Hardy Geraniums – Stage 3 and
Geraniums Suitable for Rock Gardens

James Armitage
Botanist, RHS Garden Wisley
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Stage 3 of the Trial of Hardy Geraniums and Geraniums Suitable for Rock Gardens

The first two stages of the Trial of Hardy Geraniums included plants suitable for general border use. However, Stage 3 of the Trial and the Trial of Geraniums Suitable for Rock Gardens featured plants with more specialised cultivation requirements. Stage 3 dealt with plants that thrive in some degree of shade and the Rock Trial with plants that require a well-drained soil that provides a sufficiency of water in the summer but protects from damp conditions in winter. Both trials began in 2004 and concluded in 2006.

Entries

There were 136 entries in Stage 3 and 105 entries in the Rock Trial, submitted by nurseries in the UK and Holland, National Collection Holders and individuals (listed on page 19).

There were far fewer hybrids among the Stage 3 plants than in the previous stages and most were selections of *Geranium macrorrhizum*, *G. maculatum*, *G. nodosum*, *G. phaeum* and *G. sylvaticum*. However, several cultivars of *G. × cantabrigiense* (*G. dalmaticum × G. macrorrhizum*) and *G. × monacense* (*G. phaeum × G. reflexum*) were included.

Many of the plants in the Rock Trial were selections of *G. subcaulescens* or hybrids of that species included in *G. × lindavicum* and Cinereum Group. Other important species were *G. sanguineum*, *G. dalmaticum*, and its hybrid *G. × cantabrigiense*, and *G. sessiliflorum* which has given rise to numerous dark-leaved hybrids. Several other miscellaneous species were grown, a number of which proved too large for most rock gardens.

Cultivation

Entries in Stage 3 were planted in the spring of 2004 and were provided with shade netting above and on the south side to aid their establishment. The netting was removed in November 2005. One plant of each *G. phaeum* and *G. macrorrhizum* entry was cut back after flowering to stimulate a second flush.

Plants in the Rock Trial were grown in a raised bed filled with equal parts of sterilised loam, peat and grit that was top-dressed with grit. The pH of the medium was 6.8. Plants were dead-headed after flowering.

Pests and Diseases

Leaves of *G. sylvaticum* affected by rust were removed and plants were sprayed to control mildew.

Plants in the Rock trial suffered with a number of pests and diseases including powdery mildew, vine weevil larvae and eelworm. Members of the Cinereum Group suffered badly with rust. Casualties throughout this trial were high.
## Award of Garden Merit (AGM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Description</th>
<th>AGM Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium</em> ‘Danny Boy’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium macrorrhizum</em> ‘Album’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium wallichianum</em> ‘Buxton’s Variety’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(H4) = hardy throughout the UK
(date after the name denotes year AGM was given)

### 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 determine correct nomenclature

### Judging criteria
- Habit
- Vigour (health)
- Floriferousness
- Length of flowering period
- Foliage

### Records
- Flowering dates, mildew if relevant
- Height and spread
- Habit
- Winter leaf retention
- Staking

### Award of Garden Merit (AGM)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium [Cinereum Group]</em> ‘Ballerina’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium</em> Cinereum Group <em>ROTHBURY GEM</em> = ‘Gerfos’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium</em> dalmaticum</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium sanguineum</em> ‘Gypsy’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium sanguineum</em> ‘Little Bead’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium sanguineum</em> var. striatum</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium subcaulescens</em> ‘Giuseppii’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium subcaulescens</em> ‘Splendens’</td>
<td>AGM (H4) 1993</td>
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<td><em>Geranium subcaulescens</em></td>
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### Objectives
- To recommend the Award of Garden Merit
- To demonstrate the range and use as garden plants
- To compare new with old cultivars
- To ascertain which require staking
- To determine correct nomenclature
- To assess for border decoration and ground cover
- To ascertain suitability for rock gardens

### Judging criteria
- Habit suitable for rock gardens
- Floriferousness
- Foliage
- Vigour (health)

### Records
- Flowering dates

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**The Award of Garden Merit**

To gain this award a plant must be:
- Excellent for ordinary garden use
- Generally available
- Of good constitution
- Reasonably easy to grow
- Reasonably resistant to pests and diseases
- Essentially stable in form and colour
The species included in Stage 3

*Geranium maculatum*
An open, upright plant, growing to about 70cm tall from a compact rootstock, native to eastern parts of North America. Its leaves are up to 20cm across with 5 or 7 deep divisions and sometimes have faint blotches. The flowers are upward-facing usually in rather washed-out shades of pink. Not the finest member of the genus but there are some good selections for the border or wild garden. Worthwhile clones include ‘Beth Chatto’, with large lilac flowers, ‘Elizabeth Ann’, with lilac flowers on brown leaves, ‘Espresso’, with dark leaves and small flowers, and ‘Vickie Lynn’ with good autumn colour. There is also an attractive white-flowered form: *G. maculatum f. albiflorum*.

*Geranium sylvaticum*
An upright, middle-sized geranium growing from a compact rootstock. A native of Europe including the north of England and parts of Scotland. The leaves are deeply divided into 7 or 9 and much toothed, growing to about 20cm across. The flowers are quite small, usually about 25mm across and bluish with a white eye though other colour forms are often found in gardens. Hybrids with this species are rare but selections include ‘Album’, with white flowers and pale leaves, ‘Amy Doncaster’, with blue flowers, ‘Angulatum’, an old cultivar with deep pink veins, and ‘Mayflower’ with large, lavender flowers.

*Geranium phaeum*
An upright plant with large basal leaves, sometimes blotched with maroon at the nodes. The small flowers are often drooping with flat or reflexed petals. The dark-flowered plants are sometimes called mourning widows but there are many other colour variants. This species crosses with *G. reflexum* to form a hybrid named *G. × monacense*. It is an interesting species rewarding close scrutiny of the delicate blooms and includes some of the best foliage plants in the genus. Cultivars include ‘Lily Lovell’, with large violet flowers, ‘Rose Madder’, with dark blotched leaves and curious pink-brown flowers, ‘Samobor’, with heavily blotched leaves and dark flowers, and ‘Variegatum’ with leaf margins unevenly edged in cream.

*Geranium macrorrhizum*
A spreading, rhizomatous plant forming good ground cover and growing to only 30-50cm in height. It is a sticky and sickly aromatic native to mountainous places around the Mediterranean. The leaves are square to rounded in outline with 7 deep divisions. The flowers are usually pink emerging from reddish calyces with spreading petals and long filaments. It hybridises with the closely related *G. dalmaticum* to give a sterile hybrid named *G. × cantabrigiense*. Cultivars include ‘Bevan’s Variety’, with large violet flowers, ‘Rose Madder’, with dark blotched leaves and curious pink-brown flowers, ‘Samobor’, with heavily blotched leaves and dark flowers, and ‘Variegatum’ with leaf margins unevenly edged in cream.

*Geranium sylvaticum ‘Lilac Time’*

*Geranium phaeum ‘Lily Lovell’*

*Geranium macrorrhizum ‘White-Ness’*
**Geranium wallichianum**

A spreading or trailing species lacking rosette leaves. The stem leaves are divided into 5 and are 5-sided in outline, in opposite pairs along the stems, often attractively marbled and with large, fused stipules at the base. The flowers are usually large and in a shade of blue with a white eye. A native of the Himalaya, it is a variable plant which can be spreading or mound-forming. Not a first rate garden plant except in its cultivars. It is starting to prove a valuable parent of gardenworthy hybrids such as Rozanne ('Gerwat') and 'Jolly Bee'. The cultivars are often seed-raised and include 'Buxton’s Variety', with long stems and violet-tinged flowers, and 'Syabru', with magenta-pink flowers without a white eye.

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**Geranium wallassovianum**

A bushy, hairy species from eastern Europe and western Asia, with quite small leaves cut into 7 divisions, not too heavily toothed, that colour well in autumn. The flowers are magenta-purple and have a white eye. G. wallassovianum 'Blue Star', with late, lavender-blue flowers is becoming popular and it crosses with G. sanguineum, which has given rise to the cultivar ‘Kahn’.

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**Geranium nodosum**

A rhizomatous, upright species from central Europe. Grows to a height of about 50cm with glossy green, broad leaves, cut into 3 or 5 divisions, little-lobed but with regular teeth. The upper stem leaves have 3 divisions, giving the plant its characteristic appearance. The flowers are pinkish to magenta, paler in the centre with notched petals. Cultivars are seed-raised and may vary a little. ‘Svelte Lilac’ has mauve flowers, ‘Swish Purple’ has starry flowers, magenta with a lilac base, ‘Whiteleaf’ has dark leaves.

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**Geranium erianthum**

A wide-ranging species growing to 60cm tall with basal leaves cut into 7 to 9 overlapping divisions. The flowers are large and range from white to deep lavender in colour. It is found in the wild from Siberia, Japan and Canada as well as islands in between, and plants from different parts of its range can differ considerably. There is a cultivar called ‘Calm Sea’ with lavender flowers and smudged blue veining on the petals.
**Geranium 'Danny Boy'**
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Coombland Gardens
A stunning plant with a light and airy habit that carries flowers of a most intense purple. A recent introduction and a valuable garden perennial of the future.

Spreading perennial to $50 \times 160\text{cm}$ in trial. Basal leaf blades to $90 \times 120\text{mm}$, borne on long petioles to $300\text{mm}$, with short, adpressed, rough hairs on both surfaces and at the margins, rectangular in outline, divided to two thirds into 7; divisions widely spaced, little overlapping, broadest just above the middle, lobed to almost half way, sometimes with teeth lower down; lobes coarse with jagged, irregular teeth culminating in a minute tip. Stem leaves paired, decreasing in size towards the apex. Stems green, paler at the nodes. Inflorescence of paired flowers on pedicels to $30\text{mm}$. Sepals narrowly ovate, $9 \times 4\text{mm}$ with scarious margins and a mucro to $1.5\text{mm}$. Flowers to $35\text{mm}$ across, vivid purple ($78\text{A}$), finely veined red ($60\text{A}$); petals $17 \times 12\text{mm}$, truncate at the apex, overlapping only at the base.

**Geranium 'Jolly Bee' & ROZANNE ('Gerwat')**
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Beeches, Blooms, Cotswold Garden, Rougham Hall, Van Noort

These entries were found to have no characters which could be used consistently to distinguish them and are therefore described together.

Superb border plants starting to bloom as many geraniums are finishing but then smothering themselves in large, bright blue, saucer-shaped flowers into the autumn.

Vigorous, spreading perennial, to $70 \times 160\text{cm}$ in trial. Basal leaf blades dark green ($147\text{A}$), lightly blotched yellow-green ($146\text{B/C}$), especially at the notches, covered with short, adpressed white hairs, sparse on the undersides except along the veins, $c.110 \times 90\text{mm}$ on petioles to $c.130\text{mm}$, pentagonal in outline, divided to three fifths into 5 or 7; divisions diamond-shaped, lobed to the base, long-ovate, with a short acute tip, basal lobes toothed. Stem leaves at regular intervals, paired, decreasing in size towards the apex. Stems red-flushed on pedicels and nodes with short, adpressed hairs becoming patent and gland-tipped on pedicels, upper stipules red ($181\text{B}$), lower stipules green. Flowers borne singly, in pairs or small groups towards the tips of the branches. Sepals ovate $10 \times 4\text{mm}$, macro to $2\text{mm}$. Flowers to $40\text{mm}$ across, bluish violet ($82\text{B}$) with a pinkish purple blush, white at the base with red ($60\text{B}$) veins.

**Geranium macrorrhizum 'Bevan's Variety'**
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Beth Chatto
A luscious ground cover plant giving rise to clouds of vibrant purple-pink flowers. A wonderful underplanting for flowering trees and shrubs.

Sprawling perennial to $25 \times 80\text{cm}$ in trial. Basal leaf blades rhubarb-scented to $60 \times 80\text{mm}$, borne on petioles to $150\text{mm}$, covered with short, adpressed hairs on both sides, greyish yellow-green ($147\text{B}$), divided to about three quarters into 5 or 7; divisions widest towards apex, the lowest pair only overlapping, lobed in the top third; lobes rounded, more or less regular with short mucronate tips and shallow teeth. Stem quite thickly covered with soft, patent hairs of variable length. Inflorescence a dense umbel of short-stalked flowers. Calyx swollen, bladdery, glandular hairy; sepals suborbicular with a mucro to $1\text{mm}$. Flowers to $25\text{mm}$ across, purplish pink ($74\text{A/B}$); petals strongly clawed, claw strongly wedge-shaped, blade orbicular, $10 \times 10\text{mm}$; filaments $c.15\text{mm}$, much exerted, curved; style $15\text{mm}$ at anthesis, curved.

**Geranium macrorrhizum 'Mytikas'**
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Jan Spruyt
An ideal ground cover specimen with a spreading habit and very neat foliage that lasts the summer well. Flowers small but prolifically borne and a stunning purplish pink.

Carpet-forming perennial to $30 \times 160\text{cm}$ in trial. Basal leaves rhubarb-scented, small, to $60 \times 80\text{mm}$, borne on long petioles to $220\text{mm}$, covered with short, glandular and eglandular hairs, yellow-green ($146\text{A}$), divided to about three
Geranium phaeum ‘Our Pat’
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Robin Moss
A strange and dramatic plant with purple-black flowers on upright stems. An eye-catching presence in the border.

Upright perennial to 60 × 70cm in trial. Basal leaves to 120 × 100mm borne on long petioles to 220mm with short, white, adpressed hairs, strongly associated with the veins on the underside, dark reddish brown (redder than 200B), divided almost to the base into 5; divisions widely spaced, not overlapping, lobed to about half way, sometimes with teeth lower down; lobes coarse, irregular, rounded-triangular, acute with occasional teeth. Stem leaves paired, with lowest almost as large as the basal leaves, the upper bract-like. Stems green, tinged orange-brown (176A), darkest toward flower. Pubescence tight to moderate, hairs mostly down-curved. Inflorescence of a few very long, peduncled lower flowers and clusters of upper flowers with very short pedicels. Sepals long ovate covered with gland-tipped hairs; mucro to 2mm. Flowers to 35mm across, pale pinkish-purple (81C/D); petals 15 × 12mm, broad obovate.

Geranium macrorrhizum ‘White-Ness’
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Lodge Lane
A neat and robust plant with pale, fresh leaves. The pure white flowers, carried in remarkable abundance, impart a ghostly glow to a gloomy spot.

Low mound-forming perennial with an upright habit to 50 × 110cm in trial. Basal leaf blades rhubarb-scented, small, to c50 × 70mm, borne on long petioles to c200mm, covered with short, glandular and eglandular hairs, greyish yellow green (147B), divided to about two thirds into 5; divisions widest towards apex, little overlapping, lobed to about half way; lobes shallow, rounded with small rounded, sharp-tipped teeth. Stem leaves in 2 or 3 pairs decreasing rapidly in size towards the apex. Stems with very short hairs, few of them glandular. Flowers profusely borne in dense umbels; pedicels short. Calyx swollen, bladdery, pale green; sepals suborbicular with a mucro to 2mm. Flowers to 15mm across, pure white, petals strongly clawed, claw strongly wedge-shaped, blade orbicular 8 × 9mm; filaments c18mm, much exerted, curved; style c16mm at anthesis, curved.

Geranium maculatum ‘Elizabeth Ann’
AGM (H4) 2006
Sent by Cotswold Garden
One of the best foliage geraniums with its rich bronomy leaves and elegant posture. The flowers are purplish-pink and fall to reveal lime-green calyces.

Geranium Rozanne (‘Gerwat’) see ‘Jolly Bee’
Geranium phaeum selections and hybrids in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. × monacense ‘Claudine Dupont’ (1)</td>
<td>Dull purplish red (183D)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100 × 160cm</td>
<td>Late April – early June</td>
<td>Leaves with dark brown blotches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. × monacense ‘Muldoon’ (2)</td>
<td>Dark purple (83A)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>130 × 110cm</td>
<td>Late April – mid June</td>
<td>Yellowish leaves with prominent blotches at nodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Album’ (3)</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100 × 120cm</td>
<td>Early May – late June</td>
<td>Long-flowering and reliable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Calligrapher’ (4)</td>
<td>Dull purple (79D) around a pale grey eye</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50 × 70cm</td>
<td>Late April – mid June</td>
<td>Leaves lightly marked with purple. Flowers with a dark rim around the eye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Golden Spring’ (5)</td>
<td>Dark reddish purple (N79B)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70 × 100cm</td>
<td>Mid April – mid June</td>
<td>Leaves pale with strong reddish brown mottling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Lily Lovell’ (6)</td>
<td>Dark violet(79B/C)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>110 × 150cm</td>
<td>Early May – mid June</td>
<td>One of the best flower colours amongst the G. phaeum entries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Our Pat’ (7)</td>
<td>Dark purple (79 A/B) with a silvery eye</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110 × 90cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late June</td>
<td>Excellent upright habit and very dark flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Rose Madder’ (7)</td>
<td>Unusual reddish, grey washed with a grey eye</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40 × 70cm</td>
<td>Late April – mid June</td>
<td>A very striking flower colour. Possibly of hybrid origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Samobor’</td>
<td>Dusky purple (N79B)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40 × 70cm</td>
<td>Mid April – mid June</td>
<td>Leaves very strongly blotched purple in a ring around the centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. phaeum ‘Séricourt’ (8)</td>
<td>Very dark red (187A)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50 × 70cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>Leaves very pale yellow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Geranium macrorrhizum selections and hybrids in alphabetical order**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. × cantabrigiense ‘Blondie’ (9)</td>
<td>Pale Purplish pink (74D)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 × 70cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid June</td>
<td>Leaves pale. Plant very floriferous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. × cantabrigiense ‘Cambridge’ (10)</td>
<td>Purple (N80B)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40 × 65</td>
<td>Late May – late June</td>
<td>Floriferous with attractive purple flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. × cantabrigiense ‘St. Ola’ (11)</td>
<td>White, pinkish (57D) on the veins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20 × 50cm</td>
<td>Late May – mid July</td>
<td>A good low, flat habit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. macrorrhizum ‘Album’</td>
<td>White with a hint of pink</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35 × 60cm</td>
<td>Early May – mid June</td>
<td>Not as vigorous as most but does better in deeper shade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. macrorrhizum ‘Bevan’s Variety’</td>
<td>Purplish pink (74A-B)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25 × 80cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>Effective groundcover, flowers held well above foliage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. macrorrhizum ‘Czakor’ (12)</td>
<td>Dark pinkish purple (74A-78A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30 × 50cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>Beautiful in flower but becoming ragged later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. macrorrhizum ‘Mytikas’</td>
<td>Purplish pink, pinker than 80B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 × 160cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid June</td>
<td>Forming a delightful floriferous carpet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. macrorrhizum ‘White-Ness’ (13)</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 × 110cm</td>
<td>Late May – late June</td>
<td>Lovely pure white flowers with green calyces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Geranium sylvaticum selections and hybrids in alphabetical order**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Prelude’ (14)</td>
<td>Pale violet (88C) with purple veins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90 × 120cm</td>
<td>Late April – late May</td>
<td>An unsophisticated plant good for a naturalistic setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sylvaticum ‘Afrodite’ (15)</td>
<td>Very pale pink (69D)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60 × 80cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>A good compact Scandinavian selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sylvaticum ‘Album’ (16)</td>
<td>Faint pink in bud opening white</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80 × 110cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>An excellent white-flowered plant falling just short of an AGM.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Geranium sylvaticum selections

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<tr>
<td>G. <em>sylvaticum</em> ‘Angulatum’</td>
<td>Pale pink (69B/C), purplish veins, white at base</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100 x 3 130cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>The largest-flowered of the <em>G. sylvaticum</em> entries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. <em>sylvaticum</em> ‘Birch Lilac’</td>
<td>Purple (82A) tinged (81A)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>90 x 90cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>Plentiful flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. <em>sylvaticum</em> ‘Lilac Time’</td>
<td>Purple (80A), stamens blue</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80 x 80cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>Flowers small but profuse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Geranium wallichianum selections and hybrids in alphabetical order

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Jolly Bee’ / G. <em>Rozanne</em> (‘Gerwat’)</td>
<td>Blue (88B), veined red, white at base</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70 x 160cm</td>
<td>Early June – late October</td>
<td>Outstanding plants smothered in delightful flowers over a long period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. <em>wallichianum</em> ‘Buxton’s Variety’ (20)</td>
<td>Violet (88C), white in basal half</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 x 130cm</td>
<td>Early July – late October</td>
<td>A beautiful and reliable groundcover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Wisley Jewel’ (21)</td>
<td>Purple (80B) with white at base</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40 x 170cm</td>
<td>Mid June – late October</td>
<td>A vigorous plant found as a seedling on the Rock Garden at Wisley.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Selections and hybrids of other species in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Arnoldshof’ (22)</td>
<td>Pale pink (70A), veined pink (75A)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60 x 50cm</td>
<td>Early May – late May</td>
<td>Second flush of flowers from late June – early August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Danny Boy’ (23)</td>
<td>Vivid purple (78A), veined red</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50 x 160cm</td>
<td>Late May – early August</td>
<td>Airy habit with flowers of a stunning colour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. <em>erianthum</em> ‘Calm Sea’ (24)</td>
<td>Pale violet (85A)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80 x 90cm</td>
<td>Late May – early June</td>
<td>Second flush of flowers from mid July – early August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. gracile ‘Blanche’</td>
<td>White, flushed light purple (76A)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90 x 90cm</td>
<td>Late May – early July</td>
<td>Attractive flowers but a short season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>Habit</td>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Flowering</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. gracile ‘Blush’ (25)</td>
<td>Light purple (74C/D)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90 × 120cm</td>
<td>Late May – mid June</td>
<td>Sparse second flush produced late in the season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. maculatum ‘Elizabeth Ann’</td>
<td>Pale purplish pink (81C/D)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60 × 70cm</td>
<td>Early May – early June</td>
<td>Bronze leaves combine well with purplish pink flowers and other foliage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. maculatum ‘Espresso’ (26)</td>
<td>Pale purplish pink (76A)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60 × 60cm</td>
<td>Late April – early June</td>
<td>Bronze foliage but not as dark as ‘Elizabeth Ann’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. nodosum ‘Svelte Lilac’ (27)</td>
<td>Pale lilac (82C/D)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50 × 110cm</td>
<td>Late May – late June</td>
<td>Spreading by rhizomes and good for indifferent soils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. nodosum ‘Whiteleaf’ (28)</td>
<td>Light purple (74C), heavily flushed purple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60 × 80cm</td>
<td>Late May – mid July</td>
<td>Glossy foliage and unusual white edge to the petals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. platyanthum ‘Genyell’</td>
<td>Violet purple (88B) with dark veins.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50 × 110cm</td>
<td>Early May – mid July</td>
<td>Heavy black veining on bluish flower. Originally circulated as G. ibericum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. platyanthum ‘Russian Giant’ (29)</td>
<td>Violet (88C)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70 × 100cm</td>
<td>Late April – mid May</td>
<td>Insufficient flower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Salome’ (30)</td>
<td>Pale purple (80A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 × 170cm</td>
<td>Mid June – late July</td>
<td>Rampant growth with lots of colour in flower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Silva’</td>
<td>Pale violet (85B)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80 × 140cm</td>
<td>Early June – late July</td>
<td>Flopped badly when flowering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. soboliferum var. kiusianum</td>
<td>Pinkish purple (78A/B), veined red</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60 × 90cm</td>
<td>Mid July – early October</td>
<td>Fresh foliage and flowering generously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. wlassovianum ‘Blue Star’ (31)</td>
<td>Violet (brighter than 87A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40 × 70cm</td>
<td>Mid June – late September</td>
<td>Pinkish bronze foliage when young.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. wlassovianum ‘Lakwijk Star’ (32)</td>
<td>Purple (81A) lined purplish red</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70 × 150cm</td>
<td>Early June – late September</td>
<td>Dislikes dry conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Species included in the Rock Trial

**Geranium cinereum**
A small, sparsely hairy species with often grey or silver leaves 5cm wide cut into 5 or 7 divisions. The stems have about 5 pairs of leaves with up to 10 flowers. The flowers are large compared to the plant and pale pink with a network of darker veins. It is native to the central Pyrenees. There is a white-flowered cultivar named ‘Album’. Hybrids with *G. subcaulescens*, such as ROTHBURY GEM (‘Gerfos’), ‘Ballerina’ and ‘Laurence Flatman’, occur freely and are included in *G. Cinereum Group*.

**Geranium subcaulescens**
A variable species native to the Balkan peninsula and parts of Turkey. It bears leaves to 5cm wide, divided into 5 or 7, sometimes hairy and darker green than *G. cinereum*. The inflorescence has 6 to 8 flowers. The flowers have very bright purplish-red petals with a darker zone at the centre around a black eye. Cultivars include ‘Giuseppii’, with brightly coloured flowers and a small basal spot, and ‘Splendens’, with a blackish basal blotch and white margins in the lower half of the petals. *G. subcaulescens* forms hybrids with *G. cinereum* which are included in *G. Cinereum Group* and *G. argenteum* which are called *G. × lindavicium*.

**G. × lindavicium**
Garden hybrid between *G. argenteum* and *G. subcaulescens* first raised in 1912. The leaves are grey and velvety, divided into 5 or 7, each division with 3 lobes. The flowers are numerous and a garish purple-pink with dark veins becoming diffuse at the centre. Cultivars include ‘Alanah’, with crimson-purple flowers, and ‘Gypsy’, with brilliant cerise flowers with a maroon blotch.

**Geranium dalmaticum**
A rhizomatous perennial with small leaves to 4cm across which are shiny and hairless. The long stems are carpet-forming with a rosette of leaves at the end. The flower stalks are upright with the coral pink or white flowers held horizontally. From the coast of Montenegro and northern Albania, it is closely related to *G. macrorrhizum* with which it crosses to form the hybrid *G. × cantabrigiense*. Cultivars of *G. dalmaticum* include ‘Album’, with white flowers, and low-growing ‘Croftlea’. 
**Geranium 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 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, and ‘Shepherd’s Warning’ with deep coloured flowers and a compact habit. Hybrids include ‘Tiny Monster’ and ‘Little David’, which are crosses with the much larger *G. psilostemon*.

**Geranium sessiliflorum**

An underwhelming species native to New Zealand, Tasmania and South America, with rosettes of little round leaves on long stalks. The flowers are small and white to about 1cm across in diffuse inflorescences. Most of the plants in cultivation are *G. sessiliflorum* subsp. *novae-zelandiae*, with leaves divided to about half way with oblong leaf divisions. Of most horticultural interest are the dark-leaved variants such as ‘Nigricans’, which has olive green to brown foliage, and ‘Porter’s Pass’, which has leaves of a bronzy-red colour. Seedlings arise freely and often come true. A range of hybrids with this species have been developed.

**Geranium sessiliflorum hybrids**

*G. sessiliflorum* has been crossed with a number of other species to try to combine its colourful leaves with larger plants with bigger flowers. Hybrids with *G. traversii* from the Chatham Islands have been given the name *G. × antipodeum* and include the cultivar ‘Sea Spray’ which has greenish brown leaves and pale pink to almost white flowers. Hybrids with *G. × oxonianum* are becoming common. They are generally low-growing plants with murky coloured leaves and coral pink flowers. Cultivars of this cross include ‘Coffee Time’, ‘Sea Fire’ and ‘Sea Pink’. There is also a cross between *G. sessiliflorum* subsp. *novae-zelandiae* ‘Nigricans’ and the little-grown *G. suzukii* which has been named ‘Welsh Guiness’.

**Geranium orientalitibeticum**

A low-growing perennial plant from screes in south-western China. It spreads quickly on the rock garden by underground runners and also has small tubers which can be difficult to eradicate from the soil, so careful siting is essential. The basal leaves grow to about 10cm across and are cut into 5 divisions, lobed towards the apex. They are generally low-growing plants with murky coloured leaves and coral pink flowers. Cultivars of this cross include ‘Coffee Time’, ‘Sea Fire’ and ‘Sea Pink’. There is also a cross between *G. sessiliflorum* subsp. *novae-zelandiae* ‘Nigricans’ and the little-grown *G. suzukii* which has been named ‘Welsh Guiness’.
RHS Award of Garden Merit descriptions

All descriptions are based on plants grown in the RHS Trial of Hardy Geraniums Suitable for the Rock Garden 2004-2006. Plants grown elsewhere may differ slightly according to cultivation conditions. Colour codes were taken using the RHS Colour Chart. The fifth edition (2007) is available from RHSE Mail Order, Wisley, Surrey GU23 6QD.

Geranium (Cinerereum Group)  
‘Giuseppe’  
AGM (H4) 2006  
Sent by Allan Robinson, Coomblund  
Cheerful and reliable with bright, almost magenta flowers and a small, black eye. Deserving a prominent place in the rock garden.  
Mound-forming perennial, 100 × 250mm in trial. Basal leaf blades to c25 × 30mm on petioles to 80mm, mid green (137B/C), sparsely hairy on the upper surface, thicker below, circular in outline, divided to three quarters into 7; divisions little overlapping, 3-lobed for about one third of their length; lobes more-or-less equal, ovate, obtuse with occasional teeth. Stem leaves in unequal pairs, much reduced, usually 1 pair per stem. Stems lax to upright, pale green, tinted reddish-brown, minutely pubescent. Flowers borne in pairs at the tips of the branches. Sepals narrowly ovate to elliptic, 7 × 3mm with hyaline margins, macro to 1mm. Flowers 25-30mm across, vivid reddish-purple (slightly stronger than 74A), finely veined purplish-red (71A) the colour fading just above the small black centre; petals obovate, 14 × 12mm, the apex truncate to faintly notched.

Geranium × lindavicum ‘Gypsy’  
AGM (H4) 2006  
Sent by Hon Anne Baring  
Lost from cultivation for several years but re-discovered and available once more. Strikingly vivacious flowers of a colour unlike any other geranium to date.  
Mound-forming perennial, 150 × 200mm in trial. Basal leaf blades c20 × 25mm on petioles to 80mm, mid green (138A) with an even covering of short, adpressed silvery hairs, rectangular in outline, divided to three quarters into 7; divisions little overlapping, 3-lobed for about one third of their length; lobes more-or-less equal, ovate, obtuse with occasional teeth. Stem leaves single or in unequal pairs, few, much reduced. Stems lax, green with red nodes and short, adpressed hairs. Flowers borne in pairs at the tips of the branches. Sepals ovate, 8 × 3mm with fringed, hyaline margins, macro to 1mm. Flowers 30mm across, vivid purple (74A), veins dark purplish red (71A) fading to white above a dark maroon blotch at the centre; petals obcordate to ovate with a shallow notch, 15 × 15mm.

Geranium sanguineum ‘Little Bead’  
AGM (H4) 2006  
Sent by Waterpump, Penlan  
Ground-hugging cultivar with lovely saucer-shaped, pinkish to purple flowers. One of the members of its species best suited to the domestic rock garden.  
Spreading, rhizomatous perennial, 14 × 55cm in trial. Rosette leaves few, soon disappearing. Stems leaves paired c25 × 35mm, mid green (137B), evenly covered with short, adpressed hairs, longer on the underside, divided almost to the base into 5 or 7; divisions clearly distinct, cuneate, widest near the apex, acute, margins revolute, 2-3 lobed; lobes lanceolate, lacking teeth, with a minute acute tip. Stems prostrate, pale green flushed red, especially beneath the nodes, covered with long and short, patent, eglandular hairs. Flowers mostly borne singly on peduncle to 60mm; pedicels to 30mm. Sepals elliptic-covate, 8 × 4mm with 3 prominent veins and hyaline margins, macro to 2mm. Flowers 40mm across, pinkish purple (78B), finely veined purplish red (61A/B) with a small, white eye; petals broad ovate 15 × 20mm, crimped with a very shallow notch at the apex.
**Rock Trial selection guide**

### Geranium Cinereum Group selections in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. (Cinereum Group) ‘Ballerina’ (1)</td>
<td>Pale purple (74D), veined purplish red</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 × 15cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late July</td>
<td>Plants from micropropagated stock lost compact habit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. (Cinereum Group) ‘Carol’</td>
<td>Purplish pink (74A/C), veined dark purple</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>14 × 25cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid July</td>
<td>Flowers held nicely above plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. (Cinereum Group) ‘Giuseppina’</td>
<td>Vivid purple (74A), finely veined red-purple</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>20 × 40cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid June</td>
<td>Stems become rather diffuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. (Cinereum Group) ‘Lambrook Helen’</td>
<td>Reddish purple (74B), veined purple with an eye</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 × 25cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid July</td>
<td>Quite small flowers but of a strong colour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. (Cinereum Group) ‘Laurence Flatman’ (2)</td>
<td>Pale purple (74D) with patches of white</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 × 25cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid July</td>
<td>Distinctive arrow-shaped darker patch on each petal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. (Cinereum Group) ROTHBURY GEM (‘Gerfos’)</td>
<td>Pale purple (75B/C), veined purplish red</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 × 20cm</td>
<td>Mid May – early August</td>
<td>Very neat foliage and a splendid lavender-purple eye to the flowers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Geranium sanguineum selections and hybrids in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Little David’</td>
<td>Vivid purplish red (78A) with purplish veins</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>30 × 50</td>
<td>Early June – late July</td>
<td>An unusual hybrid with G. psilostemon but proving too big for most rock gardens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sanguineum ‘Album’ (3)</td>
<td>White to very faintly pink</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>50 × 70m</td>
<td>Late May – late June</td>
<td>An attractive and reliable plant but too vigorous for a small rockery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sanguineum ‘Droplet’</td>
<td>Reddish purple (78A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17 × 45cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late June</td>
<td>Uninspiring but with dainty little leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sanguineum ‘Little Bead’</td>
<td>Pinkish purple (78B), finely veined purplish red</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 × 55cm</td>
<td>Late May – mid July</td>
<td>Ground-hugging plant with lovely rounded flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sanguineum ‘Shepherd’s Warning’</td>
<td>Vivid purplish red (67C)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12 × 33cm</td>
<td>Mid May – early July</td>
<td>Deep purplish pink flowers combine well with dark foliage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sanguineum var. striatum</td>
<td>Very pale pink (69C), veined purplish pink</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30 × 70cm</td>
<td>Early May – mid July</td>
<td>AGM reconfirmed for rock garden use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Geranium sessiliflorum selections and hybrids in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Cally Variety’</td>
<td>Pale pink (69C), fading to white</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 × 25</td>
<td>Mid May – mid June</td>
<td>Unimpressive in trial with small flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Dusky Crûg’ (4)</td>
<td>Pale pink (75C), white towards base</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32 × 55cm</td>
<td>Died in trial</td>
<td>An untidy plant best suited to the front of the border.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. [Image 1](#)  
2. [Image 2](#)  
3. [Image 3](#)  
4. [Image 4](#)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Nunnykirk Pink’</td>
<td>White and pale purplish pink (74D)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 × 80cm</td>
<td>Died in trial</td>
<td>Sparsely flowered and too spreading for the rock garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. sessiliflorum subsp. novae-zelandiae ‘Nigricans’</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 × 20cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late June</td>
<td>Attractive brown foliage but with small flowers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Geranium subcaulescens selections and hybrids in alphabetical order**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. × lindavicum ‘Alanah’ (6)</td>
<td>Purplish pink (74C), white in lower half</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13 × 30cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late July</td>
<td>Flowers with a nice dark edge. Foliage silvery and neat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. × lindavicum ‘Gypsy’ (7)</td>
<td>Vivid purple (74A), dark eye with white surround</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15 × 20cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late July</td>
<td>Superb airy inflorescence. Plants in trial benefited from light shade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. subcaulescens ‘Giuseppii’ (8)</td>
<td>Vivid purple (74A) with a dark eye</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18 × 40cm</td>
<td>Mid May – mid July</td>
<td>Compact plants with strikingly clear, dark-eyed flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. subcaulescens ‘Splendens’ (9)</td>
<td>Bright pink (67B) with a dark eye</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17 × 20cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late June</td>
<td>Wonderful bright pink flowers with a delicate eye.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other species in alphabetical order**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Flowering</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. caeruleatum</td>
<td>Pale violet (87/D)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 × 35cm</td>
<td>Died in trial</td>
<td>An unusual, floriferous plant with a good habit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. dalmaticum (10)</td>
<td>Purplish pink (74A/B)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 × 23cm</td>
<td>Early June – early July</td>
<td>A delicate aromatic plant, there is also a white-flowered cultivar called ‘Album’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. orientalitibeticum (11)</td>
<td>Pinkish purple (78B), white patch at base</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28 × 50cm</td>
<td>Mid May – late June</td>
<td>A suckering, vigorous plant with marbled foliage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. potentilloides (12)</td>
<td>White blushed pale pink (65D)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 × 80cm</td>
<td>Died in trial</td>
<td>A very invasive plant but also succumbing to disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. pylzowianum</td>
<td>Reddish purple (78A) veined red</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 × 50cm</td>
<td>Late May – early July</td>
<td>Too invasive for the rock garden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Stage 3
Botanical and nomenclatural notes
Several entries were found not to be correctly named. Some plants submitted as *G. sylvaticum* ‘Birch Lilac’ were identified as ‘Mayflower’, *G. pyzowianum* proved to be *G. orientalibeticum* and *G. phaeum* ‘Majus’ was *G. × monacense var. anglicum*. Other incorrect entries included the *G. macrorrhizum* cultivars ‘Ingwersen’s Variety’ and ‘Pindus’ and *G. × cantabrigiense* ‘Biokovo’.

During the period of the trial the plant that had been submitted as *G. platyanthum* giant was given the cultivar name ‘Russian Giant’ and a hybrid between *G. sylvaticum* and *G. pratense* was called ‘Richard Nutt’.

The cultivar ‘Silva’ was found not to be a selection of *G. sylvaticum* as usually reported but, more likely, a hybrid between *G. pratense* and *G. collinum*.

Cultivation
The benefit of cutting back cultivars of *G. phaeum* and *G. macrorrhizum* was shown. This practice results in tidier plants and often a second flush of flowers. After the removal of the shade-netting variegated and golden-leaved selections of *G. phaeum* became prone to scorching and it is best to grow these permanently in semi-shade.

Geranium ROZANNE (‘Gerwat’) & ‘Jolly Bee’
No consistent characters could be found to reliably distinguish these two beautiful cultivars. However, as both plants have the legal protection of Plant Breeders Rights it is not currently possible to synonymise the two names. Since the appearance and performance of the plants were identical in trial the AGM was given to both.

Rock Trial
Botanical and nomenclatural notes
Some plants entered as *G.* (Cinereum Group) ‘Ballerina’ proved to be ‘Laurence Flatman’ and some plants submitted as *G. sanguineum* ‘Little Bead’ were ‘Droplet’.

Cultivation
Plants that had been grown in peat tended to establish very badly and it is advisable to wash the roots of plants received in this way before planting.

A number of the entries were found to be too large for the site and for most domestic rock gardens. Particularly vigorous were *Geranium × riversleaianum* ‘Russell Prichard’, *G. renardii*, *G. tuberosum*, *G. potentilloides*, many of the dark-leaved plants and a number of selections of *G. sanguineum* as well as its hybrid ‘Tiny Monster’.

Micropropagation
Micropropagated plants of *G.* (Cinereum Group) ‘Ballerina’ were found to be inferior to vegetatively raised stock in their weaker flower colour and more lax habit. Where possible it is recommended to purchase plants grown from cuttings or division as these are considered true to the name.
The RHS Trial of Hardy Geraniums, including the Rock Trial, ran from 2002 to 2006 and was the largest ever trial of the genus. Over the course of four years more than 500 entries were recorded, described and judged.

Plantswoman and nursery owner Elizabeth Strangman had originally recognised the need for a trial to try and select the really worthwhile plants from the great number of named also-rans that had appeared over the preceding decade or so. Between 1997 and 2002 alone, the number of Geranium listed in RHS Plant Finder had shot up by 172. Now that the Trial is over there can be little doubt that it has succeeded in identifying the genuinely excellent plants. The list of AGMs is an impressive one, a reliable guide to the best crane’s-bills from across the entire range of these varied plants.

Stage 1 featured some of the more tender, less conventional members of the genus such as Geranium palmatum, the G. traversii hybrids and the South African species. In addition to these, the spectacular blue-flowered hybrids of the Pratense Group, some of the finest geraniums of all, were judged. These included the AGM-winning cultivars ‘Blue Cloud’, ‘Brookside’, ‘Nimbus’ and ‘Orion’.

Stage 2 offered the chance to study the lurid hybrids of G. psilostemon such as ‘Anne Thomson’, ‘Ann Folkard’, ‘Ivan’ and PATRICIA (‘Brempat’) as well as the less typical, but strikingly individual, derivative BLUE SUNRISE (‘Blogold’). These dazzling plants were in marked contrast to the bland ranks of G. x asperatum cultivars that also appeared in Stage 2 with their barely distinct, pastel-coloured flowers.

Stage 3 demonstrated what extremely good plants hardy geraniums are as ground cover for a shady spot. It also featured possibly the most magnificent geraniums of the whole trial, KOZANNE (‘Gerwat’) and ‘Jolly Bee’, which, in unison, both smothered themselves with large blue, white-eyed flowers well into autumn.

The Rock Trial proved to be a record of just how few rock geraniums are reliable, healthy plants suitable for domestic gardens. However, the AGM winners were among the daintiest and most appealing of any of the plants in trial.

The Trial of Hardy Geraniums was a tremendous effort of organisation, co-operation and plantsmanship and its legacy is a greater awareness of the best cultivars to plant, a more accurate nomenclature and a fuller appreciation of this fascinating and beautiful genus.

### Overview

**Floral Trials Committee**

**Chairman:** Tony Lord  
**Vice-chairman:** Roy Cheek, Pam Schwerdt  
**Bill Boardman**  
**Marina Christopher**  
**David Creese**  
**Fergus Garrett**  
**Diana Hart Dyke**  
**Ian Howell**  
**Christopher Lloyd (RIP)**  
**John Paton**  
**Chris Sanders**  
**Terry Smale**  
**Brian Talman**  
**Victoria Wakefield**  

**Co-opted members:**  
Elizabeth Strangman, Andrew Norton, Robin Moss  

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Particular thanks are due to:

RHS Floral Trials curatorial staff, headed by Jim England (Trials Superintendent) for planting and maintaining the Stage 3 plants;

To RHS Trainee Gardeners Lukas Lindemann and Lina Fors for their care of the Rock Trial;

BARRY PHILLIPS' HERBARIUM TECHNICIAN for the herbarium specimens, and detailed descriptions of entries of both trials;

Wendy Wesley (Trials Officer) for recording flowering, measuring plants and collating all the information for Stage 3;

Jacquie Gray (Trials Officer) for recording flowering, measuring plants and collating all the information for the Rock Trial;

Andrew Norton (Geranium National Plant Collection® holder) who has been so very generous with his plants, time and expertise throughout the trial;

David Victor, Rachel Etheridge, Robin Moss and Robin Parer for their help and comments, particularly at the Geranium Trials Open Days;

All the senders of plants to the trial with whom the trial could not have taken place;

Elizabeth Strangman, whose dedication and knowledge were the inspiration for these trials;

All photographs are by Wendy Wesley, unless otherwise indicated. Others are by Jacqie Gray (JG) or Barry Phillips (BP).

Further reading


Societies and websites

The Geranium Group, UK

The Hardy Geranium Group: Secretary: Tricia Fraser, 16 Hallam Grange Croft, Sheffield S10 4BP

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

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 cultivar 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. In addition new cultivars are designated nomenclatural standards.

The RHS Herbarium, located at RHS Garden Wisley, is the largest active horticultural herbarium in the UK. At present the collection contains about 70,000 herbarium specimens and over 30,000 images of plants.

RHS Trials Bulletins

Begonia Rex Cultorum Group: December 2006
Canna: September 2003
Daisies (yellow, perennial): September 2004
Delphinium: June 2004
Fuchsia (hardy): December 2005
Geranium (hardy) Stage 1: June 2005
Geranium (hardy) Stage 2: June 2006
Hyacinthaceae (little blue bulbs): September 2005
Iris (bearded): May 2007
Lavenders (hardy): July 2003
Miscanthus: October 2004
Peppers (sweet) November 2006
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

RHS Plant Assessments

The first of what will become a series of online publications, to complement the RHS Plant Trials and Awards series, was published in July 2006:

Pittosporum tenuifolium hybrids & cultivars

Support the RHS, secure a great future for gardening

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