

A vibrant garden scene featuring a large, leafless tree in the foreground on the right. The tree's branches are dark and intricate against a bright blue sky. To the left of the tree, there are dense, colorful flowering bushes in shades of purple, pink, and yellow. A path leads from the bottom left towards a small pond in the background. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny, suggesting a spring day.

Irish Garden Plant Society

Newsletter
April 2022

Issue 155

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Copy for the September issue as soon as possible please and no later than **20th July**.

Cover: Rowallane Gardens, Co Down. Photo courtesy of Pamela Orr. Grateful thanks to our horticultural advisers: Stephen Butler and Brendan Sayers

Welcome



What a fabulous time of year! This issue celebrates some of the plants and gardens which capture the essence of late spring merging into summer. Rowallane Gardens in Co Down is famous for its informal nature and wonderful rhododendrons — see them in their glory on the cover — but the garden has also given rise to a notable collection of cultivars bearing its name. Claire McNally, head gardener and IGPS member, tells us more.

Primroses too are a charming indicator of the season. Caroline Stone, a member who gardens in Cornwall, holds the National Collection of double primroses for our sister organisation, Plant Heritage, and writes about two Irish ones.

As part of the efforts to mark our 40th anniversary, recent Newsletters have carried accounts of significant events and developments over the decades. This time Members' Memories focuses on the magnificent achievement of the Society, usually in close association with the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, in mounting no fewer than four exhibits at the Chelsea Flower Show during the years between 1990 and 2002. Halcyon days indeed!

After the disruption of the last two years, the Annual General Meeting returns to being in-person and will be held at the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin on Saturday 7th May, a most appropriate venue considering that it was the birthplace of the Society. See page 32 for the formal notice.

My thanks to all the members who have so kindly written articles and shared their photos, especially to those contributing for the first time.

The section Dates for your Diary gives details of the events which our regional committees have put together. They will have an added significance this year as we look forward to being out and about and sharing friendship again.

Maeve

Maeve Bell Editor



A Note from the Chair



The National Executive Committee (NEC) meetings have been taking place via Zoom. As each person logs on, there is an opportunity to have a chat about the previous lectures. I put the Blarney Vietnamese woodland on my list of visits for the coming year. Galanthophiles on the Committee had been to the Annual Snowdrop Gala in County Carlow and to Hester Forde's garden with its collection of snowdrops and many other spring treasures.

At each meeting, Nichola Monk, our Membership Secretary, reports on the number of members. As of February 2022, the 600 mark had been reached, significantly more than the 350 memberships of 2012. While the vast majority of members have addresses on the island of Ireland, members also live in Britain, Germany, USA, Canada and Australia. New members are always welcome. Let your gardening friends know about the IGPS website and the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Also at each meeting, regional representatives report on the Society activities in Leinster, Munster and Northern regions. Through 2021 and into 2022, each regional Committee

has provided lectures via Zoom, a steep learning curve for them but well appreciated by members. Some 120 people have logged on to lectures. While there are advantages and disadvantages to the use of Zoom, it has become in the context of the IGPS a valuable 'gardening' tool.

Elsewhere in the Newsletter you will read of garden visits, a plant sale, summer lunch and other activities; while organised at a regional level, these are open to all members regardless of where they live. Do join in over the coming months and enjoy the camaraderie of IGPS members. What with those members who organise events and others working on IGPS publications, communications and other activities, some 50 people are involved. Volunteers are always welcome to help with these activities.

The 40th AGM will take place on Saturday 7th May in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, details of which are included on page 32. Elections to fill the position of Vice-Chair and one ordinary member will take place.

Do come to some or indeed all of the activities planned for this summer when the IGPS marks an extended 40th anniversary year.

Mary Forrest Chairman

Stars of Spring at Rowallane Gardens

by Claire McNally

Most gardeners have a plant or two unofficially called after the friend or garden where they were acquired. Rowallane in Co Down is different in that it has the distinction of having the most plants named for it of any garden owned by the National Trust. The majority of these originated at Rowallane while a few, such as a daffodil and a sweet pea, have been named in honour of the garden. When visiting the garden in spring, many of the former are on show.

Hugh Armytage-Moore began gardening at Rowallane in the early 20th century at an intensely exciting time in horticulture when new plant material was flooding into Europe.

Hugh bought newly introduced plants, grew others from seed collected by plant hunters like George Forrest, Ernest Wilson and Frank Kingdon-Ward.

He also benefited from having connections with botanic gardens such as Kew and Glasnevin.

A passionate plantsman, Hugh had a keen eye for a garden-worthy plant and for finding the most suitable spot for a plant to grow. He was known as a selector rather than a hybridiser. He grew many plants from seed, much of this of wild origin, and gathered a diverse collection of plants together where they could cross-pollinate and romp around the garden. A few which he considered particularly distinctive and superior to the original he named. Many of these were propagated and introduced by the nearby Slieve Donard Nursery.

Chaenomeles x superba 'Rowallane'





Primula 'Rowallane Rose'

Discovered in the Frame Yard where the original plant from the 1920s still grows, *Chaenomeles x superba* 'Rowallane' is one of these 'chance' seedlings. With glorious crimson flowers from late winter into spring, its Award of Garden Merit (AGM) by the RHS is well earned.

The unusual, early flowering *Rhododendron eclectum* 'Rowallane Yellow' is a distinct selection from a species whose flowers vary from cream through to red. Tight trusses of almost luminous yellow flowers pick up the stronger hue of its leaf petioles and veins. A demure backdrop for most of the year, on cool spring mornings the flowers glow no matter how gloomy the day.

Early in the year I'm eagerly watching *Primula* 'Rowallane Rose' as the flowering stems form. This candelabra primula was another chance seedling found along the old primrose walk. Contrasting with the apple green of its foliage, the tiers of flowers are an unusual shade of

pink that looks glorious on its own or with other candelabra primroses in a psychedelic mix of hot colours. Vigorous in moisture retentive soil, 'Rowallane Rose' is a sterile hybrid. It has its own elevated planting pocket in the Rock Garden where it can be appreciated at eye level.

The Rowallane plant with the longest season of interest (and the longest name!) is *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum* 'Rowallane'. This deciduous shrub has an elegant winter skeleton which is followed by the slow unfolding of its leaves in early spring, then showy white inflorescences that give way to red berries and spectacular autumn colour. A dainty upright form perfect for a smaller space, it was one of three seedlings from an Ernest Wilson collection originally grown at Rostrevor and given to Hugh. This plant was the first from the collection to flower in the UK and grows in the centre of the Cross Garden.



Rhododendron eclectum 'Rowallane Yellow'

We plant lovers might not have the space for all these Rowallane cultivars in our own garden but we can share Hugh's spirit of experimentation and discovery. There is hopefully a damp spot for *Primula* 'Rowallane Rose' or the possibility of walking in the footsteps of Hugh.

Whether it is open-pollinated seed from our garden or from the IGPS seed list, it's easy to give it a go, see what emerges and select our own favourites. The results could be a more pleasing habit or colour, maybe a seedling hellebore or selecting an opportunist in the paving to produce something exciting. And if not, well there's always room on the compost heap and the anticipation of what next year might reveal.



Viburnum plicatum f. *tomentosum*
'Rowallane'



The Stream Ground at Rowallane: photo courtesy of Pamela Orr.

News

The RHS honours Irish horticulturists

The lifetime work of Brian Duncan, the outstanding daffodil breeder from Co Tyrone and honorary member of the IGPS, has recently been recognised by the award of the Victoria Medal of Honour by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). This is the RHS's highest award and is given to horticulturists deserving special honour; it is limited to just 63 holders at any one time. Now in his late eighties and well known for his expertise and generosity, Brian began breeding daffodils more than 50 years ago and now concentrates on developing miniature varieties.



Brian Duncan: photo courtesy of Barbara Kelso.

At the same ceremony Thomas Pakenham and Matthew Jebb were awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal which is given to persons of any nationality who have made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the science and practice of horticulture.

Like Brian, Thomas Pakenham is an IGPS member. He is a historian, prize-winning author, founder and Chair of The Irish Tree Society, and custodian of Tullynally Castle in Co Westmeath, the parkland of which is home to many noted trees.

Matthew Jebb joined the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin in 1996 as Horticultural Taxonomist and was appointed Director in 2010. The association between the Society and the National Botanic Gardens goes back to the establishment of the IGPS in 1981; we are proud and honoured to have the support of and to be able to use the Gardens as our address.



Thomas Pakenham & Seamus O'Brien

Seamus O'Brien, head gardener at the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh and a long standing member at the Society, has been awarded the RHS Loder Rhododendron Cup for his work in horticulture, particularly in conserving the rhododendron collection at Kilmacurragh. The Cup has come

to Ireland only once before, in 1942, when it was awarded to Sir Frederick Moore, former Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

Finally, another member, Paddy Mackie, has been awarded the A J Waley Medal for rhododendrons. Over the past 50 years and more, Paddy and his wife Julie have developed an outstanding woodland garden at Mahee on the shores of Strangford Lough in County Down.

Many congratulations to all of them on their achievements



Paddy Mackie: photo courtesy of Maeve Bell.

Garden Shows

Garden Show Ireland will take place at Antrim Castle Gardens from 29th April until 1st May while Bloom will take place in the Phoenix Park from 2nd until 6th June

National Gardens Scheme Northern Ireland

2022 has seen the launch of the above scheme with 21 gardens opening for charity. Further information can be found on the website ngs.org.uk

Further Requests for *Moorea*

Earlier in the year we had a request from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, for some volumes of *Moorea* and for copies of the Newsletter issues 1 to 29. One member had copies of *Moorea* and another Newsletters 9 - 29, which have since been sent to Edinburgh. Meanwhile more requests for back issues of *Moorea* have been received. If you would like to give your copies to a good home, please get in touch by emailing igps.ireland@gmail.com

Committee Changes

There have been some changes in our committees recently. Caroline Maher has stepped down from the Executive Committee due to pressure of work. Maeve Bell has retired as Chair of the Northern region committee having completed her term of office; a warm welcome to Dr Robert Logan who has succeeded her.



Robert Logan photo courtesy of Maeve Bell

The Garden at Ballinagam Re-invented

by Paul Maher

When you work in the garden through all seasons, you get a very good idea of what will succeed in terms of design. In our case the plan was on paper before the restoration of the house commenced, we presented it to our architect and he worked to it. It is fair to say that our garden now begins inside our home and the lines lead out to focal points, taking the eye deep into the garden.

Edel and I had the benefit of knowing our moving date well in advance; this allowed us to prepare and lift 'must have' plants from our Dublin garden, ones we knew would make a significant impact in the new garden. These were mostly large specimens potted into 50 litre pots for transporting to Ballinagam. When transplanting such plants

it is essential to avoid inducing shock to root systems so some months beforehand we dug down around each specimen with a sharp spade. This allowed the production of more fibrous roots in the pots over the coming months to aid re-establishment. Gentle pruning was carried out at the same time to create good shape.

My retirement date, in February 2019, ended my career as Curator of the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland and we moved from our Dublin home to the house in Wexford previously owned by Edel's parents. Transporting the plants took several early mornings of very slow driving along the M11 but we got them all on site and with that blank canvas in our hands planting began.



May 2019

Our plot was bare earth in March 2019 except for a few plants we had safeguarded during the site clearance; *Magnolia stellata* and *Luma apiculata* were good specimens carrying significant memories and they created landmarks as to what existed in the former garden. Mature beech, oak and elm form part of our boundary and these created a setting in which the new garden would sit. Planting commenced with positioning and planting *Euphorbia stygiana*, *Ligustrum amurense*, *L. lucidum* 'Macrophyllum', *Viburnum farreri*, and *Hydrangea quercifolia* among others. These were large plants with presence and enabled us to build a scheme around them.

Betula 'White Light' is an Irish cultivar of birch, bred in Co Tipperary by John Buckley. Edel collected seed in 2013 from the tree planted in Glasnevin Cemetery to commemorate her mother and produced a batch of seedlings. Of course we know variability can be expected with seed of a cultivar, however there are usually some exciting finds in the outcome. We selected five good seedlings to grow on to about three metres and prepared them for our new garden.

Many years previously we had taken cuttings of *Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey'. We like its lush, almost tropical feeling and decided to train them as standards. Growing them in air pots, an ingenious system which encourages a very fibrous root ball, it took almost 10 years to get them to a height of three metres of clean, strong stems. Palms have always held a fascination for me, so we would certainly have to have some of these. *Trachycarpus fortunei* is a palm which should be chosen for Irish gardens instead of the ubiquitous *Cordyline australis* as, in my opinion, it is much hardier and more beautiful. Three trachycarpus from a 2002 sowing were planted and are now getting their roots down and making good growth along with others such as *Phoenix canariensis*.

We did a trawl of Irish nurseries to source good quality plants and they were there in abundance. Orders were placed and the excitement of opening boxes of neatly packed plants is something that brightened many a day for us. Then Covid arrived and imposed severe restrictions on everyone. For us it meant no interruptions and we gardened every day.



As previously mentioned it is not a big garden but we have created space for a woody collection, borders for perennials and what we call a tropical garden. I have little time for lawns whereas Edel must have one. We settled on a narrow strip 20 metre long by 1.8 metres wide and it is a joy taking just four minutes to mow and ten minutes to edge leaving more time for gardening. All other paths were laid using a fine dust from a local quarry whacked into a solid state. This can easily be broken into to make space for further planting creating informal edges which are soft and easy on the eye.

We were of course expecting some plants to struggle and they did. Plant roots that found it easy to develop in the friable soil of Dublin were now trying to adapt to a life in heavy clay soil. Ligustrum surprised us most as they sat and sulked and even seemed to shrink. We lifted large sections of planting that was struggling in the clay, laying it out on rubber matting while we sourced good quality compost from a local supplier and dug it into the beds. It was a lot of work but paid huge dividends.

Some plants on the other hand outstripped their best Dublin growth in the heavy rich soil. Roses thrive as do cannas and gingers.

As part of the project our glasshouse was removed from the Dublin garden and trucked to Ballinagam. At times it became an intensive care unit for plants that were reacting very badly to their new site but it also allowed Edel to continue to propagate so any one plant purchased became a source of many.

Lots done and lots more to do.



June 2021

Irish Double Primroses

by Caroline Stone



Primula 'Red Paddy'

To those of us in England, Ireland is something of a land of myth and legend and this has definitely been so with regard to primroses. There were always stories of the wonderful primroses that could be found in Ireland and certainly there have been many superb primroses that originated in Ireland. My particular interest is in double primroses and I grow two old Irish doubles — I should like to find more but I think they are long lost.

Double-flowered forms of *Primula vulgaris* are found in the wild when people look out for them. Two have been found in County Antrim. Perhaps the best known is *Primula* 'Elizabeth Dickey' which was found near Ballymoney in the 1930s by a child of that name. Dr Molly Sanderson, a local GP and plantswoman, received it from one of her patients, grew it in her garden and gave pieces to many friends. It was widely grown in Ireland and was in many Dublin gardens at one time. Sadly, I have yet to find any trace of the plant, but it is recorded in lovely

botanical illustrations by both Wendy Walsh and Barbara Shaw. Another double, said to have been found by Molly Sanderson whilst out picnicking with friends, is called 'Boyne Valley'. I have had it twice but found it very difficult to grow. Several friends also had plants but they too have failed to keep it going. I am very sorry about that because I find the wild doubles fascinating. Each one is different in the structure of the petals and, being of a 'proper' primrose colour, keep something of the charm of the single *Primula vulgaris*.

A number of old double cultivars came from Ireland. 'Castlederg' is a little difficult to visualise. It is described as having "large star-shaped blooms being of deep sulphur yellow, splashed with pink and brown". It was a chance seedling found by a Mrs Scott of Castlederg, County Tyrone. I have never found anyone with the plant. 'Old Irish Red' also from County Tyrone was a lovely deep red, flowered profusely and propagated easily — long gone now.

The famous Daisy Hill Nursery run by the Smith family in Newry was the source of the two varieties I grow. *P. 'Red Paddy'* is a small-flowered crimson double with a silver edge to the flower. It dates back to 1897. The other always makes me smile and not just because she is so easy to grow: '*Our Pat*'. This was a chance find in a batch of *Primula juliae* seedlings; the date is always given as 1935. The leaves are distinctive having a rather olive tinge to them. The flower is variously described as sapphire-blue or amethyst. I shall be more prosaic and say that it is a rich mauve purple. One version of the story about this plant's name is that the intention was to call it Pat after Mr G N Smith's daughter. Someone wrote to say rather sniffily that they had already named a primrose Pat. The response was to name the Smiths' flower '*Our Pat*'. I think it is a better name. Now I have never found trace of a primula called Pat so perhaps the sniffy lady was one of those people that doesn't share their plants. '*Our Pat*' is an easy plant to grow and seems to almost self-divide. '*Red Paddy*' I had at one time in profusion but then suddenly lost it, so I am having to build back my plantings.

'*Prince Silverwings*' also came from Daisy Hill in 1897 and would carry both single and double flowers. There were plants in circulation until recently, but I have never had one or seen one. I am told they were very weak.

Another old variety, possibly Irish, was '*Arthur Du Moulin*'. Both '*Prince Silverwings*' and '*Arthur Du Moulin*' were plants that would produce pollen and so were used often as a pollen parent for breeding. '*Arthur Du Moulin*' was deep violet in shade and '*Prince Silverwings*' mauve with a white edge and some white splashes and a visible orange blotch to the base of the petal.

Irish growers often supplied English nurseries with stock. The Irish climate suits primrose cultivation well, of course. There were also many small nurseries. Gladys Emerson's nursery at Limavady is still remembered for its good list of double primroses.

Primula 'Our Pat'



Another lady with a nursery, perhaps less well known, was Mrs Barlee. She had a nursery at Foxrock, County Dublin and introduced a double primrose of her own breeding, 'St. Avila Glory'. Her catalogue describes it as a small mauve double juliae hybrid. It seems not to have circulated widely however.

There were always stories of old ladies in Ireland with gardens full of wonderful double primroses. The author Roy Genders claimed to have seen the famous old double red 'Madame Pompadour' "...growing like weeds in certain cottage gardens on the West Coast of Ireland". I do wonder whether he can be believed. Although his East Anglian nursery certainly supplied 'Madame Pompadour', by the 1950s she had gained a reputation for being almost impossible to grow. Indeed, even in 1891 it had been felt worthy of record in the weekly journal, *The Garden*, that the gardener in a rectory garden at Blackrock, four miles from Dublin, had succeeded in having 'Mme Pompadour' by the hundreds in long lines in a rather shady border sheltered by a privet hedge and sold them at 18 shillings a dozen. Roy Genders also claimed to have seen in a garden on the West Coast of Ireland a superb yellow double primrose almost the colour of a Gold Flake cigarette packet. He very much encouraged the idea that "...quaint and rare double primroses" were to be found in the cottage gardens of Ireland.

There is much romance attached to double primroses and these elusive gardens are part and parcel of this. More recently Dr Charles Nelson has scotched any hopes of finding rare and wonderful primroses in Irish cottage gardens. I expect he is right, but naturally I should be delighted if anyone could prove him wrong and find me some.

Dr Darach Lupton

We are delighted that Dr Darach Lupton, the recently appointed Curator at the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, will give a lecture after the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 7th May. See page 32 for the AGM programme. His title is The National Botanic Gardens — Adapting to Change.

Using the interconnected themes of living collections, research and education, Darach Lupton will explore the ever-adapting focus of the National Botanic Gardens and look at the role horticulture can play in plant conservation in the 21st century.



Ballyrobert: A Garden in the Ulster Landscape

by Paul Parkinson



When my parents, Joy and Maurice Parkinson, purchased a run-down farm at Ballyrobert in County Antrim, they had a plan in mind. They already had a one acre garden and a small nursery a couple of miles away, barely enough to make a living. Thirty years later, they now have a sixteen acre garden and a small nursery, barely enough to make a living.

The plan was to create a garden, loosely inspired by William Robinson, which would fit the history and the conditions of the place. Hopefully a visitor would not notice where the garden began nor where it ended. Here you could relax, but also explore what constitutes a garden. It is not clear when the site was first inhabited. The first ordnance survey map of Ireland records two old cottages and a barn on the site, dating to the 17th century. This was a plantation holding and the layout put in place in the 1600s is still apparent. A local field contains a rath. Unearthed tracks and ancient cutting stones hint at even earlier inhabitants.

With this in mind, nods to local history and folklore have been both retained and added to the garden. Fairy trees are left standing and celebrated. One of the entrance pillars has been constructed with a flat top so that the fairies guarding the property can dance easily, a local tradition. The ancient Doagh Holestone is a few miles away, so the garden has a stand-alone holetree (yes, it is called that). A few other holes have been cut in hedges around the garden creating interesting views and some curious lighting effects on misty days. The original field layout was kept and is now grazed by Dexter cattle, an old Irish breed. In three of the grazed fields, rushes have been removed to reveal patterns of concentric rings, a spiral, and a Bridget's Cross, all managed so that biodiversity is increased. At what point do these features make a garden? Can it really be called a garden if a cow is in it?

Does it matter?



Rosa 'Irish Molly'

The planted areas vary from a managed formal garden and borders near the house to a small, unmanaged woodland and stream. Maurice and Joy live on the property and, after a lifetime studying, lecturing, and working at parks, colleges and botanical gardens, it is only natural the planting reflects Maurice's background. As you might expect, some Irish selections such as *Rosa x hibernica*, *Mahonia* 'Charity' from the Donard Nursery and *Omphalodes cappadocica* 'Starry Eyes' are growing here, as well as the ubiquitous but garden-worthy plants such as *Geranium* 'Rozanne' and *Anemone* 'Wild Swan'. Some rarities collected over Maurice's career are also found. For example, you may read that the true *Sorbus randaiensis* only entered Europe in 1985, but Ballyrobert has a beautiful tree budded from Ness Botanic Gardens stock forty years ago and it appears true to form. There are a few other species from this Ness batch of *Sorbus* in the garden; visitors are welcome to perform a more rigorous classification!

Apart from the occasional, exceptionally hardy cultivars such as *Alstroemeria* 'Selina' or *Echinacea* 'Razzamatazz', few if any tender or exotic genera are in the garden. Common or rare, all plants are largely left alone to compete in the mossy borders. If a plant doesn't grow well in the wet, heavy clay, it is allowed to die or is removed. The resultant effect is the planting has a relaxed, natural feel as most are plants well established and happy. Hopefully visitors feel the same way.

[Ed: Ballyrobert Gardens is open each day except Sundays, from 1st March to 30th September; see ballyrobertgardens.com for more details.]



Sorbus randaiensis all photos courtesy of Maurice Parkinson

Members' Memories

Exhibiting at Chelsea

David Jeffrey recalls his three visits to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

In 1990, with support from Bord Failte, we set about creating Ireland's first ever exhibit at Chelsea. A small team painstakingly gathered specimens from gardens, large and small, north and south. The aim was to illustrate the wide range of plants capable of growing in Ireland. On the 18th May Ricky Shannon, the Treasurer, and I set off for the ferry with a van of carefully chosen and meticulously packed specimens. We all met up at Chelsea and put together a most pleasing display of a lush woodland glade of tree ferns and shrubs, underplanted with ferns and flowering specimens, aptly demonstrating the title **'Exotics in Ireland'**. The award of a Silver Medal was a huge boost to our inexperienced team.



David and Janet Jeffery

In 1992 with our appetites whetted and experience under our belts, the Society embarked on adventure no. 2, this time titled **'Distinguished Natives and Honoured Guests'**.

The 'natives' were borrowed from various academic collections. The 'guests' were exotics from many parts of the world, again borrowed from many sources. Although entered in the educational and scientific section, a Silver Gilt Medal was awarded in the 'Flora' range as a reward for the quality and spectacle of the display.

I made my final Chelsea trip in 1995 during my second term as Chairman. The culmination of months of planning, building, transporting and finally the putting together of our exhibit **'Brightest Jewel: Ireland's Garden Celebrates 200 Years of Glasnevin'** produced a stunning spectacle in honour of the bicentenary of the Royal Botanic Gardens now the National Botanic Gardens. That Gold Medal still eluded the valiant team of workers, a Silver Gilt again, but we were rewarded by a visit and very complimentary comments from Princess Anne. I was privileged to be chosen to be on the stand on VIP afternoon and 'negotiated' with Princess Anne for a special *Deutzia* 'Alpine Magician' to be dispatched to Highgrove, Prince Charles's estate. We really felt we had made our mark!

These experiences provided excellent opportunities to meet, discuss and observe how commercial teams set about their tasks. It gave us great satisfaction to know we were able to compete with and succeed in the company of experienced and well-resourced organisations.

We all pulled together and came home feeling that we had done our bit to put Irish horticulture on the map.



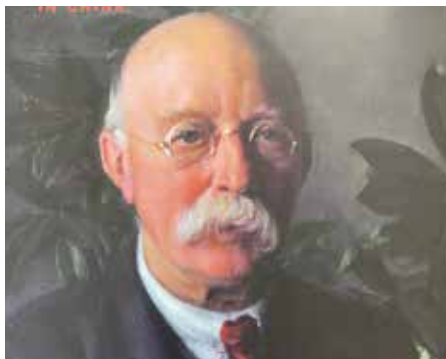
Deutzia purpurascens 'Alpine Magician':

Paul Maher shares his recollections of Chelsea.

I remember writing to Charles Nelson, who was Chairman between 1992 and 1994, about doing an exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show featuring Augustine Henry. Charles thought the time was not right but suggested an exhibit featuring the bicentenary of the National Botanic Gardens.

A committee was formed and, with funding from Bord Bia and the National Botanic Gardens, the exhibit went ahead in 1995. I remember it as an incredible story. The delivery to the Chelsea Show grounds of a live *Victoria amazonica* water lily was a huge event. David Jeffrey encountered a film crew working for the Royal Horticultural Society and told them they should come immediately as we were in the process of floating an Amazonian water lily into our exhibit; this resulted in the lily, and us, featuring in the Show's official DVD. The exhibit was awarded a Silver Gilt Medal.

The 2002 exhibit, '**Augustine Henry: an Irish Plant Collector in China**', was also sponsored by Bord Bia and facilitated by the National Botanic Gardens. Again enormous work was undertaken, most notable being the incredible research work undertaken by Seamus O'Brien on the travels of and plants collected by Augustine Henry. The result was an excellent exhibit earning another Silver Gilt Medal.



Augustine Henry

Both these ventures were the result of at least nine months' work from committee stage to assembling plant material and the construction of the staging. I designed and constructed each of the stages on which these two exhibits were mounted using Glasnevin's tools and equipment. We had increased funding for the 2002 exhibit which enabled us to produce better quality information for distribution at the Show; not like 1995 when, at the last moment, we suddenly realised we did not have a plant list to hand out! Finola Reid and I sat up into the early hours of the morning, Finola checking plant names and me writing out the list.

Brendan Sayers - the challenge of transporting a giant water lily.

Scheduled as the star attraction and centre-piece of the display in 1995 was a young plant of *Victoria amazonica* (later identified as *Victoria cruziana*). Paul had designed a bespoke box that allowed the pot and soil to remain immersed in water and the partly unfurled leaf to sit on a cushioned shelf. On the way to London we had to keep stopping to open the lid and mist the leaf and stem to ensure we arrived with this exotic lily looking her best.

Seamus O'Brien also retains vivid memories of 2002.

Paul and I remember packing up the van at the NBG Glasnevin and the two of us departing from his house at the crack of dawn in the middle of a massive thunder storm, boarding the ferry, and then driving across England to reach the Chelsea Show in London. Despite the early start and long drive, on arrival we got an adrenalin rush, moved the neighbouring exhibitor off our patch, and unloaded the plants, display cases and equipment in the Great Marquee.

In the following days the other team members arrived to help build the exhibit. We all experienced the excitement of being a part of the Chelsea Flower Show: the happy feeling when the exhibit was finally together after two and a half years of meetings, fundraising, growing plants, printing leaflets, and then that special moment when we walked in to find a Silver Gilt Medal. Finally, sheer exhaustion took over as we dismantled the stand, packed the van and boarded the ferry back to Dublin.

We were all absolutely shattered after Chelsea. Despite that, we undertook a series of lectures about the build-up to the Show, growing-on the plants, building the display, the visit by the late Duke of Edinburgh to our exhibit, and returning to Ireland with a much-coveted Silver Gilt Medal. The display was re-erected at Glasnevin where it gave people at home an opportunity to see it.

Twenty years ago now!





Painting of a giant water lily by Susan Sex: reproduction by kind permission of the artist.

Mimosa: A Dilemma

by Rosie Maye

We're situated on top of a hill and the garden can be quite exposed. When I received a lovely gift of an *Acacia dealbata*, I duly googled its likes and dislikes; every site said that, although hardy to about -10°C, it needed protection from harsh winds. I decided that a spot behind a wall sheltering it from the worst of the draughts would be ideal.

It arrived in March in full bloom so I kept it in the greenhouse for a few months. In May it got a large pot and prime position behind the wall. The following winter was cold; I watched it carefully for signs of damage but it seemed happy enough in its sheltered spot. Then in April a bitter easterly wind arrived. All the fern-like foliage was burnt, the developing flower buds froze and promptly dropped off. Aghast, I wheeled my poor tree into my greenhouse where it looked sad for the rest of the year. However this February it was smothered in fluffy yellow flowers which, on warm days, filled the greenhouse with the most delightful scent.

I subsequently visited a friend in Dublin where I was astonished to see three gigantic mimosa, 8-12 metres tall, in her neighbour's garden. She is obviously in a much more sheltered area than my garden as the trees showed no ill effects from the recent storms and the blossom was glowing in the spring sunshine.

I'm now in a quandary as to what to do with my lovely tree. Does it stay in the shelter and protection of the greenhouse or do I try another spot in the garden? Another friend who got hers at the same time as me may have the perfect solution. She has it in a large pot on an outdoor patio under a Perspex roof. It's at her back door so is near enough to be watered, it's sheltered from the wind by the walls of the house, and is protected from frost by the roof. Now all I need is a good builder!



Early Summer: What I Love Best

by Edith Brosnan, Joe Burns, Hilary McKelvey and Jennifer Strevens

Jennifer Strevens lives near Athlone and has splendid trees in her garden.



For about two weeks in early summer, my golden oak, *Quercus robur* 'Concordia', is a wonderful foil to the small copper beech in front of it; after a brief period the golden foliage turns green so this is a special moment to treasure every year. The photo is now a precious memory as a massive 200 year-old beech tree on the left sadly keeled over and died last autumn. I plan to leave the tree as a sort of natural sculpture and also a haven for wildlife. The dark sky shows rain is coming and I like the colour contrasts.



Edith Brosnan serves on the Leinster committee and loves climbers.



Lonicera tragophylla

I thought I might share some early summer climbers with you. *Lonicera tragophylla*, also known as a Chinese honeysuckle, is described as vigorous but for me, in a relatively dry area, it doesn't overwhelm its host plant. Perhaps with a little more moisture, it might produce more growth. It does reach 6 or 7 feet and flowers reliably. I think it has the best and purest yellow flower of any plant I know. It almost shines. It was recommended to me by Assumpta Broomfield and I have never regretted buying it.

Another honeysuckle but a very different specimen is a vigorous evergreen one. I bought it as *L. henryi* but it may be *L. giraldii*. Whichever it is, it is covered in terminal clusters of small dark red flowers, not terribly showy but loved by the bees and in succession they last for ages. While it is not seen very often, part of its appeal is the memory of the nursery in South Wales where I bought it – a story in itself!



Clematis henryi

After hearing Seamus O'Brien talk lyrically about Augustine Henry, I went on a 'henryi' buying spree! My favourite climber is *Clematis henryi*, a real beauty. It grows close to the house so I can easily see its large white flowers with dark centres. Its main flowering is in June but I often get blooms later in the year. They can be over 6 inches wide and, with proper support, will reach 7 or 8 feet. Up to now I have just used some bamboo stakes which can be a bit rickety and sometimes blow over. However, I was lucky enough to get a generous gift token so I treated myself to a metal obelisk about eight feet high so I am looking forward to an even better display this year.

Hilary McKelvey fell in love with peonies as a little girl.

Peonies are what I like best about the early summer. One of my earliest memories is of a beautiful, double-red blowsy peony that grew in my Granny's garden; this started my love of gardening.

Just over twenty years ago at an Alpine Garden Society plant stall, I bought a small seedling peony called *Paeonia mlokosewitschii*, often referred to as Molly the Witch. This peony comes from the central Caucasus and can grow in semi-shade or sun. We have two large plants in different areas of our garden in Bessbrook, Co Armagh which helps to prolong the flowering period. It looks good for three seasons of the year starting in February with red buds coming through the ground before changing into a soft green leaf. In May it is covered with single yellow flowers with golden stamens to be followed in the autumn by interesting seed pods. When the pods open, they contain black shiny seeds which, if sown, can take between five to seven years to produce a flowering plant. It is well worth the wait.



Joe Burns pauses for reflection on some wonderful plants in Co Cork.

Is it just me or are gardeners a peculiar bunch constantly referring to successes or failures of the past: that ideal weather we had, the amount of growth that year, the colour and perfection of blooms?

We talk of things past and those to come ... how much improved they will be or how interesting the new plantings. Yet, do we ever pause and consider the garden as it is right now?

As summer begins to arrive here at our home, Sceilg Mhíchil, we take moments to pause, to look, admire, and indeed criticise. At this time of the year we can see where the preparation and work of the past autumn and winter has paid off — or not as often is the case.

Though we may lament the passing of our snowdrops, we look above their spot to see how fine the *Parrotia persicia* planted forty years ago has become.



Iris chrysographes 'Kilmurry Black'

We are captivated by *Myosotidium hortensia* with its structured leaf and rather diminutive blue flowers, whilst our memory of the blossom of *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill' fades as it has now lost its charm above this bed.

The light is curiously different in the garden at this stage of the year, it is young and less severe, illuminating the greens gently and emphasising the emerging buds of all sorts. Together, *lochroma australe* and *Iris chrysographes* 'Kilmurry Black' highlight this magical moment.

Myosotidium hortensia



Meet the Committee

**Nichola Monk —
Membership Secretary**



I joined IGPS in 2013. Five years later in 2018 at one of the wonderful AGM weekends, I was inspired to volunteer for the position of Membership Secretary. It was a great time to begin: lots of challenges and innovations including a proper database to replace the excellent but superseded spreadsheet in 2019 and the introduction of payments by Direct Debit in April 2020. The timing could not have been better. I didn't appreciate until afterwards that such a mammoth time-consuming project would be absolutely the best thing to be doing during lockdown.

I have a small, urban garden down a quiet lane in Bangor, Co Down which is full of plants, begged, borrowed and bought. My large kitchen faces south west and is a haven and a joy to look out from in all weathers. Front and back of the house, the garden keeps changing its mind. I'm hoping that the trees I keep planting will take over from the perennials in 15 years' time. Less work!

**Bríd Kelleher —
Committee member**



I was introduced to the IGPS by a foundation member who assured me that it was "a very friendly society" and so it proved to be. My interest in plants and gardens has increased greatly, thanks to lectures, events and publications organized by it.

I've had a passion for plants since childhood and learned a valuable lesson from an experiment transplanting flowers from my parents' garden to a small quarry on the family farm; they didn't survive! Following that early setback, I've had somewhat more success gardening on the challenging terrain on the Howth peninsula.

My greatest satisfaction is derived from propagating plants from seeds and cuttings received from plant societies and friends. These in turn are donated to plant sales and friends, and so the cycle continues. For many years I have been involved in the floral art movement in Ireland and internationally where I continue to give workshops and judge.

Grow an Irish Plant

by Maeve Bell, Nicola & Peter Milligan and Brendan Sayers



***Malus* 'Irish Peach'**

There are many wonderful Irish apple varieties; an excellent one is *Malus* 'Irish Peach', sometimes known as *M.* 'Early Crofton' as it is thought to have originated in Sligo as part of the Crofton collection. This is a fine dessert apple described as having fruits that are small and round with a smooth pale yellow skin sometimes marked with dark red stripes. *M.* 'Irish Peach' is a real beauty in terms of colour and taste, it is the first Irish variety to ripen, is usually ready by the end of August or by mid-September and has a real tang.



All fruit trees have a pollinator requirement. The modern apple flowering period is broken into seven groups numbered 1-7. In general a variety will be pollinated by trees in the same flowering group and those in adjacent flowering groups. *M.* 'Irish Peach' is in group 2. The final size of the tree is determined by the rootstock; MM106 makes a good 'bush' tree around 12-15 feet in height and spread.

Whether or not the old saying that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" is true, there is great pleasure to be had not only from the blossom but also from picking and eating your own fruit. **N & PM**

Malus 'Irish Peach'
Photo courtesy of Tom Moore, UCD



***Aspidistra* 'Irish Mist'**

On Plant Heritage's 2021 shortlist for Threatened Plant of the Year was an Irish plant, *Aspidistra* 'Irish Mist'. Though not the eventual winner, it was voted People's Choice. I have in the past cited A. 'Irish Mist' as an example of a cultivar which may not have a large fan club because of its yellow mottled foliage but one deserving to be preserved as part of our horticultural heritage. Obviously my assumption about its likely popularity was incorrect.

Charles Nelson named this distinct form of *Aspidistra lurida* which was growing in the Aquatic House in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin in 1990. The name 'Irish Mist' was chosen to reflect the blurred yellow spotting of the leaf. In the Society's journal *Moorea*, Vol. 10, Alison Rutherford describes A. 'Irish Mist' as follows: "...as well spotted as a good *Aucuba*" and "...if you are kind to it" it will flower well.

She concluded: "It would be a neat ending to the story if the origin could be found".

Hopefully in time we can add more information to the history of this plant.

I have spoken to retired colleagues who are familiar with the plant collections at Glasnevin and who can remember various *Aspidistra* being grown in the glasshouses. Some have a clear memory of substantial sized plants of this particular clone being grown in the late 1970s well before it was named. It continues to be cultivated in the Gardens today.

BS



***Pittosporum* 'Nutt's Leprechaun'**

The profile of *Pittosporum* 'Silver Queen' in issue 153 mentioned that it occurred as a sport of *Pittosporum tenuifolium* and could reach more than 30 feet. At the opposite end of the height spectrum is another Irish cultivar of the same parent, *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Nutt's Leprechaun' which originated at the nursery of the late Fred Nutty, an honorary member of our Society, at Malahide, Co Dublin.

Pittosporum is in the main a genus of dioecious plants, meaning that individuals are either male or female, though there is an element of gender fluidity.

In gardens where more than one *Pittosporum tenuifolium* is grown, there can be a variable seed crop and it is not unusual in larger gardens to find a carpet of seedlings underneath mature plants.

Fred Nutty collected seed at Malahide Castle from *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Purpureum' and, from the seedlings, he selected one that showed promise. 'Nutty's Leprechaun' is a slow growing plant of rounded habit with new foliage in green, deepening to purple as the summer progresses. *A Heritage of Beauty* informs us that the original plant was only about a metre tall after 15 years of growth, a perfect plant choice for a smaller garden. Sadly, it is now rarely available from nurseries.

For those of us who grow more than a single *Pittosporum*, it is worth searching the ground for self sown seedlings where you might be fortunate enough to find another cultivar with promise. **BS**

***Osteospermum* 'Lady Leitrim'**

Osteospermum 'Lady Leitrim', is an attractive, long-blooming perennial which can flower from late spring all the way through to the autumn. Its daisy-like flowers are blush-white deepening to a lavender-pink as they age while each petal has a blue-mauve back giving a very attractive two-tone effect. The flowers open and close depending on the light. *Osteospermums* do best in a sunny position and look especially effective planted along the edge of paving or in gravel but they can also be planted in borders and containers. Dead heading prolongs the flowering period.

O. 'Lady Leitrim' is both easy to grow and easy to propagate from cuttings and is relatively hardy, unlike many African daisies. It holds an AGM (Award of Garden Merit) from the RHS and is usually widely available.

It is named for Anne, Lady Leitrim who died in 1984. She and her husband, the fifth Earl of Leitrim, lived in Mulroy House in Co Donegal. **MB**



Growing Aeonium from Seed

by Andrew Gee

It is incredibly easy and rewarding to grow aeoniums from seed. These plants are becoming very popular nowadays, both as houseplants and bedding plants. However, their prices are increasing, making it well worth growing some from seed.



It is important to use only the freshest seed possible; it quickly loses its viability. When checking the seeds, it may appear as though you have some dust — do not be alarmed! *Aeonium* seeds are exceedingly small. The time for sowing is generally early spring to early summer but, if you have the luxury of grow lights and some heat, they can be successfully sown at almost any time of year.

Prepare a pot or seed tray (a 9cm or 11cm pot is preferable, as it provides a deeper root run for the seedlings)

of sieved seed compost mixed 50/50 with perlite or grit, water it well and allow to drain for 15 minutes.

Sow the seeds very sparingly on the surface and do not cover them as this will inhibit germination. Finally, use a mister to gently settle the seeds without washing them away. Place in a warm area, such as a propagator, at approximately 18-25°C and germination should be rapid. Fresher seed will germinate more quickly than older seed.

Allow the seedlings to grow on to form small rosettes. Then, carefully prick these out into individual 9cm pots with plenty of grit or horticultural sand added to the potting mix to aid drainage. *Aeonium* does not require quite as much drainage as some other succulents do.

When your aeoniums flower, often after a few years, most will probably die as they have monocarpic tendencies. All is not lost as they will be bursting with thousands of seeds, so collect a few and you will have lots to give away or even, with considerable luck, a new hybrid.



Worth a Read

by Paddy Tobin



Gardens under Big Skies — Reimagining Outdoor Space, The Dutch Way

by Noel Kingsbury & Maayke de Ridder
Filbert Press, 2021, Hardback, 263 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-9997345-9-6, £40

Noel Kingsbury has been a frequent visitor to The Netherlands since the mid-1990s, initially to follow the work of Piet Oudolf but over the years his interests in Dutch gardens and garden design broadened and led to this study on what has influenced today's cohort of garden designers in The Netherlands.

This volume presents gardens some of which reflect historic Dutch gardening, some the engineered landscape or the natural landscape, and others the conflict between the engineers of nature and those who would rather let nature take its course. The result is a fascinating and insightful assessment of today's Dutch gardens, looking at the influences of history, tradition and environment along with the personal journeys of today's designers and the gardens they have created. Looming larger than life are the two giants of Dutch gardening design, Mien Ruys and Piet Oudolf, and many modern designers will acknowledge the contribution they have made to their own education and their continued influence on modern Dutch gardens.

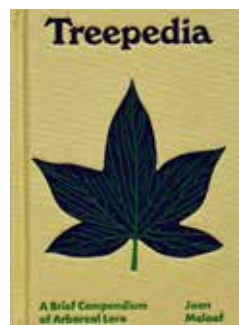
This has been my most enjoyable gardening read in ages and certainly one of my top books of the year. It is one I recommend without hesitation.

Treepedia

by Joan Maloof

Princeton Press, Oxfordshire, 2021, Hardback, 143 pages,
ISBN: 978-0-691-20875-6, £10

This little volume is a collection of fact-filled snippets about trees and related topics — people and places, facts and figures, the odd and unusual, the fascinating and the amazing, nearly 100 entries covering all matters arboreal. It is a collection of short reads to be enjoyed at a free moment with each guaranteed to be of interest although it must be mentioned that the content is heavily weighted to North American topics.



Dates for your Diary

Saturday 7 May 2022 **AGM and tour of the National Botanic Gardens**

10:30 -11:00

Registration, tea, coffee and scones

11:15 -12:15

Annual General Meeting

12:15 - 13:00

Speaker: Dr Darach Lupton, newly appointed Curator of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

13:15 -14:15

Lunch *

14:15 - 15:45

Guided tour of the National Botanic Gardens to include the Irish Heritage Plant collection

15:45

Depart

Members are entitled to attend the meeting free of charge.

* A light lunch, (quiche and salads) will be available; special dietary requirements on request. Cost €20. Details of booking via Eventbrite will be circulated.

Notice of the 40th Annual General Meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society to be held in the Visitor Centre, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin Dublin
DO9 VY63 on Saturday 7th May 2022 at 11.15am.



Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM held on 26th May 2021 via Zoom
3. Matters arising if any
4. Chair's report
To note the report
5. Treasurer's report and accounts for 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022
To adopt the accounts
6. Election of Officers and Committee Member(s)
7. Election of Honorary members (if any)
8. Discussion of any other business

Members of the National Executive Committee who served 2021 - 2022

Mary Forrest, Chairman,

Áine Máire Ní Mhurchú, Honorary Secretary,

Nichola Monk, Membership Secretary

David Grayson, Honorary Treasurer

Breda Cummins, Leinster representative

Margaret McAuliffe, Munster representative

Billy McCone, Northern representative

Stephen Butler, Committee member and Plant Heritage representative

Brid Kelleher, Committee member

Caroline Maher - resigned autumn 2021.

The positions of Vice Chairman and Committee member are currently vacant.

Nominations are therefore sought for the following positions:

Vice Chairman & a member of Committee.

Nominations may be sent by email to igps.ireland@gmail.com or by post to IGPS Honorary Secretary, c/o Áine Máire Ní Mhurchú, Croí Áirmid, Slanduff, Walterstown, Navan, Co Meath C15HKD1 to arrive no later than 22nd April 2022. Nominations must include the name of the

candidate, names of a proposer and seconder, and a statement that the candidate has agreed to stand for election.

The Zoom facility has been so useful for committee meeting that it is likely that the Committee will continue to use it for most meetings, so saving both time and money and making it easier for Committee members to take part.

Saturday 21st May from 11am to 4pm.

Spring Plant Sale at Clotworthy House, Antrim Castle Gardens, Antrim, BT41 4LH



The Northern region intends to combine an online plant sale, similar to those which have been so successful in the past two years, with a more traditional table sale in the Courtyard at Clotworthy House. In this way, members will be able to order plants in advance of the table sale which will be open to the public. All online orders will be available for collection at Antrim on the day.

Please propagate, divide or pot up some plants, especially Irish cultivars, for sale; these can be delivered to any committee member in advance. Further details of online ordering, timings and collection arrangements will be emailed to members in April. We are aware that some members do not use email and we ask those who do to offer assistance where possible.

Saturday 11th June from 11am to 4.30pm Garden visit followed by the Summer Lunch

Coolaught Gardens & Garden Centre, Clonroche, Enniscorthy, Y21 RX81



Coolaught Gardens is a country-style garden on approximately 3 acres. Harry and Caroline Deacon are passionate about plants and love to source unusual and good quality varieties to grow in their garden and also stock in their garden centre. Arrive between 10.40 and 11am for tea, coffee & scones. Leave 1pm for Hill View.

Summer Lunch at Hill View House, Ballylane, New Ross, Co Wexford Y34 TX22



Hill View House was built in the 1830s and is the family home of Margaret Fitzpatrick. She began indulging her passion for interesting trees and shrubs about 30 years ago. Near the house are mixed perennial and shrub borders, roses, an orchard, a small fishpond and an echium forest! At the back of the house there is that Victorian delight - a laurel lawn. Most paths are grass and level except for a slight incline to and from the large pond. Arrive from 1.30pm for lunch at 2pm. Leave at 4.30pm

Booking via Eventbrite opens Monday 16th May. Cost for members €30, guests €40.

Westport Weekend, 24 - 26 June



The Leinster Committee invites us to a weekend based in Westport meeting in the Castlecourt Hotel on Friday evening. On Saturday we will travel by coach to Kylemore Abbey where the head gardener Anja Gohlke will guide us through the restored Victorian Walled Garden. Morning refreshments and a light lunch are included. Then continue to Drimbawn on the shores of Lough Mask, a large 40 acre private garden for our tour with head gardener Frank Steffens. Return to Westport to enjoy our Gala Dinner at 8 pm.

On Sunday there is an option for a ramble in the woodland at Westport House and three gardens from the Clew Bay Garden Trail to visit by car. First we head towards Louisburgh to Trafalgar Lodge, a two acre seaside garden. There will be some suggested lunch spots before afternoon visits to

Hammerbeam and Speckled Meadow. There will be plants for sale and refreshments available in some of the gardens.

Pre-booking via Eventbrite, already circulated, is essential.

Saturday 2nd July from 2pm to 5pm

Visit to Greyabbey House and Garden, Greyabbey, Co Down BT22 2NQ



Grey Abbey House is considered to be one of the finest Georgian country houses in Ireland and has been owned by the Montgomery family since 1607. The gardens include mature woods and extensive borders. Part of the Chilean collection of plants and seeds from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh together with plants from Tasmania, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil grow in the Southern Hemisphere garden.

There is also an opportunity to visit the Cistercian Abbey ruins.

Pre-booking is essential.

Members and guests £24 to include the garden, a guided tour of the complete house, and refreshments in the marquee.

The visit will be guided by Dave Gillard, head gardener, and Martin Walsh, garden consultant.

Booking via Eventbrite opens Monday 20th June 2022, cost €10.

Saturday 16th July from 2pm to 5pm

Visit to Kilquade House, Kilquade, Co Wicklow. A63 NW29



Kilquade is a private estate with two walled gardens. The walled garden near the house is formal in design, the second is much more informal; it is within the estate but you will need to drive to it. Both contain herbaceous borders, productive gardens, and shrub plantings. Paths are mainly gravel the ground is fairly level with just a few steps.

Saturday 23rd July from 1pm to 5pm

Visit to Barmeath Castle & Garden, Togher, Dunleer, Co Louth

Barmeath is a flamboyant castle set in over 10 acres of historic gardens overlooking Dundalk Bay. Home to the Bellew family since the 1670s, the main design of the garden is by Thomas Wright who came to Ireland in 1745. The grounds feature a lake, islands and a rustic rock bridge which is typical of Wright's work. In the walled garden, there are roses, fruit trees, a summer house, herbaceous border and the vegetable plot.

Pre-booking is essential. You are welcome to bring a picnic. Members free, personal guests €10 to include the garden and a guided tour of the house

**Saturday 3rd September from
11am to 5pm**

**Kilcoan Gardens, 240 Middle Road,
Islandmagee, Larne BT40 3TG**



The gardens belonging to Cherry Townsend extend to 5 acres and have evolved over the past 20 years. They include a cottage garden, orchard, vegetable and herb garden, and a recently planted prairie border. The cut flower field includes eight raised beds full of annuals and perennials suitable for cut flower production. Cherry has a particular passion for old roses; over 140 different roses, old and new, can be found throughout the garden.

No booking required. You are welcome to bring a picnic.
Members free, personal guests £5

**Sat 17th September from 1pm to
5pm**

**Conrad McCormick's Garden, 31
Blackpark Cottages, Ballyvoy,
Ballycastle, Co Antrim, BT54 6RR**

If you think big-leaved, tropical-looking plants are for big, expansive spaces, think again because Conrad (aka That Botanic Guy) manages to fit all his large-leaved loves into his small garden in Ballycastle. Filled with jungle-like plants, the lush growth is a show-stopper while the shades of green provide contrasting textures from smooth large-leaved plants to those with long, slim fronds and the lacy look of ferns.

Pre-booking is essential.
Members free, personal guests £6



Meet Our Contributors

Andrew Gee is at school in Bangor, Co Down and recently joined the Society.

David Jeffery gardens in Howth; he chaired the Society on two occasions between 1988 and 1990 and again between 1994 and 1996.

Paul Parkinson graduated from Oxford University in 2005. Having joined the family business Ballyrobert Nursery and Gardens, in his own words he “began a long apprenticeship under Maurice Parkinson”.

Paul Maher recently retired as Curator of the National Botanic Gardens. He is a long standing member of the IGPS, served on the committee on two occasions and also edited the Newsletter for several years.

Rosie Maye also known as The Insomniac Gardener, gardens near Slane and writes a column for The Irish Garden magazine.

Claire McNally trained at Glasnevin and was appointed head gardener at the National Trust's Rowallane Gardens in 2020.

Seamus O'Brien manages the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, Co Wicklow. He is a long standing member of the IGPS, a former committee member, an author and serves on two committees of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Nicola & Peter Milligan garden at the Mount Stewart estate on the shores of Strangford Lough in Co Down. Both are past members of the Northern Committee.

Brendan Sayers is Glasshouse Foreman at the National Botanic Gardens and has spent almost 30 years working there; he specialises in orchids, both native and tropical. He is a long standing member and former committee member.

Caroline Stone, a member who gardens in Cornwall holds the National Collection of double primroses for our sister organisation, Plant Heritage.

Paddy Tobin a former Chairman of the Society and Editor of the Newsletter, lives in Waterford and writes a column for The Irish Garden magazine.

Photos are by kind permission of the authors unless otherwise attributed.

While every effort is made to ensure that content is correct at the time of printing, views expressed in the articles are those of the author(s) and may not reflect those of the Society. Any factual errors will be corrected as soon as possible.



Magnolia sargentiana var. *robusta* at Mount Congreve,
County Waterford: photo courtesy of Paddy Tobin.



C/O: National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

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