immediately if you can, just in case.

Here is a list of short-viability seed now available:

Anemone virginiana
Cyclamen coum
Cyclamen hederifolium
Fritillaria meleagris
Fritillaria meleagris mixed pink & white
Helleborus x hybridus
Helleborus x hybridus double white
Helleborus x hybridus tall dusky pink
Helleborus x hybridus tall white, red spotted
Helleborus niger
Pulsatilla vulgaris
Pulsatilla vulgaris ex 'Alba'
Pulsatilla vulgaris ex light blue
Pulsatilla vulgaris ex red
Ranunculus graminifolius



And probably many more which will have come in by the time this is printed!

Offa's Dyke sponsored walk

I will be setting off on my sponsored walk early in November, so donors please note that there is a possibility of not being able to include later-arriving seed on the list, as it will have to be wrapped up very promptly. Fortunately we seem to be having a good summer at time of writing so with luck we will not be plagued by everything ripening late this year!

Here I am sneaking in a plea - I am hoping to get fixed up with a motor caravan for accommodation en route on the walk as it is not so convenient for B&Bs as the 2010-11 Towpath Walk was, but unless I can borrow one or find a generous company that will hire me one at rock-bottom rates this will be too expensive; so, if you happen to live fairly close to Offa's Dyke and could face putting me up, plus two smallish and moderately well-behaved (and tired!) dogs, for a night, would you let me know? Unless you are very close to the dyke it would probably also involve picking me up in the afternoon and dropping me off again in the morning at the same place. I may not need to take you up on it but it would be extremely helpful to have the option in case of need. Many thanks.

As last time, the walk is to raise money for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research, the charity I mainly support since Adam, my 16-yr-old son, died of leukaemia, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature, which was his favourite charity (I collect sponsorship for the former and the dogs for the latter!). Just to remind you, we raised over £11,400 last time (with the 500-mile Towpath Walk), of which £9,000 went to LLR and was spent on a project investigating the type of leukaemia from which Adam suffered. This walk is much shorter (185 miles) and so I am setting a target of £5,000. I may well not make this but no point in setting one's sights too low! And now I'm off to see if I can catch any of those tricky geranium seeds! *Margaret.*