



*The  
Irish Garden Plant Society*

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*Newsletter No. 125    January 2013*



Photographs courtesy of Ciara Bermingham.  
 Cover *Mahonia x media* 'Charity'  
 Top photo *Mahonia lomariifolia*  
 Bottom photo new growth of *Mahonia* 'Winter Sun'



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## *Editorial*

Already regional groups have plans afoot for an interesting year of lectures and garden visits. This year the A.G.M. will be held on the weekend of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May. It will be organised by the Munster committee, and will take place in Kenmare. There is a very interesting itinerary of garden visits planned. The A.G.M. is always an opportunity to socialise and connect with other members and care is always taken when organising the A.G.M. to give members an opportunity to visit privately owned gardens, so do avail of this opportunity you will not be disappointed. Information on both the A.G.M. and other regional events are in the newsletter.

If you would like to receive reminders about events please forward Patrick Quigley your email details, which of course will be kept strictly confidential. Patrick's details are on the back cover of the newsletter. Similarly, if there is a gardening event you would like to publicise Patrick would be delighted to hear from you.

We are once again delighted to include the Seed List for your perusal, many thanks to Stephen for his dedication and hard work and as Stephen says "enjoy the list, there must be something there to tempt you"

Finally, thank you very much to all the contributors to the newsletter, particularly those who write on a regular basis, it is very much appreciated. Any articles or indeed comments can be sent to the address below.

With best wishes for a successful gardening year in 2013.

**Mary**

**Copy date for the May 2013 Newsletter is April 5<sup>th</sup>.**

**Please send material for the Newsletter to: [igpseditor@gmail.com](mailto:igpseditor@gmail.com)  
or Mary Rowe 29 Bantry Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9**



## *A note from the Chair*

As I write, in early December, I am delighted by the emergence of one of my favourite Irish snowdrops, *Galanthus* ‘Castlegar’. It flowers reliably each year before Christmas and is one of my flower delights of the year. Its origins are in County Galway but I always associate it with the late Dr. Keith Lamb. The Irish poet, Máirtín O Direáin, wrote “Thóg an fear seo teach. Is an fear úd fál. A mhair ina dhiaidh. Is a choinnigh a chuimhne buan” – this man built a house, the other a fence that stood after him and kept his memory alive – so it is with this humble snowdrop and with so many of our Irish garden plants; they maintain links with people now gone and they form part of our heritage to be treasured and conserved for future generations.

With this in mind, it is wonderful to see some Irish plants making an impact on the world horticultural stage and not only because they are outstanding garden plants but also because they are Irish. We all know of Joe Kennedy’s many years of work breeding primulas and I am delighted that Pat Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald Nurseries in Co. Kilkenny, has propagated these and distributed them widely. ‘Drumcliff’ and ‘Innisfree’ were released last year and further varieties are ready for this coming spring. These are plants to watch out for in the coming months.

Some further good news is that the I.G.P.S. committee now has sufficient funds to print a volume of “Moorea” and would welcome suitable articles from our members. All articles must be original, on any horticultural subject whether research, historical, plant hunting etc. However, the article must not have been previously published. All articles can be forwarded to IGPS c/o of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9. The committee is delighted that Anne James has taken on the task of organising this and hopes that members will be generous with their time and contributions.

The Annual General Meeting will be based in Co. Kerry this coming May and I hope it will provide an occasion for members living in that area to participate in the event. The committee in Cork has been working on planning and organising this event for the past while and their arrangements sound wonderful and it promises to be a most enjoyable occasion.

Finally, A Happy New Year to all members and a most sincere thanks to all committee members in all areas for your dedicated work during the last year.

Best Wishes to all, Paddy





## *Autumn: not so hateful after all*

### *by Rae McIntyre*

For this January issue I had written a couple of pages about something completely different but that will probably emerge at some later date. To-day November 15<sup>th</sup> was a fairly mild, windless day when it has only rained a little and there were even a couple of spells of warm sunshine. All the bulbs have now been planted and I didn't feel like doing any work – there's *always* something to do in the garden – so I walked round and was enthralled by just how much colour there is in it. Many perennials like asters, a few crocosmias, *Achillea ptarmica* 'The Pearl', *Astrantia major* and *Knautia macedonica* still have flowers albeit more sparsely than earlier on.

Some roses, all the fuchsias, *Clethra alnifolia*, *Desfontainea spinosa*, *Eucryphia* x *intermedia* 'Rostrevor', *Heptacodium micinioides* and *Mitraria coccinea* continue to have plentiful blooms. Half of those on the hydrangea 'Shower Teller' are still as blue as they were in summer while the rest have faded to an interesting verdigris shade. Nerines, cyclamens and *Crocus speciosus* are still going strong although some of the latter are lying prone as usual. There is even a drift of *Brodiaea* 'Queen Fabiola' which I forgot to plant until the beginning of August.

But it's the foliage colours that dominate. There is a real crescendo of it, as if Ma Nature has relented after the wettest summer for 100 years and is bestowing this display before the onset of winter. Not much planning for autumn colour has ever gone into our garden simply because it's my least favourite time of year.

My policy has always been to keep my head down, plant bulbs and think about spring although six different acers, *Stewartia pseudocamellia*, *Enkianthus campanulatus* and *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* were acquired with the idea that autumn colour would add to their other charms. I would stress that the autumn colour was secondary. They have all had their hectic displays, are now as bare as coots and I thought that was autumn colour finished and done with for 2012.

To-day, even without these showpieces, the garden looked more beautiful than it has ever done in autumn. I can hardly believe that I, the autumn-hater, am writing this. Of course it's very ephemeral and I'm sure that in a week's time

most leaves will have fallen but *Carpe diem* I shall enjoy it while it lasts. As it was getting dark I gathered branchlets from everything colourful, brought them into the house and set them on a newspaper on the kitchen table – creepy-crawlies and all – where I could study them in detail. It looks like a little blazing log fire with most colours on the warm side of the spectrum. They range from pale lime to lemon, butter yellow, gold, tangerine, deep orange, apricot, salmon, coral, vermilion, scarlet and mahogany.

In the main garden *Sorbus scalaris* is the most dominant tree, shining like a beacon and giving an illusion of warmth to the area around it. I view it from the windows of the house every morning although I have to admit that close up it's not just as spectacular. It has elegant frond-like leaves with, on average, twenty-five leaflets on each. These started to colour about a fortnight ago with the tips becoming as red as the berries (polished off by the birds) had been and since then the rest of the branches have been ignited until the whole tree is ablaze with the colours I have named.

Embothriums are not noted for their autumn colour but the one I have seems to have decided to get in on the act. It's the quite hardy 'Norquince Valley' form and is deciduous. Most of the leaves are greenish yellow suffused with copper and it looks well from a distance.

*Tetracentron sinense* was first discovered by the intrepid Augustine Henry in China. I'm sure it has been growing here for about fifteen, maybe twenty years but has never borne any pendulous flower spikes; it probably needs hotter summers than we have. All is forgiven because the heart-shaped leaves are closer to scarlet than any others in the garden and match the bright red, tiny leaf stalks.

The three beech trees at the western side of the garden are like the three Billy Goats Gruff with one large, one middle size and one small; this last is a mere thirty years old grown from a seedling. They were slow to start and their leaf colouring has been done gradually over four weeks changing from green to firework colours of orange and flame. They've now lost half their leaves and, because the area around their roots has been cleared, they lie there and make a great carpet to shuffle through. I love a good shuffle before gathering them to make leafmould. Underneath I have planted Rijnveld's Early Sensation daffodils, bluebells and, on a low bank, wild primroses – not taken from the wild but bought as plug plants from an English nursery. When planting all these I was dreaming about sunlight filtering through little tender green beech leaves and didn't give autumn leaves a single thought.

After *Sorbus scalaris* and *Tetracentron sinense* the next best plant for fall colour is the shrub *Stachyurus chinensis*. It's never listed as such that I know of but the leaves on small dark red stalks turn a heady mixture of deep pink,

coral and amber. This is a shrub that wastes no time and has already developed flower buds for late winter/early spring. These are in the form of stiff little chains comprised of thirty tiny cup-shaped primrose-coloured flowers.

The stackyard, which is I think the least attractive part of the garden, has recently become awash with gold and all the brilliant colours of the leaves on deciduous azaleas which line one border. The gold is from the coin-like fallen leaves of *Betula albo-sinensis* var. *septrionalis*, those on a spreading rugosa rose 'Blanc Double de Coubert' and on the Caucasian wingnut *Pterocarya fraxinifolia*. This last doesn't have pendulous catkins here like the ones I have seen in the south of England but it does have very long, elegant ash-like leaves that turn a rich shade of yellow. It grows in the swamp border where there are two large drifts of *Darmera peltata*. The dinner plate-sized leaves of yellow, amber and coral make a striking picture.

Before this year I don't remember either deutzia or philadelphus making any impression on me with their autumn colours. I have forgotten which variety of philadelphus I have but it now has erect reddish stems and amber leaves with prominent green veins; a telling combination of colours. I'm glad I didn't prune it after flowering last July. *Deutzia setchuenensis* bears little white star flowers in July and August and now has golden leaves.

Magnolias don't colour as spectacularly as some lesser species but they form lovely silken flower buds that are there all winter long. *Magnolia stellata* 'Royal Star' has leaves the colour of marmalade, the clones of *M. soulangeana* have those that are a combination of eau de nil and mustard but the yellow-flowered one (Senior Moment – have forgotten the name) growing among the azaleas in the stackyard has big brown leaves. These have turned exactly the same colour as mahogany and even look as if they have been polished.

Now for something less pleasant than glorious autumn colours. At the apex of the stackyard, which is roughly triangular, there is a twenty-eight year old weeping ash *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula'. In a small estate, near where I grew up, there were three of these growing in fields within circles surrounded by kerbing. I admired them greatly especially in the winter when their bare branches made striking silhouettes and that was when I became a fan of leafless trees. They're no longer there; they were probably annihilated by a JCB digger to make a few more square metres of farmland. In 1983 – 1984, when I was trying to make the old stackyard into a garden, my father, knowing my fondness for weeping ashes, gave me one for my birthday. Since then I have often wished that I had planted it in a more open position but I hadn't enough gardening experience in 1984 to realise that one little weeping ash growing in the middle of, what was then, quite a large area would soon fill it. To add insult to injury I placed a *Viburnum farreri* and a *Paeonia lutea* in front of it and both of them have grown hugely. It is the only ash left in the garden.



This time last year Andy, who works in the garden, warned me that a very large ash tree down at the bottom of the main garden was diseased and would have to be felled. I agreed at the time but decided that could be sometime in the distant future. The tree was a real mycologist's delight with many different kinds of fungi on it and round it but I stupidly ignored them. On January 3<sup>rd</sup> the tree came crashing down in a storm and fatally injured twelve shrubs including five rhododendrons, *Acer* 'Osakazuki' (the biggest one in the garden) and *Magnolia stellata* 'Rosea' that were growing in the vicinity. And yes, it was completely rotten in the inside. Andy had also warned me about another ash tree immediately behind the house. "Some morning", he said, "you will come downstairs and that ash tree will be sitting at your dining-room table". After seeing so much damage done by the other one this was a scary thought so I asked him to fell it. There was no fungus either on it or round it but it definitely listed slightly eastwards towards the house. When felled the tree appeared to be completely healthy and I have felt guilty ever since.

The fact that there is now almost a doomsday situation with ash trees under threat has worsened my guilt feelings. The disease *Chalara fraxinea* has an innocuous sound – rather like the name of one of those soul-baring women who appear in American and American-type television chat shows – but it's an incurable fungus disease that has wreaked havoc on tree populations across Europe. In Denmark 90 per cent of all ash trees have been obliterated from the landscape. Although the disease was first discovered in Europe in 1992 ash plants have continued to be imported into the British Isles. I cannot understand why on earth it was necessary to import them from Europe in the first place because ashes only take second place to sycamores in incontinent self-seeding. It is the most predominant tree in Ulster and yet up to 150,000 ash plants per year were imported into the province.

The disease was discovered in Co. Leitrim in October and a ban on imports across all of Ireland followed at the end of the month. Now it has been found in five different sites in Counties Antrim and Down, apparently spread by the wind. In England, during the Seventies, Dutch elm disease decimated the elm population and the countryside was full of felled and rotting trees. The thought of that happening to ash trees is appalling because there are just so many of them.

A strange thing was the way in which many ash trees this year held on to their leaves until nearly the end of October. In my 2011 diary I recorded that they didn't come into leaf until the third week in May and were completely bare at the end of September. I don't know whether this is of any significance or not but it gives me the faint hope that these trees which have survived for millennia might develop some immunity to the disease and that it won't be all ashes to ashes.



## *The Seed Distribution Scheme 2013*

What can I say, 2012 started dry, had late spring frosts that walloped all my spuds for the first time in 30 years, then went cold and wet for the rest of 'summer'. I can honestly state that I have never had such a bad year collecting seed, it has been poor for pollination with less insects flying so poor set, and then so wet it has been very hard to get the seed heads ripe enough to collect. Even cuttings this year I found harder than usual, which I put down to not enough sun to ripen the wood.

Enough whingeing, because despite all that we have a grand list again (though quantity and quality may not be up to the norm) including 4 *Carex* (well they like the wet.....think of *C. secta* as it develops a trunk), 2 *Dactylicapnos* (climbing Dicentra – thank the botanists for name changes), South African *Gunnera perpensa* (another one that likes it wet!), and South African *Moraea huttonii*, a wonderful yellow iris lookalike.

From last year's list I thoroughly enjoyed the bronze leaved *Antirrhinum* which was sent in as rust resistant – and despite the weather, it certainly is, and gave me a grand display all summer.

There is one other aspect to seed saving, it is a great way to remember to dead head plants. In 2011 we were so busy at the zoo with the new gorilla habitat that we did not get around as much as usual collecting seeds. This year we have had virtually lawns of seedlings erupting, showing us up badly, and causing lots of extra weedkilling! *Paradisea* was particularly bad, and of course germinates everywhere you cannot get at – but it is so easy to prevent if deadheaded in time.

So enjoy the list, there must be something there to tempt you!

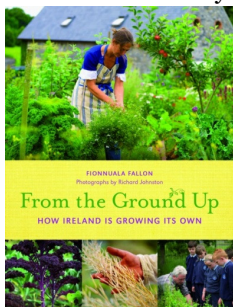
Many thanks of course to the small resolute and unwavering band of seed donators, new members always welcome, it is a fascinating aspect of growing plants and you always learn something new every year.

Stephen Butler  
Curator of Horticulture, Dublin Zoo  
IGPS Seed Distribution Coordinator



## *Worth a Read by Paddy Tobin*

The “Grow Your Own” movement has gone from strength to strength over the past decade and Fionnuala Fallon, who writes the gardening column in the Irish Times Magazine each Saturday, has been one of that enthusiastic band of growers for many years. From her recent book, **“From the Ground Up”**, it seems she has also made friends with a large number of like-minded people around the country.

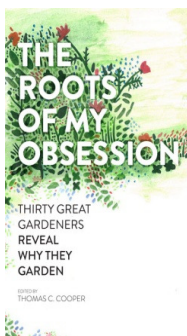


One might describe the book as a collection of interviews with sixteen of these GYOers but, as I said Fionnuala seems to have made friends with these people, and the contents come across more as reports on a series of visits and chats with fellow gardeners. It is a lovely style, one where the author deliberately steps back, hides ego, and lets the people she has chatted with have their say, speak their minds and tell it their way. So the book lacks any agenda other than facilitating people to tell the reader how they came to growing for the table, how they go about it, successes they have had, failures encountered

and the regular tips and hints that all gardeners impart and gather. However, the selection of people for the book is such that, without being instructional in nature or intent, a huge volume of knowledge is imparted. These are stories about people who garden, who love gardening and, in particular, love growing their own.

To mention a few of those whose stories are in the book, there are Klaus Laitenberger, Joy Larkcom, and Michael Viney, three well known enthusiasts and authors; there is a report from a national school in Dublin, a community garden in Donegal, an apartment block balcony garden and an allotment in Cork; all in all a diverse selection of people with a common interest. The book is perfectly illustrated by Fionnuala’s husband, Richard Johnson, excellent photographs used to give a perfect balance of picture to text. A very enjoyable book. **Collins Press, €24.99 (€19.99 online from the publishers)** – so, an Irish author and an Irish publisher!

**“The Roots of My Obsession”** is a collection of short essays edited by Thomas C. Cooper where the contributors, as the title suggests, explain what it is that made and makes them enthusiastic gardeners. There is a bias in numbers towards American gardeners – Tony Avent, William Cullina, Rick Darke, Ken Druse, Dan Hinkley, Panayoti Kedalis, for example, but there is also a representative selection from this side of the Atlantic – Helen Dillon,



Fergus Garrett, Roy Lancaster, Anna Pavord and Penelope Hobhouse, so a little to attract all readership. As might be expected, some essays read better than others with the love of plants a theme running through all. Plants seem to provide a sort of time continuum for many of the authors – they connect them with times and people from their past lives, they occupy them presently in the garden and they are part of their plans for the future. Short, interesting, light!

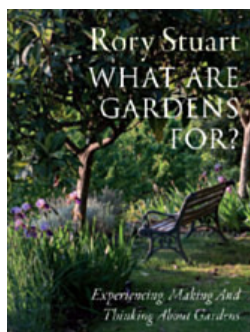
From Timber Press, £9.99.



It is rather sad when a new book comes to hand to realise that the author has died. Gunter Waldorf was a German snowdrop enthusiast with whom I had occasional contact. He had an excellent online snowdrop site with a comprehensive selection of snowdrop photographs.

He had a personal collection of around 450 varieties; had a successful nursery in Nettetal am Niederrhein and organised very popular Snowdrop Days each February. It was his ambition to publish a book on snowdrops, which he did in German, and

it is the English edition which I have to hand. ***“Snowdrops” by Gunter Waldorf.*** The book has an introductory section where the expected general advice on growing snowdrops is presented along with a comprehensive yet succinct account of all the snowdrop species, an excellent introduction to the world of snowdrops. The remainder of the book is a “Gallery of Snowdrops” presenting photographs of over 300 varieties of snowdrops, some old and well known, others new and, of course, very interesting to the enthusiast. A lovely book, good for the beginner and enthusiast alike. Published by Frances Lincoln and very reasonably priced at £14.99.

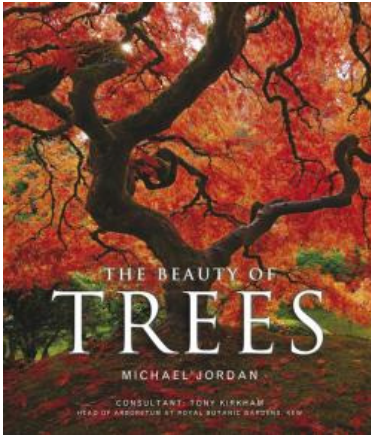


Rory Stuart’s ***“What Are Gardens For?”*** is rather a different gardening book to the norm. It is in small format, not lavishly illustrated and heavy on text.

The author’s central theme is that we will gain much more from our visits to gardens if we think about what is in front of us rather than simply passively admiring what is being presented to us.

He draws on the work of a wide range of other writers, presents gardens of varied styles and all the time shows the different ways gardens can be viewed and enjoyed. Almost by way of a case study, an example of his thought, he reviews the Old Vicarage, East Ruston in Norfolk, the Alnwick Gardens in Northumberland and Veddw House Garden in Monmouthshire. It is a thoughtful book and a book for thought; one to be read a second time, at least, and be as enjoyable then. Published by Frances Lincoln, £16.99.

I'm afraid I'm a sucker for books with beautiful photographs of trees *and* ***"The Beauty of Trees" by Michael Jordon*** did not disappoint.



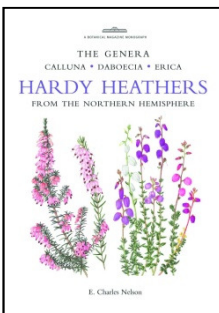
"Trees are nature's works of art" the book begins and this summaries the contents very well. It is a collection of excellent photographs of magnificent and beautiful specimens from around the world accompanied by a pleasant and informative text.

It is neither comprehensive nor a work of reference, simply an admiration of the wonders we may see in the world of trees. It is a very beautiful book, large format and very pleasant.

**From Quercus Books, £20.**



## Snippets



Dr E. Charles Nelson has received the award for the Best Reference Book of 2012 by the Garden Media Guild, for his book *Hardy Heathers from the Northern Hemisphere*, published in February 2012.

Congratulations to Charles who receives this award for a second time. *A Heritage of Beauty* having been judged best reference book of 2001 by the Garden Writers' Guild, as the Garden Media Guild was formerly known.

**Plant Person's Course: Jimi Blake** is offering a 20% discount to IGPS members who would like to attend his Plants Person's Course at his gardens at Huntingbrook near Baltinglass. With the discount, the course works out at €60 per class. See more at [www.huntingbrook.com](http://www.huntingbrook.com) or contact Jimi at [jimi@huntingbrook.com](mailto:jimi@huntingbrook.com) or at 087 2856601

**March 9<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) – RHSI Seminar “Collecting Plants for a Better Garden” 10am to 4pm at the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin**

Speakers: Jimi Blake, Huntingbrook Garden; Carl Wright, Caher Bridge Garden and John Massey, Ashwood Nurseries, Kingswinford, West Midlands. RHSI and IGPS members €50, non-members €60. Lunch not included but available at the café downstairs or at local pubs.

**Wendy Walsh - A Lifetime of Painting:** a memoir from notes made by Wendy Walsh and in conversation with Nick Wilkinson; also a suite of forty-four botanical plates with commentary by E. Charles Nelson. Tony Moreau produced the book and is offering a limited number of the signed copies which remain at 50% of the original price i.e. 425Euro each. Tony can be contacted at: 18, Woodbine Drive, Dublin 5. Tel 01 8480706. E-mail: [tonymoreau@eircom.net](mailto:tonymoreau@eircom.net)

**James Joyce at the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin:**

A portrait of James Joyce will appear at the Botanic Gardens in April of next year. The portrait has been created by planting a tulip/hyacinth combination. Dutch Ambassador, Paul Schellekens, was there when the design was planted in late October as were school children from Scoil Mobhi, Glasnevin and St. Michael's National School, Limerick. Make a note to visit in April.

**The restoration work at the Frameyard of Fota House, Garden and Arboretum in Co. Cork has received the Irish Georgian Society's Annual Conservation Award for 2012.**

The Irish Heritage Trust commissioned Dublin based John O'Connell Architects to rescue the frameyard, which is beside the formal gardens, from dereliction. Work to date includes the restoration of the free standing glasshouses originally designed by Richardson of London and a single storey bothy. The original paths have been reinstated, and the planting of the borders edging the paths carried out to a design by Finola Reid.

The gardens are open all year but Fota House and Frameyard are open during the winter for groups by appointment only, phone 021 4815543.

The Plant & Garden Fair takes place on April 21<sup>st</sup> 11.00am – 4.00pm





# *The Last Letter in Ogam*

## *by John Joe Costin*

It was a serendipitous morning. I accepted an invitation to visit a suburban garden, but did not expect that it could extend to 5 acres or that it might have a magnificent yew tree in residence. My acquaintance was enforced, and by the time I could leave, my besottedness with that tree exceeded the decorum of a first date. In a torrential downpour, I sheltered under its dome and had plenty of time to be overawed by the Gothic architecture of its crown. Not a drop fell on me, or on the snuff dry carpet of accumulated dead foliage within the 19m diameter of its drip line. Nothing grew in its shade.

This is an experience that one has to seek out now as yew planting is vetoed by farmers and stud managers and its graveyard and funereal association add reservations to its use as a garden tree. However, the frequency of yew in place names in all counties is evidence of its former ubiquity. It occurs as phonetic corruptions in two forms, **Eo Coill** yew wood, as in **Youghal** Co. Cork, **Oghil** Co. Galway and **Aghohil** Co. Antrim, the ford of the yew wood.

**The Wood of O (Eo)**, Co. Offaly reads like a far sighted translation corrupted in a combination of two languages, which anticipated the abbreviations of texting by a few hundred years. The **Ros Eo**, peninsula of the yew, is **Rush** Co. Dublin and **Mayo**, **Mayobridge** Co. Down and **Maynoe** Co. Clare are corruptions of **Magh Eo**, the plain of the yew, **Aghadoe** Co. Kerry, reads in Irish as the field of the two yews.

**Iubhar** (Ure) Yew tree is the parent of **Newry**, Iubhar Ceann Tragha, the yew tree at the head of the strand; **Terenure**, the land of the yew, is that nice suburb in South Dublin city and **Kippure** (Eipiur), the stump of the yew, explains what inspired that Co. Wicklow mountain's name. **Nure**, Co. Westmeath, **Rathnure** Co. Wexford, and **Altinure**, Yew Tree Heights Co. Cavan and Derry, and **Achadh an Uir**, the field of the yew, is the official name for that town in Co. Cavan renamed Virginia by a local chancer in an obsequious gesture to curry favour by honouring that Queen of known virtue, Elizabeth 1.

**Inverurie** (Aberdeenshire) Yew Harbour or Estuary, like other seaside placenames **Rush** and **Youghal** validate another little appreciated attribute, the wind and salt tolerance of yew which happily thrive on exposed sea cliffs.

There was a time, (up until the early 90's, when coal burning was banned in our cities), that all good horticulturists had to have habitat knowledge of plants that were tolerant or indifferent to atmospheric pollution. The yew is immune to this effect.

Place names might suggest ubiquity. However Michael Casey, a bog timber sculptor, who has worked in tandem with Bord na Mona peat harvesting operations across all their raised bogs, relates that 80% of wood excavated is Bog Oak. A small amount is bog deal (pine) and 20% is yew. Carbon dating reveals samples of the latter to be 5000 years old.

The oldest wooden artefact in the world (c 13,000 years is a spear made of yew) Despite this known resilience, few whole root stumps have been uncovered. However, the size of ancient trees can be extrapolated from those few that were dug out intact. Michael Casey sculptured magnificent fountains by inverting the root plate to form a water basin 6-7m in diameter. One decorates the Bord na Mona headquarters in Droichead Nua and the one in Ballynahown Village Co. Westmeath is a cause to stop.

We should cherish yew woodlands, as they are exceedingly rare in Europe. We have been remiss in not exulting that the woodland in the Killarney National Park is reputedly only one of 3 extant in Europe. It took an Italy based Argentinian to write the loveliest story of an imagined life of the yew, inspired by what he was shown and told about the yews in that park.<sup>1</sup>

No one now lists the yew as the finest umbrella one can plant, and that it can provide this service for 2000 years. It is understandable that specimens of that size were landmarks and offered natural shelter to the first inhabitants in our ancient afforested landscapes. Evidence of living in caves remains, but details of those who gathered under yew trees were erased by decay. We know that the Celts were a rural society and that their love of trees was both highly developed and practical, because trees were central to their self-sufficiency. Their importance was such that when Ogam, the Irish Alphabet, was created, the letters were based on individual trees. The last letter of Ogam is *iodhadh*, considered to be a form of *ibhar* or yew.<sup>2</sup>

As a consequence of inventing one of the world's 17 writing systems, the Irish language is the third oldest written vernacular in Europe, after Greek and Latin, and is the oldest north of the Alps. Irish has been spoken in Ireland for over 2000 years, making it the third oldest after Basque and Greek. Joyce <sup>3</sup> wrote "our knowledge is derived from native literature, the only authentic source of information. The wild speculations of others on matters such as Druidic practices were created on baseless conjectures with no evidence at all". We know that our ancestors, especially the knowledgeable ones, were enthralled by and in awe of evergreen plants.

They were mystified by their exceptionalism and speculated on the magic and power they possessed, that enabled them to retain their foliage at the onset of the short dark days of winter, when all other vegetation not only lost theirs but appeared to die. The scarcity of evergreens accentuated that wonderment, as there was only a handful of woody evergreens that were distributed nationwide namely, Ivy, Holly, Yew and Furze up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century when an increasing number of evergreens were introduced.

It is understandable that the yew specimens of great age which grew to monumental sizes in virgin forests, offering exceptional shelter, were natural places in the landscape, where gatherers, hunters and larger groups might congregate. It seems convenient when clans converted to Christianity that they could continue to congregate at the same natural gathering locations, where they now could perform new rituals. When stone buildings were considered an advance on natural shelter, building these adjacent to their existing meeting places seemed the obvious thing to do.

When the first Cistercian monks arrived in Yorkshire in 1132 to establish the Fountains Abbey they had no house but lived and worshipped under the large yew trees that were there, until such time as the Abbey was built. These are the famous Fountain Abbey yews of the present day. That yews predate ancient churches has been confirmed on a number of such sites. This would support the view that churches were built near yews, rather than the reverse, that yews were planted around churches.

In the grounds of Gormanstown Castle Co. Meath, home to the order of Franciscan Brothers, is a remarkable feature that brings a reality to such imaginings. It is a tunnel 2m wide, enclosed and formed from topiared yew that gives an option at the entrance. The known is to walk straight on for 70m to the light at the end of the tunnel. The unknown, is to turn left at the entrance into uncertainty, a 120m crescent shaped tunnel where there is no guidance light to offer assurance, and the impulse is to turn back. They merge on a path that leads to a secluded graveyard where members of the order are interred. It is a mood altering space that might induce fear, insecurity, prayerful, reflective or meditative thoughts.

The growth habit of the yew is particularly suited for such a landscape feature. A yew measured by Audrey Fennell for The Tree Council of Ireland at 13.5m in height and a girth of 6.11m is listed in 'Champion Trees' as the oldest tree in Ireland. Yews are not tall trees and this height is frequently recorded. The fascination is in the girth. Crown spread in yew is determined by the proximity of other trees. On its own this is a typical height, as it develops a broad full crown, but in woods it can grow tall and slender and 30m heights have been recorded. The Champion is one in an arch of yews trees growing inside the entrance to St. Patrick's College Maynooth.

Their age was accentuated by their growth habit. Yews propagate by layering when a bough touches the ground. These trees were encircled in an outer ring of their own off-spring. This spectacle was removed in the 1960's when housekeeping imperatives took precedence over historical significance. Low branches greater in length than the height of the trees were splayed across the lawn like octopus tentacles in a magnificent tangle. Some had rooted and formed trees and another formed a hedge. Their amputation sheared the trees of their appearance of venerable ancientness. Yet, yew responds remarkably well to surgery and regenerates readily from brown bark which camouflages the wounds of amputation within a few years. There is now little evidence of their defenestration or of their once remarkable growth habit, in their rejuvenated state.

Yew was never a farmyard or country side tree because of its potential to poison in a land where cattle counted as currency, among rulers, as a marriage dowry and in courts where fines and wrongs were measured in cow counts. While cattle, horses and sheep can nibble fresh foliage and eat seedlings growing in pasture, it is the weathered clippings of foliage that is highly poisonous and that causes death. Its potency was established in post mortems where veterinarians were surprised on how little foliage the dead animals had ingested. Our inheritance as genetic farmers has influenced and may explain why, yew despite its particular merits, was never a popular garden evergreen.

A short drive from Gormanstown, the recently opened OPW designed Battle of the Boyne Commemorative Garden near Oldbridge may inspire a re-evaluation of the yew, like the reconciliation between the victor and vanquished that the garden is seen to represent. Sited within the estates walled garden is a design of restraint and simplicity, a symphony of greens, grass, box hedge formality in a simple pattern, without intricacies, and the shaped cones of yew provide elevation. These are all framed within high limestone walls overhung by mature trees. It is a fine example of the Zen Buddhist principle, that 'less is more'.

Beyond this formal foreground in an irregular angled space, is a newly planted orchard of an ancient Irish apple cultivar appropriately named 'Blood of the Boyne'. Its rediscovery was the highlight of a trawl through old Irish orchards made by Keith Lamb in the 1940's.

The view from the glass walled pavilion café in the winter light overlooking the south sloping garden is one of serenity, peace and tranquillity. "Would not a bit of colour be nice" overheard from a nearby table is one call that I hope will be resisted. The 'Blood of the Boyne' apple provides the symbolic colour of sacrifice. The public may not want to be bludgeoned with the symbolism that rivers of *Salvia* flowing down the slope would represent.

Ed Scanlon, the Ohio based tree breeder and publicist in his travels around the world amassed a fine archive not of Champion trees but of trees in whose proximity significant historical events occurred. If that criterion is added then The Champion Yew named the 'Silken Thomas' is not only the oldest yew tree in Ireland but the tree that witnessed the pivotal moments in Irish history:

- This includes the rise and demise of archery
- The revolt of Silken Thomas
- The first use of gunpowder in Ireland
- The destruction of the Gaelic order and
- The imposition of English rule that gave rise to a landless class and
- a probable reason why we plant yews in our graveyards.

Archery was the Normans primary portable defence weaponry. It was a technological innovation in its time. Medieval archers could draw a 90Kg (200lbs) bow, the arrow travelled at 200Km per hour over 200m and pierced armour. Modern man might manage a draw of 30Kg. An archer in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in the Kings army had to have an accuracy to kill a squirrel from 100 paces. Yew is the most elastic of timbers and one of a few that bend under pressure and then revert on release to their original shape. It is that flexibility that impels the arrow. The long bow which stood 2m in height was not made from branches but of staves, a longitudinal section of the trunk that contained both young and mature wood. It was a prudent measure that the Normans would plant yews in the grounds of their castles in order to have control over their own supply of staves.

### **The Champion Tree**

Before the National Seminary in Maynooth was founded in 1795 this was the grounds of Maynooth Castle. The Keep was built by the Fitzgeralds in 1178. Silken Thomas (Thomas Fitzgerald) lived in the castle, the son of Gerald Fitzgerald. (Gearoid Og Fitzgerald) the Ninth Earl of Kildare and Lord Deputy of Ireland.

In 1543, Gearoid Og had been summoned to London by Henry VIII to answer charges of disloyalty. Enemies of the Fitzgeralds spread a false rumour that he had been executed in the Tower of London. His son, Silken Thomas, rose in revolt, which had been the intention of those who spread the rumour. His supporters wore a silk ribbon on their helmets - thus the nickname 'Silken Thomas'. At the beginning of the insurrection his followers murdered the Archbishop of Dublin and attacked Dublin Castle. He was easily repelled and withdrew to his keep. The English forces under Sir William Skeffington besieged Maynooth Castle in March 1535 and after a battering of five days, the breach was made on the north side of the walls, on the banks of the Lyreen. It was one of the first occasions that artillery was used in Ireland.

Being overwhelmed, Silken Thomas negotiated for his safety and asked pardon of the King. On the night before his surrender, he played his flute beneath the boughs of the tree that now bears his name. Despite the music, twenty-five of his defenders were executed on the spot before the present gateway of the Castle. He and his five uncles were lodged in the Tower of London and were executed for treason at Tyburn on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1537.

Up to these times the Kings of England designated themselves as '**Lords of Ireland**'. The Fitzgerald's had for several generations held the office of the **Lord Deputy**, the **nominated Governor of Ireland**. However, this approved monopoly of delegated power bred dynastic pretensions which proved unacceptable to the monarch. It was Henry VIII's determined and unambiguous exercise of his prerogative that culminated in the death of the Earl in the Tower and the executions in Tyburn.

Matters were confounded by the totally different systems by which land was held. Under feudal theory all lands were ultimately the property of the crown. Under Irish custom hereditary lands were communally owned. For administration tidiness and neatness Henry VIII decided his rule could only be restored by the surrender of the land holders titles and the prompt issue of new titles to the same landholders with standard conditions of obligations and privileges. Known as **Surrender and Regrant** they acknowledged the King, as head of the Church and were conferred with a title such as Earl. **The Chieftains** had to abandon tanistry and adopt primogenitor succession. Tanistry was the tradition of selecting the ablest to succeed the Chieftain during his rule. Hence, Tanaiste, the Taoiseach in waiting. It appeared no more than a bureaucratic inconvenience. However, the Gaelic Chieftains through perhaps an inability to understand its full implication complied, and in doing so acquiesced in the destruction of the basic component of a Gaelic order that had lasted for 2000 years.

The land the Irish Chiefs surrendered was not theirs to dispose of. These were tribal properties. In return for something they did not own, they were given a hereditary title now enforceable by English law. In acknowledging the Crown as the ultimate owner it was this oversight that subsequently furnished a legalistic validity to much stylistically justified theft when repossessing land as a penalty for the misbehaviour of an Irish chieftain and the reallocation of this territory to those more amenable to the desires of the English government.<sup>4</sup> The potential consequences were not apparent because the population was less than 500,000. It rose to 1,000,000 by 1649 when Cromwell arrived. By 1750 the British owned 95% of the land and from that year the Irish population grew dramatically from 2.25 to 8.2m by 1845.<sup>5</sup> It was at this point that the consequences of the blithely given away ownership of Irish land had its effect. The populous was in desperation for land.



The unlanded, second sons and the dispossessed, grazed their cattle on the long acre (roadside verge up until the 1950s when increased car use made it difficult), on waste ground and on commonage. Graveyards offered rich grazing and ideal security to corral rest and feed cattle on the night before a cattle fair. Planting yew in a graveyard offered the perfect protection to prevent such trespass. Attending cattle fairs with my father from the age of 10 in the mid-fifties, I was introduced to 'fir an bothair' (men of the road), who had no inheritance but who took to the roads to make a living, offering their labour in lieu of lodging, traded as cattle jobbers and as long distance drovers. These, I was told, were fine men and were not *bacachs*, (beggars).

Kilcock was the final rest stop before Dublin for cattle drovers from the West of Ireland, Connacht Street commemorates that history. It may be no coincidence that all the cemeteries in the area are stuffed with Irish yews.

We do not have an inventory of Old Yew trees in graveyards to match the numbers recorded in Britain. However, despite the supposedly long traditions it is the Irish yew and not the species that is most often recorded in graveyards both in Britain and in Ireland. This is the reality despite the fact the Irish Yew was found only sometime between 1740-1760 in the Florence Court Estate Co. Fermanagh. It was introduced to the trade about 1780, and would not have been widely available for perhaps another 20 years given the normal distribution and diffusion of information patterns of those times. Perhaps its popularity was fostered by the symbolism that its upright habit was a metaphor for the morality of the times of withstanding righteous man.

Church architects were influential disseminators of information and were arbiters of taste. The habit of the Irish yew mirrored the austere architecture of the English Perpendicular that was then favoured by some of the reform churches. The magnificent specimen of Irish Yew that now grows in front of the Church of Ireland at Castletown-Kilpatrick Co. Meath built in 1820 is but one fine example of what seems to have been the standard plant specification at the time.

These are 19<sup>th</sup> century influences. However, if we look at the early holy sites we do not find the same correlation. There are no yews growing in Clonmacnoise, the 6<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical city established on a 600 acre mineral island surrounded by an ocean of peat land and which was destroyed in 1552. Cattle could not cross the surrounding bogs, so animal trespass was not a concern. However, one would expect to find yews planted there when the choice of evergreen was so limited, if evergreen or yew trees were of such special importance to our 6<sup>th</sup> century ancestors. Neither are yews planted in that splendid scenic graveyard that surrounded the 12<sup>th</sup> century Round Tower in Ardmore Co. Waterford.

There is one ancient specimen in the graveyard attached to the 12th century Cistercian Jerpoint Abbey near Thomastown and many Irish yew and two stumps of the species in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Carmelite Priory in Knocktopher, both in Co Kilkenny and in the graveyard around the prodigally rich monastic site of St Moling in St Mullins on the left bank of the Barrow in south Carlow.

The yew was widely used with the male catkins of *Salix caprea*, the Goat Willow, for church decoration on Palm Sunday. Planting your own supply of palm in your own graveyard is another valid explanation offered on this association between yew and graveyards. Palm became the common name for yew with the public and is still the generic name for all conifers for many gardeners. The surge in the planting of the Irish yew can also be explained by the absence of alternative evergreens. The most popular one in Irish gardens in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Lawson Cypress and its cultivars. This species was first introduced only in 1854.

***Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata Aurea'** is the popular golden form of the Irish yew. If one wants a slender pillar, the one to seek out is '**Standishii**'. It takes the prize as the best upright form and the only one suitable for a rockery, very slow growing with the richest golden yellow foliage of all. I have transplanted our specimen twice in the last 40 years with no ill effects. It is 62 years old, stands 2.4m tall and is less than 90cm in diameter, the perfect fastigate for the suburban garden.

An employee from Boskoop introduced me to ***T.b.* 'Summergold'** as a golden horizontal form, selected by his father, that he recommended as ground cover, but it has grown into an open vigorous layered splaying form that is suitable only for larger spaces. It already measures 2m or so in height and has a ranging spread.

***T.b.* 'Repandens'** forms a neat compact dense ground cover, no more than 50cm in height with a lovely weeping skirt or edge. It would form a lovely saucer to the candle that is ***T.b.* 'Standishii'**. After 30 years it measures 250x200cm.

***T.b.* 'Summergold'** is listed in 3 Heritage Gardens but neither '**Standishii**' or '**Repandens**' is in any of these gardens. ***T. baccata*** is listed in 14 Heritage Gardens making it more popular than the two Irish fastigate forms. The green is listed in 10 and the yellow in 9.

**'Dovastonia Aurea'** is listed in 5 Heritage Gardens. This is a golden form of a very distinctive, short trunked small tree with numerous widely spreading weeping branches. There are four impressive specimens maintained as topiary spheres about 1.5m in height and 2m in diameter in St. Joseph's Square in Maynooth College. It has a highly desirable weeping habit in its natural habit.

Not everyone shares our aversion to yews. The International Plant Propagation Society (I.P.P.S) founded by Ed. Scanlon introduced me to Zelenka Nurseries in Grand Haven, Michigan. They had 1800 acres under production. They only grew yews and nothing else. In the USA, *Taxus* cultivars are considered among the highest quality needle type evergreens in landscape use. Probably the only negative comment is that they are overused. They are used as hedges, in shade, as ground cover and extensively for topiary work. All species are grown but more cultivars of the hybrid ***Taxus x media***, a cross between ***T.cuspidata*** and ***T.baccata***, are offered more than any other species. Many of the popular cultivars are naturally compact, symmetrical and need little pruning. Perhaps in the stronger sun and higher light levels in the USA, the dark green leaves give the plants a much higher landscape value than we confer on yews.

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## Regional Reports

### MUNSTER

**Tuesday 6th November.      A lecture by Dr. Matthew Jebb**  
**“Saving Ireland’s Wild Plants through horticulture”**

Matthew started his lecture describing the terrain of Ireland from the end of the Ice Age about 13,000 years ago, where Ireland began to recover from the grip of the retreating ice, which shrank back towards Scandinavia. In postglacial Ireland (9,000 and 10,000 years ago), the landscape was a very watery place. He explained about the formation of bogs and that a vast amount of trees that once covered all of Ireland died from being waterlogged. These former trees were very large indeed. Once such example, was the Neolithic log boat found at Strangford Lough. This boat was made from a single oak tree

that was hollowed out. It measured 9 metres in length and had a hull with a low centre of gravity, which gave it stability on the water. The boat was carbon dated and was found to be over 5000 years old.

Matthew went on to talk about the Burren in Co Clare which is globally unique. One can find a combination of alpine plants (eg. *Dryas octopetala*) growing alongside Mediterranean species e.g. *Neotinea maculata*. The explanation for this is the unique combination of cool, wet summers, which help the alpinists which cannot tolerate summer drought, to survive and the mild winters, which allow the frost-sensitive Mediterranean species to survive.

Ireland has about 850 native species of flowering plants, which is a relatively small number and many of the species have declined in numbers and have also become extinct due to changes in agricultural practices, mowing of roadside verges, overgrazing and the expanding numbers of golf courses.

Of course we are now encouraged not to pick wild flowers and their conservation will be brought about by protecting their habitats. Management strategies such as returning to more traditional farming practices will be necessary. We must maintain features of the landscape that serve as a refuge for wild plants, such as hedgerows, ponds and roadside verges.

Matthew brought a certain air of depression over the proceedings by listing some of the invasive species of plants that have been introduced into Ireland over the centuries. These include the Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, *Gunnera* and *Rhododendron ponticum*. Finally Matthew made us even more depressed by talking about the exponential rise of various diseases that have started to come into the British Isles over the last twenty years.

The most recent disease is the Ash dieback disease caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*, which slowly but surely has been spreading across continental Europe turning ashes into ashes, if you can excuse the pun. Ash saplings imported from continental European nurseries have been found to have been the source of the infection. For the life of me, I cannot see why it is necessary to import any Ash as it grows quite readily, like weeds, throughout the country. No doubt there is some dubious economic reason for this practice.

Matthew finished his talk by encouraging us to be very careful when buying plants. We should be fastidious in checking where the plants are sourced and only buying Irish grown varieties.

Martin Edwardes

## **Tuesday 4th December A lecture by Adam Whitbourne “Native Irish Plants; How they are threatened”**

It was a complete coincidence, that the talk in December was similar to the previous talk given by Dr. Matthew Jebb in November. It was a timely reminder of the fragility of our native flora.

Adam Whitbourne is head gardener of the Blarney Castle Gardens, which under his guidance has undergone a dramatic change for the better in the last number of years. He is very passionate about preserving Irish plants and to this end he has built an Irish Garden as an attraction within the Castle gardens.

Again the thrust of Adam's talk was the conservation of our native plants, as a large number are seriously under threat, while some are actually extinct in the wild. Picking of flowers or collecting plants from the wild poses a great risk to their ultimate survival. One well known example of this is the rapid decline of the Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*), which suffered from the Victorian passion for collecting ferns. Plants in Nature Reserves and National Parks are protected and should never be picked. The rarest species, including for the first time a number of mosses, liverworts and lichens, are protected under the 1999 Flora Protection Act.

Adam went on to talk about the Burren, where over 70% of Ireland's native species occur. A 2001 survey found 28 different species per square metre in upland grasslands and up to 45 species per square metre in some samples. Twenty two of Ireland's twenty seven orchids are found in this area.

Adam humorously brought up the topic of what plant is actually the Irish shamrock. A survey carried out by the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin revealed that when an Irishman wears the “shamrock”, it can be any one of four plants. Three of them are clovers namely Lesser trefoil or hop clover (*Trifolium dubium*), White clover (*Trifolium repens*), and Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) and lastly a Black medick (*Medicago lupulina*). All four are from the pea family. However Adam's money is on some members of the wood sorrel family such as *Oxalis acetosella*. What all these plants have in common is a trifoliate leaf structure which symbolizes the Holy Trinity. Rather strangely, there is a small group of four plants that come from North America. These are known as North American species and can be found in Ireland and Britain. One of these, Irish St. Johnswort (*Hypericum canadense*) can only be found in Ireland, while the other three, Blue-eyed grass, Pipewort and Irish Ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) are found in Britain as well.

Lusitanian Flora was the next topic in Adam's talk. Lusitania Flora are a group of wildflowers native to Ireland, but mainly absent from Britain. This unique collection of mediterranean plants came originally from the Iberian peninsula

and are found mostly in the South and West of Ireland. There is no conclusive proof as to their presence here in Ireland as it is unlikely that they survived from before the last Ice Age. This group of plants include the Kidney Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hirsuta*), St. Patrick's Cabbage (*Saxifraga spathularis*), The Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*) and the Irish Fleabane (*Inula saliciana*).

In order to aid preservation of Irish flora, the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin have drawn up a Red Data list of Irish Plants, which are divided into three categories, critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable. There are seven in the critically endangered group which require immediate intervention if they are not to join nine plants that are already extinct. In this list there are 52 plants which are considered endangered and 69 which are considered vulnerable. The Botanic Gardens are playing a critical role in preserving the endangered species within the gardens, so that they can be reintroduced into the wild if they become extinct.

To finish, Adam suggested that we should all play our part in preserving our native flora. We could set aside an area of our gardens to grow wild flowers and source Irish grown seed and garden plants where possible. We should also be aware of the risks of invasive plants, pests and diseases.

Martin Edwardes

## NORTHERN

### **July 28<sup>th</sup>. A garden visit to Ballyrobert Cottage Garden.**

Maurice and Joy Parkinson's beautiful Ulster cottage garden was the venue for the Northern group's annual picnic in July. On an indifferent showery day, we were cheered by Maurice's enthusiasm and by the incredible selection of herbaceous plants. The garden is designed on the Robinsonian principle of "a garden to fit the place", around a 17<sup>th</sup> century landscape where the original cottage and barn are the keystones of the design.

Other features are also drawn from traditional influences:- the basalt gateposts, flat-topped to make convenient dancing places for the fairies; the Celtic Spiral created in a field of rushes on the perimeter of the garden which looks out over the countryside of South Antrim and which addresses the spiritual connection between landscape and garden. So too does the formal garden whose design is based on the Irish High Cross.

As Maurice led us round the series of interconnected gardens, from the truly cottage front garden to the woodland garden and on to the lakeside garden, we were struck by his deep understanding of the topography, soil conditions and micro-climate of the area. The whole garden is linked by the stream which



dissects the property, flows into the lake and exits under a little bridge on the other side where a new area of shade loving plants is being developed under the trees.

Plants which don't perform to their best are removed or re-sited elsewhere. There is an immense range of plants in the garden from native woodland plants to specimen acers, but the herbaceous collection is the jewel in the crown; and the absolute beauty of it all is that specimens can be bought in the nursery run by Joy. One of our members was adamant that she had no room for anything more in her garden. She was buying nothing! Yet she was observed leaving with a car full of gorgeous perennials.

Ballyrobert Cottage Garden is a delight and for anyone who hasn't visited it, a must.

Yvonne Penpraze



## *Details of Spring Events*

### **NORTHERN**

**Thursday 21st March at 7:30pm, at the Clotworthy Arts Centre,  
Antrim (in Association with Antrim Borough Council)  
'An Historical Appraisal of Mount Stewart' by Neil Porteous**

Neil Porteous is head gardener at Mount Stewart, County Down. In this illustrated lecture, he gives an appraisal of Lady Londonderry's contribution to horticulture including many Irish cultivars and sponsorship of plant hunters.

Admission: IGPS Members Free, Non-Members £3. Refreshments Provided

### **MUNSTER**

#### **THE ANNUAL MUNSTER PLANT SALE**

**will be held on**

**Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> April, from 10 a.m. until noon**

**IN THE SMA HALL, WILTON, CORK**

## MUNSTER LECTURES

**February Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> at 8 pm**

**‘In search of good garden plants’ by Seamus O’Brien**

This lecture by Seamus O’Brien is based around his worldwide travels collecting plants. It also shows how the same plants have been successfully grown in Irish gardens, including the Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh Botanic Gardens.

It starts out in the American mid-west looking at wild American Prairies, Piet Oudolf's take on Prairie plants and the planting in Millennium Park, Chicago. Moving east to Battery Park Manhattan, Seamus will then move on to the High Line in downtown Manhattan.

From there the search moves to the Chilean Andes, mainly looking at Puyas, discussing their co-evolution with humming birds and seeing the same species in cultivation in Ireland and Britain.

The next stage of the journey is from Chile to south-east Tibet to search for giant rhubarb (*Rheum nobile*) and blue poppies - lots of different species - and the yellow poppywort, *Meconopsis pseudointegrifolia* ssp. *robusta*. The lecture then brings you back to Glasnevin to show how garden areas were 'modified' to successfully grow them.

Next stop is New Zealand to look at New Zealand mountain daisies in the Southern Alps of the South Island, returning to Beech Park in Clonsilla to see the collection formed by the late, great, David Shackleton. From New Zealand on to Tasmania to see tree ferns and native sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*) in temperate rainforest before returning to Kilmacurragh to discuss frost proof areas of the garden where *Dicksonia antarctica* can be grown.

**March, Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> 8 pm ‘Wild life gardening’ by Mike Copley**

Mike is a professional bird watching guide and committee member of the west Cork branch of Bird Watch Ireland. Born in England, he moved to west Cork in 2002, and created a garden at Raven's Oak near Bantry. The emphasis when designing and planting the garden was to attract and encourage wildlife and includes a wildflower meadow. The garden reflects his passion for birds, and has resulted in recordings of over sixty species of birds visiting the area. The garden can be visited in summer as part of the West Cork Garden Trail. For details check [www.westcorkgardentrail.com](http://www.westcorkgardentrail.com).

## LEINSTER

### **Thursday January 10<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm. A visit to the refurbished Herbarium at the Botany Department, Trinity College.**

This visit will be led by Prof. John Parnell.

As space is limited please ring Marcella 01 8480625 or Emer 0876987566 to reserve a place at this free event. TCD herbarium houses plant material collected from all over the world. Its collections encompass many different plant groups ranging from fungi, through algae, mosses and liverworts, to ferns, conifers, cycads and flowering plants.

**Please note.** There is no parking within the college grounds so please use public transport or public parking. The Botany Dept. is at the end of the rugby pitch. The nearest entrance is at the Science Gallery on Pearse Street.

### **Thursday 11th April, at The National Botanic Gardens at 2.00pm “Landscape - influences on Fabric and Fashion” with Marie Staunton and Christopher Heavey**

Marie Staunton studied horticulture at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin and is a journalist who writes the gardening column for the Irish Independent on Saturday. She also works in the fashion industry. Christopher Heavey is a well-known horticulturalist who works for Teagasc and lectures at their college at Glasnevin, Dublin.

**Please note this is an afternoon lecture.**

### **Thursday 18th April, 8.00pm. A joint lecture with the Alpine Society, Christopher Grey-Wilson ‘Pulsatillas and other alpine members of the Ranunculaceae’ at St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.**

Christopher Grey-Wilson was editor of the Alpine Garden Society for 20 years, he retired in 2011. Before this he served as a Principal Scientific Officer at the Royal Botanic Gardens for 22 years and from here he made plant collecting expeditions to Iran and Afghanistan, Nepal, western China, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Tanzania. In addition, he has been editor of Curtis’s Botanical Magazine whilst at Kew, and also the Royal Horticultural Society’s magazine The Plantsman.

Christopher's published works include: ‘*A Field Guide to the Bulbs of Greece*’, ‘*Alpine Flowers of Britain and Europe*’, ‘*Clematis, the Genus*’, ‘*Mediterranean Wild Flowers*’, ‘*Poppies*’, ‘*Rock Plants*’, ‘*The Alpine Garden*’, ‘*The Genus Cyclamen*’, ‘*The Genus Dionysia*’, ‘*The Rock Garden Plant Primer*’ and ‘*Wild Flowers of Britain and Northern Europe*’.



*The Annual General Meeting 2013*  
*Saturday 11th May at 10:30 a.m.*  
*At Kenmare Bay Hotel, Kenmare, Co Kerry*  
*Dinner to be at 8:00pm*  
*Dinner on Saturday evening & garden visits €70 per person*

Following the AGM, we have arranged visits to a number of excellent gardens over the weekend, ones we are sure you will enjoy, including a rare opportunity to visit an island garden, which is not normally open to the public. On the Saturday, we will be visiting gardens in the Kenmare area, which as most people know is a very beautiful part of Ireland. One of the gardens is a beautifully designed ten year old, two and half acre garden with very interesting planting.

On the Sunday, we will travel to the Killarney area to visit gardens in that region, including another two and a half acre garden, which has a very diverse large collection of plants.

The hotel has agreed to give very special rates to people wishing to stay there, so we would advise people to book early to avail of these concessions and avoid disappointment.

A complete itinerary will be posted to you on receipt of your booking form, or can be sent by email to help reduce paper consumption. If you are using email, please make sure that you receive a response to same, as sometimes emails can end up in cyberspace! As regards the dinner in the evening, the hotel would prefer to take your order on the night. If you have any special dietary requirements or food allergies, please let the hotel know so that alternatives can be arranged.

The hotel is giving all IGPS members a special rate on the rooms, so if you wish to book any rooms for the weekend, please contact Hanneke Vermolen (the reservations manager) at 064 6641300 between 8.30am to 4.30 pm weekdays or email her at [info@kenmarebay hotel.com](mailto:info@kenmarebay hotel.com). When booking, please let the hotel know that you are an IGPS member to avail of the price reduction.

Please enclose your full payment with your booking. Cheques or Bank Drafts should be made out to Irish Garden Plant Society. Do not send cash.

**NB Price is in euro and not sterling** to Martin Edwardes, The Old Deanery, Cloyne, Co Cork. Tel: (0)21 4652204 Mobile: 087 2716249 email:[edwaelec@eircom.net](mailto:edwaelec@eircom.net).

**Payment should arrive no later than Tuesday 30th April.**

The price of €70.00 includes the AGM, all garden visits, and an evening meal on Saturday. Lunches and dinner on Sunday are not included.



## *A. G. M. Agenda*

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM 2012
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Officers and Committee
7. Constitutional amendments - if any
8. Any other business

The constitution allows for the election of 10 committee members so the Society's National Committee is currently under-strength. We would greatly welcome a full strength committee so if you would like to be involved in any way please contact any of the officers or committee members to have a chat about putting your name forward.

Now for the formalities: nominations for election should be signed by two members of the Society and include the written consent of the individual to stand.

Please send nominations to Maeve Bell as Hon Sec at least two weeks before the AGM at 1 The Drive, Richmond Park, Belfast BT9 5EG telephone 0044 28 9066 8435 or 0044 7713 739 482.



## *Lomatia ferruginea* by Gary Dunlop

When is a hardy flowering tree, a half hardy foliage plant? The answer is: when the RHS gives it a First Class Certificate, and this happened as recently as 2001<sup>1</sup>, which begs the question what sort of award it would merit if it was in flower. *Lomatia ferruginea* was introduced into cultivation in the British Isles, about 150 years before by William Lobb, who collected plants in Chile for the Veitch Nursery, so it was not a new novelty with an unknown flower. Curiously Bean refers to *L. ferruginea* as a shrub or tree up to 30ft. (9.5m).<sup>2</sup> Normally woody plants that reach that height would be regarded as trees, but *L. ferruginea* does not form a single dominant trunk, but the short trunk branches close to the ground, and the branches form multiple wide spreading leaders. The ultimate height would seem to depend on the situation and climatic conditions.





The plant was first described, illustrated and named as *Embothrium ferruginea* in 1798 by the Spanish botanist Antonio Cavanilles, though he does not record who collected the specimen of this attractive plant, near San Carlos de Chiloe.<sup>3</sup> It was almost certainly collected on the Ruiz and Pavon expedition. The first consignment of specimens sent by Ruiz and Pavon was lost at sea, but when the French botanist Dombey, who actually led the expedition, arrived back, before the two Spaniards, most of his specimens were confiscated by the Spanish authorities. That is the most likely source of the specimens first described by Cavanilles and thus explains the lack of information as to their provenance.<sup>4</sup>



In 1810 the English botanist Robert Brown, in revising the members of the Proteaceae, which included some newly discovered members from Australia, established a new genus *Lomatia*, to which he transferred some South American members of the family.<sup>5</sup> The name of the genus is derived from the Greek *loma* meaning edge and refers to the winged seeds. The specific name is Latin meaning rust coloured and refers to the colour of young downy branchlets and the main and secondary leaf stalks which connect the parts of the pinnate fern-like leaf. It will come as no surprise to learn that *Lomatia ferruginea* is Martin Rickard's favourite tree.

*Lomatia ferruginea* “was introduced from Chiloe and Patagonia through William Lobb in 1851”<sup>6</sup> This date is more likely to be when plants raised from seed were first made commercially available, as Lobb arrived back from his second trip to South America in 1848, and had sent consignments of seed back before returning himself. Plants were illustrated in an advertisement in *Gardeners’ Chronicle* by 1854. It was not illustrated in the *Bot Mag.* until January 1907.<sup>7</sup>

The flowering material, from Castlewellan Arboretum in Co. Down, was sent by Mr. Thomas Ryan, in July 1906, who was gardener to Lord Annesley. It is likely that it had flowered before this date on Tresco, where it reputedly had grown on the Lighthouse Walk, since 1857.<sup>8</sup> Mr Augustus Smith who established the now famous garden was clearly an early customer of Veitch for this new plant.



*Lomatia ferruginea* is evergreen and has an extensive distribution in Chile from Maule, region VII, just north of Concepcion and mid-way between it and Santiago, right down to the southernmost region XII, Magellanes y de la Antartica Chilleana, i.e. from a latitude of 35° to 55° south.<sup>9</sup> Its extensive distribution has led to it being given at least nine different common names.

The original collection was noted by Cavanilles to grow in places occasionally inundated by sea, which would suggest a tolerance of sea water, and thus suggests that *L. ferruginea* would be potentially suitable for some coastal gardens.

However, further north where it grows inland at higher altitudes, it requires humidity as noted in a small book on Chilean shrubs: "*It grows in humid forest, which is why it can only be found in humid ravines in the north. Towards the south however, it forms part of the thicket of all the temperate rainforests.*"<sup>10</sup>

In its native habitat *Lomatia ferruginea* is essentially an under storey shrub or tree. Vegetation for most of this climatic range should be reasonably hardy in Great Britain and Ireland, though the high moisture content of the ground and air in the temperate rain forests is likely to mean that the many plants from this region will not grow well in the drier parts of England. This would probably explain why the specimen at Kew in 1906, albeit housed in the Temperate House, had only reached 9ft (2.7m) in height and about as much across in twenty years!

The conventional conception of hardiness is not applicable, and such plants should, and usually do, grow reasonably well in the south-western parts of England, and in Ireland. They should also grow well in parts of Wales and the west coast of Scotland. *Lomatia ferruginea* is probably capable of withstanding about -20°C, as the substantial tree in Rowallane Garden is likely to have experienced such a low during its long existence on several occasions.



My tree, which reached almost 25ft (8m) is less than twenty years, and was unaffected by a couple of nights of -13°C.

The branches are also remarkably flexible as an unexpected snowfall of 150mm in January 2007 weighed down some of the upright branches until they touched the ground, but they quickly regained their composure when the snow melted.

My tree is planted in an area which is damp and sometimes saturated in wet winters, but can become almost dry in long dry periods in summer, as a lot of moisture is removed by the proximity of two ash trees.

Surprisingly, *Lomatia ferruginea* seems to be quite drought resistant and the tree at Rowallane was not noticeably affected by the nine week drought here in May and June in 2008, when so many other plants in that garden, with quite shallow soil over rock, were showing serious signs of stress. My tree flowered better than ever, just before the drought ended, and flowered equally well the following year.

The relatively high humidity of the air, that is normal in Co. Down, even in clear sunny weather, despite the lack of rain, must be a contributory factor, in the successful cultivation of this tree. It has flowered regularly since it was planted about 10 years old but only recently became extremely floriferous.

*Lomatia ferruginea* does not form a substantial main trunk but instead produces many secondary trunks or branches close to the ground which form multiple, but wide spreading leaders, so that the tree is often almost as wide as it is tall. Bean notes it grows up to 30ft (9m) but then goes on to mention several specimens over that height! Measured in 1966 the tallest one was growing at Castlewellan Arboretum in Co. Down and was then 49ft (15m) high.<sup>2</sup> In 1994 it was 54ft (16.5m) <sup>11</sup> but no indication of the spread was given in either case. However it could not be located in a search to photograph it by the author, despite its location being specified by a grid reference for the arboretum and it is likely that it may have died, despite originally being planted near the bottom of the slope in the arboretum in relatively damp ground.

The largest specimen at Rowallane is probably about 40ft (12m) tall and possibly more than that wide. It is not very noticeable as it is set well back from the nearest mown grass path and partially obscured by a tall *Parrotia persica*. The attractive and distinctive smallish red flowers which are tipped yellow, despite being grouped in clusters, are not readily visible from a distance, as the ferny foliage tends to act like camouflage netting. The old dying leaves, which are about to shed, turn butter yellow about the same time as the tree comes into flower, and they are rather more conspicuous.

Flowering commences about mid June and lasts a good four weeks. Whilst it makes a very attractive tree with distinctive foliage, the flowers are attractive when viewed close up. Fortunately even the relatively large trees maintain flowering branches close to the ground, so as to add delight on close inspection when the tree is in flower.

It can be propagated either by seed or by cuttings, though I have not tried either method. My original plant was actually a self-sown seedling from a tree in Plas Merdyn, the garden of my gardening mentors, the late Drs Bill & Gretta Lennon, of Holywood, Co. Down.

The small young tree transplanted successfully, the first time. However, when I moved it a second time to a more suitable location, I found out to my cost that members of the Proteaceae do not like being transplanted, and it is usually fatal. Fortunately I was able to obtain a replacement, which grew away well. As it was surrounded by taller plants, it has tended to grow upwards more than outwards.

It is certainly well worth trying to grow by anyone with a relatively shady spot in the garden, in the more maritime or humid regions of Great Britain or Ireland. Though it will grow in full sun in humid enough conditions, in more northerly latitudes, where sunshine is a comparatively rare commodity, and high temperatures above 25°C are experienced.

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This article was previously published in *Borderlines*.



## *Snowdrop Time*

**Burtown House and Gardens**, Athy Co. Kildare will be open for two weeks in **February from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>** 10.00am – 4.00pm for snowdrops and early spring bulbs. See [www.burtownhouse.ie](http://www.burtownhouse.ie) for details.

Snowdrop Week at **Altamont Gardens**, Tullow, Co. Carlow will take place from **February 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>**. The gardens are open from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30p.m., and admission is free. There is a daily guided tour with the head gardener at 2pm, with a charge of €2. Plants will be for sale at Altamont Plants in the walled garden.

**Primrose Hill Garden**, Lucan Lane, Lucan Village, Co Dublin will be open daily from **February 1<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> at 2.00p.m.** Admission: Adults €6.00, children free. For details see [www.hcgi.ie/primrosehill](http://www.hcgi.ie/primrosehill)

**Woodville Walled Garden**, Kilchreest, Loughrea, Co Galway will be open in **February from Thursday to Sunday** 11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. There will be a tour with the head gardener at 2.00 p.m. [www.woodvillegatedgarden.com](http://www.woodvillegatedgarden.com)



## *Plant Search*

A plant a member is having difficulty finding is *Ilex verticillata*. He has written to ask if it is available in garden centres or nurseries in Ireland. It is mentioned in the Plant Finder but only for British nurseries. Both a male and female plant are requested.

Any information about its availability can be sent to Mary at the contact details: [igpseditor@gmail.com](mailto:igpseditor@gmail.com) or Mary Rowe 29 Bantry Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9



# Mahonias: *A winter feast*

## by Ciara Birmingham

When thinking of Irish cultivars the ubiquitous *Mahonia* x *media* ‘Charity’ is not the first plant that comes to mind, despite the fact that Mahonia has strong Irish connections. A member of the Berberidaceae family, *Mahonia* is a genus of about seventy species of evergreen shrubs found in woodlands and rocky areas of North and Central America, the Himalaya, and East Asia. The variety of plants ensures that there is at least one to please every gardener. It is a genus with good winter colour that carries the garden from autumn through the depths of winter and onwards to the first days of spring. It is a shrub I would always want to grow in my garden.

The group of evergreen shrubs now known as *Mahonia* was named by Botanist Thomas Nuttall in 1818 for Bernard M’ Mahon (1775-1816), an Ulsterman who emigrated to America before the suppression of the United Irishmen in 1798. He settled in Philadelphia with his wife Ann and opened a gardening shop on Second Street. Though primarily a seed shop, he printed an extensive seed catalogue. His *Catalogue of Garden Grass, Herb, Flower, Tree & Shrub-Seeds, Flower Roots &c* was the first published seed list in the United States. His 1804 catalogue ran to thirty pages, they are now an important reference as to what plants were grown in America at that time. However his customers were not confined to the U.S. but extended to Europe also. The shop also sold books and gardening sundries and a major attraction was the opportunity of speaking with M’Mahon whose advice was much sought after, as he was clearly a talented horticulturalist.

Details of his life in Ireland are scant, but given our knowledge of his expertise shortly after his arrival in America it seems likely that he had a background in horticulture before he emigrated. He published a book in 1806 *The American Gardener’s Calendar: Adapted to the Climates and Seasons of the United States*, a month by month guide with instructions on design, planting and pruning for all zones of the U.S. This was a pioneering work and was a bestseller for fifty years. The eleventh and last edition was published in 1857. In design he favoured winding paths rather than the formality of straight lines. The book’s main attraction however was that it was written specifically for American soil and growing conditions. In Britain *The Gardener’s Kalender* written by Philip Miller of the Chelsea Physic Gardens was published at this time also.

His ability in seed propagation was legendary and resulted in a friendship with President Thomas Jefferson who held him in high regard. A regular correspondence between the two men took place with M'Mahon as gardening mentor to Jefferson. It was no surprise then that having requested "a small portion of every kind", he was one of two nurserymen allocated seed from the Lewis and Clarke expedition to the Pacific Coast (1804 -1806) commissioned by Jefferson. Amongst the plants from this expedition that M'Mahon grew in his nursery was the Oregon grape (*M. aquifolium*). The Mahonia's blue-black, clustered fruits give rise to this common name of Oregon grape. While these acidic fruits can be eaten raw or cooked, they certainly could not be regarded as appetising, as they contain very little flesh and consist almost entirely of seeds.

However many species are not American but Asian, and two, namely *M. japonica* and *M. lomariifolia* from China are parents of the most popular and widely available Mahonias of recent years. *M. japonica* has long been grown as a reliable, accommodating evergreen with lax racemes of fragrant flowers that enjoy a long season and will grow in a wide variety of conditions. *M. lomariifolia* was discovered by Augustine Henry and introduced in the U.K. in 1931 from north-west Yunnan Province by Major Lawrence Johnson of Hidcote Manor. This plant is still maintained at the garden. It is decidedly more tender but compensates by having a more upstanding growth habit and neater more attractive foliage, which is initially a coppery red colour. It will grow to a beautiful large shrub in a mild sheltered garden. Christopher Lloyd found it "has me weak and babbling with admiration"<sup>2</sup>, praise indeed!

A batch of seedlings of *Mahonia lomariifolia* was raised by Leslie Slinger at the Slieve Donard Nursery in County Down. "Some of these were purchased by L.R. Russell Ltd Windlesham and were seen when quite small by Sir Eric Savill, who purchased a few for the Savill Garden",<sup>1</sup> in Great Windsor Park. Sir Eric Savill "particularly asked for three which had slightly different foliage, and John Russell agreed. In due course one proved to be a natural hybrid with *M. japonica* and the name 'Charity' was given because out of charity John had agreed to the request, little knowing what he was giving away."<sup>1</sup> The Savill Garden is now home to the National Collection of *Mahonia*, they are grown outdoors in the garden and in the Queen Elizabeth Temperate House. The original plant grows at the back of the Summer House border. A visit at any time of the year is a pleasure and it is certainly worth a visit in winter when the air is perfumed with the scent of Mahonias in bloom.

For the winter garden *M. 'Charity'* is a good choice with its bright yellow flowers and serrated foliage, and like many of the hybrids is not as tender as *M. lomariifolia*. Its hardiness makes it a popular choice and allows it to be grown in a much wider range of climatic conditions. It has a strong architectural shape if pruned in spring. It thrives on hard pruning and this prevents the



development of leafless and leggy stems. These long shoots of bare wood can be cut back as they will break from old wood and flower the next season.

It was on the recommendation of Margery Fish in 'A flower for every day' that I bought my plant many years ago, she described it as a "beautiful hybrid".

An alternative to pruning is under planting for summer with ferns that enjoy dry conditions i.e. the Soft Shield Fern (*Polystichum setiferum*), a magnificent plant that will thrive anywhere, and grow to 1.2m x 90cm. *M. 'Charity'* can be planted in full sun but prefers to be in shade or a semi-shaded area, it is fully hardy, and is generally pest and disease free. In the early 1980's Graham Stuart Thomas wrote that *M. 'Charity'* is "one of the very finest shrubs ever raised"<sup>1</sup>

It is not universally loved however, Christopher Lloyd says "it will have no beginning in my home. Charity combines the worst features of both its parents. It has the leaf of *M. japonica* (with very little of the elegance of *M. lomariifolia*)<sub>2</sub> but Robert Lane Fox calls it "this excellent shrub.....I recommend it highly, and its traditional pairing in London with the big-fingered leaves of evergreen fatsia is a splendid match"<sup>3</sup> although he does concede that its scent is not as strong as *Mahonia japonica*.

I also grow *M. 'Winter Sun'* which as its name suggests brings a ray of sunshine to my winter garden. With golden yellow flowers, it has an eventual height and spread of 5m x 4m (15feet x 12 feet) and was raised at the Slieve Donard Nursery. It is very similar to 'Charity' but I have found it to be a more vigorous plant and it has proved to be hardier in the severe winter of 2010. It will sprout from the base if damaged by frost, which in my experience 'Charity' is less inclined to do, when young. It was awarded an Award of Merit in 1984.

There are many other garden worthy hybrids two preferred by Stephen Lacey are the popular 'Lionel Fortescue' and 'Buckland'. Both originated in the garden of Lionel Fortescue at the Garden House, Buckland Monachorum, Devon. 'Lionel Fortescue' has been awarded numerous awards by the Royal Horticultural Society including an Award of Merit and the Cory Cup in 1975, a First Class Certificate in 1992, and an Award of Garden Merit in 2002.

For gardeners who find the coarse leaves of *Mahonia japonica* "tiresome" as Christopher Lloyd did, an alternative is *M. eurybracteata* syn. *M. confusa*. A five foot (1.5m.) introduction from western China made by Roy Lancaster in 1980, the leaves are shapely and very narrow, in fact a common name is the Narrow Leaved Mahonia, and it is frost hardy. This is one of many Chinese *Mahonia* that have been introduced into cultivation in the past two decades.

There is at least one *Mahonia* for every garden, indeed there is scarcely a genus of shrubs in cultivation that can compare to *Mahonia*.

Finally, propagation by leaf-bud cuttings is recommended, alternatively the easiest propagation method I find is to gently remove suckers in spring, pot up and place in a frame, out of direct sunlight!

## Bibliography

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## *The Leinster Plant Sale 2012*

The *Annual Leinster Plant Sale* took place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October at Trinity College Botanic Gardens, Palmerston Park, Dublin 6.

Many thanks to all IGPS members who donated plants, there were many Irish cultivars and unusual plants donated, and this was very much appreciated.

Thanks also to those who came along to help and make the day a great financial success. The new venue at Trinity College Botanic Gardens proved to be a good choice with easy access and adequate parking available. Many thanks also to Trinity College for allowing the IGPS the use of the venue, and to the staff at the Gardens for all their help and kindness.

Marcella Campbell and Emer Gallagher  
Leinster Region Committee



*Hedychium gardnerianum* photographed by Joan Kiernan from Longford in Trinity College Botanic Gardens, Plamerston Park, Dublin 6 on her visit to the Leinster Plant Sale October 2012.



# *The Irish Garden Plant Society*

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