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Calluna vulgaris ‘Miranda’. Photo by Karla Lortz.
Help wanted: ‘H. E. Beale’

Donald Mackay
135 Deerfield Lane, Pleasantville, NY 10570, dammackay@gmail.com

Charles Nelson, Administrator of The Heather Society, has asked our cooperation in collecting specimens of foliage from plants growing in North American gardens labeled Calluna vulgaris ‘H. E. Beale’ or a variant of that name, including the pink-colored members of the Beale family tree [see below], especially if you still have the label and, best of all, the source of the plant. Comparison of UK and North American samples may help to determine whether plants sold as ‘H. E. Beale’ in the two areas are not identical, suggesting a change in name or a previously unnoticed change in the morphology of this remarkable double heather.

Dr. Nelson has provided the following instructions for taking heather samples and preserving them for transfer to The Heather Society (UK) for microscopic examination. The search is primarily for the presence of hairs or bristles on the leaves and stems of plants believed to be C. vulgaris ‘H. E. Beale’. These hairs can be easily dislodged during sample preparation, so please try to keep handling to the absolute minimum. For the same reason, it is important to take samples of young growth, before wind and rain have had much time to rub hairs off the foliage.

The following directions for sample preparation are taken from Bulletin of The Heather Society 8 (7): 5 [spring 2016]. “Do you grow ‘H. E. Beale’, the double, pink-flowered Calluna first released in 1929? If you have one or more plants, I would like to have a few small specimens (such as side shoots an inch or so long) from each plant to examine. I do not need flowers, fresh or otherwise, only foliage. I would especially like material for old, long-established plants. Pop the specimens in a small envelope and post to me – you do not need to use a plastic bag or wrap them in moist paper or cling-film (they will not be used to make cuttings). If you know where you obtained the original plant, please also let me know.”

Send samples to Dr. Charles Nelson, Tippitiwitchet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech PE14 8PE, Cambridgeshire, UK.

Please be sure to transcribe the label and origin of your plant (if known) as accurately as possible. The initials, if present, may be important. Plants labeled (incorrectly) as ‘Mrs. H. E. Beale’ were being widely distributed by US nurseries in the 1970’s, most likely to other nurseries, for sale or propagation. Catalogs of nurseries selling callunas as ‘H. E. Beale’ or variants of this name would be most valuable adjuncts to this investigation.
**Calluna vulgaris 'H. E. Beale' family tree**

Cultivars arising as sports on 'H. E. Beale' and its sports, respectively

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<tr>
<th>First generation</th>
<th>2nd generation</th>
<th>3rd generation</th>
<th>4th generation</th>
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<tr>
<td>'Elsie Purnell'</td>
<td>'Golden Wonder'</td>
<td>'Pink Dream'</td>
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<td>'Monika'</td>
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<td>'Scholjes' Gigant'</td>
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<td>'My Dream'</td>
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<td>'Peter Sparkes'</td>
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The importance of *Calluna vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale' cannot be overstated. In the decades since its discovery and introduction, the cultivar has produced numerous sports worthy of introduction in their own right. Some of these sports had produced valuable sports of their own, listed in the table above.
Bud Bloomers: A Brief Overview

David Wilson
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In 1936, George Underwood, of Underwood and Sons Nursery in Surrey, England, noticed a clump of silvery mauve Calluna still flowering among the faded browns of the native heather surrounding it. This late flowering plant, introduced to the trade as Calluna vulgaris ‘Underwoodii’, held a significant market share through the 1970’s even while competing with the intensely popular double flowering cultivars and a surging interest in colored foliage forms. The significance of a Calluna whose flowers did not open but held their color within the tightly packed buds and lasted much later into the season than most others has only recently been realized.

The 1980’s saw more introductions of “bud bloomers”, found as mutations, or “sports”, on existing plants or occasionally spotted as seedlings in nurseries or in the wild. Some, such as ‘David Eason’, ‘Redbud’ and ‘Marlies’, are still useful plants and should be made welcome in any garden. About this time, German nurseryman Kurt Kramer saw a potential to develop improved cultivars through selective breeding using ‘Marlene’, an excellent reddish purple, bud-flowering plant with a durable upright habit. Mr. Kramer’s results secured bud flowering heather a place in the autumn flower markets of Europe and North America. ‘Alexandra’ was his first success. When it was introduced to North America, selling rights were divided east and west between some American growers, but by the turn of the century this plant was rarely grown. Perhaps the reddest Calluna at the time of its introduction, with dark green foliage and upright habit, the plant lacks a willingness to thrive and the flowers age quickly, browning in poor weather. ‘Larissa’ is an even darker red sport of ‘Alexandra’, perhaps still the darkest red. It is a unique plant worth having but a slow grower, and the buds brown by early October. Also, ‘Larissa’ reverts quite readily to ‘Alexandra’. We keep a few ‘Alexandra’ going by cutting it (the reversions) out of ‘Larissa’.

Calluna ‘Larissa’ is a gorgeous red bud bloomer, but note in this photo taken on October third that some buds already are beginning to brown. Photo by Barry Wulff. Reversions of ‘Larissa’ to ‘Alexandra’ are distinguishable by their conspicuous white sepal bases, clearly visible in this August photo. Photo by Ella May Wulff.
Other early arrivals are very garden-worthy plants, though some lack the qualities of more recent introductions. The white flowering 'Melanie' and its yellow foliage sport 'Sandy' are reliable performers. When these are planted with the pink flowering 'Annette', the purple 'Amethyst', or the red 'Aphrodite', color can last well into November.

In my own breeding for bud bloomers with yellow foliage, I used the excellent yellow (normal-flowering) Calluna 'Christina' as pollen parent. The resulting 'Galaxy' has yellow foliage and white buds that remain attractive later into the winter than those of 'Sandy'. It does, however, lack the vigor of the preferred European cultivars for quick potted plant production.

Two plants I would not want to be without are 'Athene', a lovely rich red, and 'Alicia', a plant of matching growth habit with long-lasting, bright white buds. Grow these two together in pots and watch them blend together while holding their packed flower spikes upright. Add some sparkle by contrasting them with the gold foliage of 'Theresa' – a sport from 'Sandy' that has cerise buds – or 'Tessa' – a sport from 'Theresa' with pink buds. Better still, pair 'Athene' and 'Alicia' with 'Zeta', a striking Calluna that has yellow-gold foliage and doesn’t bloom at all.

Bouquet in a pot. Contrasting Calluna bud bloomers 'Alicia' (white) and 'Athena' (red) are highlighted by the golden foliage of C. ‘Zeta’. Photo by David Wilson.
Recent introductions have added to the sturdy upright form of the plant combined with large, densely packed flower spikes. Extending the season into December with new color tones of red are ‘Angie’ and its golden foliage sport ‘Golden Angie’. ‘Sabine’ and ‘Selma’ are two more excellent reds for late season. The dusty rose buds of ‘Katja’ and the extremely long blooming, lavender-purple ‘Hilda’ are really super plants to look out for. Another innovation from Germany are the extra large flower buds of the white ‘Mary Lu’ and pink ‘Mary Rose’. Perhaps not yet developed to their full potential, we should wish for more, as the large, fat colorful buds are unique and offer a different look in the landscape.

![Young plants of Calluna 'Katja' are loaded with spikes of dusty rose buds. Photo by David Wilson.](image1)

![The white buds of Calluna 'Mary Lu' are extra large. Photo by David Wilson.](image2)

When Mr. D.F. Maxwell saw the double pink Calluna ‘H. E. Beale’ being sold as a flowering pot plant in the London flower markets 60 years ago, he proudly speculated on a bright future for this new way of selling a heather that his nursery had introduced to gardeners some years earlier. He suggested that selling flowering potted heather plants could grasp a place in the floral trade. He was partially correct, though not about ‘H. E. Beale’. Today’s “bud bloomers” have annual sales in Europe in the tens of millions, now grown in one third of the time it took pioneering growers to produce a saleable plant, now in plastic, not clay pots. I suspect that Maxwell’s imaginings did not extend to thinking that callunas would be spray painted in a rainbow of colors for added sales, or that growing up to four different varieties in one pot made sense, but both are trending in fall flower shops. Would he have thought it possible that labeling plants with a correct cultivar name would give way instead to trade registered product brand names such as Garden Girls™ or Beauty Ladies™, strictly controlled by law and patent lawyers? These are some of the consequences of the advanced breeding of new bud-flowering heathers. Heather is still a very much grown and enjoyed plant, from the same heathland roots but now coloring a different world.
Report on bud-blooming callunas in northern California

Maria Krenek
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Our experience with bud bloomers is limited here in Humboldt County. The few that we have do well, but we have very few cultivar choices. After attempting to canvas some of our HERE chapter members and receiving very few responses, I must speak primarily from my own experience.

Availability has limited me to three: ‘Underwoodii’, ‘Roswitha’ and ‘Sandy’. Many of the newer bud-blooming Calluna cultivars are protected by patents. Because Glenmar is a low-volume nursery, it has never dealt with plant varieties that are patented. The paperwork involved just wasn’t worth the effort. Infrequently, some will come through in the general nursery trade. ‘Sandy’ is one that came to me that way. I found it in a large nursery in the San Francisco Bay area, I believe. Its yellow foliage with pure white buds got my attention. My experience with ‘Sandy’ is limited to less than two years. So far, it is performing modestly. I hope its performance improves as the planting matures. When compared with the old standard ‘Underwoodii’, buds on ‘Sandy’ are more tightly carried and interspersed more deeply in the foliage, so its overall effect is similar to that of many other callunas.

‘Underwoodii’ is one of my favorite callunas. Vigorous, freely “flowering” and with no negative attributes in my garden, I have enjoyed it year round for twenty years. It is fairly neat in habit, exhibiting a soft form with full leaf cover and wind-sensitive movement when in bloom. This continues until its next pruning. I use it for much of the year to act as filler for flower arrangements, fresh or dry, as you would traditionally use baby’s breath. The stems retain their beauty and flowing form for a very long time even after being cut. In the garden and in design layouts, I use it as a unique neutral with special qualities of form, as it does not exhibit eye-catching color. Its softer form adds a textural diversion to break up some of the never-ending mounding and tight forms that our pruning produces and gives a bit of movement to the scene when its graceful branches catch the wind.

‘Roswitha’ in my garden has never been very showy. I blame that mainly on its placement in a part of the garden stricken with increasing shade encroachment from redwood trees. In spite of that, it has exhibited tremendous endurance and has bloomed well. Its dark green foliage is not particularly noteworthy, but its buds are pleasing in the fall garden. Because ‘Roswitha’ does not grow as tall or carry its bloom as loosely as does ‘Underwoodii’, I rarely use it for flower arrangements.

From the replies I did receive from fellow HERE members, everyone seems to have a different experience. ‘Underwoodii’ and ‘Roswitha’ performed differently in other gardens. Nobody had any real complaints, however. It is too bad we have such limited experience here with the bud bloomers. Perhaps NAHS members coming from other parts of the United States to the Eureka conference this August will bring along cut stems of their favorite bud bloomers for our parlour show.
A selection of older Calluna bud bloomers in the Wulff garden, western Oregon, early October. Cultivars are, from bottom: 'Underwoodii', 'Anette' (l) and 'Redbud' (r), 'Amethyst' (l) and 'Fritz Kircher' (r), 'Marlies' (upper left).

Photo by Barry Wulff.
Bud bloomer report from Vermont

Donald Mackay
135 Deerfield Lane, Pleasantville, NY 10570, dammackay@gmail.com

As many of you probably did, I started off years ago with bud bloomers like Calluna vulgaris ‘Underwoodii’ and ‘David Eason’ before they were even called bud bloomers. They were known to have deformed floral parts but were just curiosities called late bloomers. In fact, they didn’t do much except start to bloom very late or not at all or at best sparsely. I didn’t grieve when I finally lost them but later took up with C. vulgaris ‘Fritz Kircher’, which I planted in a sunny spot in Vermont. Over the years, it performed magnificently for me, with masses of long-lasting fully colored buds. I judged it fully winter hardy, but one year it got tired and collapsed to one quarter of its former volume.

I had been growing a few bud bloomers mixed among the normal heathers, but their impact was small. But one day I took out a couple of dead trees and a mass of stringy dogwoods (the local Cornus stolonifera, which does nothing but give the deer a few twigs to nibble) and found that I had uncovered a 12 x 12 foot patch of pretty good soil with only a few large stones to interfere with planting plans. I levered out the stones, dug over the soil, got lots of roots out, and wondered what to do with the space. It was right at the edge of the woods and rather badly shaded, but it was spare. I had acquired a large number of bud bloomers, mostly Kurt Kramer’s new and some older Garden Girls™, from Bill Dowley when Bill was starting to dismantle his New Hampshire nursery in preparation for his move to Delaware. I had space for about 40 small plants, which without regard for their bud color I planted on 18” centers.

These newer bud bloomers are now in their third year, and all are doing well though not growing rapidly. I lucked out, because when they start to bloom, the autumn leaves are already falling and the shade is far less than in mid-summer. I also lucked out by planting only bud bloomers. They add to each other without a distracting cultivar next door. However, I have put C. vulgaris ‘H. E. Beale’ and ‘Peter Sparkes’, also late bloomers, at the edge, and they do help the color effect. And, of course, they also have a long bloom period.

For winter protection, I have covered the bud bloomers with balsam and spruce boughs each year (as I do my other heathers) and so far have lost none. But this winter is brutal: low temperatures in the minus twenties Fahrenheit, 40–50 mph winds, and very little snow. I just have to hope that the branches have held onto a couple of inches of snow. Perhaps being in a shaded area will keep foliage desiccation to a minimum. I’ll know more in three months, but as of now, I’d say a mass planting of bud bloomers in a shady area has worked out very well for me. Obviously it’s my planning skills at work.
Bud bloomers for the Mid-Atlantic region

Jane Murphy
Hickory Hill Heath and Heather, 2473 Hickory Hill Rd., Oxford, PA 19363, murphy1213@zoominternet.net

What isn’t there to love about bud bloomers! Here in the mid-Atlantic, we typically enjoy the colorful buds from late July into December. Even when the color has faded, the spent buds remain whitish through the winter and provide a nice contrast to the green foliage of the callunas.

We’ve tried a number of bud bloomers over the years and have found two that are very reliable. With her purple-tipped white buds, Calluna vulgaris ‘Marleen’ is a real standout in the garden. She reliably blooms profusely year in and year out. ‘Roswitha’ is another favorite. The lilac-red buds are a nice contrast to the dark foliage. We have found that both cultivars are easy to propagate and grow nicely in the mid-Atlantic region. According to the International Register of Heather Names, ‘Roswitha’ was a sport on ‘Marleen’ and is named after the wife of Leo Meurs (who found the sport), although it was originally submitted for plant breeders’ rights as “Rote Maureen” (Red Maureen).

‘Bonita’ is a bud bloomer that we are trying for the first time this year. We hope she does well, as this cultivar has everything that one could ask for in a Calluna. We enjoyed the red buds from late summer into the fall. They were a lovely contrast to the warm-weather golden foliage. By December, the buds were spent, but the foliage changed from golden to an orangey-red. What a stunner this plant is! We hope ‘Bonita’ will be able to survive our winter climate here in the mid-Atlantic.

Calluna vulgaris ‘Bonita’ has colorful buds and colorful foliage, too. Photo by Karla Lortz.

We are also trying ‘Athene’ and ‘Alicia’ this year. They did not fare as well during the summer as ‘Bonita’. Several plants were gone by fall. We’ll wait to see how the remaining plants respond to our winter before deciding if they are candidates for a mid-Atlantic garden.

We don’t want to discourage anyone from trying other bud bloomers, but we haven’t had success with ‘Amethyst’, ‘Aphrodite’ or ‘Susanne’. None of them were alive a year after planting.
Interesting newer bud bloomers

Karla Lortz
502 E. Haskell Hill Rd., Shelton, WA 98584, handh@heathsandheathers.com

All photos are by the author.

The early varieties of Calluna bud bloomers, e.g., ‘Melanie’, ‘Amethyst’, and ‘Alexandra’, have been improved upon by Kurt Kramer and other heather breeders. I found ‘Melanie’ to be a weak and unattractive plant for me. ‘Amethyst’ is terribly fungal prone and ‘Alexandra’ even worse in both nursery production and in the garden. ‘Larissa’, a sport from ‘Alexandra’, has been awful here, as well. I do not spray for diseases. September is the dangerous month here in western Washington for these plants in pots. If it rains, there is trouble. They usually do better once planted in the ground. I finally found a spot where ‘Alexandra’ could thrive that was sunny with lots of air movement.

I have some newer bud bloomers that I find interesting and more reliable than these older cultivars. For example, ‘Renate’, ‘Selly’ and ‘Valentina’ have been much more trouble-free in my nursery and are just as pretty in flower, if not prettier than the older cultivars.

Calluna vulgaris ‘Renate’ (left), ‘Valentina’ (center), ‘Selly’ (right)

Some of the newer cultivars have colorful foliage that makes them even more desirable. ‘Sylvana’ is a vigorous silver-foliage bud bloomer with pink buds. ‘Bonita’ has red buds and golden foliage that turns orange in winter. ‘Anouk’ and ‘Galaxy’ have white buds with golden foliage. ‘Theresa’ and ‘Tessa’ have, respectively, cerise and pink buds with gold-green foliage all year. ‘Renate’ and ‘Lianne’ have very dark green to purple foliage during our winters. Now you have very long “flower” color combined with beautiful foliage colors.

White-flowered ‘Veluwe’ has “fat” green foliage. ‘Ruby Sprinkles’ has the added benefit of colorful new spring-tipped growth. There is even a creeping red bud bloomer, ‘Nelly’, with a habit of 4” by 20”, a good candidate for hanging basket cultivation.
Bud-blooming cultivars with colorful foliage. *Calluna vulgaris* ‘Anouk’ (left), ‘Lianne’ (center), ‘Veluwe’ (right).

Are bud bloomers as hardy as other cultivars of *C. vulgaris*? I have no proof of that yet. I need to get more feedback from customers. I have to be careful where I send some cultivars due to their susceptibility to fungal attack, because the better-known red and purple bud bloomers are notorious for failing during summer in highly humid climates. The newer cultivars lack enough garden data yet to answer this question. If you have some feedback on this issue, please let me know.

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**From a nurseryman’s “Help requested” files**

A customer sent photos of *Erica carnea* and *E. × darleyensis*, asking for advice about the plants that she had enjoyed for 20 years but which now were in declining health. The plants definitely appeared to be stressed and struggling.

As part of my advice to her, I suggested that she give them a break from pruning next year. She replied that her new gardener clips them every month and she would ask him to leave them until next year!
Editor Wanted
for
Heather News Quarterly

Qualifications: Familiarity with desktop publishing or willingness to learn

Responsibility: Produce four newsletters per year in format suitable for downloading and printing from website.

Remuneration: Opportunity to have first look at new and exciting developments in the world of heathers, and interaction with enthusiastic and knowledgeable heather people (your authors) and keen photographers.

Starting date: Now

Further information: Contact Ella May Wulff at ewulff@peak.org

Note: This position could be shared between copy and layout editors.
Calendar Winter 2016

Jan. 27  VIHS general meeting, home of Heather Schyf.  
        Info: Earl Jenstad, earljenstad@live.com

Mar. 2   VIHS general meeting, home of Elaine Rogers.  
        Info: Earl Jenstad, earljenstad@live.com

April 6  VIHS, to be announced

April 9  NEHS heather trimming, Fort Tryon, Manhattan, NY.  
        Info: Mary Matwey, pmatwey@stny.rr.com

April 30 NEHS heather trimming, Heritage Museum & Gardens, Sandwich, MA

May 18   VIHS, visit to Malcolm Ho You Peonies, Saltair.  
        Info: Earl Jenstad, earljenstad@live.com

June 8   VIHS guided visit to Hatley Park.  
        Info: Earl Jenstad, earljenstad@live.com

Aug. 10–13 NAHS Conference, Eureka, CA.  
            Info: Chris House.

Oct. 5   VIHS, Companion plants for Heathers, Sylvan United Church.  
        Info: Earl Jenstad, earljenstad@live.com

Nov. 2   VIHS annual general meeting

Dec. 7   VIHS Christmas luncheon
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$15/year including electronic newsletter; $11/yr. surcharge for print copy

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John Calhoun, treasurer (address above).

Chapter dues may be included when paying NAHS dues by adding $10/year for HERE one person, OHS, VIHS; $15/year for HERE family membership and NEHS.

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In Canada, contact Elaine Scott, 2836 Oceanside Lane, Mill Bay, BC V0R 2P2, 250-743-0965, TheScottRogers@aol.com

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