

The Newsletter of the
IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY



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Editorial

Dear Fellow Members,

Thanks to our regular and new writers we have an excellent range of articles in this issue. I am deeply grateful to all these people and would like to remind you that new contributors are always welcome. Indeed contributions have been so generous for this newsletter that some articles have had to be held back for another issue. Printing and postage costs are hindering expansion of the newsletter despite the committee's best efforts to overcome these obstacles. Any helpful suggestions would be welcomed.

The survey of Irish cultivars is a central activity of the society and I urge you to read and respond to Brendan Sayer's article promptly.

There will be no new series of "Garden Heaven" this year. We will instead have a re-run of some past programmes. R.T.E. is giving rather a poor service to Irish gardeners. Why not let them know that you are not satisfied with this situation.

Best wishes and enjoyment to you all in the garden this season and remember to watch out for Irish cultivars for your garden this year.

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Front Cover: *Winter Aconite*. Many thanks to Wendy Walsh.

The State of Play for Irish Cultivar Survey by Brendan Sayers

In the last issue, No 87, the Editor, Paddy Tobin, without prompting, made reference to the poor response to the survey of Irish Cultivars that I received. He mentioned a handful of replies and just to be precise, I give the following details.

From the first request for plants of Irish origin beginning with the letters A, B and C, I received 5 responses. I do not include my own contribution, as it should be expected. Nevertheless I did get out pen and paper and list my plants. That brings the total to six. A further request for plants beginning with D, C and E got four responses, three of which gave the full listing of Irish origin plants in their respective gardens. In my original request for information I suggested that if members preferred to list the whole alphabet it would be quite acceptable. Taking this into account the list with the largest amount of entries is one from A - Z of 30. The least amount on a list was an A - C of 6 entries. I give these quantities for two reasons; first to illustrate the amount of Irish cultivars that some people grow and also that even one name on a list is as valuable as one with 30, especially when you consider the rarity of some of these plants.

My original method, of taking three letters at a time, would I had hoped have allowed me the time to collate the information. I should not have been concerned in this regard. With a membership of 792 (current membership on February 3, 2003), I think it reasonable to expect a better response. I do know that people are very busy but I urge you to attempt again and to complete your list in one go so that you only have to motivate yourself once. If you are familiar with your garden plants, a few hours will see you through the main section of the book (*A Heritage of Beauty*).

To help encourage you along I would like to mention some of the plants that came up from the few lists that were returned to me. Commonly mentioned in the returns received to date were *Iris unguicularis* 'Kilbroney Marble', *Dactylorhiza elata* 'Glasnevin' and *Athrium filix-femina* 'Frizelliae'.

But the plants that are of most interest are ones that are seldom heard of. An old apple variety is growing in one garden. In the same garden there are two Irish cultivars which I know of as being very rare. One is difficult to propagate - though our efforts in this direction should not be hampered by this fact. I am sure there is a time or method that will prove successful. The other is a plant that can easily be bulked up and would make a lovely addition to any garden.

One thing that was noticeable was the absence of the plants that have been bulked up and distributed at the plant sale in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Plants like *Aspidistra* 'Irish Mist', *Gloxinia sylvatica* 'Glasnevin Jubilee', *Berberis x stenophylla* 'Gracilis Nana' and *Anemone* 'Bright Eyes' were distributed in reasonable quantities and I would have expected them to be mentioned.

The Society's efforts to conserve the plants listed in *A Heritage of Beauty* will not end as a result of the poor response. There is a core group of people who will keep the flag flying. Unfortunately progress will be much slower if we do not have the assistance from other members. These days time is very precious to both gardeners and Irish cultivars. Comparable societies in other countries have had great success stories with their conservation programmes. The day will come when we too can boast of our

own successes. The more members who become involved the sooner that day will come. As the days go by we are losing valuable material. There was the time when we (the IGPS) could plead ignorance of which plants had Irish origins. We can do so no more!

I have tried in all articles to encourage members to assist in any way possible. The simplest method is to participate in the survey. If you wish to be more involved there is always something for you to do. The time for the ABC's is over. I will not ask for any more lists. The ball is in your court.

Brendan Sayers, Irish Cultivar Co-ordinator
Irish Garden Plant Society

Iris Unguicularis 'Kilbroney Marble'
Photo: P.Tobin



Augustine Henry an Irish Plant Collector in China **Chelsea 2002 by Paul Maher**

Shortly after returning from Chelsea, joint IGPS - National Botanic Gardens Educational exhibit in 1995, plans were formulated to stage an exhibit that would feature Dr. Augustine Henry and his work in Central China. The proposal was put to a committee meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society. Apart from Sheila Pim's biography of Dr. Augustine Henry 'The Wood and the Trees' only brief articles have dealt with his work in Central China.

It was proposed that this exhibit would be staged at the Chelsea Flower Show of 2000, however acceptance of the proposal arrived too late and it was suggested that it should be staged at the 2001 show. The initial meetings were held in Stephen Butler's home and from there a sub-committee was formed. Seamus O'Brien was elected chairman and he took on the task of continuing the research that Assumpta Broomfield had started as a student at Glasnevin. Seamus unearthed volumes of information that had lain hidden for many years in various texts. Assumpta Broomfield took over the job of fundraising from Stephen Butler when, due to other heavy commitments, he had to resign from the sub committee. Caroline Mahon was elected Secretary and I continued with my work of exhibit design and logistics organiser. Carol Marks dealt with the job of press officer. All other committee members worked tirelessly to compliment the various aspects of committee work.

After our 1995 experience we learned that very clear and concise information panels were needed for a display such as this. Environmental Publications was awarded the contract and from the beginning Katrina Bouchier worked closely and tirelessly with the committee to produce panels of stunning quality that complimented the entire exhibit and told the story ever so well.

Disaster struck the project in March of 2001 with the foot and mouth outbreak in the U.K. Throughout the summer we had to care for the plant collection, watering,

feeding trimming and standing it out in frames. This improved the quality of the plant material and greatly benefited the exhibit.

We started proceedings once again in the autumn of 2001 with some slight committee changes, Mary Bradshaw taking over the job of secretary. The RHS, on receipt of our application for 2002, informed us that the size and shape of space allocated to us originally could not be offered to us for the 2002 show. Instead, we were positioned in a corner site which covered an area of 24 sq. metres, not in any way accommodating to our original design. Negotiations with the RHS proved unsuccessful and it was back to the drawing board to produce a new design to cater for a different space and this was put before the main committee for approval.

Experience had taught us that for exhibitions, like the Chelsea Flower Show, it is best to construct a box structure and stage the plants within that. One of the last jobs undertaken before travelling was a trial run at the construction process, including putting in some of the key plants. All went according to plan but when the bulk of what was needed to stage the exhibit was viewed alongside the box van for its transportation a feeling of trepidation descended on us all.

In the final frantic days there was a multitude of small incidental things that needed attention. Everything came together and the packing of the van took place on Thursday, 16th May, ready to travel on the earliest ferry on the Friday. The journey to London, thankfully, was an uneventful eight-hour drive, with myself behind the wheel and Seamus O'Brien as navigator. As we were driving both Mary Bradshaw and Carol Marks were flying over to meet up with us on the Friday evening.

On arrival in the showground in the late evening the buzz was incredible, as everybody was totally absorbed in making the deadline for completion by Monday morning. Our instant reaction was to start unloading the van even though our schedule told us we did not need to until Saturday morning. By 8 pm that evening we had all our staging in the marquee along with the plants. This gave us a huge headstart allowing construction to commence at first light on Saturday morning.

Saturday saw the completion of the staging and the placing of many plants. The notable thing about the building days was that many friends of the IGPS dropped by for a chat and to get all the news from Ireland. Stephanie Henry, a grand niece of Augustine Henry, had joined us for the final day's building. One of the final jobs was the erection of the information panels and the portrait of Dr. Augustine Henry. Not being content with that we polished trimmed and tweaked on into the night and all the next morning for as long as we were allowed to stay.

As is customary, the judging took place over that evening and night and although exhaustion told us to sleep, nervous anticipation kept us awake. On the Tuesday morning there was an unseemly dash to the marquee to see what award, if any, was present and once again the IGPS had earned itself a Silver Gilt medal, higher than silver, but not quite gold. There was a slight air of disappointment that the gold medal was not in the bag however as the gates opened and visitors thronged the grounds we found our spirits were uplifted once again as compliments and comments flowed. Many called by and spoke of their love and affection for Ireland and Irish horticulture and there were some who openly declared it was high time that Dr. Augustine Henry was celebrated on such a stage for his great work.

The benefits of such participation cannot be overstated. It is perhaps the greatest stage on which the IGPS has exhibited. That the exhibit was appreciated is borne out by the fact that an invitation to exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show arrives to the committee every year without fail.

The Chelsea committee saw many people take part at one stage or another and these people must be mentioned: Seamus O'Brien, Assumpta Broomfield, Paul Maher, Grace Pasley, Sarah Ball, Caroline Mahon, Carol Marks, Mary Bradshaw, Paul Gardiner, Alison Leonard and Stephen Butler. At the initial meetings, adding their expertise, were Dr. David Jeffrey, John Ducie, Cathy Burke, and Ricky Shannon.

Projects such as this cannot proceed without financial assistance and for this we must acknowledge the backing the society received from An Bord Glas, the main sponsor, and the contribution of Mr. Michael Maloney must be particularly acknowledged. Others, to whom we are very grateful for their help include The Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, The Forestry Service and Coillte.

Ramblings of an Older Gardener by Dr. Keith Lamb

As the years roll on one may not be able to do as much physical work in the garden. On the other hand, one can look back and note which plants have done persistently well with minimal attention and consider whether these should be propagated in greater numbers to become the mainstays of the seasonal displays.

To start with spring, the snowdrops can be naturalised under shrubs and trees. There are several other species besides the ordinary *Galanthus nivalis* that will thrive with out special care. Of these the Crimean snowdrops (*G. plicatus*) *G. elwesii* and *G. byzantinus* have done well in our garden. With them come the winter aconites. We prize the cultivar 'Guinea Gold' for the more intense golden-yellow colour of the flowers. This one flowers just a little later than the ordinary kind and does not seed around, but forms clumps that can be divided every few years.

Another genus that has given us lasting pleasure is *Erythronium*, the so-called Dog's Tooth Violets. *E. californicum*, 'White Beauty' is one of the most vigorous. It bears creamy coloured flowers, petals somewhat reflexed after the manner of a cyclamen. Like all the erythroniums it has attractive foliage, faintly marbled in this one with lighted coloured veins. *E. tuolumnense* has plain but lovely green leaves to set off the golden flowers. *E. hendersonii*, with violet coloured flowers, is our favourite, though not so willing to increase as the others. *E. dens-canis* is a little disappointing in that, while prolific with offsets, the flowers are not so abundant. Perhaps we should plant it deeper. *E. americanum* is a failure as it has produced almost no flowers despite almost filling a bed with its leaves.

The mention of cyclamen is a reminder that here we have species that range from the fully hardy to the frost tender. The earliest in spring is *C. coum*, with deep pink or white flowers. Though it has persisted for many years in our midland garden it has not spread as freely as it did in our former garden near the coast. *C. repandum*, though, has been a triumph, spreading quickly under the beech trees to form a carpet of scented carmine-coloured flowers every April. Then, of course, there is the familiar *C.*

hederifolium of autumn. One can never have enough of this, or indeed of any cyclamen.

Luckily, we started with trilliums years ago, as they are slow to flower from seed. Planted near the beech trees *T. chloropetalum* has spread to cover quite an area. The three-petalled flowers vary from white through purplish to red, the upright narrow petals sitting on a ruff of three leaves. These leaves are interestingly varied, plain green or mottled. Curiously, the seedlings more commonly in the adjoining gravelled drive than in among the plants. Of the other trilliums the lovely double form of *T. grandiflorum* shows some promise of becoming a notable feature in the garden. It increases by forming clumps which can be divided occasionally.



T. chloropetalum in Hestor Forde's garden
Photo, P. Tobin



Galanthus nivalis. Photo, P. Tobin

With the trilliums we grow another American plant, the bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*), so named from the red sap that oozes from a damaged root. The frail crocus-like flowers are set off by the unfolding leaves of glaucous grey. These flowers are so short lived that the double form is more desirable as the blooms last longer. Either form, though, is lovely and no trouble to grow. It is a woodland plant in nature and looks appropriate in such surroundings in the garden. Indeed, all the plants mentioned so far look well under trees. In gardens of modest size it should be possible to contrive a copse of smaller growing trees – rowans, the smaller cherries, maples etc. – to accommodate them as ground flora.

In the rock garden also are genera of smaller plants that can form permanent plantings with few demands for upkeep. In early spring there are the scillas and chionodoxas. Among the trouble-free plants the pulsatillas must rank high. Indeed, once established they are best left alone. The furry buds open to enchanting flowers in mauve, pink, red and white. In Ireland the celmisias can be lasting features, to the envy of our English friends. Best of all is *C. 'David Shackleton'* with its glistening white leaves. Of the alpine primulas, *P. pubescens* 'Mrs. J.H. Wilson' and *P. marginata* have persisted with us for many years, as have the ramondas and haberleas, even when planted on the flat rather than in the north-facing crevices usually advised.

The saxifrages offer several kinds of permanent value. Many of the kabschias and englerias call for careful attention, but not *S x apiculata*. This forms slowly spreading mats of spiky leaves covered in spring with yellow or white flowers. Sharing any sunny spot can be the encrusted saxifrages, available in endless size and form of leaf. The clumps are attractive at all seasons, but especially so when bedecked with

sprays of, usually, white flowers. Forms with yellow, reddish or spotted flowers are available.

Much more could be written on the theme of permanent plants, but every gardener can draw up his or her list of indispensables. These will form the main picture, but no real gardener can refrain from trying some more demanding species, few or many according to age and capabilities. A gardener always has something to look forward to. Perhaps the favourites will do even better next season, or perhaps the latest acquisitions will settle down.

The Magic of an Old Walled Garden by Tim Cramer

Nostalgia, it has been said, is a thing of the past, and the past is another country where we cannot go again. It is foolish and saddening even to try, as I found recently when I tried to return for a brief while to my horticultural roots.

Many years ago, as a callow youth awaiting placement in my chosen career, I worked for six glorious months for a neighbour who was also a small farmer and local property owner. From spring to early autumn, on days when there was no other work for me, Jim would dispatch me to the garden with the simple instruction: “Look after the place”.

At one time it had obviously been a small but beautiful old walled garden, a serene place of vegetable plots, fruit trees and mixed borders. It was entered through a rose-covered arch and had a large but now run-down greenhouse. The old fruit trees and bushes, I was told, still yielded meagre crops; a few aged shrubs struggled into bloom, but of flowers and vegetables there were none.

Once in there, Jim rarely bothered me – perhaps he thought I knew more than I actually did which, horticulturally, was precious little. But with youthful enthusiasm I tidied what and where I could and I think he was pleased. At any rate, when I suggested growing some basic vegetables, he supplied the seed without demur and of course there was no shortage of well rotted manure from the nearby cow sheds, so I was able to feed and mulch the trees and shrubs.

The frustration, of course, was that I could not be spared every day as more urgent work often intervened. But on those mornings when he would grin at me and say: “Go and kill your weeds”, I felt I was being sent to my own private heaven. The sun shone warm on my back, the balmy late spring breezes blew, the high walls muted the sound of occasional traffic and as time wore on, the good earth responded to my tentative efforts at cultivation.

There was a sort of monastic timelessness about this old place, with its mellow walls, its benign ghosts (I had known Jim’s elderly relatives who had, in their time, worked the garden) its birdsong and its beauty. I had no timepiece in those lean teenage days and the passing hours were marked only by the tolling of the Angelus bell and an outer suburban bus which trundled past several times a day. In these idyllic surroundings, I could not but be at peace with myself and the little world around me.

I even persuaded Jim to buy some small plants of hardy annuals to embellish the path to the house and with these flowering and the lawn maintained, he was impressed and I was satisfied –almost. On the subject of the greenhouse he would not

be moved. I wanted to refurbish it, replacing broken glass and giving it the lick of paint which was all it really needed, but Jim had other long-term plans of which I knew nothing. He would merely smile and say: "Let it be. Anyway, you won't be here forever and who will use it when you are gone?"

So I had to leave it, and not long afterwards, leave the walled garden also, to go into another world and another life. Recently, out of curiosity, I went back on something of sentimental journey, aware that Jim had passed on, at a great age, not long before. The house, barred and shuttered, was there, as was the front lawn which I had maintained and the path along which I had planted the annuals.

The lovely old walled garden is gone, however, its fertile soil submerged under the bricks and mortar of the developers. The unrepaired greenhouse has long since disintegrated, though a few supports still cling forlornly to the gable of the house.

Another little treasure has been lost to the nation, but of course in those days nobody noticed. I suppose I should not have gone back, but not everything is lost. A legacy of the contentment I found in that gentle place remains with me today – in my own garden.

Well Worth a Read!

by Paddy Tobin

Maggie Campbell-Culver spoke in three locations earlier this year, Belfast, Dublin and Cork. Unfortunately I was unable to attend at any of these locations but the enthusiastic comments I heard from those who had attended these lectures prompted me to get a copy of her book, "The Origin of Plants". While I may have missed the treat of hearing the author speaking on the subject I have since had the pleasure of reading about it.

Maggie traces the history of the introduction of plants over the past millennium, linking their arrival in Britain with the historical events of the time and introducing us to the people who were involved in their introduction. She draws on her two areas of expertise, horticulture and history, to present us with a wide range of stories which will fascinate and delight the reader.

It was indeed a pleasure, especially in these days of so many lightweight gardening books, to read a book which was obviously very well researched, had extremely interesting and informative content and was written in a clear, concise and witty style.

Many members will be quite familiar with the range of plants now available to us, will have grown a wide range of these plants and will, in general, be reasonably knowledgeable gardeners. For you this is a book which will give you a deeper and more interesting insight into the many plants you know and love. This is a book of substance, full of delightful information, excellent illustrations and is a truly pleasurable read.

"The Origin of Plants" is published by Headline Book Publishing and costs GB£25.

Common or Garden Plants?

by Rae McIntyre

What quality does it have that makes a plant so desirable that everyone yearns to own it? And then, of course when everyone does own it, it loses its appeal and goes almost completely out of fashion. Take *Cerintho purpurascens*. The first time I saw it was in Beech Park in 1995. My notebook was filled with the names of desirable plants that attracted me. Jonathan Shackleton identified this one with its metallic blue-grey leaves and flowers of blue suffused with purple but offered no further information. Of course, in time, I acquired seeds and saved them from one year to the next but for the past two years I haven't bothered to grow it. Later on it's going to be one of the free seed offers with Amateur Gardening Magazine so every other patio in the British Isles will have its plastic pot of *Cerintho purpurascens*. That should really devalue its currency even though it is intrinsically a most attractive plant.

Something similar has happened with the *Dahlia* "Bishop of Llandaff". I think I heard about it some twenty years ago when Christopher Lloyd described it in glowing terms. Dahlias were going through a phase of being downright unfashionable anyway so nobody had it. Dahlia foliage is coarse and green but His Grace has almost ferny, horticultural-purple leaves (it bears no resemblance to ecclesiastical purple) and glowing single red flowers. Now it is so popular every plant and bulb catalogue lists it and garden centres sell pot-grown ones in July. This is so that you can have instant colour on your patio or you can put it to bed with *Crocosmia* "Lucifer" which it matches to perfection. But somewhere along the line the "Bishop of Llandaff" has lost some of his appeal by being so readily available.

I remember seeing *Cercis Canadensis* "Forest Pansy" with its spectacular purple leaves in Helen Dillon's garden many years ago and admired it so much that I ordered one for myself at great trouble and expense. Now this has become easily obtainable but you still don't see that many in gardens here. The Northern Irish climate (can't speak for that of the South) with its high rainfall and cool summers doesn't suit it at all. Mine was obviously so homesick for hot sunshine and so disgusted with heavy rain that it didn't even bother coming in to leaf one spring. I notice that Helen got rid of hers too from her "hot" border so it's possible that even Dublin's fair climate was somehow lacking.

Thankfully that nauseating tree that thrived in Ireland, North and South, for many years is no longer ubiquitous. I'm referring to *Populus x candicans* "Aurora" with leaves so conspicuously variegated that they look as if someone had been sick over them. To get this desired (?) effect it is necessary to prune them hard every winter and presumably this constant hacking has weakened their constitutions so much that many of them have died. About twelve years ago we had a holiday in the far South of Ireland and saw some glorious gardens but 90% of smaller roadside gardens had "Aurora" and *Lavatera olbia*. "Aurora" and *Lavatera olbia*. "Aurora" and *Lavatera olbia* ad nauseam. This was in places with such a mild climate they could have probably grown tree ferns successfully and the most tender *olearias* and *leptospermums*. *Populus x candicans* "Aurora" is rare in English gardens but Vanessa Cook, who has a very special garden (with a National Collection of *pulmonarias*) at Stillingfleet Lodge in Yorkshire, has two standing like sentinels to demarcate different

areas of the garden. She just couldn't understand why these visitors from Ulster were so profoundly unimpressed, to the point of rudeness, by trees that she'd had such difficulty in obtaining and for which she had great affection.

Sweet peas are happily becoming very popular again. Not just any sweet peas of course. They have to be antiques, to have been around since the nineteenth century and to be strongly scented. For many, many years they seemed to epitomise naffness and were nearly on a par with garden gnomes. I remember one woman (Mrs X) speaking of another (Mrs Y) who had made quite a name for herself as a skilled, enthusiastic alpine gardener. Mrs X said "And to think that she used to grow sweet peas in her garden." Mrs X said this in exactly the same tone she would have said, "She has a bad infestation of head lice." I followed the herd and was outwardly rather scathing about sweet peas too. Inwardly I still had the fondness for them that I've had for as long as I can remember. They're such generous flowers. There's nothing else that you can cut in armfuls, bring into the house, stick in a jug with none of the tedious fiddling around with oasis and that still looks pleasing, that fills rooms with a heavenly scent and then replenishes itself so that you can cut another armful within a few days.

Hellebores are very much in the ascendant just now. They've been popular for a very long time with the gardening cognoscenti but even a decade ago there were no stands of 100 + hellebores in garden centres. Many garden centres didn't stock them at all. For years all the hellebores I had in the garden were divisions or seedlings mostly of *Helleborus x hybridus* (formerly *Helleborus orientalis*) that had been given to me by gardening friends or relations. Now I'm nearly spoilt for choice in a garden centre near Coleraine.

A notable feature of star plants that become ultra fashionable is that, in the beginning, they are seen only in choice gardens, like Helen Dillon's or Margaret Glynn's in Ballymena, and they are not easy to obtain. Once they become widely available, they lose their kudos and are sometimes loved to death q.v. *Populus candicans* "Aurora". *Papaver orientale* "Patty's Plum" is in the transition stage between being rare and loved to death at the moment. *P.* "Patty's Plum" is a real designer poppy beloved by those who enjoy the silken texture of poppy petals, need their flowers to fill the "June gap" but shudder sensitively at the full-blooded red of "Goliath" or "Beauty of Livermere" or the orange-salmon of Mrs Perry. "Patty's Plum", I realised, would be ideal for one bed that is usually a bit off-colour in June so I recently bought five from Peter Nyssen Ltd. of Manchester. Their spring catalogue includes hardy perennials and "Patty's Plum" was available at £7 for 5. I could have bought 100 for £130 if I had wanted them which just goes to show that nurserymen have spotted the plant's potential and soon there will be rows of it in a garden centre near you.

Some plants are real beauties but are difficult to grow and even more difficult to propagate so they'll never make big displays at garden centres or be offered by the hundred in Peter Nyssen's catalogue. I'm thinking of plants like *Nomocharis pardanithina*, *Trillium grandiflorum* "Flore Pleno" or *Stellera chamaejasme*. Dermot Kehoe told me about a truly black-flowered clematis. I may be wrong but I think it is a form of *C. orientalis*. His specimen hasn't flowered yet but the one at Airfield was blooming away when I saw it late last July. I can predict that it will become very popular because black-flowered plants are sought after and Frances McDonald's collection at The Bay, Camolin, is interesting and amusing and well worth a visit.

GHS (GARDEN HORROR STORIES) by Phemie Rose

Charity Days, tours, groups, garden trails, whatever the particulars, trekking through gardens is fast becoming a voyeur's pastime. Garden tours may have become the new house tours. On a house tour some people may look under beds and open drawers and cupboards. In the garden they may trample your beds, pinch cuttings and ask you to redesign their garden on the spot, while their children throw gravel at the fish in the pond or run up and down the gravel slopes that you have spent hours raking.

I must admit that visitors who talk constantly about their plants and their garden and barely look at ours are not top of my popularity chart. Neither are those who are part of a tour and ask for a cutting from a small unusual shrub, with the remaining 40 members of the tour standing behind them waiting for the same. I am more than willing to give cuttings but not to 40 odd people at one time.

The most outrageous garden snipper I ever had was part of a tour. She had brought with her a clear polythene bag and secateurs. She proceeded to take cuttings of everything that took her fancy; I was totally unaware of this until she presented me with her booty and asked for identification of the plants. I suffered from an instant attack of amnesia.

Garden visiting should not really be regarded as a family outing. Perhaps you have heard the horror story where a young mother finished the tour, thanked her host and handed her the 50 plant labels her children had collected, or the father with baby in backpack completely unaware that his papoose was pulling leaves off every shrub and tree he could reach and stuffing them into his mouth.

Some of us gardeners have skins as thin as onions and some people, because they have paid to come into the garden, think they can treat the place as entertainment, criticise the plantings and the design, even the health and choice of plants, within earshot of the gardener.

It would be preferable for ladies not to wear high heels unless they intend to aerate the lawn and then golf shoes would be infinitely preferable.

Beware the keen photographer who becomes so intent upon her subject that she steps slowly backwards and disappears down the bank into the stream, sits down suddenly and has to be helped out soaking wet and with a muddy backside. After a shower and a change of clothes (provided by the garden owner) she was none the worse, and her friend thought the whole episode hilarious!

An outside toilet is essential we have found from our experience. With our first visiting group of ladies the inevitable happened and someone needed to pay a visit. In no time at all the whole busload was queued up waiting to go into the house. The outside toilet became a priority after that.

Why do we gardeners do it? Why do we open our gardens? Is it because we are egomaniacs?

All the hard work and the occasional visiting bores are worth it for the one or two knowledgeable people who come through the gate, such as the two young Americans who came to see the garden. Malcolm was digging out a large shrub to give to a visiting friend and it was proving to be a bigger job than he had expected. In no

time at all these two guys were digging out the plant with Malcolm, they then tied it up and put in our friend's car. We all went inside and had tea and scones and they left at 7p.m. They were very keen gardeners and the craic was great. We then had a postcard saying that the visit to the garden had been the highlight of their holiday and they still keep in touch and send me seeds. It's for people like these that we open our gardens.

So don't be put off by the horror stories. A sense of humour (usually after the event) will mostly prevail. So go on take the step and open your garden, you will not regret it.

No "Céad Míle Fáilte"

by Dr. Dermot Keogh

Nowadays garden visitors in County Wicklow can be assured of a warm welcome. Prince Hermann von Pueckler-Muskau who visited us in 1828 found little sign of the "céad mile failte" The prince had inherited large estates straddling the river Neisse which today marks the boundary of Germany and Poland. He was infatuated with landscape gardening but lacked the means to develop his ideas. He married Lucie Hardenberg, a rich Berliner, and rapidly spent her fortune, much of it on the landscaping of the estate. By 1826 they were broke and decided to divorce (but not separate) so that Hermann could seek a new wife of substance who would continue to support his extravagance.

To this purpose and to further his gardening studies he travelled to France, Britain and Ireland, writing regularly to Lucie, telling her of the places he visited and the people he met. He landed in Dublin on August 11th 1828 and had clearly done some homework.

Accompanied by a theologian!, he left Bray at 5am to visit Kilruddery whose French style garden was even then famous. They were however abruptly refused entry. He attributed this to their modest attire. The theologian (an Irishman) was outraged at such treatment and forecast that the earl would certainly be condemned to hell. At Bellevue, above the Glen of the Downes, they were however well received by the owner, Mr La Touche, "a dignified old gentleman."

Not totally daunted, a few days later he presented himself at the gates of Powerscourt. This was before the gardens, as we know them today, were developed. No luck; it was Sunday and he was again turned away. He rants at the false piety which would permit Lord Powerscourt to venture out to a damp church on the Sabbath but not permit one to enjoy God's own wonderful open air temple. He was particularly aggravated that the workers in the estate who sweated all week to earn their wages were not allowed to enjoy the park and God's creation on their free day. There is no record that he actually asked the workers as to their preferred past-time on Sundays. He walked along the estate wall, stealing forbidden impressions of the landscape and the waterfall. A few days later he returned and made the five mile journey through the landscape to the waterfall. He comments that it was more like a natural landscape than a designed one.

To what extent Pueckler- Muskau's views on Ireland had already been formed or were influenced by his early rebuffs in Wicklow I cannot tell. His expanded attacks on Lord Powerscourt and Irish landlords, especially absentee landlords, were quite vicious, particularly considering his own aristocratic background. He spent four months in Ireland, failing to find the rich wife, but writing a fascinating outsider's account. His gardens at Muskau and Cottbuss, greatly influenced by the English landscape style, are regarded as amongst the finest in Germany.

Refs: Reisebriefe aus Irland, Hermann von Pueckler-Muskau, Ruetten &Loening, Berlin

A Move to the Sea

by Joan Christie

It is not easy to leave something that you have loved for over forty years. Every tree, shrub and plant had earned the title, "Friend". I thought that only death would separate me from these, but life threw up an opportunity to move from Belfast to a bungalow on the Antrim Coast and I could not resist the lure of the sea and sky and the challenge of making a new garden.

The old garden had passed through many transformations. A small area of fruit trees had become a play area with sand pit, swing and tumbling bar. The lawn then became a football pitch or a badminton court. A poor section of lawn became a formal pond surrounded by paving and cornered by four statuesque Irish junipers. So it went on, ever changing.

Right from the beginning I realised that the garden was well suited to all the ericaceous subjects and I found great inspiration visiting the National Trust gardens at Rowallane and Mountstewart. There, for the first time, I saw *pieris* and wrote to Mr. Slinger at the Slieve Donard nursery to find out if he had any. I bought two and one is a very large specimen and I marvel at how widespread this shrub and its many new varieties have become in the last fifty years. I was so anxious to build up a stock of rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias that I became quite good at striking cuttings. I seem now, alas, to have lost the knack.

The garden progressed through many more changes but ended with a less formal look with many more perennials giving it a cottage garden effect. One visitor remarked that she liked the way everything tumbled over everything!

When leaving a garden a great problem is to choose what, if anything, to lift. I did not want to disturb the old garden and yet I wanted to take a few old friends with me.

Away back in the sixties I had bought *Camellia* 'Brigadoon' at a cost of one pound, seven and sixpence. What value it gave producing glorious bloom yearly. It came easily from cuttings and I soon had daughters and granddaughters throughout the garden. One of their progeny was one of the four shrubs that I chose to bring to the seaside. It will not be so happy here but it will survive. I also brought *Thuja orientalis aurea nana*, again grown from a cutting.

When visiting Susan Montgomery's lovely garden I fell in love with a rhododendron that had come from the Slieve Donard Nursery and was an unnamed variety. This gave it a kind of mystique. This, as well as its beauty, led me to crave a cutting. I was given two and this inspired in me a determination to live and see the two shrubs flower. This they did so one is now with me in my new garden.

As I had not any intention of leaving Belfast, just before the move, I had planted a *Sorbus vilmorinii* and since it had not even settled in it too came with me. I also had many plants in containers and they were easy to transport and were useful in furnishing the new garden.

I had a small influence on the new garden over the past ten years when it was the property of my son and daughter-in-law. Bits and pieces which might thrive by the sea had been brought from Belfast. It was a very pleasant garden with lawn and

playhouse. I did not want to be cutting grass in my new life so the grass was removed and a great chunk of slope excavated to make room for a sizeable area of paving. Steps lead to the upper level which is covered with breathable membrane topped with quite large pebbles. On both side of the steps are two raised beds and the pebbled area is surrounded with beds for shrubs and plants. The garden at the back is well sheltered from the sea winds by the house and a tall fuchsia hedge. At the back of the plot there are two cherries, one on either side of the back gate and a tall privet hedge which I tolerate as a necessary evil.

As I look out in January *Genista* 'Mount Usher' is in full bloom, having already bloomed well in April and May. It really is a valuable shrub. In the pebbles I have planted grasses, euphorbias and a kniphofia. Spaces have been left in the paving for a black-stemmed bamboo, an *Astelia*, *Nerines*, *Aloes* and the black *Ophiopogon*, which stands out against the stone. The walls of the house are furnished with honeysuckle, *Rose New Dawn*, *Clematis jackmanii* and a young *Fremontodendron*. When looking towards the house from the garden I felt that something was needed to break the line of the house so I have planted *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck Gold' which is slender and slow growing. I hope I have been wise to do this and that the beech will withstand the salt-laden winds which ever affect the back garden.



Dahlia 'Bishop of Llandaff'



Geranium 'Ann Folkard'

Last summer, groups of *Cosmos* highlighted the beds. I have saved the seed, which originally was collected in Japan, and I hope to reproduce the display this summer. *Osteospermum* and *Erigeron* do well here and are mixed with *Geraniums*, *Celmisias* and *Iris*. *Geranium* 'Ann Folkard' drapes herself elegantly from the raised bed on to the paving. One of my favourite perennials, *Thalictrum* 'Hewitt's Double' is grouped with *Dahlias*, including the must-have 'Bishop of Llandaff'.

I have decided to have roses of the climbing type and have already planted 'Compassion', 'Madame Gregoire Straechlein' and 'Bobby James' in the hope that he will climb into the ash tree in the far corner of the garden. *Cornus* 'Eddie's White Wonder' is settling in beside some *Cistus* and *Mallows* which do very well here.

At the front of the house the climate is totally different. It is always several degrees colder than the back and very windy. A little shelter is provided by a large *Phormium*, some *Gorse* and *Rosa rugosa*. It is surprising to me to find that many plants do thrive. Bulbs are followed by *Poppies*, *Erigeron*, *Osteospermum*, *Geraniums*, *Sedums* and *Anemones*.

Projects for the coming gardening season are the making of a small raised bed for a few salad crops, the construction of a compost bin and the purchase of a few more plants and sowing lots of seeds.

Do I miss my old Belfast garden? Of course I do, but it is still fresh in my mind. As I visualise it I remember it with love and gratitude for all the pleasure it gave me. I am compensated at the sea by a great view of ever-changing skies, headlands, waves and wheeling birds and when I tire of all that I can go to the back of the house and accept the challenge of a seaside garden.

A New Snowdrop Colour by Paddy Tobin

The March 2003 issue of "The Alpine Gardener" reports on a new colour break in snowdrops. We are all used to the white, with green markings, on the snowdrop and even the occasional one with yellow markings or ovary, such as *Galanthus* 'Wendy's Gold'. However, Joan Strood, who gardens in Gloucestershire, discovered a snowdrop which emerged in her garden with cream coloured buds. She has grown these on since, showing the snowdrop to the RHS Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee at the Westminster Show in February, 1999, when it was described as a 'remarkable find' and 'a new break in snowdrops'. The snowdrop is named as *Galanthus elwesii* 'Joy Cozens'. The deep cream/apricot buds arise in early February and as they open two-thirds of the tepals are pale apricot coloured, the basal portion being white. Interesting!

Gardens of Wexford

Planning a day out?

Why not visit some gardens in Co Wexford?

Kilmokea, Campile; Tel. 051 388109 email: kilmokea@indigo.ie

Woodville, New Ross; Tel. 051 421268

Shortalstown, Killinick; Tel. 053 58836

Sandy Lane, Killinick Tel. 053 28323 email wexgardens@eircom.net

Coolaught Gardens, Clonroche Tel. 054 44137 or 087 6446882

The Bay Garden, Camolin 054 83349 email:

thebaygarden@eircom.net

A call will assure you of a welcome.....

and give you directions and details!

A Woodland Garden in Early Spring by Marty Adams

In the last article, I wrote of the appearance of my garden in winter, giving a brief description of location, topography, weather and types of plants for winter interest. I intend to give you an idea of how the garden changes with the seasons and which plants are actively growing and are flowering during certain times here in my garden.

As I write this article, it is early spring and a muddy mess outside. Early spring is a tantalizing time for avid gardeners. After four months of winter, I have read and re-read the many gardening catalogues and am ready to burst out of horticultural hibernation. However, the exuberance I feel at the closeness of spring is tempered by my knowledge of the mercurial weather March often brings. This time of the year brings great meteorological confusion; a short spate of warm weather can easily be followed by a cold snap bringing injurious frosts. It is a time in which the seasons are not easily distinguished and gardeners take cautious inventory of plants while watching the calendar and daily weather reports. The old adage that says, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb" often proves its sagacity.

During a three day period in February, our entire area was blanketed by a significant snowfall which totaled up to 30" in some areas. Due to the very vicious winter we had, the temperatures were low enough to allow the snow to remain for about three weeks without melting. The temperatures have become more spring-like since then, and the blanket of white has been quickly replaced by a muddy scene of decaying leaves and pooling water. Though I do yearn for tinkering in the garden, no serious work can commence in such a quagmire.

This dreary display is offset by the heartwarming knowledge that spring is close at hand! I am expectantly waiting for the spring ephemerals to make their annual fleeting appearance on the forest floor. These are our delicate woodland wildflowers which are so named because they take advantage of the increased light levels afforded by the yet leafless deciduous trees in late March. They are only delicate in their appearance, for they are not coddled by mulches, watering cans or fertilizers and they withstand the vagaries of nature with remarkable pluck.

These herbaceous perennials live eleven months of the year as corms or minor bulbs underground, waiting for the early spring to burst forth. Growing rapidly to produce leaves and flowers, they set seed and photosynthesize a bit before relapsing into dormancy as the towering forest trees begin shading them out. They seem to be blissfully unaware of the constant threat of frost they are subject to in this early spring world.

Spring ephemerals in the wooded portion of my property which will soon make their appearance include anemone, *Anemone quinquefolia*, trout lily, *Erythronium americanum*, Dutchman's breeches, *Dicentra cucularia*, toothwort, *Dentaria laciniata*, spring beauty, *Claytonia virginica*, and Virginia blue bells, *Mertensia virginicus*.

Other early spring plants which are not considered ephemerals due to the fact they linger for the whole season are jack- in- the- pulpit, *Arisaema atrorubens*, May apple, *Podophyllum peltatum*, skunk cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, Solomon's seal, *Polygonatum biflorum* and False Solomon's Seal, *Smilacina racemosa*.

As I turn toward the cultivated areas of my garden, there is not much to see in terms of spring activity. The only obvious activity I see is the emerging new shoots of forgotten fall planted bulbs and some growth of lenten rose, *Helleborus* sp.

Most of my upcoming time will be spent ridding my lawn of last fall's torrent of leaves and adding mulch to selected areas. I have also sustained some winter injury on newly planted items and tender plants which are probably not fully cold hardy here. This list includes shrubs such as box sandmyrtle, *Leiophyllum buxifolium* and Florida anise, *Illicium floridanum*. Though I fully expected some damage due to my flouting of horticultural axioms, I am disappointed nonetheless.

Other, more subtle indications, that days are lengthening and spring is close at hand, are the swelling of buds and the coloration in the small twigs of certain plants. In contrast to fall's blazing curtain call, spring's first subtleties are dainty and esoteric. The twig colours of the maples, willows and dogwoods are begirted with their attractive and deepening reddish hues while the flower buds of Azalea, Rhododendron, Fothergilla, Aronia and Amalanchier grow plump with expectancy.

By the next article, I hope to convey the beauty of my native Rhododendrons, Phlox, Kalmia, Pieris, Aesculus and Fothergilla, to name a few. Until then, I am joyous, knowing that many plants are ready to burst into their collective silent symphony of colour and scent.

Wish me patience! Sincerely,

Marty Adams

Westminster, Maryland, USA

Borderline

by Annette Dalton

I started to write a piece about working at Kew about 5 or 6 weeks ago and abandoned it. When I came back to continue I realised how much had changed in such a short time and was forced to start again. It is a good illustration of how steep the learning curve has been for me since I began. RBG Kew is a vast organisation as well as a vast Botanic Garden. The Herbarium houses the greatest collection of preserved plant specimens in the world; the Jodrell Laboratory is a first class research institute; the School of Horticulture runs the 3 year Kew Diploma and Wakehurst Palace is home to the Millennium Seed Bank. Then there are the on site enterprises – shops and catering, the Kew Explorer to help people get about, and the Events Department which runs the various festivals and events at Kew. Finally, there are the gardeners, the ground force responsible for the visitor's horticultural experience.

The 300 acres at Kew are divided into sections and the Hardy Display Section covers roughly 100 acres in the north east of the gardens. The Hardy Display Section is also my new home! I have had an exciting time so far, including a visit from HRH

Prince of Wales. One of the highlights, however, has been planning the new Exotic Border, which is to be established in the Duke's Garden beside Cambridge Cottage. I have worked on the plan with Alison Smith, the gardener with responsibility for that area, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The border, and that area of the Dukes Garden, has been many things in the recent past, including a herb garden and a bulb garden. Most recently it was the half-hardy border, but it didn't quite work. I remember looking at it this time last year as a visitor to Kew and wondering what was the aim of the border. There was a lot of old woody material, some of which was damaged or leaning, interspersed with bananas and then filled with half hardy annuals. There were also some lovely specimens, a great *Drimys winteri*, a lovely big *Crinodendron patagua*, an *Eriobotrya japonica*, a nice *Cornus capitata*, a *Chamaerops humilis*, a few *Yucca aloifolia* 'Marginata' and fascicularias. We took our inspiration from these (and the bananas) and decided it should henceforth be the Exotic Border.

First we decided to do a cull. To begin with, of course, we had to list all those plants that we felt should go and then look into their history on the database. If a plant was of particular interest, from a natural source, or unique in the garden, we would have to do our best to save it, at least for this season, and propagate from it in case we lost it in the future. Once we had established what could go, the clearing started. Next the whole border was single dug, incorporating manure. Andrea and Renata, two of the Kew Diploma students, worked tirelessly for weeks to get all the digging done.

Meanwhile Alison was drawing up the new plan. She and I had various brainstorming sessions to come up with our plant lists, as well as visiting some nurseries, and a well-known exotic garden in Norwich – that of Will Giles. We finally came up with a plan, which we think will work.

To our 'backbone' of existing shrubs we added a few *Dicksonia antarctica*, a *Phoenix canariensis*, a *Trachycarpus fortunei*, a few *Fatsia japonica* and a *Phormium tenax* 'Purpureum'. We aim to achieve further height through the use of more bananas, especially the large *Musa sikkimensis*. We already have *Musa basjoo*, which appears to have survived the winter well and, although not as tall but very impressive, *Ensete ventricosum* 'Maurelii' will add a tropical feel with its very large, red/purple-tinged leaves. We will include a few tender candidates which will have to be placed under glass (and heated glass at that) for their winter hibernation, such as *Strelitzia reginae*, *Caladium bicolor* 'Red Flash', *Colocasia esculenta*, *Alocasia x amazonica*, and *A. macrorrhiza*. The rest we may try to get away with! Will Giles has had amazing success with overwintering some of his exotics, including hedychiiums and cannas, and he is much farther north than we are. Speaking of those two genera, we intend to include quite a few – *Hedychium gardnerianum*, not only for its stunning flowers, but also the amazing scent, *H. ellipticum*, *H. spicatum*, *H. coccineum* and *H. densiflorum* 'Assam Orange', *Canna* 'Durban' (aka. *C.* 'Tropicana'), *C. indica* 'Purpurea', *C.* 'Striata' and *C.* 'Assaut'. We'll also try some brugmansias, *Beschorneria yuccoides* and lots of dahlias. And that's not the half of it!



Busa Basjoo



Canna 'Durban'



Beschorneria yuccoides

So if any of you are visiting Kew this summer (late summer is probably best) make a bee line for the Duke's Garden and have a look at our Exotics to see what you think. It might inspire you to go a little more exotic yourself!

THE SHRUBBY POTENTILLA COLLECTION AT ARDGILLAN DEMESNE
By Kevin Halpenny

In Autumn of 2002 the Shrubby Potentilla Collection at Ardgillan Demesne near Balbriggan in North County Dublin was granted National Collection Status by the **National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens** (NCCPG). Fingal County Council Parks Division currently manages several plant collections including the National Olearia Collection based in the Talbot Botanic Gardens at Malahide Demesne.

The name Potentilla is taken from the Latin *potens* meaning powerful and this is an allusion to the medicinal properties attributed to some of the herbaceous species in the genus.

There are two schools of thought about shrubby potentilla nomenclature. Some botanists group the shrubby potentillas into three or four species: *Potentilla arbuscula*, *P. davurica*, *P. fruticosa* and *P. parvifolia*. Other authorities are of the opinion that all are varieties of *P. fruticosa* and this is the scheme used at Ardgillan.

The potentilla collection at Ardgillan developed as a result of an initial contact from the Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Wisley who in 1998 were looking for a permanent home for a collection of 90 or so shrubby potentilla varieties then being trialed at Wisley. Wilfrid Simms, an acknowledged potentilla expert, was very heavily involved in assembling the material for the potentilla trial at Wisley. Mr. Simms agreed to source and/or propagate material from the Wisley trial and many other locations in the United Kingdom and mainland Europe on behalf of Fingal Parks Division.



Potentilla 'Red Robin'

Photograph: Kevin Halpenny

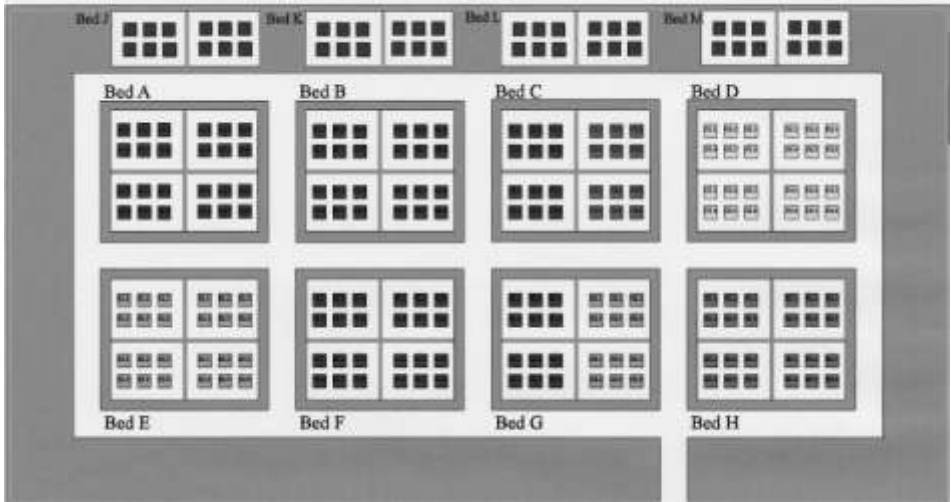
There are currently 207 different types of shrubby potentilla on display at Ardgillan with more types at various stages of propagation. The Potentilla Garden was laid out during 2000 and 2001. From the outset, the plan was to provide a setting and layout in which the wide variation in colour and form of these plants could be exhibited to the public to good effect. The collection is based in a roughly rectangular garden at Ardgillan. This area is bounded by low walls and hedges and previously served as the orchard for the Castle but had more recently been adapted as a picnic area. This garden is convenient to the formal rose garden and restored walled garden which are popular with visitors to Ardgillan.

The varieties are laid out in a strict alphanumeric geometrical grid system and grouped on the basis of a range of themes including country of origin, trial & research and historic interest. This grid system is vital to prevent the large number of varieties which often vary in quite subtle ways from becoming muddled. Large rectangular beds containing 24 varieties are subdivided into quarters by low yew hedges which provide a good backdrop for these prolifically flowering shrubs.

Initial improvements to the garden, including the restoration of the paths and boundary planting, were carried out with grant assistance from the Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Programme. The National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin have held a collection for many years and provided assistance and encouragement in establishing the Ardgillan collection.

A total of 11 Irish varieties are represented in the collection including the new varieties '*Burrren Blue*' and '*Ceo Gorm*' (*Blue Mist*) and older ones such as '*Longacre Variety*', '*Sophie's Blush*', '*Tangerine*' and '*Marian Red Robin*' (*Marrob*). We have reserved a special spot for the variety '*Daisy Hill*' named for the famous Co. Down nursery where it originated. This variety has so far eluded us.

ARDGILLAN DEMESNE - POTENTILLA COLLECTION



Key to layout of Potentilla collection:

Historic and Early Cultivars: Bed D

European (mainland) Cultivars: Bed E

British Cultivars: Bed B, F and left-hand sides of C and G

Irish Cultivars: Bed G on right-hand side North American Cultivars: Bed H and right-hand side of C

Trial and Research: Bed A, J, K, L and M

The purposes of the Ardgillan Demesne collection are as follows:

- A) to preserve as a “living library” all known varieties and cultivars of shrubby potentillas.
- B) to assess and compare both existing and new introductions for garden suitability.
- C) to determine correct nomenclature.
- D) to provide both an ornamental and educational garden feature.

The sheer range of size, texture and flower colour provided by this versatile, hardy, native garden plant is illustrated to good effect in the collection. The prostrate forms, such as the North American variety ‘*Medicine Wheel Mountain*’, are ideal for the alpine rockery, on low hollow walls or as groundcover; the medium-height spreading forms as specimen shrubs; and the tall upright forms such as ‘*Mount Everest*’ for low hedges or screens.

The Potentilla Collection at Ardgillan is open to the public every day during park opening times from 10.00am until dusk. Admission is free.

Kevin J. Halpenny, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent

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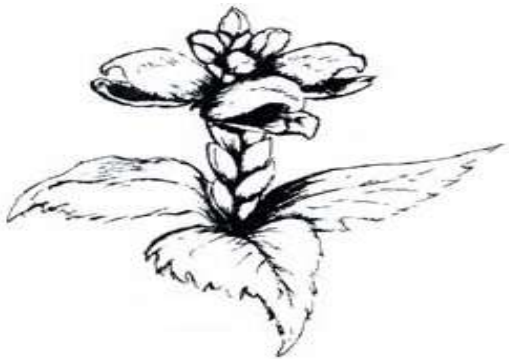
Turtle-head by Diana Beresford - Kroeger

Once upon a time the *Chelones*, turtle-heads, were very common on the North American landscape, but ditching machines and road graders show it no mercy. To locate colonies of turtle-head one must search off the beaten track and only then, when it is actually in flower. It is almost invisible at other times of the year and next to impossible to pin down. Turtle-head is also commonly known as snake-head and balmony, depending on where you are located on the continent. It is mostly represented as *Chelone glabra*, in Canada and *Chelone lyonii* as you trek south of the border. Here and there in the bayous, *C. lyonii* has, over time spawned some variant species, *C. obliqua* and *C. cuthbertii*. The differences between these species are mostly based on a lack of leaf petiole, making them sessile.

The *Chelone* is closely allied to *Penstemon*, beard-tongue. They are in the same family and are immensely useful for the gardens of Ireland, England and Europe. Where many of the *Penstemon*, beard-tongue species will grow so will the wonderful *Chelones* or turtle-heads. However, the latter have a good heads-up on the *Penstemons* because they will flower ever so faithfully in August, September and October at a time when quality flowers are needed in the late summer and autumn gardens. The flowers are large, bright and pure at these times and fit well into any garden, great or small.



Chelone glabra



Chelone obliqua

In Canada, turtle-head, *C. glabra*, is a magnificent flowering plant. The flowers are snow-flake white and contrast elegantly with the deep resounding green of the plants foliage. There is occasionally, the odd plant found with tinges of pink on some or all of the petals. The plant can be up to 6' (2 m) tall but is most commonly around 3' (1 m). It is never found actually sitting in water but dangling its root tips in moisture. Turtle-head is slow to divide, so the larger the colony, the older it is. On

the north shore of Prince Edward Island there are colonies of turtle-heads which must be well over a hundred years old with growing diameters of 10-15' (3-5 m). The flowers of turtle-head are large. Each one is approximately an inch (2.5 cm) long occurring in a spike-like raceme with the youngest flower on top and the oldest forming a seed capsule at the base. The flower greatly resembles a turtle poking his head out of his shell. The form of the flower itself is almost identical to a living turtle with the upper corolla shaping a hooded visage out of three fused petals. The jaw portion, below, is a combination of two petals fused to open as a stage. Like most members of this family, *Scrophulariaceae*, a heavy insect like a bumble bee is needed to crank open the flower for pollination. The bee lands on the jaw. The dead weight causes the jaw to reflex. Then a surprising thing happens, the style or the entry to the ovary, which to this point has been invisible curving elegantly into the upper portion of the hood, pops down. The style of the turtle-head is very strong and turgid. It has an angle which forces the bee into a supine position and literally shoves the insect into the heavenly sweetness exuded by the glands at the base of the ovary. Then the insect's head gets a car wash of the rotating stamoid bristles which dump a load of pollen on its struggling torso. As the insect comes up from the sugar trough for a breather, the flower has somewhat closed so it must fight to get out. As it wrestles with the pollen producing bristles and the arch of the style, it must come in contact with the strange, bulbous, top-knot at the tip of the style. This top-knot acts as a comb, raking the pollen from the poor insect's head and body. The comb is also a bit sticky so that only the strongest of the pollen grains will remain.

These pollen grains slide down the inside pore of the style towards the ovary and fertilize it. This happens not long after the bumble bee has whacked its way out of the jungle of the flower's inside into the open sunshine. The flower, after pollination, seems to become a little blowsy and unhinged, the style flopping sideways in a drunken fashion. Each style adds to the others below in a pattern of misbehaviour.

This disorder leads to a further feeding phenomenon. The base of the ovary continues to produce a sugar secretion. This now feeds the smaller insect populations like ants, earwigs and later honey bees who now have an easier access to the bar. The deep green, somewhat glabrous leaves of the turtle-head are, together with false foxglove *Gerardia grandiflora*, used interchangeably as a host plant by the spectacular butterfly called the Baltimore, *Euphydras phaeton*, and to a lesser extent by the Harris' Checkerspot. These brilliantly black and orange Baltimores appear to be larger in size when feeding on the throbbing magenta coloured turtle-heads, *Chelone lyonii*, of the south. The southern butterflies have a smaller, red wing border while the northern Canadian species don a wider one. The variation in the width of the red wing banding may possibly be a physiological reaction in the butterfly. This could be as a result of varying alkaloid concentrations in the northern to southern growing *Chelone*.

The waterways of North America abound with turtles. When the water levels are higher in the spring into early summer, many of these reptiles undoubtedly use the submerged root structures of the various turtle-heads or *Chelone* as food. The aboriginal peoples have incorporated into their sacred rituals of the turtle, the similarity between the flower's turtle form and the turtle itself.

All of the North American *Chelone* species sit centre stage for one major irony of modern living. We read of ethnobotanists going down to the Amazon basin in search of strange, exotic plants for their medical cures. This happens at a time when

zenochemicals or hormone mimics from atmospheric pollutants are wreaking havoc on the reproductive systems of all mammals, humans included.

Chelone sits in quiet, damp solitude with a treasure trove. This specie, used in a dried form of the entire flowering plant, was once employed by our aboriginal population in the treatment of anorexia. This plague of our teenagers now appears to be tied into polycyclic zenochemicals sitting inertly in the teenager's adipose tissue. It could well be that the *Chelone* on our own doorstep holds a valuable cure. But, all of these species have never been scientifically analysed.

Chelone has also been used by the Iroquois and other aboriginal peoples for the management of excess bile and other intestinal disorders and as a general tonic for the intestinal tract.

All species like a rich, clay soil to which manure has been added. The poorer sandy soils can be amended with equal volumes of garden compost or peat moss which has been placed deeply in the planting hole. These amendments are mixed well with the soil and are put both below and around the lower roots for moisture conservation. Dryer gardens can also use a mulch of grass, woodchips or aged manure around this plant. In all zones and in all garden soils a shallow catch basin is moulded around the plant to catch rainfall. As a specie the *Chelone* is not fragrant. The absence of fragrance or any growing smell around the entire plant is remarkable.

Chelone lyonii holds one of the centre spots in my perennial border. It queens it over *Digitalis ciliata*, the hairy foxglove, from the Mediterranean to the left and to the right, *Primula sikkimensis*, from the Himalayas. When its companions are looking a little rough at the edges, the Lyons turtle-head, *Chelone lyonii*, comes into its own with its glowing magenta voluptuous flowers and surprising turtle imagery. This is just a last reminder from the garden. It is nature's way of teaching us that she is always full of surprises.

A Special Welcome

I would like to extend a special welcome to the following new members who have joined the Society since January 2003. Hopefully we will see them at some of our activities and get to know them soon. To the new members I would say "Please come along and join in as we are delighted to have you". Ed.

Jane Armstrong
Elizabeth and Jim Kelly
Catherine Doherty
Ms EA Baxter
Mary Lowther
Keith Simpson
Nora Gray
Tim Guilbride

Joe Donnellan
Paula Gillooley
Noreen Brown
Eleanor & Christopher Pringle
Mary Sullivan
Orla Madden
Mirian Matthews

Seed Distribution, Spring 2003 by Stephen Butler

As with last year I have foolishly promised to do a quick interim note re the seed distribution before I finish sending seeds out.

We seem to have some new popular lines this year. From the first hundred requests there are several close runners for the most popular. *Aquilegia vulgaris* (semi double black maroon), *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Painted Lady', *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost', *Lilium mackliniae*, *Papaver somniferum*, *Echium wildpretii*, *Primula candelabra*, and *Meconopsis grandis*, are all in the running, though there is plenty of time for that to change.

At the other end of the popularity scale there are quite a few not requested at all yet, so we shall have to check the rogues' gallery later – but again the rogues may be great plants themselves!



I am enjoying watching a lot of my seed sown last year coming up this year. Many of the bulbs, and some tree seed, needed the extra winter to convince them to germinate – as I had sown too late, and had not used the fridge to simulate winter cold. As always with plants, patience helps. My only problem was moss or liverworts in some pots, and I solved that by keeping them dark from late summer, and gently loosening the soil or grit surface this spring.

Any good stories out there of seed from last year would be welcomed!

Iris sp. J937 – Who are you? by Edith Brosnan

Each year I eagerly await the arrival of seed distribution lists from the I.G.P.S. and other societies. I enjoy trying to grow plants from seed and have reasonable success with very basic equipment. I don't necessarily want loads of the same thing so a few plants satisfy my needs and a few for the plant sales are the bonus.

I have 3 categories of selection –

1. Plants I know, and want.

2. Plants I don't know but find in my reference books and appear to be something I would like.
3. Plants I don't know and cannot find any information about – basically a lucky dip!

Iris sp. J937 falls somewhere between 2 and 3. Obviously I know what an iris is but the genus is so varied and as this, presumably, was wild collected seed its requirements were unknown to me. I sowed the seed in Feb 2000, outside, in a pot plunged in a bed of sand. There was certainly germination by 2002. Earlier this year as I sorted out my seed bed there was just one tiny plant, approx 2cm. high. I decided to pot it on. It obviously needed the encouragement and nourishment as it is now approx 8cm.

However, I still have my basic problem. If the person who supplied the seed in 1999 could tell me where it was collected and what conditions it needs, it would be helpful! Perhaps someone has grown the seed to flowering stage quicker than I have. Perhaps its species name has now been identified. I would be delighted to have any information on this little treasure! Edith Brosnan Email: ediebro@eircom.net

Regional Reports

Report from Dublin

January 2000

"To Boldly Go - the Intrepid Plant-Hunters", Maggie Campbell-Culver.

This lecture dealt with the immense subject of plant discoveries and introductions to the Western world in the period from the Middle Ages to the end of the 20th century. The speaker made the point, so obvious after she had made it, that the dates of plant arrivals in the British Isles are, of course, linked to historical events of the period. One striking example of this is the Dianthus growing in the castle walls at Falaise, where William the Conqueror was born, finding its way to England with the Norman invasion in 1066. Likewise, *Anemone coronaria* sometimes called "The Blood Drops of Christ" was brought from the Mediterranean shores by the Crusaders.

Yucca gloriosa, originally from Mexico, first flowered in Essex in 1604, over 50 years after it arrived in England. One of its colloquial names, Spanish Dagger, tells of the takeover of South America by Spanish and Portuguese colonists. The voyage of the "Endeavour" (1768-71) to the South Seas and the subsequent discovery of Australia by Captain James Cook, introduced no less than 1,500 plants to western gardens. Maggie describe this period as "a sumptuous time for plants."

Of course, I am not forgetting the many plants discovered by "our own" Augustine Henry in China in the last 20 years of the 19th century. He sent 158,000 herbarium specimens to Kew just as the Boxer Rebellion was spreading throughout the Chinese countryside.

As we visit our garden centres and consult catalogues, perhaps we should give a little thought to the historical connections of our plants. Maggie Campbell - Culver has made it very easy for us through her lectures and her book "The Origin of Plants" (2001) published by Headline Book Publishing.

Mary Bradshaw

Conversazione 13th Febuary at Clyde Road.

We changed the members' night to February so that different kinds of plants would be featured. What a surprise we had.

First off was Fred Nutty with several pots of *Lachenalia*, their pink and yellow bells truly amazing especially *L.* 'Nelsonii' and *L.* 'George Baker'. *Lachenalias* are best potted up in August when their growing season starts, then kept outdoors for as long as possible before frost begins. Then bring indoors. March - April is their flowering time. When finished flowering and foliage is yellowing, stop watering and allow to dry out. They like to bake in the sun during the summer. Start into growth again in August and September.

Dara Lupton, who has recently joined us on the Leinster committee, was next up. He spoke about his trip to the tea plantations of Tanzania. He told us that four and a half thousand years ago a leaf of *Camellia sinensis* fell into the cup of the Emperor of China; hence the cup of tea was born. He showed us wonderful slides of all aspects of tea harvesting and the blending of different kinds of *Camellia* species. The history of how it finally arrived in these parts was fascinating. A cup of tea will never seem the same to me again.

George Sevastopulo then spoke about composts and their usefulness. He has recently discovered that composted pine bark is extremely useful for potting orchids and the propagation of difficult subjects. There then followed a lively discussion on the benefits of different kinds of potting and propagation material.

Carmel Duignan brought some beautiful *Clematis* specimens. *C. fasciculiflora* was particularly beautiful. This species is like *C. armandii* though not as vigorous. She told us about *C. grandiflora* from Africa, with its yellow flowers and magnificent seed heads. *C. fusca* from Japan with its mauve trumpet-shaped flowers was beautiful. She mentioned that she collects and is more interested in the small-flowered species, rather than the large-flowered summer species.

Dermot Kehoe showed us some slides of his garden in Kilquade taken last year. This put us all in mind of treats to come this summer, *Hydrangea* 'Annabel' and *Beschorneria yuccoides* which takes nine to ten years to come into flower. He then moved on to some pictures of the garden at the home of Frederick the Great in Brandenburg with its magnificent castle. The reflections in the lake, surrounding the castle and gardens, are a big feature.

Berlins Jewish Museum was next on his list. It featured forty nine columns, on top of each of which a willow grew in soil from Israel. Every part of this garden relates to the history of the Jews. The architect of this garden is short listed to design the replacement buildings for the twin towers in New York

Mary Bradshaw titled her piece “Sidewalks of New York”. She visited the flower markets where she photographed banks of Orchids, the colourful sidewalk gardens and small parks, beautifully landscaped, which took her attention. She particularly liked Bryant Park, 42nd and 6th a park, used to the maximum, with containers and terraces delightfully planted, which is used by New Yorkers at lunch times and evenings.

Anna Nolan brought in some specimens from her garden. A big tray of Hellebore flowers, each different and beautiful, was the main attraction of the evening. She spoke about *Daphne bholua*, *Mahonia x media* ‘Charity’ and *Correa* ‘Marion’s Marvel’. All great value plants for our gardens in February.

Stephen Butler rounded off the evening with memories of his visit to the Eden Project and some of the gardens of Devon and Cornwall. He explained that this project is about plants and our dependence upon them. His slides gave us a good idea of the project and its various aspects. He then visited Pine Lodge and Nyslays woodland garden and his slides showed the garden’s very peaceful nature.

Our committee would like to thank everyone who took part and put so much effort into the evening.

I regret to say that the event was poorly supported but the evening ended on a festive note with tea and cake, a free raffle and book sale adding to the enjoyment.

Marcella Campbell, Leinster Committee

Reports from Cork

January 2003.

To Boldly Go – The Intrepid Plant Hunters. Maggie Campbell-Culver.

On a dark January evening, the Cork group, augmented by some members from Waterford, listened to a fascinating account of the arrival of many of our familiar garden plants – indeed of our horticultural treasures – to the British Isles.

Our lecturer, Maggie Campbell Culver, led us with great humour and erudition through a little known branch of history from the earliest arrival of plants via the Romans on our sister island, through the medieval physic gardens to the Tradescants of 17th century, explorations of South Africa and of native American flora as well as to the Antipodes and to those of our own generation working in China and Central America.

We left the hall laughing and ready to explore our own areas with renewed interest and appreciation of our heritage.

Elizabeth Corban-Lucas.

February 2003.

The Ecology of Irish Mountains and Country Roads, Nuala Hayden.

The month of February can often be a very quiet time in gardening but the Munster Branch were transported to sample the hidden delights of Irish Mountains and country roads. Our guide for the journey was Nuala Hayden, teacher, hillwalker and member of Birdwatch Ireland. Her love of the countryside exudes from her every word, which she delivers in a soft and gentle voice.

Our starting point was the hills and mountains of Cork and Kerry from which we were able to see the beautiful countryside which surrounds us but at which we rarely now have time to stop and look. Gradually we came down to a more familiar level of country roads with which I suspect many of us felt we were well acquainted.

Such was not the case! It was a glorious awakening for many of us to the wonders that we pass in the hedgerows each day. Even in our own gardens there is so much to see and more importantly so much that we can do to encourage its continued survival.

Our surroundings will never look the same after this inspiring talk.

Kitty Hennessy

March 2003.

Lodge Park Walled Garden – Well Grown, Little Known, Patrick Ardiff.

Head Gardener, Patrick Ardiff, gave an informed and humorous introduction to the little known garden, which included some of its recent history and the state of its development. Much of the garden's original structure has been well maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced with the addition of Georgian heirlooms saved from the builder's scrap heap by the vision of the present owners.

The Garden has a strong structure, which is strengthened with the use of box edging and clipped Yews. Within this structure are compartments in which different features are developed.

We saw a series of very good colour co-ordinated borders and admired many excellent plants such as the vase shaped *Hosta* 'Royal', *Euphorbia stricta*, *Pelargonium splendide* and two magnificent Dahlias. *Dahlia* 'Dark Desire' and *D.* 'Summer Night'.

Patrick also told us about the Steam Museum which is now housed in a relocated church beside the walled garden.

Catherine MacHale

Reports from the Northern Area

Our Northern correspondents report that all who attended thoroughly enjoyed Maggie Campbell-Culver's lecture but decided not to write a report as they felt it was already being well covered by those in the other areas.

The Annual Dinner went ahead as planned on Friday, February 21st.

Looking Ahead

**Preview of the AGM weekend,
Saturday 31st May to Monday 2nd June 2003 by Pat Quigley**

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at Beech Hill Country House Hotel, Londonderry, on Saturday 31st May 2003. As always, a series of garden visits has been planned for all those attending. Apart from the official visits, have a wander round the grounds of the hotel. The original house has a fascinating history as the home to generations of the Skipton family who settled there in the early 17th century. Some old stone ruins can be seen in the garden along with a series of millponds and a Lime Avenue which was carpeted with snowdrops in February.

In addition to the garden visits highlighted below, there will be the opportunity to purchase some horticultural souvenirs from John Gault's specialist rhododendron nursery (there's more than just rhododendrons, though) and Coleraine Garden Centre.

The Gardens:

David Gilliland, Brook Hall, Londonderry.

Brook Hall stands within a landscape park of some 100 acres on a sheltered riverside site looking onto the River Foyle. Within the park is a large arboretum (about 30 acres) started by the late Commander Gilliland in the 1930's and today being maintained and enlarged by his cousin, David Gilliland who succeeded to the property in 1957. This important tree collection contains rarities such as *Abies pindrow* var. *intermedia* and *Cupressus lusitanica* 'Glauca Pendula' alongside many different conifers and deciduous trees, numbering over 900 specimens in all.

On the east of the house are several tall *Embothrium lanceolata*, a one hundred year old Tulip Tree and a large *Magnolia acuminata* while to the west are *Cercis siliquastrum*, *Taxodium distichum* and a large *Magnolia* 'Lennei'

Adjacent to the walled garden is a new collection of escallonias; David holds the **National Collection of escallonia**. Inside the walled garden is a fine collection of camellias, magnolias, kalmias, bamboos and two lily ponds. At their best in early June are the many azaleas, magnificent hardy hybrid rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs.

Rae McIntyre, Blackhill House, Coleraine.

A rather bald description of Rae's garden states that it is a compartmentalised garden of just under an acre, with azaleas, dwarf species and hybrid rhododendrons, herbaceous borders with old roses, a winter garden, a white garden, a boggy border some drier beds and a small fernery. Many of you will know that there is a richness of plants held in this garden described with passion and enthusiasm in Rae's regular contributions to the Newsletter and to the Irish garden magazine. Far be it from me to try to elaborate on her own words. Suffice to say, this will be a real treat of a garden visit for us all.

Noreen Brown, Walworth garden, Ballykelly.

This is a gem of a garden, hidden behind the ancient manor and bawn. A huge tulip tree dominates the lawn behind the house, but for many, the recently restored walled garden is the highlight. Set within the old walls are lavish plantings of roses and herbaceous perennials with many fine shrubs and trees adding structure. In the centre is a beautiful formal water feature, enclosed by trellis covered in roses. The garden has featured on television and in the Irish garden magazine, not to mention several books on Irish gardens.

Brian Mooney, Fox Lodge, Strabane.

There are some gardens which just cry out to be visited time and time again to see the ever-increasing plant collections and the craft of a true plantsman. Fox Lodge is one such garden. This two-acre garden has something to offer every plant lover with many woodland plants, peat beds, a scree area, a large heather garden, and a bog garden surrounding a series of linked pools – all in an informal setting. At every turn you will find a new horticultural treasure, grown to perfection and in total harmony with its neighbour.

Gordon Toner, Ballymore Avenue, Limavady

We have the grand scale of the arboretum at Brook Hall during our weekend programme. Here in Gordon's garden we come to the other side of gardening – the intimate scale of the Alpine gardener. This third of an acre site is home to scree areas, a rockery, a pond, trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and a fine collection of primulas and alpinines. Some of you may have come across Primula 'Dark Rosaleen' in *A Heritage of Beauty*. Described as: '*foliage bronze; polyanthus-type, flowers single, red with yellow eye, and an irregular white to pink stripe down the centre of each petal*'. Well, in the Toner garden you will come across two versions of Dark Rosaleen – the lovely little primula described above, bred by Joe Kennedy of Ballycastle, Co. Antrim. And then there is the other version – Gordon's wife, in whose honour the plant was named.

Dublin Fixtures

Garden Visit, Saturday, 12th April, 2pm. to Shirley & John Beatty's Garden,

As mentioned in the January newsletter there is a visit planned to the garden of Shirley and John Beatty at Knockree, Glenamuck Road, Carrickmines Dublin 18

on Saturday 12th April at 2pm. Knockree is a two acre natural garden with alpine, herbaceous and woodland plants growing amid huge glacial boulders.

Directions:

Leave Foxrock village by the Brighton Road. Turn right onto the Glenamuck Road and travel for about 1 km. Knockree is on the left. There is limited parking on the avenue, cars may be parked on the Glenamuck Road. The no. 63 bus stops at the gate, nos. 44 & 86 nearby. Admission charge €4.50 per person. Shirley hopes to have plants for sale.

Garden Visit: Saturday June 28th. 2 pm. Kestrel Lodge, The Long Hill, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow.

See map for directions. In the interests of safety, please find parking on the nearby slip road. Do not park on the Long Hill.

Vera Huet's hillside garden is 500 feet above sea level affording spectacular views of the Wicklow Mountains. However, Vera defies the wind by growing a wide range of interesting and uncommon plants, many from seed or cuttings, including bulbs, grasses and cottage garden flowers. Her interest in colour can be seen in the attention given to colour grouping in her many borders. June is a perfect time to enjoy the garden and the natural beauty of the surrounding hills.

Admission is €4.50 and there will be plants for sale.



Garden Visit: Saturday July 26th 2 pm
Lodge Park Walled Garden, Straffan, Co. Kildare.

Familiar to viewers of Garden Heaven who watched Brenden Sayers plant a new border there last year, this is a 1ha (2.5acre) 18th Century walled garden with fruit, vegetables, herbaceous borders and much more. Immediately inside the garden gate there is an inspiring 'white garden', planted with agapanthus, phlox, Japanese

anemone, foxgloves and roses. Nearby is a restored orangery planted with many tender plants including daturas and plumbagos.

Straffan is signposted from Kill on the N7 and from Maynooth on the N4. It lies approximately 8 km. from both places.

Admission €4. Tea and scones are available on request for an additional €4. **To book for tea and scones** please phone Rose at 01 - 8324598 or email her at igps@eircom.net

Northern Area Fixtures

Wednesday, April 9th 7.30p.m. The Clotworthy Spring Lecture
Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim.

'The Cottage Garden Revisited' with Maurice Parkinson.

Maurice and Joy have created a new garden which, although traditional in appearance, uses many modern plants and environmental ideas to create a cottage garden for the 21st century. The garden has been created from a small farm holding, with a traditional cottage and farm buildings. Comprising 4 acres surrounding the house, sub-dividing the area has allowed the creation of a front cottage garden, a lakeside garden, a formal garden, woodland and wildlife areas. The garden is sympathetically designed to complement the buildings and immediate landscape and is planted with a vast array of cottage garden plants. Maurice explains the philosophical approach to the design and choice of plants and brings us up to date on how the garden has developed. Members free, others £1.00.Refreshments free. Plant sales.
Joint lecture with Antrim Borough Council.

Tuesday, May 6th, 6.30 for 7.00p.m.

Garden visit to Mr. & Mrs. Andrews, Maxwell Court, 1 Ballygowan Road, Comber, Co. Down. Admission is free but donations for charity accepted. Parking close to house on driveway.

Wednesday, June 18th, 6.30 – 7.00p.m. Garden visit to Mr. & Mrs Metcalfe, 49 Jericho Road, Killyleagh, Co. Down. Admission free. Donations for Macmillan Nurses. Limited parking near house, otherwise follow signs.

Munster Fixtures

Saturday, 17th May at 2.00p.m. Garden visit to Shirley Bendon, Glandore, Co. Cork

Over the past 10 years Shirley Bendon has been working on creating a very special garden in this magnificent coastal village. Situated in an old one-acre walled

fruit and veg. garden, she is pushing out the boundaries of sub tropical plants grown outdoors. Describing herself as a plantwoman, many items in her garden are one off which she has, in many cases, grown from seed herself.

The garden is subdivided, with a water feature, woodland walk and it still retains a small area of vegetables. An old vine house, which is still useable, is used for propagation and for growing on some of the very tender plants that would certainly not survive outside in an Irish winter.

Because of Shirley's interest in growing from seed she will also have a selection of very unusual plants for sale.

Directions

Coming from Cork, take the road to Skibbereen. At Rosscarbery, pass the Celtic Ross Hotel and you will almost immediately see the signpost for Glandore telling you to take a left turn. The distance is approximately 4 miles.

On arrival in Glandore, drive down to the Pier and past the Marine Hotel for about 500 metres. You will have passed the old C. of I. church and the garden is the 5th driveway on your right with "Coach House" on the gate pier. Plenty of parking along the side of the road. I look forward to seeing you all there.

David O Regan

SPECIAL EVENT

Wednesday April 9th at 8.00p.m. My Favourite Plants at the National Botanic Gardens.

This is a **Special Olympic Fundraising Event** The title for the evening's proceedings is "My Favourite Plants" and will feature staff members from the National Botanic Gardens: Seamus O'Brien, Paul Maher and Brendan Sayers.

There will also be an "Ask the Experts" session – Let our panel solve your gardening problems.

Admission €10. Booking is essential. Ph. 01-8570909

Also: Raffle

Letters to the Editor

• Book Search

Dear editor,

I'm a second year student at the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and am studying "Nursery Stock Production" as one of my elective subjects. With that in mind I am trying to locate an out-of-print book that one of the other members may have, no longer need and would be willing to sell. I have tried the publisher and many other sources but to no avail.

The book in question is:

Nursery Stock Manual

Manual 1, by Keith Lamb, James Kelly and Peter Bowbrick.

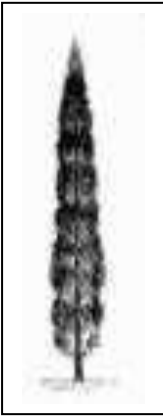
The ISBN is 1899372040.

There were two editions printed and I would prefer the second as I believe it has additional chapters but either one would be great.

I would be most grateful if anyone could help and can be contacted at audreycw@usitmail.com or at 085 7144043 and a message left if I don't answer.

Yours sincerely,
Audrey Walker.

- ***Calocedrus decurrens* 'Berrima Gold'**



- Dear Mr. Tobin,
With reference to the article on Mount Congreve in the IGPS Newsletter No.84, the April 2002 issue, which I have just re-read.

In this article a reference is made to *Calocedrus decurrens* 'Berrima Gold' which is said to have come from Hilliers Nursery in Australia. In fact this plant was raised by Claude Crowe, a nurseryman, in his nursery Berrima Bridge, in Berrima N.S.W. He was sent four seeds of *Calocedrus decurrens* from England in 1960 from which he raised three seedlings. The best of these was a gold form. Claude sent scions of this to Hilliers in England in 1976. It was marketed as *Calocedrus decurrens* 'Berrima Gold'.

We were speaking to Claude's widow Isobel, still at the nursery, a few days ago who confirmed the above.

I joined the IGPS as a founder member when I lived in Co. Cork and have been receiving the newsletters ever since. I find them the best of the other society newsletters I receive. They contain such interesting articles.

Yours sincerely,
Jane Hayter (Mrs.) 30th January, 2002.
The Diggings, Bells Flat Road, Yackandandah, Australia.
Email janeross@optusnet.com.au

SNIPPETS

- **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting will take place at 10.00a.m. in The Beech Hill Country House Hotel in Londonderry on Saturday, 31st May. All members are invited and welcome to attend this meeting. Nominations for committee should be sent, at least two weeks prior to the AGM, to IGPS, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

- **Snowdrop Week at Altamont Gardens**

Paul Cutler, Head Gardener at Altamont Gardens, organised a very successful week for snowdrop lovers this year. The attendance far surpassed Paul's expectations with over 300 people visiting the gardens over the course of the week. There was a selection of over 50 varieties of snowdrops to be seen in the garden, all clearly labelled and easily accessible. Paul took each group which attended and brought them around the collection, giving an account of each snowdrop, its background and history and pointing out its distinctive features. There were several snowdrops which had not yet been officially named and it was a special treat to be able to see these.

If you haven't been to Altamont for a while it is time you went. The herbaceous borders, prepared and planted by Assumpta Bloomfield and staff, have developed marvellously in the Corona North Memorial Garden while the walled garden in general has been tidied up in preparation for future plans. The Wexford Garden Club has planted a willow arch there which is growing well. They are continuing the maintenance of the arch and hope that the willow will have grown sufficiently to close the arch during this growing season.

Of course, there are other attractions in this garden which is one of those with a special atmosphere of its own and I'm sure Paul will organise other events during the year also. The Snowdrop Week will certainly be on again next year, so keep a lookout for it. Altamont Gardens are now in the care of Dúchas and can be contacted at 0503 – 59444

Two Irish snowdrops



Galanthus 'Hill Poe' Photo, P. Tobin



Galanthus 'Straffan' Photo, P. Tobin

- **The Institute of Horticulture – Spring Lecture**

The Institute of Horticulture had what sounded like a very interesting Spring Conference on March 6th. The title of the conference was, “Getting on with Natives – The Landscaping Potential of Irish Native Plants”. Speaking at the conference were Donal Synott, John Fennessy, Art McCormick, Terry O Regan and Declan Doogue. I imagine that this topic is one that would have interested members of the IGPS and it would be worth keeping an eye out for future events of the Institute of Horticulture.

- **Belated congratulations**

Unfortunately I forgot to mention in the last issue that Paul Maher, of the Botanic Gardens, also successfully completed the International Diploma in Botanic Garden Management at Kew Gardens last year. Congratulations to Paul and best wishes for the future. Paul was also very involved in the Augustine Henry exhibition at the Chelsea Flower Show last year and has an article about this event in this issue.

- ***Kilkenny Castle Rose Pruning Practical Demonstration***

Sally O Halloran, along with Donal Croghan, organised a Rose Pruning Demonstration in the Rose Garden at Kilkenny Castle on March 8th. The demonstration explained the how, why and when of rose pruning, using the following groups: Dogrose, China, Musk, Gallica, Hybrid Teas, Floribudas, Climbers and Ramblers. Look out for future events which will be advertised in the locality or contact Sally at Kilkenny Castle at 056 - 21450

- ***Straffan Summer Garden Fair & Rare Plant Sale***

Thursday, June 5th, is the date for the above event. The entrance charge of €7 will be donated to Celbridge Multiple Sclerosis Self-Help Group and will allow entry to the gardens and to the Steam Museum. See our programme of events for the date of the society’s visit to the garden.

- ***West-Cork Garden Trail***

Phemie Rose dropped a line to remind people that the West-Cork Garden Trail will run from the 14th to the 29th of June. If you are down that way there will be many good gardens to visit. If you are an IGPS member, do make yourself known.

- ***Watch out for this one!***

A **documentary about the recent travels in China** by the group from the Botanic Gardens and others who accompanied them will be shown on R.T.E. television in May. This programme will be part of the “**Townlands**” series. Have a look back at the last issue of the newsletter to read Seamus O Brien’s article on this expedition. This should be a very worthwhile programme, so watch out for it.

And, for the record, I concede that R.T.E. does get it right in their gardening programmes occasionally. Ed.

Co Wexford Garden & Flower Club
presents

Corona North Memorial Lecture

THOMAS PAKENHAM

“Remarkable Trees of the World”

on

Thursday 30th October 2003 at 7.30p.m.
(during Wexford Opera Festival)

in

The Church of the Annunciation, Clonard, Wexford.

Tickets: €15

Enquiries 053 58836; 054 83349; 051 397291

Email: cowexfordgardenclub@eircom.net

IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR THE YEAR 2002-2003

	<u>£ Sterling</u>	<u>Euro</u>
Single membership	£15.00	€25.00
Family membership	£22.00	€35.00
Student membership	£7.50	€10.00
5 year single membership	£70.00	€120.00
5 year family membership	£100.00	€165.00

IGPS COMMITTEE:

Malcolm Rose (Chairman); Dermot Kehoe (Vice-chairman); Patrick Quigley (Hon. Secretary); John O'Connell (Hon. Treasurer); Brendan Sayers; Mary Bradshaw; Maire Ni Chleirigh; Anne McCarthy; Edward Bowden.

Regional representatives (ex officio members): Patrick Quigley - Northern group; Kitty Hennessy - Munster group.

NCCPG representative: Mary Forrest.

Correspondence and enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., IGPS, c/o

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9. **N.B.** Letters only please. **No phone enquiries.** **E-mail:** igps@eircom.net

Please send copy for the next issue of the Newsletter to: Paddy Tobin, “Cois Abhann”, Riverside, Lower Gracedieu, Waterford.: pmtobin@eircom.net by early **June 2003.**

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