



# Irish Garden Plant Society

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**Newsletter**  
January 2020

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The next copy date is **Friday 13th March**

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Cover photograph: Blarney Castle in spring; many thanks to Olive Ryan, Deputy Head Gardener.

# Welcome

by the Editorial Team

Members may remember the autumn issue and the encouragement from our Chair, Billy McCone, to increase our focus on plants with an Irish connection as this is what makes the Society different and special. Well, this issue is right on message.

Grow an Irish Plant, with new contributors Peter and Nicola Millington joining existing stalwarts, suggests four beautiful plants for winter and early spring. In the past many of us have struggled to source some of our attractive but rare heritage plants; thankfully online retailing is starting to change that. Despite this, some of the most desirable plants are either hard to propagate or slow to increase or both. *Iris unguicularis* 'Kilbroney Marble' is a case in point so it is exciting to see that, thanks to the dedication of two of our members, there will soon be some to go into 'safe havens', some into the gardens of enthusiasts who will pass it on wherever possible, and some to go on 'general release' at our plant sales.

A few years ago Blarney Castle Gardens started to develop an Irish trail and now have probably the biggest collection of Irish plants outside of the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh.

Olive Ryan, Blarney's deputy head gardener, tells us about it.

Another 'grand big garden' to quote Jane Powers in her splendid book *The Irish Garden* is Mount Congreve in County Waterford; Paddy Tobin brings us the welcome news that the Department of Rural and Community Development, has awarded €3.7m to secure its future.

Welcome to another new contributor, Rosemary Maye. Members who were lucky enough to visit her garden near Slane for the summer lunch last June will know that she has created it with a passion second to none. Her joy in and commitment to gardening is described in a way which is sure to inspire.

A warm thank you to Paddy Tobin for kindly allowing us to use several of his excellent photos and to Mary Montaut who is stepping down after two years as editor. The good news is that Mary will continue to contribute; in this issue she questions whether a wild garden is a contradiction in terms. What do you think?

## A Note from the Chair

Since advertising for volunteers in the last Newsletter, I am delighted to report positive developments. Former ebulletin editor, Ali Rochford, found she had to reduce her commitments for family reasons. An excellent member of the team, her talents have been greatly missed. We send her best wishes and congratulations on the birth of a baby girl, Almha. Replacing her is Galway member, Branka Gaberscik. Branka is a professional gardener and has recently achieved a qualification in film production. I'm sure we all look forward to receiving regular news about our events and other developments.

We also say goodbye and many thanks to Mary Montaut. Having edited the Newsletter for the past two years, Mary has retired from the post but kindly agreed to contribute articles and assist generally. We now need a new editor to take over as a matter of urgency. Please get in touch right away if you think you could help. It is not essential to have advanced IT skills or design experience as we have an excellent relationship with the printer who looks after design and layouts and we have developed a support team including Brendan Sayers, Stephen Butler and Maeve Bell to assist with proofing and contributing additional material.

Anne James, following 10 years on the National Committee including four as Vice-Chair, has volunteered to collate the regional events.

Joining our *Moorea* team will be County Down members, Will and She She Lewis. With a background in publishing, their expertise will be most valuable. Retired professional grower Robert Dunlop is willing to assist Stephen Butler in taking forward the plant conservation programme. Over the past year first Barbara Kelso and then Victor and Roz Henry have retired from the Northern sub-committee after their ten years of service; not so sad a farewell though as all continue to help. The region welcomes two new committee members, Heather Farmer and Julie Holmes.

Many thanks to our new team members and to our existing team for their flexibility and continued support. All great news – but, while Pascal Lynch is generously continuing on a temporary basis, we still urgently need a new Treasurer. Please come forward and take on this key position in our Society which, I'm glad to say, is in a healthy position financially.

**Happy New Year everyone.**



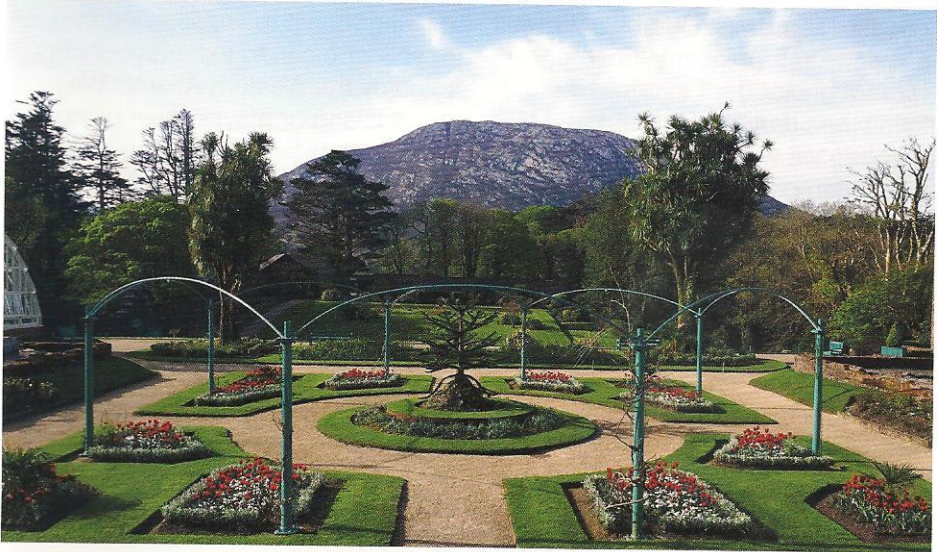
*Billy  
McCone*

Chairman

# AGM Weekend – 16 & 17 May 2020

## Destination: County Mayo

by the Leinster Committee



Kylemore Abbey Photo: Anje Gohlke

We are delighted to announce that the AGM weekend will be held in Mayo this year, the first time it will have been in this county, and we hope many of you will join us and visit six contrasting gardens.

This year the actual meeting will be held on Sunday morning to facilitate enjoying the maximum time in two large gardens on Saturday. We have organised a coach to take us first to Kylemore Abbey, just over the border in County Galway. Kylemore was visited previously when the garden was opened to public in 2000 after five years restoration

work. The eastern half includes the formal flower garden, glass houses, the head gardener's house, and the garden bothy. The western part of the garden includes the vegetable garden, herbaceous border, fruit trees, a rockery and herb garden. Kylemore is a Heritage Garden displaying only plant varieties from the Victorian era.

We are very grateful to have the opportunity to visit a private garden in the afternoon. Dating from the Victorian era, this extensive garden has been thoroughly restored by new owners, with some structures

left as a reminder of the earlier garden. Substantial work has been done on the arboretum, flower garden, vegetable garden, orchard, rhododendron bank and some woodland gardens. Other work is still in progress.

Following our AGM on Sunday morning, we will visit another restoration project, Westport House, a three hundred-year-old garden whose new owners are working hard to recreate the original beauty and mystique of a substantial estate overlooking Clew Bay. We will see the Italianate gardens dating from 1914-15, the river walk, and woodland restoration.

Sunday afternoon will provide a complete contrast as we visit a selection of delightful smaller gardens. We will see and learn how their owners work with the often-challenging elements to garden under the shadow of Croagh Patrick and close to Brackloon Woods. In one, the emphasis is on biodiversity and gardening for wildlife, including various habitats. The second continues the theme of diversity in a cottage garden which mingles native trees and flora with an emphasis on planting for the native Irish honeybee. The last is a relatively new garden surrounding a farmhouse and traditional outbuildings on a challenging site with a natural stream flowing through it.

All in all, a diverse and tempting selection of gardens in a county that is often overlooked.

Our base will be in Westport, a thriving tourist town, allowing those of you who can to extend your stay to enjoy the Western Atlantic Way, Achill Island or maybe even climb Croagh Patrick!

The **Castlecourt Hotel** will host our annual dinner on Saturday evening. A competitive B&B rate has been negotiated as follows:

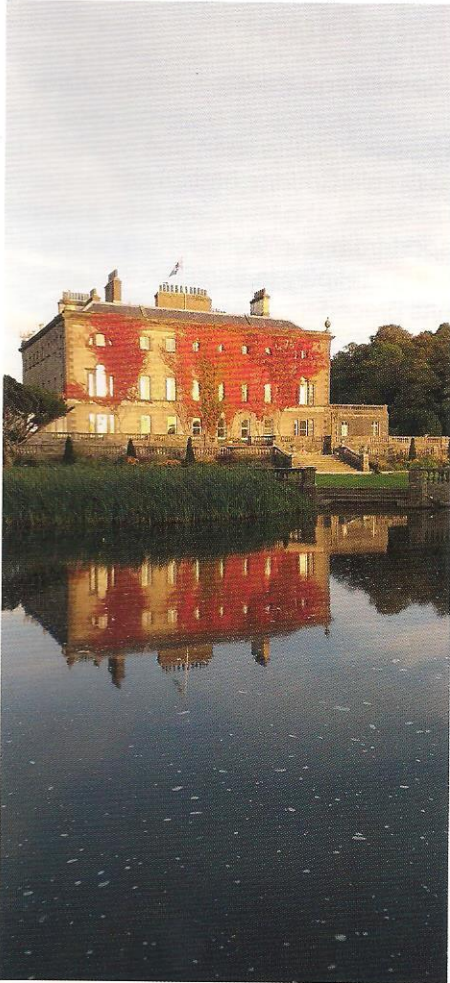
**Friday night:** €69 per person sharing (pps)/€109 single occupancy

**Saturday night:** €99 pps/€139 single occupancy

**Sunday night:** €59 pps/€99 single occupancy.

NB To avail of these rates please call **The Castlecourt Hotel 098 55088 (353 98 55088 from NI)** between the 1st February and the 12th April quoting the **Group Reservation Number 1045174**.

For information about other accommodation, see the website for a link to Westport Tourism. As we will be leaving by coach early on Saturday morning for our garden visits, we recommend staying in Westport on Friday night. Members of the Leinster Committee will be on hand in the Library of the Castlecourt Hotel to welcome you and give you



Westport House Photo: Paul Smith

all the information on the gardens to be visited as well as suggestions for further places of interest in the area. Further details about the event, which can be booked immediately, are available on the website [www.irishgardenplantsociety.com](http://www.irishgardenplantsociety.com) with a link to Eventbrite for booking for the AGM, garden visits, lunch and dinner. If you have a difficulty in accessing a computer or going online, please email [igps.leinster@gmail.com](mailto:igps.leinster@gmail.com) or telephone +353 1 843 6644.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Westport in May.

Please note that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on **Sunday morning** rather than Saturday. All members are entitled to attend free of charge but, even if you plan to come only to the meeting, please complete the Eventbrite booking form so we know how many to expect. The formal notice calling the meeting and the agenda will be carried in the April Newsletter.

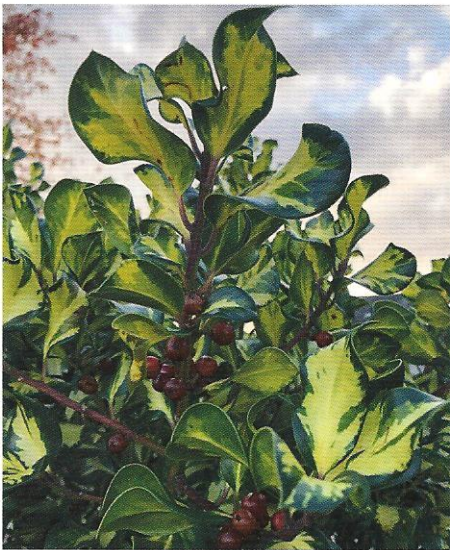
# Grow an Irish Plant

by Peter & Nicola Milligan, Brendan Sayers and Paddy & Mary Tobin

## *Ilex* 'Lady Valerie'

*Ilex* 'Lady Valerie' originated as a sport of *Ilex* × *altaclerensis* 'Golden King'. It was noticed, propagated and named by a founding IGPS committee member, nursery owner and plantsman, Dr Neil Murray. Neil named the plant for Lady Valerie Goulding as it was in the Goulding's garden at Dargle Cottage, Co Wicklow the sport occurred.

This holly, with attractive variegation and undulation to the leaves, is a female so, along with the attractive leaves, some red berries will add to its winter spectacle.



*Ilex* 'Lady Valerie'

However, as the sport that originated at Dargle Cottage had its name published at a later date than a similar sport from *Ilex* 'Golden King' in the town of Ripley in England, the latter has precedence. As a result, *Ilex* 'Ripley Gold' and its sister Irish sport are correctly named *Ilex* 'Ripley Gold'. The rules of nomenclature do not, however, change the geographical history of the Dargle Cottage plant and propagations sourced from it are truly Irish.

As gardeners, it is useful to know that holly cultivars with centrally blotched leaves have a tendency to revert to their original green leaved stems; these should be swiftly removed.

## *Galanthus* 'Castlegar'

*Galanthus* 'Castlegar' is an attractive snowdrop of simple elegance with the added value of flowering early in the snowdrop season, reliably in the first week of December. It will also be forever associated with the late Dr J G D (Keith) Lamb, one of our great Irish gardeners, generally credited with saving many varieties of Irish heritage apples.

Regarding the snowdrop, he wrote: "In 1985, Sir George and Lady Mahon took us to see their old home in Castlegar (on the outskirts of Galway City). It was not a horticultural trip but when I looked out the window, I saw



snowdrops in flower under a tree and I was given a few bulbs. A year or two later Ruby and David Baker were here and were intrigued by such an early snowdrop. They took specimens to a meeting of snowdrop enthusiasts in England. They wrote back to say that no one knew what it was and that it should be named, hence the name, 'Castlegar'."



*Galanthus* 'Castlegar'

G. 'Castlegar' is usually available online "in the green" from some of the specialist bulb suppliers such as Avon Bulbs.

***Iris unguicularis* 'Kilbroney Marble'**

*Iris unguicularis* flowers intermittently from November to February and was first introduced into cultivation from Algeria by the British botanist, the Hon William Herbert (1788 – 1847).

The true species of *I. unguicularis* has deep violet petals with white and deep yellow at the base of each fall. The petals of *I. 'Kilbroney Marble'* have the addition of marbling on each of the petals making them particularly

interesting and attractive. It arose in a garden in Co Down and was originally propagated and distributed by the famous Slieve Donard Nursery.

Vita Sackville West wrote: "Kindliness, so far as the Algerian iris is concerned, consists in starving it. Rich cultivation makes it run to leaf rather than to flower." E A Bowles commented that "...the older a clump grows, the better it flowers".

In the garden, the plant grows to 30cm high with narrow evergreen foliage, often tatty in appearance, and the flowers are best picked and enjoyed indoors away from the predations of slugs and snails. It is rarely available commercially but efforts are in hand to have some available at our plant sales in a year or so.



*Iris unguicularis* 'Kilbroney Marble'

***Trillium grandiflorum forma roseum***

This is the very beautiful pink-flowered form of *Trillium* and is the only member of the Melanthium family mentioned in Charles Nelson's *A Heritage of Beauty*. Dr Nelson's entry for this plant quotes Dr Keith Lamb who said "this variety originated long ago in Smith's nursery at Daisy Hill". We obtained our first *T. grandiflorum f. roseum* from Rare Plants, a nursery then operated by Dr Paul Christian who noted that it was produced by vegetative propagation from stock obtained from the Royal Botanical Garden in Edinburgh. However, it was the source of Edinburgh's plants that proved interesting. Dr Christian's notes went on to say that Edinburgh's stock had been obtained originally from the nursery that introduced the plant to cultivation in Ireland and further afield - Daisy Hill Nursery, Newry. So a double confirmation that our plant had good Irish origins.

We have found trilliums relatively easy to grow. Our plants reside in a raised, north-facing bed containing a layer of coarse grit on top of which is a deep

mix of peat, leaf mould and garden compost. When planting, we add in turn a little grit and a layer of compost before we place the rhizome. Trilliums can be 'shy' the first year after planting; no leaves may appear and at this stage a well-intentioned 'poke' to discover if the plant is alive will do more harm than good. Basically, leave well alone, and wait for leaves to appear in a subsequent year. Once established, the plants will increase gradually and can form spectacular colonies.

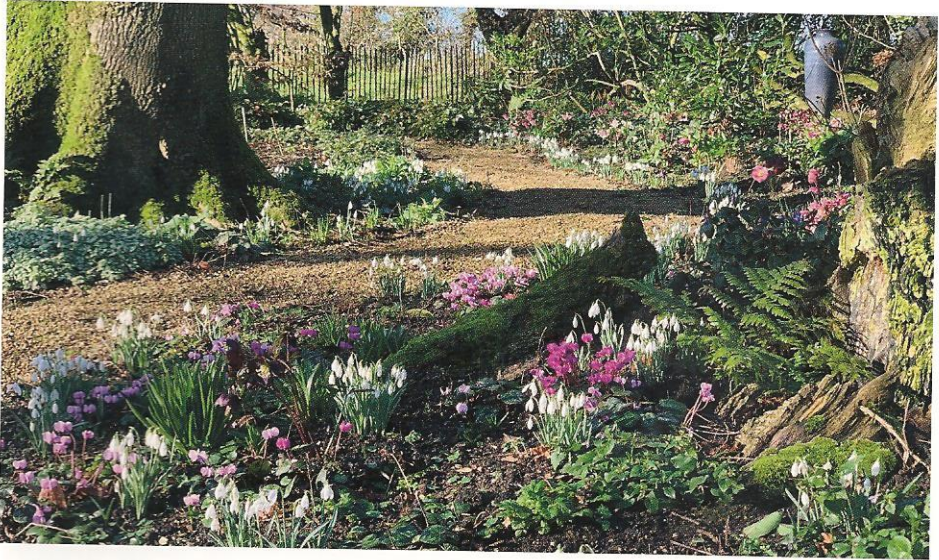
The good news is that I am aware of two sources, both online: Rare Plants ([www.rareplants.co.uk](http://www.rareplants.co.uk)) who list it, incorrectly, as *Trillium grandiflorum* Roseum and Twelve Nunns ([www.twelvenunns.co.uk](http://www.twelvenunns.co.uk)) who list it as *Trillium grandiflorum f. roseum*. There may be others. A note of caution: prices vary from £17.50p/€20 to £27.50p/€32 depending on size but it is well worth the expense to enjoy this choice Irish trillium.



*Trillium grandiflorum f. roseum*

# Gardening is more than just plants

by Rosemary Maye



Anyone who knows me will be aware of my love of gardening. When I try to analyse it, there is never a clear picture of why that is. On the down side, it's hard work; gardening in all sorts of weather, dodging rain showers, being buffeted about by the wind or being scorched by the sun (I just added that last one in for the fun of it!). Then there's the physical work, digging ground that is too wet, too dry, too sandy, too heavy or too weedy; the part where you wrestle with plants that attack you as you try to prune them like roses, raspberries, holly, *Pyracantha* and *Berberis*. Don't they realise you're trying to help them stay healthy?

And of course there is our favourite pastime of weeding: the annuals that pop up like shepherd's purse, willow

herb and groundsel that, though easy to weed, arrive with alarming speed and spread everywhere unless you get them early before they seed about; buttercups with their cunning method of sending out arching slender stems that root as they go ending up a metre away from the parent; dandelions and docks that send down roots to Australia; and of course the weeds that make every gardener tremble in their boots like bindweed or robin-run-the-hedge.

I'm sure you're beginning to think I don't like gardening at all but I'm only teasing. The list of what makes me love gardening is so much longer. Firstly it gets me outdoors in all sorts of weather. I've spent many a pleasant morning in the garden

with one eye on the darkening sky and one eye on the job at hand and felt that great sense of achievement when I complete my task ahead of a shower. I'm lucky enough to have a greenhouse that means I can sow seeds, divide plants, pot on plants, or even tidy up though that's really pushing it. It's important to take time to walk about the garden and inspect and enjoy the results of your labours though I find it impossible not to bend to pull a weed or deadhead a flower that's gone over. We call it the 'driveway dance' as one walks, bends, pulls, and repeats. In the few good summer days is there anything more rewarding than to sit on your patio and enjoy the fragrance, colours and sounds of a happy garden?

There's a lovely quote attributed to Audrey Hepburn that says: "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow"; I really believe it to be true. We sow seeds, we divide plants and nurture them willing them to go on and thrive. We take slips and watch over them eagle-eyed until that eureka moment where we see the signs of new life as roots appear at the base of the pot and the cutting puts on healthy top growth. We plan borders and colour schemes, we trim, prune, mow, strim, deadhead, feed and nurture our plants along, taking care of their individual needs until they delight us with blooms or striking leaf colour. We plant bulbs on chilly autumn days content in the knowledge they

will reward us in spring from the shy hello of a snowdrop to the full blown explosion of colour that shouts "We are tulips, look at us."

Oh, the delight of it all is what keeps me gardening but one thing more than anything else brings me such joy that my heart is filled to bursting with it. I know we all buy plants wherever we can but it is the plants that remind us of people that are the most special. I've many plants in my garden from loved ones, now gone, who gardened in their lifetime. Their plants are a connection with them that tugs at the heartstrings and floods me with memories. I've got snowdrops my parents dug up from an abandoned farmhouse in the 1950's, roses my Dad planted for my mother who adored their fragrant blooms, rhubarb my beloved uncle tended to for most of his 96 years, slips of scores of plants from my mother's best friend, and plants that have been gifted to me by fellow gardeners equally obsessed with the joy that is gardening. So those plants are not just plants to me; they are reminders of gardeners in my family, they speak to me of a generous friend, they bring back a memory of a visit to a fellow gardener who delighted me with a slip of a rare or unusual plant. Each memory is a perfect prism reflecting a moment captured in time. Emotions are tied to these plants and give me focus as I tend to their care and nurture them; yes, getting cold fingers and toes

and the odd scratch from a thorn but mostly the pleasure of seeing them grow and each enjoying its moment in the sun. So we gardeners can reflect on the fact that not only

are we a link to our past but also, hopefully, to a future generation of gardeners.



# A Touch of Irish Colour

by Peter & Nicola Milligan



*Nerine 'Mountstewart'*

The beginning of the third week of October and harvesting the last of the tomatoes and their subsequent removal from the greenhouse confirms that we must accept that summer has passed and we are well into the autumn season. While we can agree with Keats that autumn is the

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, / Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun, ...”

and that this season brings many pleasures, some in the form of the pears and apples being gathered

from our small orchard, some for eating and some for storage, it must be acknowledged that the garden can look a bit bare.

A walk around the garden each morning – a favourite activity in retirement – accompanied by our large black and white cat, Scarlett, and a cup of coffee, confirms that a good deal of colour can be found.

For example, many of the garden chrysanthemums are showing good colour, the autumn-flowering crocus are holding forth, late flowering ‘old’ roses add their scent to the air, the colchicums give a brave display, and living up to its name *Scabious* ‘Irish Perpetual Flowering’ is displaying new buds. Added to this is a bulb that gives wonderful colour at this time of the year and a bulb that has an Irish connection – the nerine.

At this point I would refer readers to the excellent article on the *Nerine* provided by Charles Nelson [1]. In this article you will find a good review of the plant covering its habitat in the wild and its introduction to Irish horticulture. Another good read is found in Dr Nelson’s book *A Heritage of Beauty* [Now available on our website. Ed.] where you can find a review of the major series of *Nerine* cultivars raised in Ireland, including many tender hybrids with *N.*

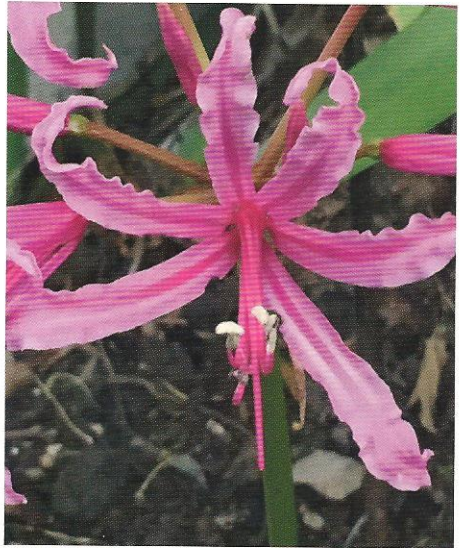
*sarniensis* as a parent, together with a list of some thirty cultivars. It is sad to note that few, if any, of these cultivars can be found in the current nursery trade.

Based on our experience we have found that *Nerine bowdenii* grows well outdoors here in Co Down; our garden benefits from its location in the Mount Stewart demesne with Strangford Lough on one side and the Irish Sea on the other providing a favourable microclimate. As well as the basic species *N. bowdenii*, we grow a range of cultivars including 'Abivetta', 'Bickham', 'Ella', 'Castlewella', 'Fenwick's Variety', 'Mount Stewart', 'Nikita', 'Stephanie', and many more.

Of these three are worth a mention. *N. bowdenii* 'Fenwick's Variety', now referenced as 'Mark Fenwick' in some lists, was grown in great swathes in the formal gardens at Mount Stewart; this would have been from the 1970s. This cultivar was obtained by the then head gardener, Nigel Marshall, and was planted in the raised beds which separate the house from the Italian Garden. It used to provide a tremendous bank of colour at this time of the year but, sadly, is now gone.

We have some of 'Fenwick's Variety' (a gift from Nigel) that we grow in several locations in the garden. In addition we have two Irish nerines, *N. bowdenii* 'Castlewella' and *N. bowdenii* 'Mount Stewart'. As shown

in the photographs taken by Nicola, these provide good autumn colour in the beds and borders of our garden. 'Castlewella' is named for the old arboretum at Castlewella in Co Down and 'Mount Stewart' is named for the Mount Stewart demesne. Both have the characteristic pink colour associated with the *N. bowdenii* cultivars: you can obtain a nice white form – *N. bowdenii* 'Alba' – but to the best of my knowledge there is no Irish connection for this bulb. At the moment I am on a quest to track down as many Irish nerines as I can and to try to obtain bulbs to propagate and distribute to those with a real interest in this fine Irish plant.



*Nerine bowdenii*  
'Castlewella' at Ros Cuan

As a point of interest, the Royal Horticultural Society conducted a trial of nerines from 2012 to 2017 and published the final report in 2018 [2]. Gary Dunlop of Ballyrogan Nursery, Co Down submitted bulbs of 'Castlewellan' to the trial and both Bridgemere Garden Centre, Nantwich and Gary Dunlop submitted bulbs of 'Mount Stewart'. It is pleasing to note that 'Mount Stewart' was awarded an AGM.

On a closing note, the most recent IGPS Newsletter (No. 146) contained an article 'Grow an Irish Plant' by Maeve Bell, Stephen Butler and Brendan Sayers and I would encourage all of the IGPS membership to have this as an annual resolution. If we would add one new Irish cultivar to our gardens each year – no matter how large or small our gardens we can always find space for a new cultivar of a loved plant - think how we could increase and preserve our plant heritage.

### Bibliography

1. '*Nerine bowdenii* in Irish Gardens: A short history and a conundrum' E. Charles Nelson, IGPS Newsletter, No. 114, October 2009, pp. 41-44
2. *Nerine bowdenii* Final Trials Report, Royal Horticultural Society 2018, pp 1-23

## Website

Excellent news: the text of Dr E Charles Nelson's seminal book *A Heritage of Beauty* is now available on our website

[www.irishgardenplantsociety.com](http://www.irishgardenplantsociety.com)

Go to the Home page, click on Publications at the top of the page, and scroll down the menu until you come to the title.



## Blarney's Irish Trail

by Olive Ryan



*Carex* at the Seven Sisters

The collection and preservation of Irish cultivars is at the core of what the Irish Garden Plant Society is all about. *A Heritage of Beauty* by Charles Nelson details many of the plants of Irish origin or with Irish associations and is the reference bible. Since the book's publication in 2000, possibly as many as 200 new cultivars have come on the scene. When Adam Whitbourn, head gardener at Blarney, joined the IGPS, he was inspired by the stated mission to preserve Irish heritage plants and this led to the idea of creating a collection at Blarney Castle Gardens. Adam contacted Matthew Jebb,

Colin Kelleher and Noleen Smith at the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin; they set him on the right track and Blarney Castle Gardens began collecting Irish cultivars in earnest in 2011.

The importance of conserving cultivated varieties with an Irish connection cannot be over-estimated; many of the varieties are not for sale commercially and their existence is under threat if we do not make a concerted effort to identify, collect and conserve them. Since 2011 there has been a conscious effort by the team at Blarney to

collect and plant Irish cultivars in different locations throughout the gardens. Currently we have in the region of 200 located and labelled throughout the estate and we are increasing this number all of the time. Some plants establish more quickly and easily than others.



*Bergenia* 'Irish Crimson'

Rather than developing one area in isolation, we have integrated the Irish cultivars in various locations throughout the 70 acres of gardens so that the many different growing requirements of various plants can be accommodated. Our collection is made up of trees, shrubs, lots of herbaceous plants, and some bulbs also. Building the collection is

facilitated by sharing plant material with different gardens also interested in collecting and identifying plants of Irish origin as well as using the *Plant Finder* to find nurseries stocking some of the hard-to-find specimens.

Every year we review what is doing well, what failed, needs division and so on in an effort to keep our records accurate and to further share the parts of the collection that we have doing well here at Blarney. Currently we have a lot of herbaceous plants but we would like to acquire more trees and shrubs to extend our collection of the woody plants.

In the past year we have travelled to Dublin to meet Brendan Sayers of the National Botanic Gardens and Stephen Butler who leads on Irish heritage plants for the Society and we will be propagating some of the material they were able to make available. We look forward to continued co-operation with interested parties in our efforts to extend and share this valuable collection which is important to the continuation of Irish-bred plants everywhere.

We have a good collection of primroses, apple trees, agapanthus and crocosmias. *Crococsmia* seems to do particularly well in the Seven Sisters area of the gardens; here they are planted amongst various different grasses where they enhance the display of colour late in the summer.

It is a constant challenge to ensure that plants are labelled correctly and provided with the right growing conditions. We have sourced many *Carex* and *Primula* cultivars from Pat Fitzgerald's\* nursery in Stoneyford, County Kilkenny and some *Agapanthus*, *Leucanthemum* and *Dierama* from Kilmurray Nursery run by Paul and Orla Woods\* in Wexford where in-house plant breeding is constantly in progress.

We are particularly interested in building up our collection of heathers going forward as well as dahlias, dianthus, daffodils and snowdrops. One of the daffodils pictured here is the lovely *Narcissus* 'Blarney', a small-cupped daffodil with white

petals and a yellow cup raised by J L Richardson of Waterford and registered before 1935. If anybody can help us add to the collections, please get in touch at [deputygardener@blarneycastle.ie](mailto:deputygardener@blarneycastle.ie). I and my colleagues would love to hear from you.

\*[Pat Fitzgerald is an Honorary Member while Paul and Orla Woods are members of the IGPS. Ed.]



*Narcissus* 'Blarney' All photos: Olive Ryan

# Is a 'Wild Garden' an Oxymoron?

by Mary Montaut



Mount Usher: still beautiful in early winter

Ever since William Robinson published his book *The Wild Garden* in 1881, there has been an understanding that his ideas heralded an entire revolution in the art of gardening. A visit to Mount Usher, which advertises itself as 'a Robinsonian Garden', provides a superb illustration of the apparent 'wildness' which has become so familiar and beautiful over time. However, I suggest that there may be no such thing as a truly 'wild' garden. I am not aiming to decry the wild look which is so beautifully achieved in many gardens, but just wondering about the meaning of the word in this context. To quote Penelope Hobhouse in *The Story of Gardening* (2002): '... we take

with a pinch of salt statements in Robinson's *The Wild Garden*, such as "an owner might go away for ten years and find it more beautiful than ever on his return." Most of us find that, although a 'wild' garden may not need many hours of labouring maintenance, it calls for a constant programme of skilled editing and manipulation in order to retain its natural beauty.'

In effect, the phrase 'wild garden' may really mean a particular gardening style or principle, one which Robinson passionately espoused in opposition to the bedding-out, bare earth and formal patterning of the late Victorian public park flowerbeds.



In the Introduction to his 1883 edition, Robinson states: 'There has been some misunderstanding as to the term "Wild Garden." It is applied essentially to the placing of perfectly hardy exotic plants in places and under conditions where they will become established and take care of themselves. It has nothing to do with the old idea of the "wilderness," though it may be carried out in connection with that. It does not necessarily mean the picturesque garden, for a garden may be highly picturesque, and yet in every part the result of ceaseless care.'

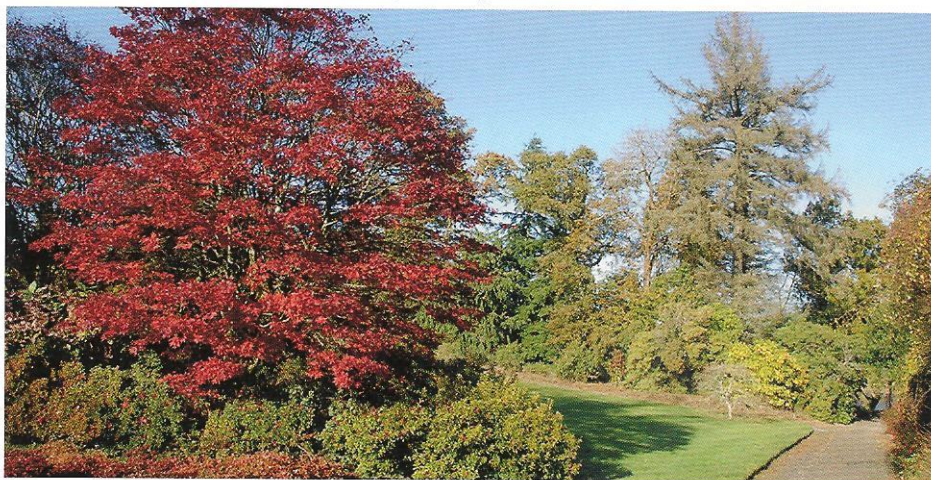
It is interesting that he mentions the long tradition of 'wilderness' as distinct from his own use of 'wild'. Even Francis Bacon (*Essays*, 1626, *Of Gardens*) clearly values wildness. The famous opening line "God Almighty first planted a garden" is echoed later on in his recommendations for the 'wilderness' area. 'For the *Heath*, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed, as much as may be, to a *Natural Wilderness*.

Trees I would have none in it, but some *Thickets*... and (the plants) to be in the *Heath*, here and there, not in any order.' However, as Hobhouse points out, the 'wilderness' of English gardens in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could be an orchard or a series of 'walks' among carefully planted trees or shrubs; a far cry from the 'natural wilderness' preferred by Bacon, but nonetheless an indication that a 'wild' feeling or area was highly valued as more 'natural' than the formal style of the parterres, potagers, topiary, statuary and so on. It seems to me that this may be interpreted as a continuing idea for the art of gardening, over at least these four centuries.

I must admit to being delighted with this idea, whether a contradiction in terms or not. The new approach to the large grassy areas in our local parks around Dublin, under the aegis of the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan*, has brought about some amazing changes and, for me at least, a great deal of new pleasure. Instead of wide expanses of mowed grass, there are now 'meadows' blooming with wild flowers and humming with insects. The number of swallows and martins seems to have increased somewhat last year, after many years of decline, and they swoop around the long grasses and flowers in the 'wild' areas making their delightful music. I think that William Robinson would be just as delighted as I am and indeed probably so would Sir Francis Bacon.

# Mount Congreve in Early Winter

by Paddy Tobin



Acers at Mount Congreve

Mount Congreve Gardens are situated a little to the west of Waterford City and are renowned for the most wonderful display of magnolias, rhododendrons, camellias and azaleas in the woodland garden each spring. The collection of these plants in the garden is of international importance so it is not surprising that their flowering time should receive such attention and acclaim. However, there is always something of interest in the gardens and autumn/winter has its interest also as a recent early November walk proved. The day was sparkingly bright, cool with a clear blue sky, and the gardens simply beamed with winter colour.

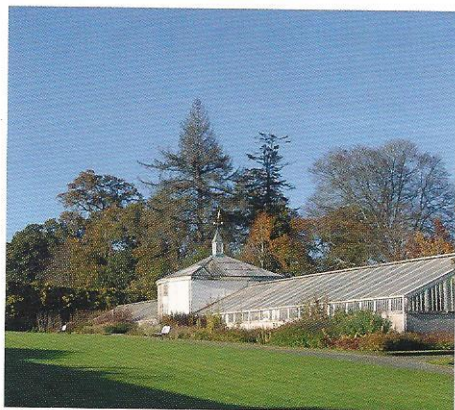
As might be expected at this time of the year, maples stole the show

but there was much else of colour and interest also. Fallen leaves can enliven the duller of garden paths, and the foliage and fruit from Sweet Chestnut trees is especially beautiful. We don't have a tradition of using these chestnuts but I am tempted to collect and roast some. Nor do we eat the fruit of *Cornus kousa* despite its appealing name, the Chinese Strawberry, though a friend made a very pleasant jam from them last year. The fruit adds to the colour of the foliage at this time of year, at least until the blackbirds turn their attention to them.

Some plants die well, an added bonus after their main season performance – would that we were all so gifted! Grasses, which generally

don't appeal to me in the garden, are far more appealing in their winter colours. Astilbes, Royal Fern and *Darmera peltata* are equally appealing when, at this time of year, they take on that buttery golden colour which is so attractive, bright yet gentle on the eye.

Recently Mr Michael Ring TD, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, announced a major funding initiative for developments at Mount Congreve under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. The press release stated: "The funding of €3,726,000 will ensure Mount Congreve is a world class tourism destination with an enhanced visitor experience. The funding will allow for the redevelopment and restoration of the Mount Congreve Estate and will provide enhanced visitor amenities including repair of the historic greenhouse, improved access to grounds and pathways and provision of family friendly facilities." It continues:



"This project proposes the following:

- Development of the farmyard to incorporate the following facilities: new café; offices and meeting facilities; craft yard; small playground and retail unit.
- Enhancement of the grounds and existing paths to facilitate improved accessibility and increased visitor numbers, along with a woodland playground.
- Repair of the existing historic greenhouse.
- Provision of controlled access to wetland zone, a unique natural 'garden'.
- Provision of a waste water treatment facility for 150,000 visitors.
- Provision of new car/coach park for up to 200 cars and 5 coaches.
- Total Proposal Cost is €4,968,000."

These are all very worthwhile projects which will develop Mount Congreve as a significant visitor attraction. Personally, I would like to see some funding specifically for the development and maintenance of the gardens including the conservation of the plant collection. A proposal to develop an adventure playground in a central location within the gardens appals me.

Mount Congreve is a garden for all seasons ... and let's hope a garden for many years to come.

# Seed Distribution Scheme

by Debbie Bailey

As I write for the Newsletter, it seems to have been raining for weeks so hopefully everyone will have collected their seeds before this bout of bad weather. So far some really great seeds have arrived and it is heartening to get the seeds in good condition and, for the most part, well cleaned. It makes the process of sorting and distributing so much easier.



From this

As ever, it is a small number of people who send in seeds so I wonder how we can persuade some other members to collect and share their seeds? If you have collected seeds and know their name, please consider sharing them with fellow IGPS members. It is such a valuable and tangible membership benefit for free. But remember that plants grown from named cultivars will not always come true to their parent or stay true to form.

A quick glance at the addresses of the contributors last year shows some interesting results. The majority came from Dublin and Wicklow but packets have also arrived from generous gardeners as far away as the Co Antrim coast in the northeast to Galway and Longford in the west. Fourteen people contributed the bulk of the seeds. In all, 91 requests for seeds were completed during the year. Of these, most were requested from Dublin, Northern Ireland and Cork. There was even one request from Germany.

Important: when sending for your seed, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. This applies to members in Northern Ireland as well; put a local stamp on your envelope as I can usually give it to someone to post for you.

My address is:

**Clonguaire  
Ballynacarrig  
Brittas Bay  
Co Wicklow  
debbiebailey797@gmail.com**

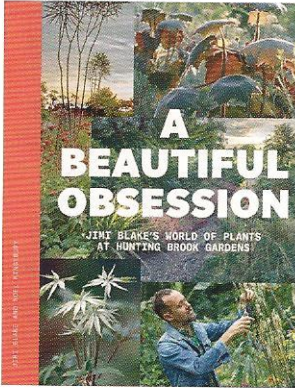


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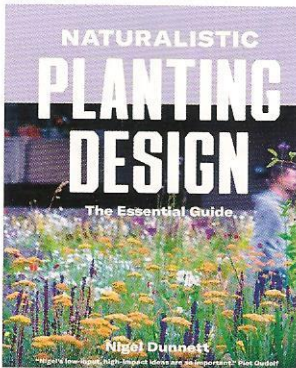
## Worth a Read

by Paddy Tobin



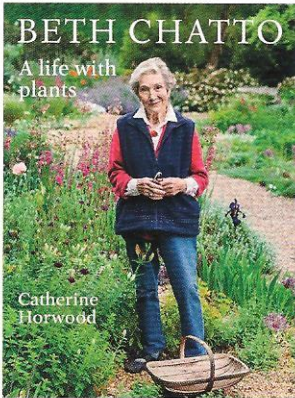
***A Beautiful Obsession:*** In his seventeen years at Huntingbrook Garden, Jimi Blake has cut a dash through the traditional herbaceous border, the shrub border, the woodland garden and is leading the way in Irish horticulture with his innovative approach to gardening, with his new plant trials and introductions but, most of all, in the manner in which he has made gardening such fun and such a joy. It is a special delight to have a book from an Irish author describing his own gardening journey, his enthusiasm for plants and the garden he has made. The book was co-written with Noel Kingsbury with outstanding photography from Richard Murphy and Bernard van Giessen. It is my top recommendation for you.

[*A Beautiful Obsession*, Jimi Blake with Noel Kingsbury, Photography from Richard Murphy and Bernard van Gieesen, Filbert Press, 2019, Hardback, 224 pages, £25, ISBN: 978-1-9997345-2-7]

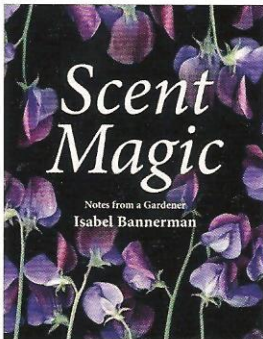


***Naturalistic Planting Design, The Essential Guide:*** Equally enthusiastic about plants and creating extraordinary gardens is Nigel Dunnett – you may recall his wonderful gardens around the grounds for the London Olympics. In his thoughts, plans, designs and creations he aims to go beyond that found in most gardens; he wishes to create something which will elicit an emotional response deeper than the simple appreciation of beauty, of plant selection, of colour combinations or of garden design. He wishes his gardens to connect with our human instincts and emotions; to be places where we immediately feel comfortable,

places where we feel safe and unthreatened, places we regard as beautiful and where we might feel at home. His account of his creative journeys is fascinating and insightful. [*Naturalistic Planting Design: The Essential Guide*, Nigel Dunnett, Filbert Press, 2019, Hardback, 239 pages, £35, ISBN: 978-0-9933892-6-9]



***Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants:*** Beth Chatto has been one of the most influential British gardeners and plants women of the past hundred years. Her garden has charmed us and her books have informed us – *The Dry Garden*, *The Damp Garden*, *Beth Chatto's Shade Garden* – there were eight in total. She went to the Chelsea Flower Show, winning ten Gold Medals and later pioneered the development of dry gardens, those which did not require any irrigation, and her planting philosophy “Right plant – right place” is both simple and profound and will continue to influence how we garden for some considerable time. This book is the most comprehensive and informative account of her life and work, private and public, written with her full cooperation and extraordinarily interesting and revealing. [*Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants*, Catherine Horwood, Pimpernel Press, 2019, Hardback, 288 pages, £30, ISBN: 978-1-910258-82-8]



***Scent Magic – Notes from a Gardener:*** It is difficult to select the right words to describe scent/ smell/fragrance/odour for they are of a fleeting nature and often of an unfathomable complexity. Language regularly fails – and writers fail – yet Isabel Bannerman captures and describes the complex world of scent through the evocation of memories and associations alongside wonderfully informative and insightful descriptions infused with an enthusiasm and a love of plants. Wonderfully written and and informative. [*Scent Magic – Notes from a Gardener*, Isabel Bannerman, Pimpernel Press Ltd., London, 2019, Hardback, 256 pages, £30, ISBN: 978-1-910258-49-1]

**In brief:*****Cherry Ingram: The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms,***

Naoko Abe, Chatto & Windus, London, 2019, Hardback, 380 pages, £18.99, ISBN: 9781784742027. The most extraordinarily interesting book, highly recommended.

***Great Gardens of London,*** Victoria Summerley with photographs by Marianne Majerus and Hugo Rittson Thomas, White Lion (an imprint of the Quarto Group), London, 2019, Hardback, 208 pages, £20, ISBN: 978-0-7112-4409-2. A wonderfully interesting selection of London gardens.

***The Artist's Garden, The Secret Places that Inspired Great Art,*** Jackie Bennett, White Lion, London, 2019, Hardback, 224 pages, £30, ISBN: 978 1 78131 874 4. Equally appealing to artists and gardeners, an excellent book.

***Planting the Oudolf Garden at Hauser & Wirth Somerset,*** Rory Dusoir, Foreword by Piet Oudolf, Photography by Jason Ingram, The Filbert Press in association with Hauser & Wirth Publishers, 2019, Hardback, 208 pages, £30, ISBN: 978-1-9997345-3-4. Very interesting as it gives an account of the gardens in the years after they were created and not simply the design and plans, as is so often the case.

***The Dry Gardening Handbook – Plants and Practices for a Changing Climate,*** Olivier Filippi, Filbert Press, 2019, Hardback, 208 pages, £40, ISBN: 978-1-999-73455-8. Nobody deals with this topic better than Olivier Filippi.

***How to Grow Native Orchids in Gardens Large and Small,*** Wilson Wall, Dave Morgan, Green Books, Cambridge, 2019, Hardback, 175 pages, £19.99, ISBN: 978-0-85784-460-6. A niche interest, perhaps, but very interesting, encouraging and comprehensive.

***We Made a Wildflower Meadow,*** Yvette Verner, Green Books, Cambridge, 2019 – first published in 1998 – Paperback, 136 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 9780857845245. If they could do it, anybody could!

Lack of space does not allow full reviews here in the Newsletter but they may be accessed on the "Blog" section of the IGPS website:

<https://irishgardenplantsociety.com/>

or on my personal blog: <https://anirishgardener.wordpress.com/>

By the way, contributions to the IGPS blog would be extremely welcome – a few photographs and a few lines can make an interesting contribution.

Drop me a line at: [pmtobin@eircom.net](mailto:pmtobin@eircom.net).

## Around the Regions

### Leinster

#### Summer Lunch

Report by Margaret Casey

I remember my dismay when I first saw Mullaghduillon House near Slane some 17 years ago. It was a neglected Georgian farmhouse on a steep, three acres of complete wilderness, covered in dangerous trees and tangled scrub. What a transformation! Today it is the comfortable home of Rosemary Maye, “The Insomniac Gardener”, and her husband, Padraic, and is surrounded by a garden of great interest and beauty.

After a generous lunch in their converted, capacious barn, Rosemary took us on a most entertaining and instructive tour. She



gave us the highs and many lows of constructing a garden from scratch and thanked her many friends for their plants and advice, especially her expert plant divider, Breda Dixon.

Great advantage has been taken of the very varied planting opportunities connected by Padraic’s well constructed hardcore paths. We started at a productive vegetable garden, then on to a woodland area under a rookery where, in spring, the ground is covered in snowdrops, cyclamen and hellebores but by June there are ferns, hostas, astilbes and species of *Pachyphragma*, *Dicentra* and large-leaved *Podophyllum*.

Down the slope is a bed of hydrangeas, colourful mixed perennials under a *Crinodendron hookerianum* and an attractive “white bed” with *Silene* and tall white alliums on show; this is spectacular later on when white roses, *Hydrangea* ‘Annabelle’ and the white blooms of the black bugbane, *Actea simplex*, scent the air. There is a stunning edge to this part of the garden with blue/mauve *Nepeta* and orange *Calendula* combined with a flash of a flame-coloured oriental poppy.

To the front of the house, a grove of silver birch, *Betula utilis* v. *jacquemontii*, is under-planted with foxgloves following on from the snowdrops, tulips, bluebells and

primroses of spring. The edges around the wildlife pond provide space for several varieties of *Kniphofia* and roses in shades of peach and orange.

Rosemary's love of plants and enthusiasm for nature is infectious and the more impossible parts of the garden are encouraged to flourish with insect-friendly native plants. No opportunity is missed and their latest enterprise is a sheltered courtyard with beautiful stone work. Here is the perfect setting for an olive tree, tree ferns, maples, a mimosa and tender pot plants like *Aeonium*, *Senecio* and *Plectranthus argentatus*.

Mullaghduillon is a garden for many seasons and was especially lovely on a sunny afternoon in June. Thank you to Rosemary, Padraic and all the helpers for a great day.

### **Fifteen Years Hard Labour on Kew's Rock Garden**

Report by Mary Bradshaw

Joanne Ryan spoke to a combined Alpine Society and IGPS group on October 17th. She began with a short history of the rock garden and alpine displays at Kew which started with the opening of the first Alpine House in 1887. A second opened in 1981 but, while very popular with the public, problems with ventilation led to plans to replace it. Joanne described the huge amount of specialist work required to create the new house in sourcing and placing

rocks before a collecting trip to New Zealand and her photos really captured this.

What awaits you now the work is completed? Some of the highlights of the year are *Ipheon sessile* in October, in November *Cyclamen cypricum* and *Crocus ochroleucus* while December presents *Galanthus elwessii* var *monosticus*, which flowers on Christmas Day, and *Euphorbia myrsinites*.

In the New Year, expect snowdrops. Visit in March and find a Turkish endemic *Paeonia kesrouanensis* as well as species tulips. April shows off *Narcissus bulbocodium* ssp *bulbocodium*, *Tulipa orphanidea* and *Fritillaria acmopetala*. In May, look for *Pulsatilla patens* ssp *flavescens* and *Ramonda nathaliae* which is easy to grow and, in June, the easy-to-grow *Iris variegata* along with the difficult *Dianthus alpinus*. July brings *Campanula thyrsooides* and *C. fragilis* ssp *cavolinii*.

August gives us *Castilleja integra* - a semi-parasitic plant from Oregon and N. California. In September as autumn approaches, look for *Cyclamen africanum* from Algeria and *Crocus tournefortii*.

The rock garden is a wonderful scene of beauty and a great credit to Joanna and all her team, not just for the hard physical labour required but for the depth of horticultural knowledge underlying the planting.

## Munster

### Arcadia - Amongst other Things

Report by Janet Edwardes

Christopher Moore is a much acclaimed garden historian and, in his definition of Arcadia, he stressed that it referred to the creation of an idealised environment often when the reality wasn't so ideal. He began with the story of the controlled garden at Haddon Hall, and went on to mention Alexander Pope, a key influencer, who celebrated wild nature in his poetry and created a new garden style called "nature methodized". Moving on, the garden at Rousham celebrated the natural countryside leading one around the garden on a very carefully planned route without necessarily being aware of being directed.

The magazine *Country Life* played a part in the story in portraying an enlightened view of the past in its pages. Edward Hudson, its editor, had commissioned a house

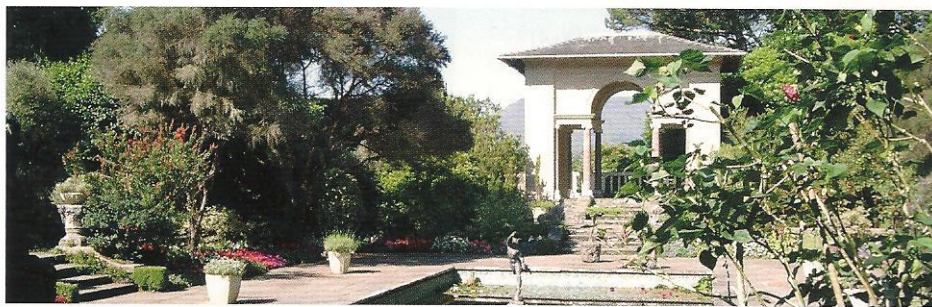
and garden designed by the famous duo of Lutyens and Jekyll. Linking to the story, in Ireland the Baring family of banking fame saw Lambay Island for sale in *Country Life* and this led to its garden being designed by Lutyens. In Ireland, gardens which epitomised the concept of Arcadia as it evolved into early 20th century include Beechpark in Dublin and Hardymount. Harold Peto brought an Italian influence to his own garden at Iford Manor and we have a splendid example of Peto's work at our own Garinish Island in West Cork.

Christopher gave us a wonderful insight into the concept of Arcadia in gardens and pointed out that it is still relevant today if we are to achieve relaxation, beauty, order, peace, and tranquility in our own gardens.

### Trees for our Gardens

Report by Janet Edwardes

Our November lecture was given by Dave Foley, otherwise known as "Greenman Dave". Dave has fairly



Garinish

recently come into the gardening sector explaining that he had been a carpenter in the past and therefore had an interest in trees from another perspective before starting his new career in propagation. He has spent some time working in Future Forests where many of us would have purchased trees and shrubs from their extensive list. Dave is now running his own business from outside Cork where he specialises in the propagation of unusual trees and shrubs selling mainly at plant fairs around the country. Being the season of autumn colour, Dave showed us many examples of trees and shrubs at their peak including some beautiful Japanese maples and he recommended some particular varieties to try. For us Cork residents, he recommended visiting Fota which has an amazing array of unusual trees showing their lovely seasonal tints at the time of the lecture. A few he mentioned were *Taxodium*, *Nyassa*, *Metasequoia*, and *Zanthoxylum similans*. An unusual one to look out for was *Sycopsis sinensis*.

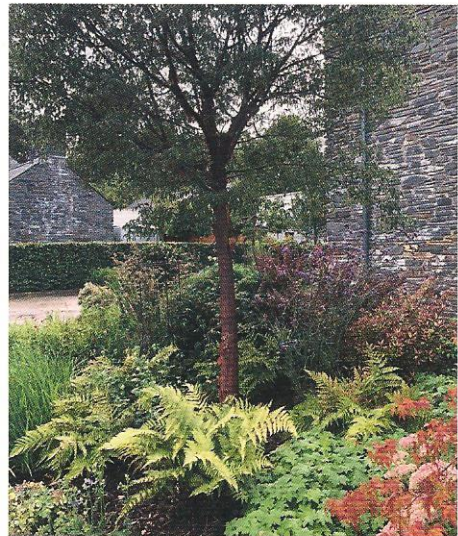
Besides leaf colour, another dimension of trees not to be forgotten in autumn is the range of berries that are produced. Added to their show of colour is the fact that they are providing food for the birds as well. We were all inspired to get planting some of the more unusual trees and shrubs over the next few months.

## Northern

### Visit to the Irwin's garden

Report by Maeve Bell

A visit to a town garden can be something of a rarity especially one which has been developed around a new house completed only towards the end of 2012. It certainly attracted a keen audience with over 70 members and their guests braving the rain for the tour led by its designer, and IGPS member, Barbara Kelso. We were fascinated to see the before and after photos: from mud, earth-moving equipment and one lone birch tree to today's immaculate pocket-handkerchief lawn, tree house for the grandchildren, and subtle colour combinations.



Already some 700 plants have gone into the garden including several choice Irish cultivars including

*Pseudowinteri colorata* 'Marjorie Congreve' with the crimson-bronze edges to its leaves echoing the mahogany trunk of a nearby paper-bark maple, *Sorbus* 'Autumn Spire' with its fruits just starting to colour, and the variegated holly, *Ilex* 'Lady Valerie', which promised a rich harvest of berries later in the season.

## Adventures on the Road

Report by Patricia Kernohan

Shirley Lanigan must be the most prolific and professional Open Garden visitor in Ireland. She began by reminiscing about her early enjoyment of gardens, strolling past privet hedges in Drumcondra while on her way to school, catching glimpses of beautiful roses, hydrangeas and fuschias. This interest in gardening combined with a background in art and journalism has culminated in her writing about Irish gardens.

Shirley's stunning garden photos swept the audience across every county in Ireland. She spoke with admiration about artist, Phillipa Bayliss, at The Meadows in Carlow who gardens on a steep slope and uses her garden as a studio and inspiration for painting. Moving from Carlow to Cork, Shirley spoke with amusement about The Ewe Garden which, when she trekked to visit, had moved from Beara to Glengarriff! This is an interactive sculpture garden with huge mischievous sculptures such as the 'Snail Trail'

and 'The Pig in a Bath.' She also described her unannounced visit to Pat Murphy's garden in Kilkenny who climbed on top of his roof to check his topiary. Shirley provided us with a wonderful insight by capturing the essence, determination, flair and humour of all the gardeners and gardens visited.

Her lecture further ignited our enthusiasm to visit many of the gardens, armed, of course, with Shirley's book.

## How to get the most from the Smaller Garden

A packed house gathered on a dark winter's night in Belfast on 4th December for a talk by T J Maher, artist, owner and creator of Patthana Garden in Co Wicklow. We were immediately transported to a semi-secret oasis with lush growth, exotic planting, fabulous colour combinations - sometimes subtle, sometimes saturated - and enough inspiration to invigorate even the most cynical and weary gardener.





## In Memoriam

We report with regret the death of Rosalie Andrews [1923 -2019] on 9th June. She was a founder member of the IGPS. A life-long enthusiastic gardener, one of her proudest moments was to be present when her daughter, Susyn Andrews, the Horticultural Taxonomist, was awarded the RHS Veitch Memorial Medal in 2012.

## Our Contributors

**Debbie Bailey** completed a degree in Horticulture as a mature student. She teaches horticulture and flower arranging while practising as a Horticultural Therapist.

**Rosemary Maye** hosted the Summer Lunch in her garden on the outskirts of Slane and has gained many followers in her guise as The Insomniac Gardener.

**Peter and Nicola Milligan** live on the Ards peninsula in Co Down, their garden contains many Irish cultivars and they have a particular interest in *Primula*, *Agapanthus*, and *Crocosmia*.

**Mary Montaut** is a member of the Leinster Committee and has a keen interest in wildlife in the garden.

**Olive Ryan** has worked at Blarney Castle Gardens since 2014 and is currently deputy head gardener. She studied plant science at UCC and Landscape Architecture at UCD.

**Brendan Sayers** is Glasshouse Foreman at the National Botanic Gardens and an early member of the Society following its formation in 1981.

**Paddy and Mary Tobin** garden near Waterford; Paddy is a former Chair of the Society and former Editor of the Newsletter.

**Maeve Bell, Mary Bradshaw, Margaret Casey, Janet Edwardes and Patricia Kernohan** are all members of the Society.

## Dates for your Diary

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**Saturday 18th January**  
**The Gardens of Leinster**  
 with Shirley Lanigan at  
 National Botanic Gardens,  
 Glasnevin. 2.30pm – 4.00pm

When Shirley Lanigan began visiting gardens, Leinster was the undoubted All-Ireland

Champion when it came to horticulture, although some Cork people might take issue with that. Over that time how have these gardens fared? What is new? What is fab? What is drab? Is Leinster still the champion or slipping down the rankings?

*NB: Book through Eventbrite to guarantee your seat.*



**Tuesday 4th February**  
**The Greedy Gardener –**  
**how to have colour**  
**in every season**  
 with Rosemary Maye at  
 Northridge House, St Luke's  
 Home, Castle Road,  
 Mahon, Cork

Rosemary Maye, probably better known as the Insomniac Gardener, will show how she manages to have colour in every season. Rosemary says: "Seventeen years ago we were enticed to a romantic old house in the countryside but with no colour. I love colour and immediately set about planting. Join me on a year's journey in my garden."

Tea/coffee afterwards. Raffle. Visitors €5

**Saturday 15th February****Botanising in Kyrgyzstan, the Switzerland of Central Asia**

with Derry Watkins at St Bride's Hall,  
Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast. BT9 6FP.

2.30pm – 4.30pm

Derry Watkins is a passionate plants woman and has developed her well-known nursery, Special Plants Nursery, near Bath, based on plants she has discovered around the world. An American, she has lived in Britain for most of her life, planning one major plant-hunting expedition a year. These trips have fuelled both her seed list and nursery, described by one writer as being full of special plants that will set any plantaholic's pulse racing. Today she will tell us about her recent visit to Kyrgyzstan and will bring some seeds for sale.

Tea, coffee and cakes afterwards. Seeds for sale.

**IGPS & AGS members free. Visitors £5**



**Saturday 15th February**  
**Mount Congreve – A National Treasure**  
with Paddy Tobin at National Botanic Gardens,  
Glasnevin, Dublin. 2.30pm – 4.00pm

*Book through Eventbrite to guarantee your seat.*

Mount Congreve Gardens, in Waterford, are of international importance as they hold a plant collection unparalleled in any other garden with 2,000 different rhododendrons, 600 camellias, 300 acers, 600 conifers, 250 climbers, 1,500 herbaceous plants and the greatest planting of *Magnolia campbellii* to be seen anywhere in the world. Management of the gardens is passing to the local authorities and there are plans to develop the general facilities, something which will be a significant boon to the area.

Hopefully the gardens will continue to develop as they are, indeed, a national treasure.

Paddy Tobin, a former Chairperson of the IGPS, is both a knowledgeable gardener and a fantastic amateur photographer. A native of County Waterford where he still resides, Paddy has been a champion of Mount Congreve for many years.

Follow his blog [anirishgardener.wordpress.com](http://anirishgardener.wordpress.com)





**Thursday 19 March  
Using Rock Garden  
Plants outside the  
context of the Rockery**  
with Kevin Hughes  
at National Botanic  
Gardens, Glasnevin 8pm

Kevin Hughes's lecture will show us ways to use these little beauties without having a dedicated rock garden. Kevin spent seven years as a head gardener before having his own nursery near Salisbury where he specialised in unusual trees and shrubs, especially magnolias, hardy plants, climbers and trilliums and now owns the famous Cally Gardens and Nursery in Scotland.



**Thursday 26th March  
Collecting Plants for  
a Better Garden**  
with Carl Wright at The Old  
Courthouse, Market Square,  
Antrim 7.30pm to 9.00pm

Carl Wright has created one of Ireland's very special gardens in a very special place, the Burren with its famous limestone pavement in Co Clare. Carl has trialled and selected the very best of plants, including more recently, a collection of more than 70 Irish-bred daffodils, and will tell us about some of these in his talk.

Tea/coffee afterwards. Raffle. Visitors £5.

**Tuesday 7th April**

**First Days of Spring – Flowers, Foliage and Perfume**  
with Liam Grainger at Northridge House, St Luke's Home,  
Castle Road, Mahon, Cork

Liam Grainger is a Cork nurseryman of great experience and will present us with a range of plants which will brighten the spring garden and leave the dull days of winter as mere memories.

Tea/coffee afterwards. Plant sale. Raffle

**Members free. Visitors €5**

**Saturday 9th May**

**Visit to Kilmacrew Garden 2.00pm – 400pm**  
70 Kilmacrew Road, Banbridge, Co Down BT32 3TB

Kilmacrew is an oasis of tranquility. Tucked away in the South Down countryside and well protected with shelter belts, the house was built before 1835 and the knowledge and enthusiasm over many years has resulted in fine specimens of choice trees under-planted with rhododendrons and many other shrubs. Robinsonian in character, the garden has an atmosphere that is very special and, when in bloom, the magnificent *Davidia involucrata* never fails to attract gasps of awe. Kilmacrew is noted for its connection with Helen Waddell, best known for her historical novel *Peter Abelard*, who visited regularly.

Members and their personal guests only.

**Guests £6 including tea/coffee afterwards.**

## Advice for contributors

### Length

If writing a report of a regional event such as a visit or lecture, please keep it short and sweet: about 250 words is very suitable. Articles are always welcome; 600 to 700 words, occasionally 900, works well especially when accompanied by two or three good quality, high resolution photos, i.e. 1MB or more. Do not embed them in the text, send them as a separate jpeg. It's very helpful if you can alert the editor ahead of time about what you plan to write.

### Newsletter conventions

**Book and magazine names** should be in italics with a capital letter for all the principal words e.g. *A Heritage of Beauty* and *The Irish Garden*. Do not use either single or double quotation marks around the title.

**Scientific names of plants.** The scientific or Latin name of the plant must be in italics. The initial letter of the species name has a capital letter, e.g. *Nerine*, while the second does not - *Nerine bowdenii*.

**The cultivar name**, which is often but not exclusively English, is printed in regular or Roman type and enclosed within single quotation marks e.g. *Nerine bowdenii* 'Alba'. If there is more than one reference to the same plant, the second and subsequent ones can be shown with just a capital letter in italics for the genus, e.g. *N. undulata*.

**Common plant names.** When plants are referred to by their common names, they are in regular/Roman rather than italic type and the initial letter is lower case, e.g. nerines, roses, hellebores and peonies.

**Capital letters.** Use an initial capital letter for proper nouns, i.e. the names of people, countries, gardens, and institutions. Thus the National Botanic Gardens, Rowallane, or Kilmacurragh; the Society when referring to the IGPS but gardening societies in general; the Chairman when referring to the person who has been elected to this post in the IGPS.

Seasons of the year are in lower case e.g. spring, autumn.

**Abbreviations.** Write IGPS rather than I.G.P.S., Co Kildare rather than Co. Kildare, etc rather than etc., and Mr rather than Mr., but include a stop (or point) for the following two abbreviations, e.g., and i.e.

**Quotation marks for speech.** Quotation marks are used to denote direct speech or a quotation from a text. Current practice tends to use 'single' quotes rather than "double". Double marks, however, should be used for a quote within a quote.

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