



**Boulous - Special Offer!**  
 NCS Member Steve Budding is a boulou fan. Steve owns Brookside Nurseries and has a special offer for NCS Members in 2008.

### In Praise of Boulous by Paul Cornelius



It was in 1999 that we first heard of the 'Boulou' family of chrysanthemums when, having seen them on Sam Oldham's stand, the late Geoff Amos, a regular at our Norfolk Chrysanthemum Association monthly meetings extolled their virtues and offered to sponsor a class at our late show, for which the winner would receive a bottle of champagne! Some plants were acquired and several members took up the challenge and we were staggered and delighted at the show when no less than fifty two pots graced the show bench!!

Surprisingly the champagne was won, not by any of our leading lights but by a lady grower, Joan Abel, who, in addition to the bubbly, also had her photograph in Garden

News alongside Sam Oldham who had visited our show to see for himself the response the class had received.

### So just what are 'Boulou' chrysanths and why am I writing in praise of them?

The family currently comprises five main cultivars *Rose Boulou*, *White Boulou*, *Yellow Gonzo*, *Red Bronco* and *Bronze Bronco*. Latterly two more cultivars have been added to



More details on Steve's Brookside Nurseries website  
[Brookside Nurseries](http://www.brookside-nurseries.co.uk)

A range of colours available



the range, Alfredo Orange and Alfredo Mauve. They are a late flowering strain developed to flower in normal conditions in early November and, on a relatively short plant, to carry 4 or 5 good quality floristry sized flowers. In contrast to most other disbudded lates they do not need rooting until mid May, with a stop before 18th June.

After stopping, the plants grow away very vigorously and send out numerous side shoots, which need to be removed early. As insurance grow one additional flower to the final number being aimed for. When the plant has produced buds the extra break can be removed, thus concentrating the plant's energies on the remaining flowers.

As with the tops, root growth is rapid and soon the plants need moving on to their final pots, which in my case were 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (162mm). This size is designed to contain the rate of growth thus making for a short plant at flowering time. If desired a larger plant and more flowers can be achieved in a bigger pot.

My chosen compost is a standard commercial quality soil less mix and thus feeding commenced 4 weeks after final potting. A level analysis (1-1-1) liquid feed was used at quarter strength each watering and an additional solid feed at three week intervals, plus top dressing as flowering time approached. Obviously with such fast growth adequate precautions also had to be taken against both insects and rust or fungal attacks.

As the breaks lengthened, split canes were added and tying up commenced to secure them and to produce a well balanced plant with evenly spaced flowers.



The plants inevitably became top heavy in the pots so a mini standing ground was established to enable the canes to be secured to low level straining wires to prevent toppling and damage.

Once the buds were secured the decision was taken as to which surplus break should be removed. As the plants began to show colour they were housed on one side of a small 8'x 6'(243cm x 183cm) aluminium greenhouse but as the plants (including the pot) did not exceed 30" (750 mm) in height they were easily accommodated on the staging. Eleven pots fitted easily and probably a further four or five would have been possible on the same side.

All the normal preparations for housing conventional disbuds were observed and with judicious ventilation and the provision of gentle heat some nice flowers were produced early in November. Some were cut and used for vase decoration or floral art, whilst other plants were eagerly accepted by friends for use as stand-alone plants in their conservatories, bringing some welcome colour as other plants fade in the autumn. A further number sold very rapidly at our late show thus swelling our funds by the princely sum of £35.

#### **So to sum up — what are the virtues of Boulous??**

- Ideal introductory plants for newer growers.
- Relative ease of cultivation, if you can grow reasonable lates you will certainly master these.
- Late rooting and potting gives a shorter period of growth and maintenance. Less cost on heat.
- Smaller pot size allows for a more compact growing area.
- Short plants, which in soil less compost are not heavy to lift, give the chance for disabled growers (or those not quite as able as they once were) to tend the plants easily or lift them to a higher surface to make life easier.
- If you take a holiday or short break anybody looking after them in your absence will find it less daunting than a full standing out ground of conventional disbuds.
- Easily accommodated in a normal greenhouse with a height that allows use of the staging and ease of culture.
- Light in weight so housing is more easily accomplished.



- Can be easily flowered in a porch or conservatory where they provide weeks of interest and colour.
- The finished product can double as a pot plant or cut blooms depending on your preference and needs.



We all know that if our hobby is to survive we must set our sights at encouraging potential new growers, not with what they see as the 'mumbo jumbo' of the exhibition world, but by demonstrating there are less arduous sides to the hobby by which they can achieve good quality flowers. In Boulous I firmly believe we have such a family and I hope these few lines will have whetted your appetite and that you will join the fun in growing these easy to manage cultivars.

If you do, why not try and get your society to include a special class in their schedule?? Good growing, have fun and here's to success!!

The Web Site Development Team is responsible for website contents and currency, if there are topics that you would particularly like to see included or you think the current proposals can be improved please use the Feedback form or send an e-mail using the 'Contact Webmaster' link below.



Boulou colour range pictures  
courtesy of Steve Budding



Steve Budding