



## RHS Plant Trials and Awards

# Hardy Geraniums – Stage 2

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# Stage 2 of the Trial of Hardy Geraniums

There are over 550 *Geranium* cultivar names listed in the *Register of Geranium Cultivar Names* (Victor, 2004) so a thorough consideration of the genus could not be made from a single trial. For this reason the Trial of Hardy Geraniums was split into 3 stages to be judged by the Floral Trials Subcommittee with a further trial of geraniums suitable for the rock garden conducted by the Rock Trials Subcommittee. Stage 1 ran from 2002 to 2004 and dealt mainly with species from the Pratense Group and their hybrids; Stage 3 was planted in 2004 and included species that thrive in light shade. Stage 2 commenced in 2003 and concluded in 2005 and was comprised mainly of *G. × oxonianum* cultivars, *G. sanguineum* variants, cultivars and hybrids of *G. psilostemon* and summer dormant species. Almost half the entries were cultivars of *G. × oxonianum*, offering an unparalleled opportunity to assess the distinctiveness and horticultural worth of this important group of geraniums.

## Objectives

- To recommend the Award of Garden Merit 🏆 to those plants considered the best for garden decoration.
- To demonstrate the range and use as garden plants.
- To compare new with old cultivars.
- To assess for border decoration and ground cover.
- To ascertain which require staking.
- To produce a permanent record through herbarium specimens, photographs and written descriptions for the RHS Herbarium at Wisley.
- To determine correct nomenclature.

## Records

- Flowering period – start and end of flowering
- Height and spread
- Staking – required or not
- Habit – groundcover, spreading, mound-forming, scrambling
- Evergreen – retention of foliage over winter
- Hardiness

Front cover: *G. 'Anne Thomson'* (Photo Jacquie Gray)

Opposite: *G. 'Stephanie'* (Photo Wendy Wesley)

Right: Hardy Geraniums Trials Open Day 2005 (Photo Wendy Wesley)

## Entries

There were 134 entries in the Trial, submitted by nurseries in the UK and Holland, National Collection Holders and individuals (listed on page 11).

The great majority of entries in Stage 2 were cultivars, hybrids or variants of *G. × oxonianum*, *G. sanguineum* and *G. psilostemon*. Representatives of *G. endressii*, *G. versicolor*, *G. albanum*, *G. tuberosum*, *G. malviflorum*, *G. macrostylum*, *G. libani* and *G. peloponnesiacum* were also assessed.

## Cultivation of Stage 2

The large number of entries in this trial and the space required by some of the plants meant that the plants had to be split over two beds. The larger bed (Site 1) contained *G. × oxonianum*, *G. psilostemon*, *G. endressii* and *G. versicolor* cultivars, the smaller (Site 2) *G. sanguineum* cultivars and other entries. The soil at both sites was sandy and slightly alkaline but high in nutrients. No fertiliser was added to either site.

*G. 'Anne Thomson'* and *G. 'Ann Folkard'* were staked with birch twigs to support their scrambling habit. Two plants of each of the *G. endressii* and *G. × oxonianum* entries, numbers 1–66, were cut to the ground during July 2004 and watered, leaving one plant of each for purposes of comparison and record-taking.

## Pests and Diseases

The plants in Stage 2 were sprayed to prevent the onset of mildew. Some entries became infested by ants and were treated though ants do not usually cause significant damage to species of *Geranium*.





## Award of Garden Merit (AGM)

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Geranium</i> 'Anne Thomson'                                 | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium</i> BLUE SUNRISE ('Blogold')                       | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium</i> 'Dilys'  | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium</i> 'Ivan'   | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium</i> PATRICIA ('Brempat')                           | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium endressii</i><br>'Castle Drogo'                    | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium</i> × <i>oxonianum</i><br>'Beholder's Eye'         | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium sanguineum</i><br>'Ankum's Pride'                  | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> 'Aviemore'                          | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> var.<br><i>striatum</i> 'Splendens' | (H4) 2005             |
| <i>Geranium</i> 'Ann Folkard'                                  | (H4) 1996 Reconfirmed |
| <i>Geranium psilostemon</i>                                    | (H4) 1993 Reconfirmed |
| <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> 'Album'                             | (H4) 1993 Reconfirmed |

## Award of Garden Merit rescindments:

Consideration will be given to the rescindment of the AGM from the following at the next review of the award in 2012:

|  |
|--|
| <i>Geranium</i> × <i>oxonianum</i> 'Wargrave Pink' |
| <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> var. <i>striatum</i>    |

(H4) = hardy throughout the UK

## The Award of Garden Merit

To gain this award a plant must:

- be excellent for ordinary garden use
- be available
- be of good constitution
- be reasonably easy to grow
- be reasonably resistant to pests and diseases
- be essentially stable in form and colour

## Judging

The trial was assessed for the Award of Garden Merit by the Floral Trials Subcommittee using the following criteria:

- habit
- vigour (health)
- floriferousness
- length of flowering period
- foliage

# Geranium names

## Hybridity in *Geranium* and the use of botanical epithets

One of the reasons that hardy geraniums make such excellent garden plants is their propensity to hybridise. In the wild species of *Geranium* are usually prevented from crossing by geographical separation, ecological requirements, pollinator specificity or flowering season but in gardens these barriers break down and hybrids arise freely. This tendency is encouraged in *Geranium* as pollen is often released before the female part of the flower is receptive so increasing the likelihood of cross-pollination. Where two or more geraniums grow together hybrid seedlings often crop up and many good garden plants have arisen in this way while others are the product of a more deliberate breeding process. The most important breeding work in the genus has been performed by Alan Bremner who began hybridising hardy geraniums in 1985 and has made many thousands of crosses. His work and record keeping have proved a valuable scientific resource in addition to realising some of the potential of *Geranium* as an ornamental genus.

Hundreds of individual hybrids have been given cultivar names but it is sometimes useful to provide a collective botanical epithet, or hybrid binomial, for all the progeny derived from the crossing of two parents. The name *Geranium* × *antipodeum*, for example, can be applied to any plant resulting from the hybridisation of *G. sessiliflorum*

and *G. traversii*. The known crosses in *Geranium* are so various that to provide names for them all would be impractical and confusing and species are so promiscuous in gardens that to apply the names reliably would be difficult but where the same cross occurs repeatedly it is helpful to be able to use a hybrid binomial.

The most prevalent hybrid binomial in *Geranium* is *G.* × *oxonianum*. These are hybrids between *G. endressii* and *G. versicolor* that are fertile and so produce seedlings of their own, many of which have been named. On occasion seedlings of *G.* × *oxonianum* display a mutation in which the petals are much narrowed and the anthers often rather flattened giving a semi double-flowered effect. This peculiar form was first noted in 1927 and given the name *G. endressii* var. *thurstonianum* as its hybrid origin was not then realised. In 1929 Miss Eleanor Armitage found another narrow-petalled variant in her garden in Herefordshire and over the years a number of similar seedlings such as 'Breckland Brownie', 'Sherwood' and 'Southcombe Star' have been selected. To try to limit the unnecessary increase of cultivar names the botanical epithet *G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum* has been provided. This name can be applied to all the narrow-petalled variants of *G.* × *oxonianum* and distinctive named clones attributed to it as in *G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum* 'Sue Cox'. For further details see Grant, M.L. (2005) *Thurston's crane's-bill. The Plantsman* (n.s.) 4(1): 28–29.



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Armitageae'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Breckland Brownie'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Crüg Star'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Robin's Ginger Nut'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Sherwood'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Southcombe Double'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Southcombe Star'



*G.* × *oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*  
'Sue Cox'

# Findings



*G. × oxonianum* 'Beholder's Eye'



*G. endressii* 'Castle Drogo'



*G. endressii* 'Betty Catchpole'



*G.* 'Farncombe Cerise Star'

## Geranium × oxonianum cultivars

Around half the entries in Stage 2 of the trial were cultivars of *Geranium × oxonianum* and so there was good opportunity to assess the distinctiveness of the named cultivars of that hybrid. It was found that many plants were extremely similar and not worthy of recognition with a cultivar epithet. It is strongly recommended that use be made of the national collections and available literature when considering naming *G. × oxonianum* seedlings.

## New ways with geraniums

Geraniums are not always used very imaginatively in the garden but it was found that growing *G.* 'Ann Folkard' and *G.* 'Anne Thomson' over birch twig supports provided a novel and very attractive means of displaying these plants and was something that might be tried with other geraniums that have a similar scrambling habit.

## New introductions

The trial was useful in drawing attention to some notable new introductions including a currently unidentified species from the Tien Shan mountains in China and two forms of *Geranium psilostemon*, one with pale pink flowers and the other pure white flowers. These latter plants had been grown in a garden in Istanbul and were unnamed at the time of publication but have obvious potential for breeding purposes.

## Botanical and nomenclatural notes

Several entries proved to be incorrectly named including 'Shepherd's Warning' AGM and 'Richard Elsey' which turned out to be 'Glenluce'. The plant entered as *G. peloponnesiacum* was identified as *G.* 'Stephanie', a hybrid of that species. Both 'Shepherd's Warning' and 'Richard Elsey' were re-sourced and referred for further assessment.

*Geranium endressii* can be very difficult to distinguish from *Geranium × oxonianum* and the botanical differences lie in small details of the fruit and veining of the petals. There has been little consensus over the attribution of 'Castle Drogo', 'Betty Catchpole' and 'Beholder's Eye' to these taxa. After examination of the plants in trial it appears most likely that 'Castle Drogo' and 'Betty Catchpole' are selections of *G. endressii* and 'Beholder's Eye' is a *G. × oxonianum* cultivar.

*Geranium* 'Farncombe Cerise Star' was entered into trial as a cultivar of *Geranium × oxonianum*. The plant has narrow petals as in *G. × oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum* but its large size and bright magenta flowers reveal that it is a hybrid between *G. × oxonianum* and *G. psilostemon*. The narrow-petalled flower form had not previously been recognised as occurring in crosses other than *G. × oxonianum* but since the trial similar *G. × oxonianum × G. psilostemon* hybrids have come to light one of which has been named 'Kanahitobanawa'.



*Geranium* from the Tien Shan Mountains in China



*G. psilostemon* pink-flowered



*G. psilostemon* white-flowered

## The species included in Stage 2

Herbarium sheets by Barry Phillips



*G. × oxonianum*  
'Phoebe Noble'



*G. × sanguineum*

### *G. × oxonianum*

Fertile hybrids between *G. endressii* and *G. versicolor* appearing frequently where the two parents are grown together. This hybrid does not occur naturally but populations escaped from gardens can be found in the wild in Britain and France. It is a reliable, hardy and commonly cultivated plant growing to around 50cm in height with rather pentagonal leaves sometimes blotched brown. The funnel-shaped flowers to around 40mm wide are usually in shades of pink. It is not the most eye-catching member of the genus and its leafy stems tend to fall apart as the season progresses but it is nevertheless an important garden plant. A very large number of cultivars have been named including 'Claridge Druce', a vigorous plant with dark venation on the petals, 'Trevor's White' with pure white flowers and 'Rosenlicht' with reddish-purple flowers.

### *G. sanguineum*

A low-growing bushy, rapidly spreading plant found throughout most of Europe, the Caucasus and Turkey. The stems emerge from underground rhizomes and carry paired leaves that, at around 5cm across, are rather small and deeply divided into 5 or 7. The flowers are a striking shade of purple-red, upward-facing to about 40mm wide. *G. sanguineum* var. *striatum* is native to Walney Island and other places on the Cumbrian coast and are low-growing plants with very pale pink flowers, of which the cultivar 'Splendens' is a fine selection. Other cultivars include 'Album' with white flowers, 'Cedric Morris' with very large flowers and 'South Nutfield' with blue-tinged, flowers while hybrids include 'Dilys' and 'Tiny Monster'.



*G. × oxonianum* f.  
*thurstonianum*  
'Armitageae'



*G. psilostemon*

### *G. × oxonianum* f. *thurstonianum*

A form of *G. × oxonianum* that has arisen independently on numerous occasions in which the petals have become narrowed up to a width of 6mm, a feature that is often accompanied by a semi-double effect caused by the flattening of the anthers. Several clones have been named including 'Armitageae', 'Sherwood' and 'David McClintock'.

### *G. psilostemon*

One of the most impressive members of the genus is this spectacular species from N.E. Turkey that forms upright mounds growing to around 120cm. The leaves are large, to about 20cm wide, with up to 7 jagged divisions at the base becoming smaller and less lobed as they ascend the stem. The flowers to 40mm across are a startling magenta colour with black centres. Selections include 'Bressingham Flair' with crumpled, notched petals and the very large 'Coton Goliath' while 'Ann Folkard' with golden-green foliage, 'Ivan' and 'Eva' are hybrids with other species.



*G. endressii* 'Betty Catchpole'



*G. tuberosum*

***G. endressii***

A tolerant evergreen perennial usually growing to less than 50cm tall with deeply divided, hairy leaves, the divisions lobed and diamond-shaped. The flowers are erect up to 40mm wide with notched petals of a deep pink colour deepening with age and borne over a long period. An adaptable plant for shade or sun *G. endressii* can become weedy in ideal conditions. One of the parents of *G. × oxonianum* this species also forms attractive hybrids with several other species including *G. traversii* to make *G. × riversleianum* and *G. psilostemon* as in *G. PATRICIA* ('Brempat'). Selections include 'Betty Catchpole' and 'Castle Drogo'.

***G. tuberosum*/*G. malviflorum*/*G. albanum***

*G. malviflorum* is found wild in southern Spain and northern Africa while *G. tuberosum* has a range extending across the Mediterranean into Iran. They are closely related species belonging in the Tuberosum Group and have adapted to surviving in a hot dry climate by becoming dormant for the summer months after flowering. They are both vigorous plants with strongly dissected leaves but with flowers bright rose-purple in *G. tuberosum*, blue in *G. malviflorum*. *G. albanum* is another summer dormant species from the Caucasus and Iran with pink flowers and magenta veins borne over a longer period.



*G. versicolor* 'Snow White'



*G. libani*

***G. versicolor***

An open or spreading plant though growing from a rather compact rootstock, reaching a height of perhaps 60cm. The leaves grow to 15cm or so and are more open than in either *G. endressii* or *G. × oxonianum* usually with brown blotches where the divisions meet. The erect flowers are about 40mm across, white, trumpet-shaped with notched, net-veined petals. Native to Italy and southern parts of the Balkan peninsula this species makes effective groundcover but is mostly represented in gardens through its hybrid *G. × oxonianum*. There is a selection called *G. versicolor* 'Snow White' which lacks pigment in the veins.

***G. libani*/*G. peloponnesiacum***

Two similar Mediterranean species with attractive basal foliage that appears in autumn and persists over winter being perhaps susceptible to very cold weather. The airy, umbel-like inflorescence of violet flowers appear in spring after which the plants die. The presence of glandular hairs on *G. peloponnesiacum* which are absent on *G. libani* provides the best means of reliably distinguishing the two species. A *G. libani* × *G. peloponnesiacum* hybrid named 'Solitaire' was also assessed in the trial.

# RHS Award of Garden Merit Descriptions

All descriptions are based on plants grown in Stage 2 of the RHS Trial of Hardy Geraniums and plants grown elsewhere may differ slightly according to cultivation conditions. Colour codes were taken using the RHS Colour Chart. The fourth edition (2001) is available from RHSE Mail Order, Wisley, Surrey GU23 6QB.



## **Geranium 'Anne Thomson'**

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Meadow Cottage Plants

Early season, golden leaves combine beautifully with dark centred reddish-purple flowers. Of the same parentage as 'Ann Folkard' but with a more compact habit.

*Spreading perennial to 150 × 165cm (with support) in trial. Basal leaf blades to c100 × 120mm borne on long petioles to c300mm, with short, white hairs concentrated around the veins on the underside, yellow-green (N146A), unblotched, rather circular in outline, divided into 7 to about two thirds; divisions widest towards the apex, not overlapping, heavily lobed to about one third; lobes triangular with a small acute tip, teeth irregular to absent. Stem leaves in pairs, divided into 3 or 5 with jagged lobes, remaining fairly large to the apex. Stems with patent, gland-tipped hairs, sprawling or scrambling. Flowers profuse, borne in pairs from leaf axils along upper part of stem. Sepals narrowly ovate, glandular hairy, mucro to 3mm. Flowers to 40mm across, vivid red-purple (midway between 74A and 78A) with black veins from about midway becoming suffused to form a black eye; petals broad obovate, to 20 × 15mm, apex rounded, truncate or weakly notched.*



## **Geranium BLUE SUNRISE ('Blogold')**

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Blooms of Bressingham

A remarkable plant of robust constitution with bright golden leaves perfectly balanced by violet flowers. Its low-growing habit makes this a perfect specimen for the front of the border.

*Mound-forming perennial to 40 × 110cm in trial. Basal leaf blades c80 × 100mm borne on petioles becoming long with age with sparse white hairs concentrated around the veins on the underside, yellow (151D), unblotched, divided to about four fifths into 7, divisions diamond-shaped, little overlapping, heavily lobed to about half way; lobes broad lanceolate, tapered to a sharp, dark point, teeth jagged. Stem*

*leaves in pairs, 5-7 lobed, sharply lobed. Stems with short, white eglandular hairs. Flowers borne in pairs from leaf axils towards the end of the stems. Sepals ovate-elliptic with a translucent margin, mucro to 2mm. Flowers to 40mm across, violet (88C) lightly flushed pink, veins purple (81A), older flowers becoming pinkish-purple (81B/C), veined 81A; petals broad obovate 15 × 15mm, rounded, truncate or faintly notched at the apex.*

## **Geranium 'Dilys'**

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Meadow Cottage Plants

A prolific and long-flowering hybrid in blossom until the first frosts. The perfect groundcover for a sunny spot.

*Sprawling perennial, to 55 × 150cm in trial. Basal leaf blades to c55 × 75mm borne on long petioles to 240mm with short, sparse, white hairs confined to the veins on the underside; rectangular in outline, divided into 7, divisions overlapping, lobed to about half way, lobes rounded with minute tip, teeth irregular. Stem leaves in pairs, pentagonal, jagged, divided into 5 or 7, lobed, lobes acute with occasional teeth. Stems semi-prostrate, vigorous, forming a central mound, green, flushed red (183B) on exposed side with moderate covering of long and short, occasionally gland-tipped hairs. Flowers borne singly or in pairs towards the tips of the branches. Sepals ovate-oblong, 6 × 3mm, mucro to 1.5mm. Flowers to 30mm, strong reddish purple (78B), veined red (71A); petals broad obovate, 17 × 13mm, varyingly notched.*



## **Geranium 'Ivan'**

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Meadow Cottage Plants

A magnificent and imposing perennial flowering furiously over a long period. Provide room in the border and combine with other strong colours.

*Mound-forming to spreading perennial, to 80 × 170cm in trial. Basal leaf blades to 180 × 200mm, borne on long petioles to c55cm, with short, white, adpressed hairs*





becoming sparse and curly on the underside, yellow-green (146A) becoming red-flecked, ageing to brown, divided into 5 or 7 to about four fifths; divisions not overlapping, lobed to about one third, the lobes further lobed with neat, regular, triangular, acute teeth. Stem leaves in pairs, mostly divided into 3 with sharp lobes and glandular hairs. Stems green with an even covering of long to medium gland-tipped hairs. Inflorescence borne around periphery of foliage, flowers in pairs. Sepals elliptic, covered in gland-tipped hairs, mucro to 2mm. Flowers large to 50mm across, reddish-purple (74A/B) veined reddish-purple (79A), uniting at the base to form a blackish, shiny eye; petals broad obovate, 25 × 22mm, faintly notched at the apex.

**Geranium PATRICIA** ('Brempat')

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants

Forming a spreading mound of lush foliage that is smothered in flowers from early to mid summer this is a bold and spectacular border perennial.

Mound-forming to spreading perennial to 65 × 130cm in trial. Basal leaf blades to c160 × 170mm borne on long petioles to c48cm, with short, white adpressed hairs becoming sparse and curly on the undersides, yellow-green (146A) becoming red-flecked, aging to brown, divided into 5 or 7 to about four fifths; divisions not overlapping, lobed to between c one third and one half, the lobes further lobed, these rather narrowly triangular, acute, irregularly toothed. Stem leaves in pairs, 3-5 times divided into regular, narrowly triangular, sharp-pointed lobes and persistent, triangular, long-pointed stipules, 8 × 2mm. Stems green with an even covering of long to medium gland-tipped hairs. Inflorescence borne around periphery of foliage. Flowers in pairs, pedicels tacky to touch. Sepals elliptic-oblong, covered in gland-tipped hairs, mucro to 4mm. Flowers large to 50mm across, reddish-purple (74A) veined reddish-purple (redder than 79A) these uniting at centre to give a shiny dark centre to flower; petals obovate to broad obovate, c24 × 17mm, varyingly notched at the apex.



**Geranium endressii** 'Castle Drogo'

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Catforth Gardens

Masses of pretty, peachy flowers freely produced from mid May to early August makes this a cottage garden classic in the best tradition of hardy geraniums.

Mound-forming becoming spreading perennial to 40 × 120cm in trial. Basal leaf blades to c65 × 70mm on petioles to 200mm, with an even covering of white, rather bristly, eglandular hairs mostly confined to the veins on the underside, mid green (137A), pentagonal in outline, divided to about three quarters into 5 or 7; divisions overlapping, widest about the middle, shallowly lobed; lobes obscure with a cut margin, sharp-pointed. Stem leaves in pairs, 5 times divided with jagged lobes becoming smaller and simpler towards the apex. Stems green, evenly covered with patent, medium and short hairs, the latter gland-tipped. Inflorescence borne around the periphery of the foliage and separated by a length of bare stem. Sepals ovate-lanceolate, 7 × 3mm, mucro c1mm, hairs confined mostly to the veins. Flowers to 25mm across, peachy purple (52C/D) with fine, slightly darker veins, older flowers becoming bleached between the veins to pale pink (75C); petals obovate to obcordate, c16 × 10mm, overlapping, distinctly notched.



**Geranium × oxonianum**

'Beholder's Eye'

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Hellyer's Garden Plants

Standing out from the crowd this is a neat and tidy cultivar producing throughout the summer and into autumn purple-pink flowers that are white at the centre.

Mound-forming perennial, 55 × 135cm in trial. Basal leaf blades to c70 × 85mm borne on long petioles to c200cm, dark green (147A), with an even covering of short, white, eglandular hairs, absent on the underside except at the veins, divided to four fifths into 5-7, divisions, little overlapping, widest about the middle, lobed to about halfway; lobes with regular teeth, rounded with an acute tip. Stem leaves in pairs, 3 or 5 times divided, with acute, triangular toothed lobes becoming smaller and simpler towards the apex. Stems green, red-flushed in parts



especially on the pedicels covered in fairly long patent hairs. Inflorescence remaining fairly compact. Sepals ovate-lanceolate, 10 × 3mm, sparse hairs along the veins, mucro to 2mm; flowers c30mm across, deep reddish-purple (71C), veins white towards the base forming a pale eye; petals obovate, 20 × 8mm with a v-shaped notch at the apex.

**Geranium sanguineum**  
'Ankum's Pride'

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Monksilver Nursery

A fine ground-hugging cultivar that makes spectacular groundcover with its low-growing habit and dazzling red-purple flowers.

*Spreading, rhizomatous perennial 20 × 70cm in trial. Rosette leaves few, soon disappearing. Stem leaves c30 × 40mm, mid green (137B/C) evenly covered with short, white hairs becoming longer on the underside, divided almost to the base into 5 or 7, often truncate at the base; divisions clearly distinct, cuneate, widest near the apex, revolute, acute with 1 or 2 lobes, lobes lanceolate, lacking teeth with a tiny, acute tip. Stems prostrate, green flushed reddish-brown on exposed sides, evenly covered with patent, eglandular hairs of varying lengths. Flowers borne in pairs or singly on long peduncle to 70mm or more, pedicels to 25mm. Sepals elliptic-ovate, 9 × 4mm with long white hairs along the veins, mucro to 1.5mm. Flowers 35mm across, purplish pink (66C), finely veined bluish purple (81A); petals broad obovate, to 20 × 17mm, crimped and faintly notched at the apex.*

**Geranium sanguineum** 'Aviemoore'

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Hellyer's Garden Plants

Tidier than many of its species this cultivar impresses in a sunny spot with its vivid pinkish-purple flowers and low, mound-forming habit.

*Spreading, rhizomatous perennial 30 × 110cm in trial. Rosette leaves few, soon disappearing. Stem leaves paired c40 × 45mm, mid green (137A) sparsely covered with short, adpressed hairs, longer but confined to the veins on the underside, divided almost to the base into 5 or 7; divisions clearly distinct, cuneate, widest near the apex, revolute, acute, usually with 2 lobes; lobes lanceolate,*

*lacking teeth with a minute, acute tip. Stems prostrate, green, flushed reddish brown with a light covering of long, fairly coarse, patent hairs. Flowers borne singly or in pairs on peduncle to c50mm; pedicels to c25mm. Sepals elliptic-ovate, 9 × 3mm with long white hairs along the veins; mucro to 2mm. Flowers 40mm across, purplish-pink (74A/B), lightly veined reddish-purple (61A); petals obcordate, to 20 × 10mm, crimped with deep, v-shaped notch at the apex.*

**Geranium sanguineum** var. *striatum*  
'Splendens'

AGM (H4) 2005

Sent by Rosies Garden Plants

A splendid clone with flat, white flowers, prettily flushed with purple and pink veins. A perfect mix of daintiness and vigour.

*Spreading, rhizomatous perennial, 25 × 60cm in trial. Rosette leaves few, soon disappearing. Stem leaves paired, c55 × 65mm, dark green (147A) sparsely covered with short, adpressed hairs, longer but confined to the veins on the underside, divided almost to the base into 7; divisions with 1 or 2 lobes or lobeless, clearly distinct, cuneate, widest near the apex, revolute, rounded at the apex with a minute, acute tip; lobes lanceolate, sometimes suppressed, lacking teeth, rounded with a minute, acute tip. Stems prostrate with a light covering of medium length, patent hairs, green flushed red (183C) on the exposed side. Flowers borne singly or in pairs on a peduncle to c80mm; pedicels to 40mm. Sepals elliptic, 7 × 4mm with long white hairs along the veins; mucro to 1.5mm. Flowers to 35mm across, white, secondary veins flushed pink (62B/C), fine primary veins pinkish purple (64C); petals broad obovate, to 16 × 15mm, with a shallow notch at the apex.*



## Floral Trials Committee

**Chairman:** Tony Lord

**Vice-chairmen:** Roy Cheek, Pam Schwerdt

### Members:

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Bill Boardman      | Bob Brown            |
| Marina Christopher | John Coke            |
| David Creese       | Ivan Dickings        |
| Fergus Garrett     | John Gibson          |
| Diana Hart Dyke    | Tony Hender          |
| Ian Howell         | Sibylle Kreutzberger |
| Christopher Lloyd  | Alison Mulvaney      |
| John Paton         | Graham Rice          |
| Jean Sambrook      | Chris Sanders        |
| Keith Sangster     | Terry Smale          |
| Mike Smallwood     | Brian Talman         |
| Ray Waite          | Victoria Wakefield   |

## Senders of plants to the trial

### Nurseries and Gardens

Beth Chatto Gardens, Elmstead Market, Essex CO7 7DB

Blooms of Bressingham Ltd, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2AB

Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Bateman Street,  
Cambridge CB2 1JF

Catforth Gardens, (no longer trading)

Coen Jansen, Vaste Planten, Ankummer Es 13, NL-7722 RD  
Dalfsen, Holland

Coombland Gardens, (no longer trading)

Cotswold Garden Flowers, Badsey, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5EZ

Crŷg Farm Plants, Griffith's Crossing, Caernarfon,  
Gwynedd LL55 1TU

Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, Freefolk Priors,  
Whitchurch, Hants RG28 7NJ

Hellyer's Garden Plants, (no longer trading)

Howard Nurseries, Wortham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1PX

Linward Hardy Plants, 17 Roland Avenue, Nuthall,  
Nottingham NG16 1BB

L W Plants, 23 Wroxham Way, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 4PP

Meadow Cottage Plants, Pitt Hill, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0JJ

Monksilver Nursery, Oakington road, Cottenham,  
Cambridge CB4 8TW

Perryhill Nurseries Ltd, Hartfield, E. Sussex TN7 4JP

Rosie's Garden Plants, Rochester Road, Aylesford, Kent  
ME20 7EB

Rougham Hall Nurseries, Rougham, Bury St. Edmunds,  
Suffolk IP30 9LZ

Usual & Unusual Plants, Onslow House, Magham Down, E.  
Sussex BN27 1PL

Tir Mab Cynan Nursery, Brithdir, Nr Dolgellau, Gwynedd,  
Wales, LL40 2RW

Waterpump Plants, Ryeford, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire  
HR9 7PU

### Individuals

Andrew Byfield, Mr H J Mazza, Dr R Mackenzie, Robin Moss, Andrew Norton, Mrs Grace N Officer, Susan Rowe, Dr Evelyn Stevens.

## Acknowledgements

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Barry Phillips (Herbarium Technician) for the herbarium specimens, photography and detailed descriptions of the 136 different entries of the trial all of which can be viewed at the RHS Herbarium at Wisley;

Wendy Wesley (Trials Officer) for recording flowering, measuring plants and collating all the information for the trial; all photographs in this bulletin are by Wendy unless credited otherwise;

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all the senders of plants to the trial without whom the trial could not have taken place;

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## Further reading

Bath, T. & J. Jones. (1994) *The Gardeners Guide to Growing Hardy Geraniums*. David & Charles, Newton Abbot

Bendtsen B. H. (2005) *Gardening with Hardy Geraniums*. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon.

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Parker, G. (ed.). (2001) *Hardy Geraniums for the Garden*. Hardy Plant Society, Pershore

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Yeo, P.F. (3rd edition, 2002) *Hardy Geraniums*. B T Batsford, London

## Societies and websites

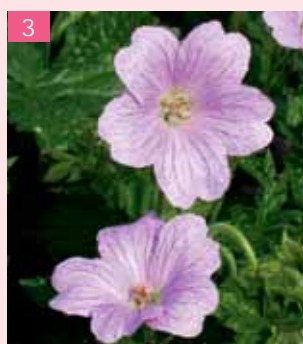
**The Hardy Geranium Group:** Secretary: Mrs T. Fraser, 16 Hallam Grange Croft, Sheffield S10 4BP

**The Geraniaceae Group:** Mr Richard Clifton, 7 Crabble Road, Dover, CT17 0QD

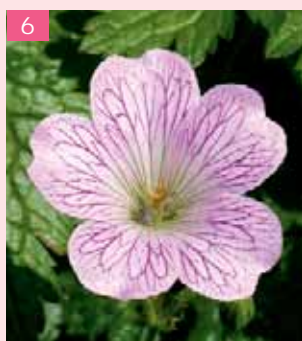
[www.hardygeraniums.com](http://www.hardygeraniums.com) website of *Geranium* National Plant Collection® holder, Andrew Norton.

# Stage 2 selection guide

Habit 1 = Groundcover  
 2 = Spreading  
 3 = Mound-forming  
 4 = Upright (including staked plants)

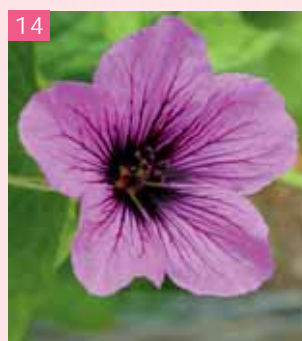


| Geranium × oxonianum cultivars in alphabetical order           |  |       |            |                          |   |
|--|--|-------|------------|--------------------------|---|
| Name   | Colour                                   | Habit | Dimensions | Flowering                | Notes   |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> f. <i>thurstonianum</i> 'Armitageae' (1) | Reddish-purple (74C) white at base       | 3     | 60 × 100cm | Late May – late October  | One of the earliest of the <i>G. × oxonianum</i> cultivars and still attractive.            |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Beholder's Eye' 🏆                       | Deep reddish purple (71C), white at base | 3     | 55 × 130cm | Late May – early October | Pink flowers with a white eye. Of good habit.   |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Breckland Sunset' (2)                   | Reddish purple                           | 2     | 50 × 200cm | Late May – mid October   | Holds its shape well with strongly veined, carmine flowers.                                 |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Claridge Druce' (3)                     | Purplish pink (74C)                      | 2     | 60 × 170cm | Late May – early October | Pink, notched petals and a network of darker veins, undistinguished in trial.               |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Hexham White' (4)                       | Purplish pink (78B/C)                    | 2     | 50 × 180cm | Early June – mid October | A good, pure white-flowered cultivar but with a tendency to fall apart later in the season. |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Laura Skelton' (5)                      | Pale purple (75D), strongly veined       | 3     | 70 × 150cm | Late May – early Sept    | Unusual flowers, intricately veined on a pale background.                                   |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Pearl Boland' (6)                       | Pinkish purple (78D), white towards base | 3     | 60 × 120cm | Late May – early October | Forming a compact mound and with dark-veined flowers that age from white to pink.           |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Rosemary' (7)                           | Reddish purple (74B)                     | 3     | 55 × 120cm | Late May – early October | Rich-coloured flowers fading in the centre with age.  |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Rosenlicht' (8)                         | Purplish pink (66D)                      | 2     | 65 × 130cm | Early June – mid October | Strong, bright flowers but fading badly in bright light.                                    |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Wageningen' (9)                         | Strong purplish-pink (55A/B)             | 2     | 60 × 100cm | Late May – early October | Dark salmon-pink flowers.   |
| <i>G. × oxonianum</i> 'Wargrave Pink' 🏆 (10)                   | Pink (65A)                               | 3     | 60 × 140cm | Mid May – early October  | Appealing salmon pink flowers but with a messy habit.                                       |





| Geranium psilostemon selections and hybrids in alphabetical order |  |       |            |                         |  |
|---|--|-------|------------|-------------------------|--|
| Name  | Colour   | Habit | Dimensions | Flowering               | Notes  |
| G. 'Anne Thomson' 🏆   | Red-purple (between 74A and 78A)                   | 2     | 70 × 180cm | Mid May – late October  | Similar to 'Ann Folkard' with black eye but more compact so seeming more floriferous.                                      |
| G. 'Ann Folkard' 🏆 (11)   | Reddish purple (darker than 78A) with black eye    | 3     | 60 × 190cm | Late May – mid October  | Golden foliage in early season. Long stems excellent grown over wigwam of twigs in trial.                                  |
| G. BLUE SUNRISE ('Blogold') 🏆                                     | Violet (88C), flushed pink, veins purple           | 3     | 30 × 70cm  | Late June – mid October | Stunning golden foliage which does not brown and combines excellently with violet flowers.                                 |
| G. 'Eva' (12)   | Purple (78A/74A), veined dark purple               | 3     | 60 × 150cm | Late May – mid July     | An interesting hybrid with <i>G. pratense</i> , offering deep, richly coloured flowers.                                    |
| G. 'Farncombe Cerise Star' (13)                                   | Reddish purple (74A), veined deep red-purple (71A) | 2     | 60 × 160cm | Late May – mid July     | Very narrow, frilled petals produce an effect as in <i>G. × oxonianum</i> f. <i>thurstonianum</i> but reluctant to flower. |
| G. 'Ivan' 🏆   | Reddish purple (74A/B) veined purple (79A)         | 3     | 80 × 170cm | Late May – late July    | Dazzling flowers but may require staking to prevent collapse.  |
| G. <i>psilostemon</i> 'Jason Bloom'                               | Reddish-purple (darker than 74A) with a black eye  | 2     | 60 × 140cm | Early May – late July   | Blooms to 6cm across make this the largest-flowered <i>G. psilostemon</i> cultivar.  |
| G. 'King Penda' (14)  | Reddish purple (74A) with dark veins               | 2     | 80 × 160cm | Late May – mid July     | Bold foliage with flowers profusely borne.   |
| G. 'Maxwelton' (15)   | Reddish purple (74A), veined redder than 79A       | 2     | 90 × 200cm | Late May – early August | Similar to PATRICIA ('Brempat') but flowers less intense.  |
| G. 'Nicola' (16)  | Reddish purple (darker than 74A), veins dark       | 2     | 60 × 140cm | Mid May – mid July      | Narrow petals give a distinctive starry effect to the flowers.   |
| G. PATRICIA ('Brempat') 🏆   | Reddish purple (74A), veined reddish purple (79A)  | 3     | 70 × 160cm | Late May – late July    | Large pinkish magenta flowers held well above foliage.   |

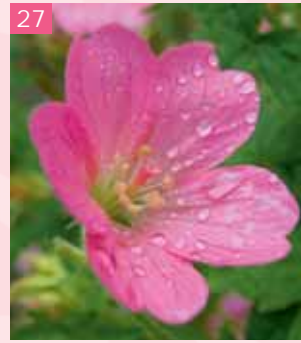
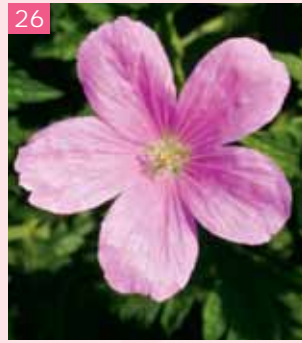


Colour codes refer to the RHS Colour Chart.

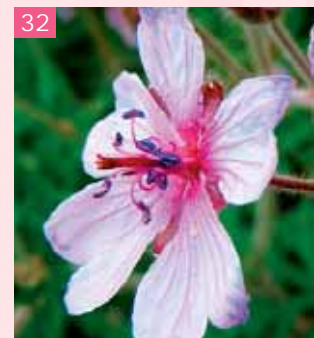
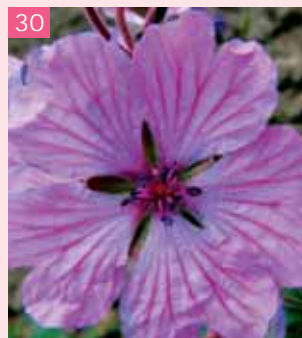


| Name   | Colour   | Habit | Dimensions | Flowering               | Notes   |
|--|--|-------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| <i>G. psilostemon</i> 🏆 (17)   | Reddish purple (74A) with black veins and eye  | 2/4   | 70 × 150   | Mid May – late July     | Imposing and eye-catching border perennial.   |
| <i>G. psilostemon</i> pink-flowered (18)                                       | Pale purplish pink (75C/76B)                   | 3     | 70 × 110cm | Late May – late July    | A very different plant lacking the typical black eye of <i>G. psilostemon</i> .                 |
| <i>G. psilostemon</i> white-flowered (19)                                      | White  | 3     | 80 × 90cm  | Late May – late July    | Large plant bearing pure white flowers mostly towards the end of the season. A real innovation. |
| <b><i>Geranium sanguineum</i> selections and hybrids in alphabetical order</b> |  |       |            |                         |   |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Album' 🏆 (20)  | Pure white                                     | 1     | 45 × 100cm | Late May – mid July     | Clean, pure white flowers refreshing to the eye.  |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Ankum's Pride' 🏆 (21)                                    | Purplish pink (66C), bluish veins (81A)        | 1     | 20 × 70cm  | Mid May – early August  | Vibrant pink flowers on floriferous, ground-hugging stems with a second flush in September.     |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Aviemore' 🏆 (22)   | Pinkish purple (74A/B), veined purple (61A)    | 1     | 30 × 110cm | Early May – late July   | Flowers held well above the foliage.  |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Cedric Morris' (23)                                      | Reddish purple (78A), veined red (71A)         | 2     | 40 × 90cm  | Mid May – late August   | A vigorous clone with pale foliage and very large, glowing flowers.                             |
| <i>G. 'Dilys'</i> 🏆 (24)   | Strong reddish purple (78B)                    | 2     | 30 × 160cm | Late May – late October | Bears dark-centred flowers over a long period, though sparse in June. Good shape and tidy.      |
| <i>G. 'Feu d' Automne'</i> (25)  | Reddish purple (78A), veined red (60B)         | 3     | 40 × 90    | Late May – late August  | Differing little from the norm but said to have good autumn colour.                             |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Nyewood'   | Purple (80A), veins reddish (72A)              | 3     | 30 × 60cm  | Mid May – late August   | Might be grown at front of border for its compact, dome-forming habit.                          |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Robin's Rascal'  | Purple (78B) veined purplish red (60B)         | 3     | 30 × 70cm  | Mid May – Early August  | Tidy, mound-forming stems.  |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'Rod Leeds'   | Pinkish purple (78A), veined dark purple (83A) | 2     | 20 × 50cm  | Mid July – late Sept    | Plant swamped by surrounding entries in trial.  |





| Name  | Colour                                       | Habit | Dimensions                        | Flowering                | Notes   |
|---|--|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> 'South Nutfield'                   | Dark purple (81A), veined red(60A0)          | 3     | 30 × 60cm                         | Early May – early August | Flowers with an unusual bluish hue.                                   |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> var. <i>striatum</i> 🏆             | White or pale pink veined pink (64C)         | 2     | 30 × 100cm                        | Mid May – early August   | An attractive plant best represented by the clone 'Splendens'         |
| <i>G. sanguineum</i> var. <i>striatum</i> 'Splendens' 🏆 | White, veins flushed pink (62B/C) and (64C)  | 2     | 25 × 60cm                         | Mid May – early August   | Large saucer-shaped flowers with pink-veined petals.                  |
| <i>Geranium</i> 'Tiny Monster'                          | Purple (78A), veined red (61A)               | 2     | 20 × 50cm                         | Mid May – late June      | A hybrid with <i>G. psilostemon</i> with large purple-red flowers.    |
| <b>Other species and cultivars</b>                      |  |       |                                   |                          |   |
| <i>G. albanum</i>                                       | Purple (78B/D), veined red (61B)             | 2     | 50 × 180cm                        | Late May – early July    | Very floriferous in trial and can be grown through other specimens.   |
| <i>G. endressii</i> 'Betty Catchpole' (26)              | Purplish pink (74C)                          | 2     | 30 × 130cm                        | Late May – early October | Clear pink flowers and forming an attractive dome.                    |
| <i>G. endressii</i> 'Castle Drogo' 🏆 (27)               | Peachy purple (52C/D)                        | 2     | 30 × 150cm                        | Mid May – mid October    | Large bright pink flowers; floriferous.                               |
| <i>G. libani</i> (28)                                   | Light violet (88C)                           | 2/4   | 40 × 80cm                         | Late April – late May    | A graceful plant but perhaps best suited to the large rock garden.    |
| <i>G. malviflorum</i> (29)                              | Purple (82A)                                 | 4     | 40 × 60cm                         | Late April – late May    | Delightful upward-facing flowers but may be difficult to flower well. |
| <i>G. macrostylum</i> 'Leonidas' (30)                   | Purplish pink (80A), with darker veins (80C) | 2     | 40cm tall, spreading indefinitely | Late April – early June  | Attractive but may prove too vigorous.                                |
| <i>G.</i> 'Stephanie' (31)                              | Pale violet (88D), veined purple (83B)       | 2/4   | 40 × 90cm                         | Late April – late June   | Airy inflorescence over attractive, lush foliage.                     |
| <i>G.</i> from Tien Shan Mountains, China               | Very pale pink (69D) to white                | 3     | 45 × 60cm                         | Mid June – late August   | Currently unidentified species.                                       |
| <i>G. tuberosum</i> (32)                                | Pale pink (76C), veined reddish pink (66C)   | 2     | 40cm tall, spreading indefinitely | Late April – late May    | A pretty plant but somewhat tender and not easy to accommodate.       |



## The Royal Horticultural Society

The RHS is the UK's leading gardening charity dedicated to advancing horticulture and promoting good gardening. Its charitable work includes providing expert advice and information, advancing horticulture, training the next generation of gardeners, helping school children learn about plants, and conducting research into plants, pests and environmental issues affecting gardeners. The RHS AGM plant trial scheme is an important part of this work.

The RHS receives no government grants and for every pound received from members' subscriptions we need to raise more than twice as much again to fund our charitable work. We also rely on donations and sponsorship to supplement income from our garden operations, flower shows, shops and plant centres.

## RHS Plant Trials

With so many different types of gardener and so many different cultivars available to them in each group of plants, it is important that a system of recommendation is in place to help with selection at point of sale. These recommendations must be clear and reliable to ensure that of the thousands of plants available in the UK, a proportion are known to be excellent garden plants. The RHS provides this information through its extensive programme of plant trials held at RHS gardens in the UK. The RHS Award of Garden Merit 🏆 signifies the selection of the best cultivars for general garden use.

RHS plant trials serve the professional gardener who wants to know the range of plants available, including the latest breeding and selection programmes, with their distinctive characteristics and provenance. They also serve the amateur who wants to know which plants will grow and perform well in a particular garden situation.

The RHS has an unrivalled resource of knowledge and expertise and is therefore best placed to conduct plant trials for the UK gardening market.

## RHS Herbarium

The RHS Herbarium keeps a record of trial cultivars as dried specimens with detailed descriptions and photographic images. This forms an important reference for the horticultural industry. Any new cultivars are highlighted and a Standard specimen is preserved and described.

The RHS Herbarium, stored at RHS Garden Wisley, is the largest active horticultural herbarium in the world. At present the collection contains about 70,000 herbarium specimens and over 55,000 images of plants. Material is actively collected from a wide spectrum of sources including RHS plant trials.

## RHS Bulletins

**Canna:** September 2003  
**Daisies** (yellow perennial): September 2004  
**Delphinium:** June 2004  
**Fuchsias** (hardy): December 2005  
**Geraniums** (hardy) Stage 1: June 2005  
**Hyacinthaceae** (little blue bulbs): September 2005  
**Lavenders** (hardy): July 2003  
**Miscanthus:** October 2004  
**Potatoes** (salad): November 2004  
**Potentilla** (shrubby): July 2002  
**Rhododendron yakushimanum & hybrids:** May 2006  
**Saxifrages** (silver): May 2005  
**Spiraea japonica** (with coloured leaves): November 2003

These bulletins can be viewed at a larger size on the RHS Website:

[www.rhs.org.uk/plants/trials\\_bulletins.asp](http://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/trials_bulletins.asp)

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