The Irish Garden Plant Society

Newsletter No. 129 May 2014

The Irish Alphabet in Botanical Art

Above: Athair thalún (*Achillea millefolium*) by Susan Sex, see page 30.

Front Cover:
***Paeonia* 'Anne Rosse' by Wendy Walsh courtesy of James Fennell**

In this issue

Editorial

Welcome to the summer edition of the newsletter. This issue has been posted early to give further details of the AGM on May 17th & 18th. If you wish to attend there is still time to book and contact details are on page 4. Bookings can also be made online on www.irishgardenplantsociety.com, the IGPS website.

It is encouraging to read on page 22 Stephen Butler's account of the ongoing work of the Society and Stephen in particular regarding Irish Heritage Plants. You may have sent details in the previous survey in 2007, Stephen now needs to update that information so please do contact him. Stephen also reports on the trends in this year's seed distribution on page 9. Rae McIntyre writes of people and fashions that have influenced her while Gary Dunlop writes about *Cordyline indivisa,* a very handsome plant. Many thanks also to other members contributing include our Chairman Paddy Tobin, Hon. Secretary Maeve Bell, Lorna Goldstrom, and members from around the country writing with news of local events.

We extend our sympathy to the family of the late Wendy Walsh, a much loved and admired woman. Brendan Sayers writes 'a farewell to a dear lady' on page 7. Our condolences also to Marcella Campbell, a long serving member of the Society, on the death of her husband Iain. May Wendy and Iain both rest in peace.
Mary

The copy date for material for the September Newsletter is August 1st.
Please send to:igpseditor@gmail.com
or Mary Rowe, 29 Bantry Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

A Note from the Chairman

As I write, Spring certainly has not established itself here in the south-east but I hope it will have done so by the time you are reading this. It has been a rather long and drab end of winter and an improvement in the weather and the opportunity to get out into the garden more regularly would be most welcome.

In such conditions it is good to have something to look forward to and the AGM weekend in Dublin has the appearance of the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. If you look at the events section of the IGPS website you will find an excellent account of the gardens we plan to visit. One advantage of society membership is that gardens generally not open to the public will open their gates to the members of a society. This is the case this year with two particularly excellent gardens we would not normally see open to us. I hope to see a great number of you there. My thanks to the Leinster Committee for their work in organising the weekend.

Stephen Butler has made a most welcome return to the Executive Committee and has immediate plans to revitalise the work of the society regarding the conservation of Irish heritage plants. Brendan Sayers and Stephen have been working away over several years on recording a database of Irish plants and Stephen is now in the process of comparing that list to those plants listed in The Plant Finder as this will give us a reasonable idea of which plants are readily available and which are in danger of slipping out of cultivation and being lost. He has a note in this issue of the newsletter outlining this work and also a listing of those plants which are of “at risk” status. He will ask you to inform him if you have any of these plants and please, please, please respond to this request. All information will be absolutely confidential, as Stephen will explain, and it will give us the opportunity to record the status of our Irish heritage plants and take action to ensure the survival of those in danger.

Finally, I am delighted to report that Paul Maher, Curator of the Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin and a long time IGPS member, has produced an initial plan for a section of the walled garden at Russborough House, a section which will be planted with plants of Irish connection.

This is part of the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland's project in the garden and we were very kindly asked by the RHSI to participate in this work. It is planned that the gardens will be officially opened in 2016 to mark the bicentenary of the RHSI. It is a wonderful project and we wish them all the best. Check out the RHSI website for an insight into the work going on there.

Best wishes to all members.
Paddy Tobin

The Annual General Meeting weekend Saturday 17TH and Sunday 18TH MAY 2014 at the Marine Hotel, Sutton Cross, Dublin 13

The 2014 AGM of the Society will be based at the very comfortable 3* Marine Hotel at Sutton Cross. The formal meeting - no charge, members only - will take place at **11am** (note the later start date); please see page 6 for the agenda. Following garden visits, there will be a dinner in the evening with more visits on Sunday. If you have any special dietary requirements, please notify these at the time of your booking or let the hotel know in good time. Non-members are welcome to join the weekend; the cost for the full weekend is €65, garden visits only are €30, and the dinner only €35.

If you have not already booked, please send the booking form to:
36 St Brendan's Park, Artane, Dublin 5 or book through the IGPS website.
For further information, please contact the Leinster committee by email at igps.leinster@gmail.com or telephone +353 (0)1 848 0625.

We are delighted to get an opportunity to visit two gardens near Howth which are rarely open for visits.

One is on the southern side of the peninsula giving extensive views of Dublin Bay. It is a gardener's paradise with lots of mature trees and beautifully designed borders with a combination of hardy and tender perennials. Walkways wind through both formal and informal planting.

Due to its location, there are some steep steps in parts of this garden requiring suitable footwear and care.

Created over the past decade, the half-acre garden of two enthusiasts appears much larger thanks to a series of terraces and clever interlinking of different areas of interest. There are mixed hedges, colour-themed borders which include large leaved exotics, an elegant greenhouse, grasses, a formal pool and a vegetable patch. A natural rock outcrop with choice alpines and a small birch copse under-planted with a collection of spring bulbs ensure that the garden is linked to the surrounding landscape.

A change of tempo brings us to the allotment gardens of Lorna and David Hopkins. Located on the eastern side of Howth Head, there are views over the harbour, Ireland's Eye and Lambay Island. These are allotments with a difference. One is owned by *Aqua*, a restaurant on Howth pier, proving that its vegetables and herbs are super fresh. Then there are the animals - pigs, hens and an apiary. The allotments have plenty of interest and hopefully some of the other owners will be on hand for a chat.

Or try linking horticulture and literature. Dr Mary Forrest of UCD School of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture and author of *Trees and Shrubs Cultivated in Ireland* will lead us on the Rhododendron Walk immortalised in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Starting at the Deer Park Hotel, we will view the 20th century planting by the Gainsford St Lawrence family who still own this area. Sturdy footwear is recommended due to uneven terrain.

Malahide Castle with its 260 acres of grounds dates from Norman times and was home to the Talbot family for 800 years. The gardens were largely shaped by the late Milo Talbot from 1948 to 1973 and contain an acclaimed collection of southern hemisphere plants. There is also a peach house, an alpine yard and an extensive demesne containing the ruins of an ancient abbey which still has two sheela-na-gigs on the walls. We are particularly fortunate that our guide will be Kevin Halpenny, Senior Parks Superintendent of Fingal County Council. The West Lawn collection includes *Nothofagus*, *Pittosporum*, *Berberis*, *Hoheria*, *Syringa*, *Escallonia*, *Deutzia* and the NCCPG collection of *Olearia* which now includes 55 species and varieties. The walled garden includes many tender and rare species. Plants of note in the walled garden include *Eucryphia milliganii*, *Acradenia frankliniae*, species of *Bomarea* surviving outdoors, and a range of *Passiflora* species of which *P. antioquiensis* is the most stunning.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society to be held at the Marine Hotel, Sutton Cross, Dublin on Saturday 17th May 2014 at 11.00am

AGENDA

1 Apologies
2 Minutes of the AGM held on 11 May 2013 [*Available at the meeting]*
3 Matters arising
4 Chairman's report
5 Treasurer's report and accounts for 2013-14 [*Available at the meeting]*
6 Election of Officers and Committee members
6.1 Election of Treasurer
6.2 Election of Membership Secretary:
Patrick Quigley has been Acting Membership Secretary since November 2013 and being eligible offers himself for election.
6.3 Election of Northern representative
Hilary Glenn has been Acting Northern Representative since November 2013 and having been selected by the Northern sub –committee offers herself for election.
6.4 Election of Leinster representative
Clíodhna Ní Bhrion has been selected by the Leinster sub-committee and offers herself for election.
6.5 Election of a Committee member
Stephen Butler has been a co-opted committee member since January 2014 and being eligible offers himself for election.
7 Election of Honorary Members
8 Any other business

Nominations for the National Committee

Please send nominations to the Honorary Secretary, Maeve Bell, giving the name of the candidate, the names of the proposer and seconder and a statement that the person concerned has agreed to stand.

Nominations may be sent to her by email at igps.ireland@gmail.com or by post to 1 The Drive, Richmond Park, Belfast BT9 5EG to arrive no later than close of play on **Friday 2nd May**.

Farewell, Dear Lady – Wendy Felicité Walsh

The Doyenne of Irish botanical art, Wendy Walsh has passed away at the more than considerable age of 98, just short of celebrating her 99th birthday. Her memorial service was held in Timolin Church. Moone, Co. Kildare on April 3 and the numerous attendees attest to the fondness with which Wendy was held by so many communities. During the eulogies by her children Lesley, Michael and Anna, the many awards and honours bestowed by Societies and Institutions further emphasised how well respected she was by professionals and academia. They emphasised the tripartite sections of their mother's long life, the last of which is most applicable to Irish Garden Plant Society members.

Through the Society's early years Wendy's drawings illustrated some newsletters and the Society's journal, *Moorea*. Her illustration of *Cortaderia selloana* formerly known as *Moorea argentea*, the plant that inspired the title of the journal, adorned the covers of Volume 1 and 2. Her line drawing of the Angel's fishing rod, *Dierama dracomontanum*, though not an official commission by the IGPS, still lines the side of our compliment slips and is an ever present element of our newsletter. Wendy was also commissioned to illustrate stamps, fabric designs and designed the Gold Medal with *Fritillaria meleagris* for the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland which they awarded to Dr J.D.G. Lamb.

Her most significant contribution to Irish gardening was in her collaborations with Charles Nelson and as a pair, they not only produced the most authoritative books on Irish garden history but set the bench mark for quality and beauty in the genre's book production. *An Irish Florilegium – the wild and garden plants of Ireland, Vol. 1* was the tome that first brought them together and continued as the histories of Irish garden plants, plant collectors and some of the establishments that homed them were written and illustrated.

Wendy was not only an illustrator of plants but also a gardener, her gardens a home to many Irish cultivars and plants of Irish interest. When she and her husband John moved from The Glebe in Lusk I visited to collect cuttings and divisions. It is with fondness that I recollect walking with Wendy, Scilla and Bracken (two large and gentle but protective Doberman Pinschers) to gather, among others, *Iris* 'Turkish Blue', *Rosa bracteata* and a mix of *Dierama* seedlings derived from plants raised at The Slieve Donard Nursery.

We have lost an Honorary Member but she has left us with so many memories – she will not be forgotten. Take a volume of *An Irish Florilegium* and thumb through the plates, or spend some time refreshing your memory on some Irish cultivars in *An Irish Flower Garden replanted* with its paintings and pencil sketches, *Deutzia* 'Alpine Magician' among them or marvel at the pencilled cone of the big cone pine, *Pinus coulteri*, the frontispiece of *A man who can speak of plants*. Her legacy is large, well documented and well celebrated and we IGPS members should celebrate too - Wendy was one of us for so long and contributed so lovingly and generously to the Society's life.

Brendan Sayers

Photograph on page 7 courtesy of Pat Clarke

Seed Distribution Report – 2014

I'm writing this a little early, current totals are 82 requests so far, I'd expect another 10 to come in, maybe from new members, so probably down a little from last year. After deleting duplicates, and removing a very few that had no visible seed, we had 229 varieties to distribute, almost the same number as last year (228).

This year's favourites – among the first preferences – were: *Tulipa sprengerii* (20), *Aquilegia vulgaris* (ex 'Irish Elegance') (19), *Nicotiana sylvestris* (ex 'Only the Lonely') (15), *Eryngium giganteum* (14), *Cyclamen hederifolium* (scented) (14), *Digitalis purpurea* (ex 'Camelot Cream') (14), *Gentiana asclepiadea* (14), *Libertia sessiliflora* (dark blue form) (14), *Meconopsis wallichii* (14). Both the Tulip and the Aquilegia featured in last year's top requests too. Normally there are a few plants that no one requests, not this year! We had 6 with only one request each though: *Allium carinatum subsp pulchellum, Carex baccans, Canna paniculata, Geranium pulchrum, Phormium tenax* (ex Purpureum Group), *Eryngium bourgatii*.

As always a massive thank you to all our seed donators – a small group of around 10 members - without whom the distribution scheme collapses, it is a slow, careful, and at times painstaking task collecting seeds, but great fun too!
Seed saving time is already with us again, hellebores and early bulbs are forming seed heads as I write this. New seed collectors are always welcome, just try to get into a routine of cutting off a few seed heads when fully ripe and the first have opened, place them in an open paper bag, write the name on it first of course, and let nature release the seeds in her own time! If collecting explosive seed pods – Euphorbia, Geranium, or Viola perhaps – then fold the bag to keep the seeds in. I use used A4 or A5 envelopes for most, cardboard trays for larger quantities, or even paper carrier bags, the key is plenty of air to dry the seed pods gently and naturally – I've even used a wheelbarrow for Euphorbia, with a mass of finished flower heads, and a cloth over the top, very satisfying the next Monday to see hundreds of seeds just sitting ready to be cleaned further!

Seed donations welcome as always to below.
Seeds must reach me before the end of November to be included in the list.
Stephen Butler, Curator of Horticulture, Dublin Zoo, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8
Comments welcome at stephencbutler@gmail.com

Cordyline indivisa in the British Isles by Gary Dunlop

Despite its common name of mountain cabbage tree, *Cordyline indivisa* is the most subtropical looking cabbage tree from New Zealand. It is also known as the broad-leaved cabbage tree and in New Zealand has a range of Māori names, including tōī. The species was first described by the Prussian Johann Georg Forster in 1786 under the name *Dracaena indivisa* (Forster, 1786). He and his father Johann Rheinhold Forster accompanied James Cook on his second voyage around the world as the official naturalists, and found this species in Dusky Sound, Fiordland, in south-west New Zealand. Among other name changes, it was subsequently transferred to its current name, *Cordyline indivisa*. Although it was introduced into cultivation in England almost 150 years ago, *Cordyline indivisa* is not so widely known or grown as the almost ubiquitous *C. australis* or cabbage tree (also known in the UK as the cabbage palm), found in coastal areas around the British Isles and introduced into cultivation several decades earlier.

It is not clear exactly when *C. indivisa* was first introduced into cultivation in the UK but a specimen, which must have been several years old, was put up for award by John Standish of the Sunningdale Nurseries (Berkshire, England) in 1860 and received a 'First Class Certificate' (FCC) from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) (Anon.,1860). Ambroise Verschaffelt, the editor of *L'Illustrations Horticole* based in Ghent (Belgium), was quick off the mark and published the first illustration of Standish's plant, in colour, the same year (Verschaffelt, 1860). It shows a plant about 2–3 years old. Presumably the editors of *Curtis' Botanical Magazine* preferred to wait until the flowers could be illustrated before featuring the plant, which they finally did in 1922 from material supplied from Mount Usher Garden in County Wicklow, courtesy of Mr Walpole (Stapf, 1922).

As the common name mountain cabbage tree suggests, *Cordyline indivisa* typically grows at higher elevations than *C. australis* and thus may be relatively hardier than its more common relative. Lawrie Metcalf notes "being a plant of high rainfall regions and growing in cool mountain forests which are frequently shrouded in mist, it demands a cool moist soil, and in warm climates a cool rather shady position in the garden" (Metcalf, 1987).

Although not as ubiquitous as *C. australis*, *C. indivisa* nevertheless has an extensi9ve natural range growing in subalpine forests from Hunua and Coromandel Ranges south to Banks Peninsula and Fiordland (Moore and Edgar, 1970; Fisher et al., 1988; Simpson, 2000). *Cordyline indivisa* as its specific name implies forms a stout, usually single-stemmed tree, with a normally unbranched head of pale green leaves, radiating from the top of the trunk, which can be up to 2 m long and 150 mm at its widest, gradually tapering to the apex (Moore and Edgar, 1970; Poole and Adams, 1990). The conspicuous central vein is orange, with many finer orange veins running the length of the leaves, although these are less conspicuous on the glaucous undersides, or even on the upper surface from any distance. The maximum height of the tree is about 8 m although a maximum of 6–7 m is more common in cultivation when the plants are not drawn up in dense forest. The leaves are evergreen with the older leaves persisting for several years before dying and turning brown as the sap drains from them. During their senescence they gradually droop before finally hanging vertically beside the trunk. At this stage they can be fairly readily removed with a downward tug, starting with the lowest one, as the base of the leaves overlap one another where they attach to the trunk. Some people may consider the plant to be at its most exotic looking at about 5- 6 years old and about 2 m tall, with several years of foliage radiating out in an almost spherical shape and the oldest leaves touching the ground, but the young trunk still disguised by the attached foliage. It is only at this stage that a fleeting resemblance to an *Agave* could be imagined, though one without succulent leaves, one such plant is illustrated by Cave and Paddison (1999).

While the date of first introduction of *C. indivisa* is not known with certainty, two nurserymen, Mr B.S. Williams and Mr J. Burley, both exhibited specimens at the horticultural exhibition of 1869 as part of displays of ‘stove foliage’ plants (plants that require warm greenhouse conditions in winter), and Mr Williams put on a similar display the following year (Anon., 1969, 1970). It is likely these specimens did not survive for long in cultivation as apart from apparently being treated as stove plants *C. indivisa* resents being pot grown for any length of time. One plant growing in the open at Tresco Abbey in the Scilly Isles first flowered in 1895 (Fitzherbert, 1901) and was apparently first recorded at Tresco in 1853 (King, 1985). This specimen may be part of the same batch from which Mr Standish’s plant received its award.

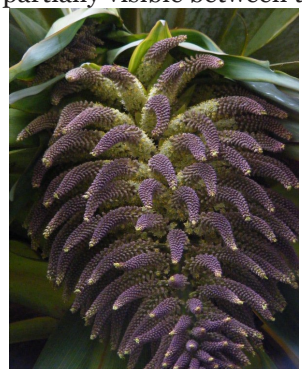
The various species of *Cordyline* were easily confused both in cultivation and by botanists from an early date. In 1859 the German botanist Eduard von Regel published a description of *C. indivisa* in *Gartenflora* which turned out to be *C. australis*. Mr Lee of the Vineyard Nursery obtained an Award of Merit from the RHS in 1864 for *C. indivisa* which was later correctly identified as *C. banksii*.

Cordyline indivisa

Around the turn of the century various periodic notes and illustrations in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* indicated the degree of confusion that still existed amongst the species in cultivation, with a large clump of *C. banksii* growing in Torquay, Devon in 1901 captioned *C. indivisa* (Ramsey, 1901) but some weeks later it was correctly identified by Mr S.W. Fitzherbert (Ramsey, 1901). A row of mature *C. australis* at Abbotsbury Gardens, Dorset was also captioned as *C. indivisa* but corrected. This confusion was finally resolved with the first publication of a photograph of a seven year-old plant of *C. indivisa vera* growing in Castlewellan Arboretum (County Down) in 1904 (Ryan, 1904) and again as a supplementary illustration to *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1906 (Ryan, 1906). The suffix 'vera' (Latin for genuine, real, or true) was apparently added by Mr Burbidge of Trinity College Gardens, Dublin who obtained the seeds from New Zealand and supplied some to Lord Annesley at Castlewellan, to emphasise that they were the true species (Ryan, 1901). The following year a photograph by Mr Fitzherbert of both *C. australis* and *C. indivisa* growing in proximity to one another was published (Fitzherbert, 1907) thus removing any further confusion between the two species.

In reasonable moist and shaded growing conditions, based on my experience of growing it, *C. indivisa* takes about 20 years to approach its typical full height in cultivation of 5-6 metres. The tallest specimens are likely to grow in reliably moist conditions. Once mature one or more additional growth points can sprout from the base of the trunk. These will start to grow into additional trunks as the head of the original tree gradually weakens and dies. In time, after several generations of this process, the tree forms clumps of full height trunks as is evident in the several venerable plants at Castlewellan Arboretum which are just over 100 years old. They include the champion specimen in the British Isles which is multi-stemmed, and one trunk has flowered at least twice with an interval of 2–3 years between flowering (Johnson, 2008). Trees measured there are considerably taller, at 7.5 metres, than the other one mentioned by Johnson (2008) at Glendurgan, Cornwall at 3 metres tall. There is however a possibly even taller specimen at Mount Stewart, growing in moist shade, though it may be a cluster of plants in close proximity with rather thin trunks and small heads, and probably drawn up by the proximity of a large rhododendron, which is still taller than the *Cordyline*. It is not clear how many years it takes before *C. indivisa* first flowers and it is reputed to be shy to flower. At Mount Stewart one robust plant flowered at barely 3 m tall under the optimum conditions of moist soil and a humid shady environment. My

plant of *C. indivisa* took about 20 years to flower. My tree, which is planted in shade in reasonably moist ground (which can become dry in summer), produced its first basal growth point in spring 2007, it was about 18–19 years old, and produced its first flower spike in 2009. It produced the flower spike on the side least easily seen, and was only discovered on 1st May when some of the drooping dead leaves were being removed. It was fully formed and in bud, shortly before the flowers started to open. The inflorescence must have started to develop shortly after midwinter, and throughout a rather long cold spring. It emerged from below a bract, which appears to be a modified leaf, broader and shorter than the normal leaves. Closer inspection revealed a much smaller secondary inflorescence immediately above the main one, with its own smaller bract above it, but rather larger than the inflorescence, which was only partially visible between the two bracts.



C. indivisa inflorescence

Close up of inflorescence

The flowers are described as perigones i.e. in which the perianth is not clearly differentiated into a calyx and corolla. They are purplish externally and white internally suffused with green and lilac, and when fertilised mature to form purplish blue berries. John Salmon published a good close-up photograph of the flowers (Salmon, 1999) and the spike in flower (Salmon, 1986). The flowers open from the base of the various segments of the inflorescence and from the base to the tip. The small pale green ovary starts to expand after fertilisation, gradually turning deeper green with the surrounding flower turning brown and eventually shedding the stigma and the surrounding anthers, before eventually turning purplish blue. Whilst no agent was noticed, flies are a likely agent of fertilisation and midges are abundant in my garden during the flowering season. Elsewhere in *Cordyline*, Simpson (2000) mentions that *C. australis* flowers are adapted for insect (moth, fly, and other insect) pollination.

According to Ross Beever (pers. comm. 2009), New Zealand species of *Cordyline*, other than *C. indivisa*, are self-incompatible and set little or no fruit in isolation (although often hybridising). In contrast, Dr Beever suspects that *C. indivisa* is self-compatible, and cases of good seed set in isolated plants support this hypothesis. My garden in Co Down is isolated in farm land and the nearest house and garden is about 1 km. away. *C. indivisa* is uncommon in the region, as it is elsewhere in the British Isles. The nearest *C. indivisa* that I know of is at Mount Stewart, about 12km away. This indeed supports the idea that *C. indivisa* is self-compatible.

C. indivisa immature berries

Mature champion tree at Castlewellan, Co. Down

Drought effected tree at Mount Stewart

C. indivisa has a fairly compact root ball and probably makes new roots annually like some other New Zealand genera, such as *Phormium*. Reasonably mature specimens can be moved successfully as was undertaken many years ago at Mount Stewart Garden with several specimens. One unexpected side effect of the move was that the transplanted trees promptly produced new growth points at the base of the trunk. Nigel Marshall, the then head gardener, suspected that severing the root tips prompted this reaction and verified his theory by cutting around the root ball of a couple of plants that were not moved which resulted in similar sprouting of new growth points at the base of the trunk. (Nigel Marshall, pers. comm. 1992). The trunk of *C. indivisa* is usually unbranched (Moore and Edgar, 1970; Simpson, 2000) and shoots sprouting from part way up the trunk are uncommon (Lawrie Metcalf, pers. comm. 2008). However there is one specimen at Mount Stewart which has not only a double head but also two well-developed growth points sprouting from half way up the trunk. Replacement shoots arise from the axil(s) of the uppermost leaves usually following flowering, and trunk and basal sprouts arise when there is some damage and consequent change in hormone balance that releases the apical dominance. The trunk has numerous dormant buds laid down in the axils of leaves before the leaves are lost (Tomlinson and Fisher, 1971; Simpson, 2000; Ross Beever, pers. comm. 2009).

C. indivisa grows well in Co. Down with quite a few mature specimens in both Castlewellan and Mount Stewart. The botanist Michael Leer commented that when he undertook the surveys of woody plants for the National Trust he was surprised that he did not see any mature plants in either Devon or Cornwall (Michael Leer, pers. comm. 1997). The species was relatively widely grown there almost a century ago so it is surprising that mature specimens are not common in the south west of England. The climate in the coastal gardens there would be milder than Co. Down, but probably hotter and drier in summer with lower humidity. As early as 1906 Mr Arthington Worsley suggested "our midsummer heat may be too much", on the basis that "it is a plant of higher mountains in New Zealand (where very severe frosts occur)" (Worsely, 1906). Dry conditions can certainly greatly reduce the length of the leaves and overall size of the head as one specimen at Mount Stewart has displayed. It is growing in full sun and has clearly suffered during several long, dry periods in the last couple of years. By 1923, the Rev. A.T. Boscawen VMH curiously noted that "it should be, where it has the protection of neighbouring trees, as it is not so hardy as the common *C. australis* and *C. banksii*" (Boscawen, 1923). However, the trees at Mount Stewart are quite cold-hardy, as, whilst the double row of *C. australis* in the Italian Garden were killed back in the winter of 1981 1982 with temperatures down to -16°C, the nearby specimens of *C. indivisa* were unaffected.

My tree was raised by Nigel Marshall from seed set at Mount Stewart, given to me as a young plant and is a sibling of some of the other young trees at Mount Stewart. It has survived a couple of nights of -13°C about 10 years ago without any problem and has also proved tolerant of the much more exposed conditions in my garden. Raising *C. indivisa* from seed is not without its problems as Thomas Ryan, the gardener at Castlewellan a century ago, described (Ryan, 1906). The first batch of seed, obtained by Lord Annesley from Mr. Dorrien Smith of Tresco Abbey, failed to germinate. The seeds were planted in a greenhouse with a temperature of about 13°C. Subsequently the seeds obtained from Mr. Burbidge were sown in a pan in a cold frame and took about 3 months to germinate. Within a few days of the first couple of dozen seedlings that germinated, "all lay flat on the ground through lack of moisture and in a rash moment we took the seed pan to a water tank and let the soil soak from the bottom upwards." Whilst a couple of days later the seedlings were well recovered, the remaining seed had rotted. So it would seem that cool and moist conditions are necessary for germination but that soil that is too wet will cause the seed to rot. Otto Stapf mentions that *C. indivisa* can easily be propagated from cuttings, but to do so it is necessary to decapitate the plant (Stapf,1922). This will produce many side shoots from the trunk which can be used for cuttings.

Acknowledgement
I would like to thank Jeff Irons (United Kingdom) and Ross Beever (New Zealand) for their helpful comments and additional information.

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Fashions Change by Rae McIntyre

Occasionally, to be truthful very occasionally because I am not particularly house-proud, I take out my ever-growing collection of gardening books from their shelves and dust them. This takes an awfully long time because I can't help looking through the books. It's a job for a very wet day, of which we have many, and is the most enjoyable facet of housework. Just by looking at some photographs I can quite easily place the garden in which decade they were the height of fashion.

Most of my books date from the 1970's because that was when I became hooked on gardening but, from childhood, I noticed other people's gardens. This was inevitable with keen gardening parents, particularly my mother, and two sets of interested grandparents. Where I grew up, outside Cookstown in Co. Tyrone, there were some lovely small gardens. In many of them a rockery was obligatory and, from what I can remember of them, they were pleasant features with plants and stones well integrated and not like the currants-on-a-cake style of some I have seen in recent years. My mother had a well-thumbed copy of Reginald Farrer's *My Rock Garden* published in 1908 (second edition) which I remember being lent to other gardeners in the neighbourhood. There were no 'high alpines' that I knew of. The plants were fairly common like *Aubrieta*, *Alyssum*, different campanulas, *Dianthus*, violas and a sprinkling of Welsh poppies all of which did particularly well in the limy, sharply drained soil. The same plants were in everyone's rockery because they gave each other cuttings and seedlings. The best rockery, I thought, belonged to Mrs B. because she had a small circular lily pool in hers. It was the only one in the neighbourhood and, strangely, not copied by anyone else. I think this may have been because a fast-flowing river was a dominant feature in the landscape.

Rockeries are not all that common nowadays. There are highly skilled alpine enthusiasts who can grow rare plants in screes or small crevice gardens but comparing them with the rest of us is like comparing a first-class honours degree with O-levels. I remember overhearing two keen alpine gardeners discussing another one and saying, quite scornfully, "Do you remember how she used to grow sweet peas and dahlias? Thank goodness she's come a long way since then". There was a decade or two when these plants were unfashionable but not now. More of this later.

During the 1940's and 1950's there was much growing of annuals from seed and, in the bleak post-war years with rationing, people wanted gardens to be highly coloured and cheerful. Gardens that were an explosive rainbow of colours were much admired. Those were the days before garden centres and the invention of plug plants so growing everything from seed must have been very labour intensive. I thought my mother was very unadventurous because she only grew shrubs and perennials in her ornamental garden so there were no floral fireworks. I can remember bergenias, asters, *Physalis*, wallflowers, lupins, geraniums, pulmonarias and carnations. *Daphne mezereum* seeded itself around so there were always about three in the garden and there were wonderfully scented old roses and pink-flowered hydrangeas. She always provided flowers for the church but these were grown in long lines in the vegetable garden. There were long lines of daffodils and tulips, annuals like antirrhinums, calendulas and cornflowers, a whole battalion of gladioli which had to be staked, dahlias and chrysanthemums which were needed for the harvest thanksgiving services and a long line of sweet peas. She did the church flowers for at least twenty years, only complaining occasionally and then someone had the sense to suggest that they do it on a rota basis. She promptly stopped growing all those annuals but it was odd how for years afterwards the cornflowers, calendulas especially and even gladioli and dahlias would appear.
One man in the neighbourhood had quite a large garden which was covered in box-edged beds. There was a five-pointed star, a circle, a hexagon, a crescent and a not-so-elaborate square. The box hedging was clipped to perfection, grassy paths in between were like velvet and every bed had a different variety of annual growing in it. All, of course, came from seed. The only flowers I can remember were the antirrhinums which occupied the crescent-shaped bed. I knew them as snapdragons and was busy showing his daughter, with whom I was pally, one day how to open and shut the 'dragons' mouths'. Her furious father sneaked up behind me and swore horribly at me. I was shocked, took to my heels and ran home. He was perfectly justified in being angry but I haven't been able to look at antirrhinums since without remembering that day.

I also infuriated Hugh my Co. Tyrone grandfather who lived about three miles from us. He didn't grow flowers but he had a collection of conifers clipped into perfect domes. This was long before conifers came into the ascendant thanks to Adrian Bloom et al. It wasn't complicated topiary because they were all exactly the same and I had the temerity to tell him one day that my other grandfather, who lived in Co. Leitrim, had proper topiary with conifers that were clipped into tiers. I further enraged him by doing a kind of steeplechase over his precious domes and not always managing to clear them. Horrible child.

My grandmother grew every vegetable for which she could find seed. She had a passion for growing - and cooking - these and fruits like blackcurrants, gooseberries and redcurrants in long straight lines. The orchard had apple trees and plum trees growing in long straight lines. From the damsons, Victoria plums and greengages she made tongue-curling jam because she was so frugal with the sugar. She also grew flowers in long straight lines. There was a long straight border of purple phlox: nothing else. Outside the greenhouse in which she grew long straight lines of tomatoes and cucumbers there was - I don't know for what purpose - a border of nasturtiums which were seething with green caterpillars. She loved lupins - grown in long straight lines of course - edged with *Alchemilla mollis*. I saw it there long before it was grown anywhere else. She had found it in the wild and gave it a home because she loved the way dewdrops and raindrops sparkled in the leaves. She liked lupin leaves for the same reason. However she was ruthless about deadheading the *Alchemilla* flowers once the lupin edging was established. This was because she disliked green flowers and thought that my mother was quite mad for wanting, for her own garden, a clump of *Helleborus viridis* growing wild at the side of a field just outside their orchard. The fortunes of roses fluctuate. My Co. Leitrim grandfather Henry, a widower for much of my life loved growing old, unidentified roses from slips/cuttings taken from derelict gardens so his garden was a very fragrant place in which to be. A relation disapproved of the way in which these lasted in flower for only a short time and gave him a dozen assorted hybrid tea roses including 'Peace' which became so popular after World War 2. He hated them and the attention they needed to be lavished on them - the feeding and the pruning, especially the pruning. His old roses were neither fed nor pruned and yet they grew and flowered abundantly. The hybrid tea roses didn't. He said, with tongue in cheek, that the Co. Leitrim climate was too wet for them.

Our nearest neighbours in Tyrone, about half a mile away, had a strange way of growing roses. There was a long narrow path leading to the side door of their house with borders on either side. The only denizens of these were hybrid tea roses and peonies which they called peony roses. These paeonies were dowager specimens, supported by stout sticks and were all the crimson *Paeonia officinalis*. They stayed put but every autumn the roses were lifted and dumped and the ground was heavily manured. In early spring the neighbours took themselves off to McGredys' Nursery in Portadown, bought three dozen new roses in assorted colours and planted them. Roses are notorious for suffering from specific replant sickness yet theirs never did. My mother, who like her father in Co. Leitrim, didn't much care for hybrid tea roses tactfully didn't tell that to the neighbours. Instead she said that modern roses didn't much like the soil in her garden.

They advised her to grow them the way they did and kindly offered to supply a trailer load of manure but somehow she never got round to it. Now it's the turn of the hybrid teas and, to a lesser extent, the floribundas to be rather scorned and I know few private gardens with beds dedicated solely to roses. They still look well in public gardens and I remember greatly admiring a bed of the yellow 'Whisky Mac' roses in Powerscourt, the huge assortment of roses in the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park in Belfast. Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire which has a National Collection has as many old roses growing, some very old, as it does modern ones.

When I started gardening in earnest in 1978 conifer and heather gardens were very fashionable and proclaimed as ideal for people who wanted low maintenance. This suited me very well so I filled what there was of the garden in those days with - and this is in hindsight - a dreary collection of dwarf conifers. I can't understand how I allowed myself to be brainwashed into thinking these did anything for anyone's garden. There are still beds of dwarf conifers being planted in people's gardens although not nearly as many, thank goodness. While I like the shape and colour of some of them they are best as specimen plants, not all with their low key colours, lumped together as a collection. And I'm afraid I never warmed to heathers because that murky mauve colour that is so prevalent among them does not appeal.

I read not so long ago that rhododendrons are deeply unfashionable. Frankly I don't care because I get more pleasure from these plants than any others in the garden. Next in the line of preference come the hellebores which I greedily acquire. Now these really are fashionable and garden centres and nurseries are selling hundreds of them. What, I wonder, will replace them when they go out of fashion as they will surely do? Gardeners used to collect hostas avidly but they're not nearly so popular now. More hellebores, the *Helleborus* x *hybridus* types that used to be called *Helleborus orientalis* are being developed every year. We've had, singles, doubles, spotted, 'Party Dress' hybrids, anemone-centred and picotee flowers. Recently I acquired three beauties called 'Angel Glow', 'Winter Moonbeam' and 'Penny's Pink' that have all been bred in recent years. 'Penny's Pink' is a lovely warm shade of pink; the other two are subtle blendings of peach, pink, pale green and cream. All three are exactly right for cheering up a bare February and March garden that is still winter-bound and when spring is reluctant to arrive. I don't think that gardens devoted almost entirely to perennials have ever been as popular in Ireland as they are across the Irish Sea. Conifers still linger along with other shrubs. *Pieris japonica* is very popular especially in the hybrid 'Forest Flame'. Lavateras used to be almost ubiquitous, flowering cherries are well-loved, much more so than magnolias which are far superior plants.

Perennials require more maintenance and sometimes more room to grow than shrubs and garden space is becoming noticeably smaller. In Coleraine's prime residential areas, for example, there are many very large houses which fill nearly all the expensive allotted space of their site leaving little room for a garden. Houses nowadays are larger because families require a huge kitchen/kitchen diner where they can eat as well, a utility room, two, possibly three big reception rooms, a study, at least four bedrooms all with en suite bathrooms as well as a family bathroom. A double or triple garage is tacked on too as is a store for a state of the art gas barbecue, bikes and other accoutrements. That doesn't leave much space for a garden. So. What do people do with limited space? There is a huge upsurge in the growth of annuals and tender perennials, not carefully grown from seed as they were in my childhood but bought as plugs and seedlings through mail order catalogues or garden centres. It is possible now, with enough money of course, to create and fill a small garden and containers with a highly coloured display in an afternoon. In our throwaway society nobody seems to have any guilt feelings about dumping the whole expensive display in autumn and replacing it with a collection of winter-blooming genera. These are nearly as colourful as the summer plants and nurseries are diligently widening their range.

Enter Sarah Raven. She is married to Adam Nicholson, grandson of Vita Sackville-West who, with her husband Harold Nicholson, owned and designed the famous gardens at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent. Sarah has tapped into the zeitgeist during the present period of economic retrenchment. Her type of planting is as far removed from the conifer/heather/very ordinary shrubs scenario as could be. In the days when money was more plentiful people didn't seem to need colour as much as they do now and did during previous depressions but this is just a theory. Anyway, if you have a chance, look through one of Sarah's zingy, rainbow-coloured catalogues to see what I mean. There's a huge variety of sweet peas which for so long nobody dreamt of growing in their gardens. There are all kinds of dahlias mixed in, what we would have regarded as horribly clashing colours a decade ago, but have now become attractive and desirable. This goes for chrysanthemums and zinnias too. Sarah's mantra could be *cut and come again* because she is keen on flower arranging in the house. These are informal bunches of mixed flowers in a jug or vase and are ideal for people like me who would never have the skill or artistry to do one of those competition arrangements. Sweet peas, dahlias, calendulas and zinnias among others need to be cut continually because the more they are the more they bloom.

Fashion in gardening, as in other areas of life, doesn't progress in a linear way but does so in circles.

Irish Heritage Plants – plants with an Irish connection

Irish Heritage Plants have been central to the work of the IGPS since its formation. Their conservation is listed in our constitution as one of our major aims; we have published "A Heritage of Beauty" to spread information on them and over the years have sought out threatened Irish plants, recorded their whereabouts, propagated and distributed them and continue this work today. We need the full involvement of our members in this work.

Such a task is always a work in progress; we have to keep checking which plants are safe, which are seldom seen and which are quietly joining the ranks of 'not seen for years and where can we find it now?' As an example, while checking the information for this issue I noticed *Berberis* x *stenophylla* 'Irwinii' in A Heritage of Beauty listed as being widely available, but now, only 14 years since publication, it is listed in only 2 nurseries.

With web access, checking plant availability is now much easier although not the complete answer. Using data from A Heritage of Beauty, with help from Brendan Sayers and Charles Nelson, I have started to cross check with the Plant Finder as to current availability. There are several caveats to this. The Plant Finder is largely UK and Northern Ireland centred. It is a compilation of nursery listings and just because a plant is listed does not mean it is in stock and of course it may not be correctly named. One advantage of using the web-based Plant Finder is that it lists in which year the plant was last listed if not available now.

The database can be sorted by genus, species, or cultivar name. It takes a few seconds to find all cvs that are, for instance, called "Lissadell" or "Glasnevin". Eventually, with a lot more input, we will be able to sort by garden or individual that the plant is connected with. What we would like to do now is build on our survey of 2007, and try to keep an accurate record of who is growing which plant, and where. Members can rest assured that any information received, for example, details of name, address etc., will be kept entirely within the IGPS database and not given out to third parties.

If anyone contacts us looking for particular plants we will contact the person growing the plant directly ourselves. We will also be contacting gardens and nurseries, seeking the same information, and encouraging the growing of Irish Heritage Plants.

Starting with this issue, each newsletter will have a list of Irish Heritage Plants which our research has shown have limited availability. This will be a small percentage of the total number as there are many more not listed at all because they are no longer commercially available.

So please, read through the list below, and let me know if you grow any of them. It would be good to know if you are propagating them or if you would allow propagation material to be taken and maybe even where or who you got the plant from – the more information the better. All details will be kept confidential. Of course if you have any other plants listed in A Heritage of Beauty please feel free to list them too.

Listing alphabetically A-C totals 659 plants. Only 109 are listed below as available at present or recent past (excluding 75 *Begonia* for sake of space). 46 more (not listed) are available at present in 4 or more nurseries. 3 of the plants below were listed in the IGPS survey of 2007 - *Celmisia* 'David Shackleton', *Acanthus spinosus* 'Lady Moore', and *Cestrum roseum* 'Illnacullin'.

Stephen Butler
Curator of Horticulture
Dublin Zoo
stephencbutler@gmail.com

Available from only 1 nursery

Aeonium valverdense

Agapanthus campanulatus 'Spokes'
Agapanthus praecox 'Bangor Blue'
Agapanthus 'Ballyrogan'
Agapanthus 'Oxbridge'
Agapanthus 'Slieve Donard'
Agapanthus 'Starburst'

Anemone coronaria 'Saint Bridgid'
Anemone nemerosa 'Green Dream'

Aspidistra lurida 'Irish Mist'
Athyrium filix-femina 'Congestum Minus'
Berberis x stenophylla 'Autumnalis'
Berberis x stenophylla 'Compacta'
Bergenia 'Ballawley Guardsman'
Cedrus libani 'Comte de Dijon'
Celmisia 'David Shackleton'
Chamaecyparis thyoides 'Variegata'
Chionodoxa siehei
Cotoneaster bradyi
Cotoneaster newryensis
Crocosmia latifolia syn. *crocosmioides* Mount Stewart Late (not established)

Crocosmia masoniorum 'Rowallane Apricot'
Crocosmia x *crocosmiflora* 'Daisy Hill'
Crocosmia 'Carnival' ('Cardinale'?)
Crocosmia 'Ruby Velvet'
Cryptomeria japonica 'Kilmacurragh'
Cryptomeria japonica 'Knaptonensis'
Cupressus macrocarpa 'Pendula'
Cytisus 'Killiney Red'
Cytisus 'Newry Seedling'

Available from only 2 nurseries

Acanthus spinosus 'Lady Moore'
Aeonium nobile
Agapanthus campanulatus 'White Hope'
Agapanthus praecox 'Mount Stewart'
Amorphophallus kerrii
Anemone nemerosa 'Hannah Gubbay'

Berberis x *stenophylla* 'Irwinii'
Bergenia Ballawley Hybrids
Calluna 'Leslie Slinger'
Calluna 'Ruby Slinger'

Campanula poscharskyana 'Glandore'
Crocosmia masoniorum 'Fernhill'
Crocosmia x *crocosmiflora* 'Mount Stewart' = 'Jessie'

Crocus veluchensis
Cytisus 'Dorothy Walpole'
Cytisus 'Firefly'
Cytisus 'Fulgens'

Available from only 3 nurseries

Agapanthus campanulatus 'Oxford Blue'
Agapanthus 'Lady Moore'
Agapanthus 'Plas Merdyn Blue'
Agapanthus 'Plas Merdyn White'
Anchusa (Pentaglottis) sempervirens
Anemone nemerosa 'Lismore Blue'
Campanula x *tymonsii*
Cardamine heptaphylla 'Guincho'
Cytisus 'Killiney Salmon'

Not available at present, last listed in Plant Finder in year after name

Anemone coronaria Creagh Castle Strain 1997

Ajuga 'Brockbankii' 1998
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Killiney Gold' 1998

Bergenia 'Croesus' 2000
Cytisus 'Butterfly' 2000

Cytisus 'Lord Lambourne' 2002

Berberis x *antoniana* 2004
Cytisus 'Dragonfly' 2004
Cytisus 'Queen Mary' 2004

Aeoniu subplanum 2006
Berberis x *stenophylla* 'Corallina' 2006
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Annesleyana' 2006
Berberis x *stenophylla* 'Coccinea' 2008
Cupressus macrocarpa 'Donard Gold' 2008
Cytisus 'Andreanus Splendens' 2008

Berberis x *carminea* 'Buccaneer' 2009
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Moonlight' 2009
Colchicum speciosum 'Maximum' 2009

Aeonium gomerense 2010
Agapanthus campanulatus 'Mooreanus' 2010
Agapanthus mooreanus 2010
Aster 'Silver Queen' 2010
Berberis x *carminea* 'Barbarossa' 2010

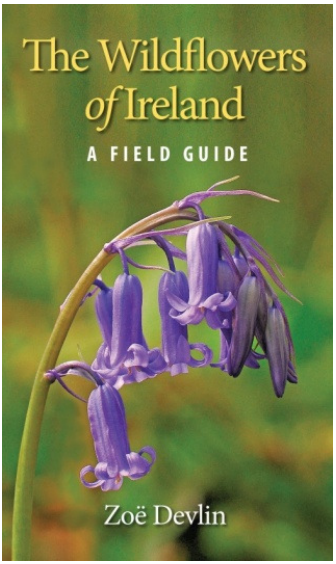
Abies fargesii 'Headfort' 2011
Agapanthus 'Violetta' 2011
Anemone nemerosa 'Lismore Pink' 2011

Calluna 'Alba Tomentosa' 2011
Calluna 'Anne Dobbin' 2011
Calluna 'Bray Head' 2011
Calluna 'Caleb Threlkeld' 2011
Calluna 'Carbgold' syn 'Carngold' 2011
Calluna 'Celtic Gold' 2011
Calluna 'Clare Carpet' 2011
Calluna 'Coccinea' 2011
Calluna 'Foliis Argentea' 2011
Calluna 'Hibernica' 2011
Calluna 'Minima Smith's Variety' 2011
Calluna 'Roland Haagen' 2011
Calluna 'White Carpet' 2011

Campanula persicifolia (Irish Double White) 2011
Celmisia Ballyrogan Hybrids 2011
Celmisia 'Harry Bryce' 2011
Cupressus macrocarpa 'Golden Spire' 2011
Cytisus 'Daisy Hill' 2011

Agapanthus campanulatus nanus (Slieve Donard) 2012
Cedrus deodara 'Nivea' 2012
Cestrum roseum 'Illnacullin' 2012
Cytisus 'Baronscourt Amber' 2012
Cytisus 'Donard Gem' 2012

Worth a read by Paddy Tobin



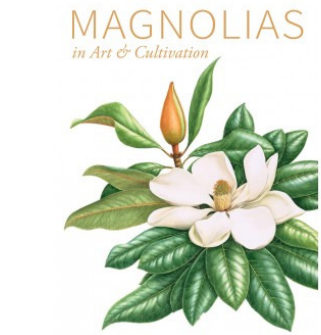
When you are out walking do you constantly look at the flowers growing at the roadside; do you check off their names in your head as you go along and when you spot one you don't immediately recognise does it set you to thinking and analysing and wondering what it might be? Do you take out your reference books when you go home – well, how many of us actually carry these field guides with us – and begin the oftentimes frustrating search for the elusive identification. It is something I have done many times. I am simply a keen amateur with no botanic training and a simple-to-use book to help me identify Irish wildflowers is something I have always wished for. Here, we have one! Zoe Devlin has produced just the book for the likes of me.

Over 500 plants are listed and illustrated by over 1,200 of her photographs and all organised by colour – what do you do when you want to identify a plant? Like me, you probably start with the colour of the flower - what most amateurs do - and the author recognises that and provides the ideal tool for us. The book is organised into sections by the colour of the flowers and within each section it is further organised by, for example, the number of petals, how the flowers are organised on the plant, single or clumps, shape of the leaves etc. It makes the hobby of identifying the plants you meet on your way so very enjoyable and, most importantly, successful – you do find a name for that unusual one you came across! That is what a good field guide should do and this one does it so beautifully!

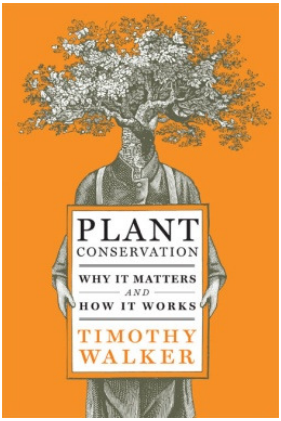
Highly recommended. Another topper from Zoe and from The Collins Press. Outstanding value if ordered directly from the publishers.

Yoko Kawaguchi's ***"Japanese Zen Gardens"*** with photographs by Alex Ramsey is an absolutely wonderful book. Much of the bewilderment we might have when we view Japanese gardens is quickly cleared away in this volume. What is a Zen garden? Quite simply a garden built in a Zen Temple, so it is a term applied to a garden in a particular location rather than to a style of gardening. Indeed, the Japanese don't use the term at all but rather refer to dry-landscape gardens. And, again, the mystique of the placed rocks is clarified. It is all a matter of symbolism and interpretation so one need not despair when the flying crane is not immediately obvious on first viewing or you fail to see the carp ascending the dry waterfall or the distant mountains, represented perhaps by a group of azaleas or the group of islands by carefully placed rocks. You must gaze and appreciate or, better still, be shown the garden by the gardener. Failing that, as most of us won't manage to do so, there is always this wonderful book which traces the Zen garden through 800 years of its history bringing us right up to the 20th century. A timeline early in the book allows the reader to place the development of these gardens into an international perspective, a small but fascinating inclusion. The photography is outstanding concentrating almost completely on garden views rather than on detail and Alex Ramsey acknowledges that most were taken under the direction of the author so as to best illustrate the essence of each garden. Together, the photographs and the text are a wonderful combination, an excellent and informative read beautifully illustrated. Frances Lincoln, £30 – worth it!

I am fortunate to live very close to Mount Congreve Gardens in Waterford and, especially at this time of year, to be able to enjoy the magnificent range of magnolias which is growing there. Winter storms felled many trees in the gardens, a great deal of damage but also some marvellous opportunities. The loss of two old and large cherry trees opened a vista over a planting of *Magnolia campbellii* which had not been seen in fifty years. It encompasses some dozens of trees and runs, certainly, for over one hundred metres. It is the most fabulous planting I have ever seen.



I am also fortunate to have a copy of Magnolias ***in Art & Cultivation*** to hand. It is one of those extraordinarily fabulous and beautiful books which appears only very occasionally and it is one to be treasured. The book contains over 150 original paintings by botanical artist Barbara Oozeerally while the text is provided by Jim Gardiner and Stephen A. Spondberg. Barbara Oozeerally turned from architecture to botanical art in 1996 and has since received many, many rewards for her work – gold medals from the RHS, Certificates of Botanical Merit from the UK and the USA among others. My comments on the merits of her work would be superfluous only to say I found them truly beautiful and incredibly life-like. Jim Gardiner is presently RHS Director of Horticulture and was Curator at RHS Garden Wisley for over twenty years prior to that, while he worked previously in The Savill Garden, Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as Curator, the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and the City of Liverpool Botanic Gardens. He has written previously on magnolias and his *Encyclopaedia of Flowering Shrubs* was an outstanding publication. Here he provides the general information on the magnolias and their cultivation covering all the hardy species and around 100 hybrids and cultivars. Stephen A. Spongberg is Curator Emeritus of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and Director Emeritus of the Polly Hill Arboretum. His particular interest is in the wood plants of the North Temperate Zone and in the horticultural history of plant introductions into garden cultivation. His book, A Reunion of Trees, is on this topic and draws on his many plant collecting trips to Asia. In this book he provides full botanical descriptions for the magnolias. As might be expected from such a combination of talent the book is simply outstanding in every aspect, one to have and to treasure, a legacy book. Kew Publishing, £90.



Finally, and briefly, Timothy Walker has spoken to gardening groups here in Ireland on a number of occasions and those who have attended can attest to what a wonderful speaker he is and how well he presents his material. He is the Director of the Oxford University Botanic Garden and a member of the group of conservation biologists helping to develop the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. The book is written for gardeners and all those who care about plants and who understand how essential they are to our future. The most crucial areas of plant conservation are examined to show what we each need to do to prevent further plant losses.
Timber Press, £15.

Snippets

Two exhibitions in the Education and Visitor Centre, NBG, Glasnevin

Lady Charlotte Wheeler-Cuffe
Continuing until Wednesday 23rd of April this exhibition opened in early April with the launch of *Shadow Among Splendours - Lady Charlotte Wheeler-Cuffe's adventures among the flowers of Burma, 1897-1921* by Dr. E. Charles Nelson. The book is available to purchase at the information desk.

In May the Irish Society of Botanical Artists will present their inaugural exhibition. The exhibition entitled *The Irish Alphabet in Botanical Art* marries native plant species with the capital letters of their names in Irish. There are over 60 artists producing distinctive paintings, which will be exhibited as complete eighteen-letter Irish alphabets. Tim O'Neill, renowned calligrapher, has created a unique font for the project. Artists from the thirty-two counties of Ireland will be taking part, along with Irish artists living in Britain, France, Austria and Italy, Newfoundland and Oregon U.S.A. This unified collection of paintings will be a celebration of the Irish language, native Irish plants and botanical art. Each work will depict one of a wide selection of native plants chosen by the National Botanic Gardens, to illustrate the variety of plant forms and habitats on the island of Ireland.

The Irish Society of Botanical Artists is a group of botanical artists and people interested in botanical art. Their mission is 'To facilitate interaction amongst botanical artists in Ireland, and to foster and inspire their creative development.' The Society was established in response to the revival in popularity that botanical art has experienced in recent times. Irish botanical artists are fortunate to have an extraordinarily rich heritage of botanical art to draw upon, including artists such as, Lydia Shackleton, Lady Charlotte Wheeler Cuffe and Raymond Piper.

The exhibition will take place from 2nd May – 25th May in the Visitor Centre of the National Botanic Gardens. For additional information please contact:
www.irishbotanicalartists.com www.botanicgardens.ie

On the inside cover of the newsletter is the letter A painted by Susan Sex.

Regional Reports

MUNSTER

February 4th "Snowdrops-harbinger of spring."
On Tuesday, 4th February, Paddy Tobin braved a wild night to come to Cork. He began his well-illustrated talk, logically, by telling us about snowdrops: snowdrops (Galanthus from the Greek for milk flower) are native to a large area of Europe, and, although often thought to have been introduced into Britain by the Romans, they most probably came to Britain and Ireland in the early 16th century. There are over 2000 named snowdrops. Most are *G. nivalis* with other varities being *G. plicatus* and *G. elwesii*, or hybrids, generally *G.nivalis* with *G. plicatus*.

After the introduction, his many photographs of expanses of snowdrops showed how attractive and welcoming they can be after winter. Although harbingers of spring, some grow in autumn and for example *G.* 'Faringdon Double', a double that appears before Christmas and *G. plicatus* 'Three Ships' is also a "Christmas" snowdrop. We were told that snowdrop bulbs can sell for 100s of euros, but that is really only for people wanting the latest fashion "must have". Indeed, Paddy described a normal cost snowdrop, *G.* 'Straffan' as "the best in the whole world". This is a hybrid of a *G. plicatus* brought here by Major Eyre Massey from the Crimea in the 1850s and a *G. nivalis* tended by the gardener Frederick Bedford at Straffan House, Co. Kildare. More snowdrops of Irish interest were shown. Mark Smyth found a *G.nivalis* x *G.plicatus* cross in a garden in Co. Antrim. This is aptly named 'Mark's Tall' as it reaches over 1 foot when in flower. It is also very scented and, with its height, good for the back of the bed. Another Irish snowdrop *G.* 'Hill Poë' arose in the garden of James Hill Poë at Riverston, Nenagh around 1911. A double snowdrop, small, with five outer segments and about twenty inner segments. An elegantly shaped early flowering *G. elwesii*, is named 'Mrs. MacNamara'. She came from Ennistymon, Co Clare (The Falls Hotel) and was the mother in law of Dylan Thomas. Snowdrops survive best if divided about every three years and feeding merely requires the application of leaf mould. Having attracted us all to snowdrops, Paddy suggested getting snowdrops by asking fellow gardeners or buying from the specialist Avon bulbs in England.

Paddy finished with a picture quiz which the attentive audience answered well, having been riveted by the presentation. A short report cannot cover all that we were shown. Because of the weather the audience was not large, but everyone there appreciated the well-presented and informative talk.

Graham Manson

March 4th Between a Rock and a Hard Place - The Story of Caher Bridge Garden
When Carl Wright moved over from Devon to County Clare it was his love of potholing, photography and plants that brought him. The Burren was the ideal environment for Carl and although he only planned on staying a few years, 30 years later he still calls it home, although he's quick to point out that he's still only a blow in! In 1999 Carl purchased a small cottage with some land on the edge of the Burren and set about renovating the place. He is very much a hands on type of guy and not only did he renovate the cottage almost entirely himself, but he then turned his attention to the gardens. What started out as a small tidying job very rapidly developed into an obsession. Fortunately Carl is a very talented man and the results (so far) reflect his skills and artistic flair. What he has achieved on such a challenging site can only be described as awe inspiring. I was particularly taken with his use of the abundant natural stone throughout the garden and would say his moon window was my favourite feature.

In the first part of the presentation, the story he tells is enthralling as he takes you from the early stages of the houses renovation through the various developments in the garden and on to the gardens in their current state. I will not use the word finished as this is clearly a man who never does! There's always potential for new ideas or adjustments. He is quick to point out that not everything he tries has worked, and you can learn a great deal from your mistakes.

For the second part of the talk we moved into plants and some of Carl's particular favourites. His passion and knowledge were very evident here and I found myself making notes of quite a few of his observations and recommendations. Carl is a very exceptional individual who describes himself as 'mad' and maybe rightly so. I mean, who in their right mind would sieve over 1000 tonnes of topsoil by hand and barrow it onto site? But they also say there's a fine line between madness and genius! If you have not had the pleasure of attending one of Carl's talks then I urge you to do so, but even better visit Caher Bridge Garden and see for yourself.

Adam Whitbourn

Wesley's Trees by Maeve Bell

Those of us who were in luck last Christmas found a copy of *Heritage Trees of Ireland* in our stockings. One of the exceptional trees chosen by Aubrey Fennell for inclusion is the Sweet Chestnut, *Castanea sativa*, at Rossana near Ashford in Co. Wicklow. It is known as the Wesley Chestnut because John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, visited the estate and is said to have preached under the tree. Aubrey Fennell writes: '....it has the greatest girth for a broadleaf tree in Ireland. In 1903 it was 29ft/8.8m around its waist, and is now over 35 ft/10.7m and a modest 62ft/19m high, and has become stag-headed with crown die-back.'

Two other trees associated with Wesley can be found near Belfast. Derriaghy was the home of Henrietta Jones, a noted socialite who married Edward Gayer in 1758. Gradually she became concerned about the salvation of her soul, so much so that, on one occasion when she attended a ball at Dublin Castle, she brought her prayer book with her and retired to read it between dances. She met John Wesley when he was preaching in Lisburn. Records show that he visited the Gayer house and that he preached under their yew tree on 16 June 1778, remarking even then on the age of the yew. Some 230 years later it still stands, bushy and venerable. Aubrey Fennell calls yews 'the Methuselahs of the tree world'; he reckons that some in Ireland are between 500 and 800 years old, so perhaps the Derriaghy yew isn't ancient , merely middle aged.
Henrietta's daughter married and went to live nearby in Ballyskeagh so it is hardly surprising that Wesley delivered an outdoor sermon here as well. He apparently twisted two young beech saplings together as a symbol of the essential unity between Methodism and the Anglican Church. Today the two trunks merge in an explosion of humps and bumps, whorls and knots, butchered stumps and criss-crossing branches. It takes only a little imagination to see them as an allegory of inter-church relations on our island.

References

Heritage Trees of Ireland by Aubrey Fennell
Our Remarkable Trees by Dinah Browne and Mike Hartwell

Wesley's Yew

Wesley's Beech

Details of upcoming events

APRIL Wednesday 23rd at 6.30 p.m. GARDEN VISIT
A visit to Tracy Hamilton's historic walled garden at Ringdufferin House on the banks of Strangford Lough to see the impressive Rhododendron collection.
An additional feature of the garden is the Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) which is the tree with the greatest girth of any tree in Ireland at 12.65 metres, and was planted in the late 19th century (it is described in Aubrey Fennell's 'Heritage Trees of Ireland') this together with a fine collection of other specimen trees makes this a visit not to be missed.
LOCATION: Take the A22 South towards Killyleagh from the roundabout on the Comber Bypass. Proceed through Lisbane and Balloo and at 8.9 miles turn left into Ringdufferin Road. Keep straight on for 0.8 miles and the gates to the estate are on your right.
ADMISSION: Members free. Non - members £5.00

MAY Saturday 10th 11a.m. – 4 p.m.
Spring Plant Sale and Garden Open Day
Lismacloskey Old Rectory Garden, Ulster Folk & Transport Museum,
Cultra, Holywood, Co Down, BT18 OEU

Celebrate the spring season with a garden-themed afternoon at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum hosted by the Museum's Garden Volunteers and the Irish Garden Plant Society. The focus for the afternoon will be the Old Rectory's flower garden and the Vegetable Garden at Coshkib Hill Farm.
The activities for the afternoon will include:
A plant sale by the Irish Garden Plant Society. Garden tours led by Volunteer Gardeners at scheduled times. Cookery demonstrations inspired by the produce of the gardens. Seed planting or make a floral posie – great for children and families.

MAY Saturday 10th at 11:00a.m. : TWO GARDEN VISITS

Deborah and Martin Begley's Terra Nova Garden, Dromin, Kilmallock,
Entry: €5

LOCATION: From Cork, Travel through Charleville on the (N20) Limerick bound. After 9km turn right at crossroads following signposts for Martin Begley Glass and Terra Nova Gardens. Continue to follow signposts for the next 6 km.

1:00pm Adjourn for lunch.

2:30pm Kevin Begley's Coolwater Garden. Entry: €3

Location: 9 miles directly south of Limerick City, north west of Skule Hill.

JUNE Saturday 7th at 2.0 p.m.

A 2-2.5 hour tour of MOUNT STEWART. The itinerary, as suggested by Neil Porteous will commence with a guided tour of the formal gardens and then proceed up past the lake to Tír na nÓg, the burial ground of the Londonderry Family, then on to Rhododendron Hill, the new Fern area and the Maddenia Rhododendron site and on to The Walled Garden and Nursery. *This is a wonderful opportunity to visit several of these locations which are not normally open to visitors*..
LOCATION:
Take the A20 from Newtownards heading South towards Portaferry.
After about 5 miles you will see the entrance to the Estate on your Left.
ADMISSION: The admission fee will be £5.65 for both Members and Visitors. Members of the National Trust can use their Membership Cards.

JULY Saturday 5th at 2.30 p.m. **GARDEN VISIT**
21 Library Road, Shankill, Co Dublin. IGPS members free Visitors €5.00
We will be visiting Carmel Duignan's garden in Shankill. The garden covers a quarter acre and is situated near the sea. I hope you enjoyed reading Moorea, her article would have given you an indication of what to expect – large foliage plants are a special interest but there are many more treasures to be seen. Special interests are small flowering *Clematis*, *Pseudopanax* and *Tetrapanax*. For a preview see www.dublingardens.com.
LOCATION: Take N11 from Dublin, left at Loughlinstown roundabout, first right into Stonebridge Road and left into Library Road.

JULY Saturday 12th at 2.30 p.m. A visit to the RHSI walled garden at Russborough House, Blessington Co. Wicklow. See *A Note from the Chairman* for details of plans for the walled garden by the RHSI. Russborough is on the N81 just 2 km after Blessington, 45 minutes from Dublin.

AUGUST Saturday 16th at 2.00 p.m. GARDEN VISIT & ANNUAL PICNIC
The visit will be to Mrs Meta Page's Billy Old Rectory Garden at 5 Cabragh Road, Castlecatt, Bushmills, County Antrim BT57 8YH
This is a mature garden of 3 acres on an historic site. To the front of the Georgian rectory is a lawn with mature trees, an ancient well and a developing woodland with a small fernery. To the rear of the house is another large lawn with contrasting borders of roses, herbaceous plants and shrubs, as well as an attractive pond area. A wooden rustic fence separates the long herbaceous border from the kitchen garden, with greenhouse, herb, vegetable and fruit gardens. Beyond the lawn is a large old orchard with an ancient apple tree at its centre, as well as an experimental area with wild flowers and annuals.
LOCATION:
Travelling North on the A26, having passed Ballymena and on to the Ballymoney by-pass go straight on at Kilraughts Road roundabout then take 2nd right onto B66 signposted Dervock. Enter Dervock and turn left (B66) signposted Bushmills. Continue on this road through Derrykeighan. At approx. 2.3 miles after Derrykeighan at Castlecatt turn right signposted Billy 0.5 miles and then immediately fork left onto Haw Road. Continue to the Church, turn right onto Cabragh Road, garden is on the right
ADMISSION: IGPS Members free. Visitors £4.00

SEPTEMBER Wednesday 3rd at 6.30 p.m. **GARDEN VISIT**
A visit to Mr Adrian Walsh's Garden at 59 Richmond Park, Stranmillis, Belfast. BT9 5EF
A small, plant packed and interesting city garden combining a vibrant mix of perennials and grasses set within a formal layout that also incorporates trees and shrubs.
LOCATION:
Travelling from the roundabout at Stranmillis College towards Malone Road, Richmond Park is the second on the left. Number 59 is on the left hand side.
ADMISSION: IGPS Members free. Visitors £4.00

SEPTEMBER Saturday, 13th at 2.30 p.m.
National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, Kilbride, Co. Wicklow
Also in Moorea Seamus O'Brien wrote a wonderful piece on his Sikkim adventure and he is going back for a third visit in the autumn. We usually visit Kilmacurragh when the rhododendrons are in bloom so this will be a chance to see the herbaceous borders and Seamus will tell us of future plans. It is planned to have a cafe at Kilmacurragh from July. We will keep you informed via the web site of how these plans are progressing and it might be nice for us to be sociable and have lunch before our tour.

LOCATION: Kilmacurragh is south of Dublin on the N11. Turn right at the Beehive Pub, c. 1 km. south of where the dual carriageway turns to a single carriageway. Drive 5km. From the South on the N11 turn left at the Tap Pub. Drive 2.5 km. to a T junction. Turn right and drive for 1km, the entrance is on the left.

OCTOBER Saturday 4th 12 noon – 5 p.m. **Autumn Plant Sale**
Rowallane Garden, Saintfield, Co. Down, BT24 7LH

OCTOBER Saturday 11th 11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
LEINSTER PLANT SALE
TCD Botanic Gardens, Palmerston Park, Dartry.
Donations of plants and help greatly appreciated

OCTOBER Thursday 16th at 8.00p.m. National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin.
A joint lecture with Alpine Society.
John Dower "*Why not make a Miniature Garden*"
This lecture will guide us through all the elements of planning and planting up a trough - starting with compost ingredients, it's construction, selection of plants and finally planting up and applying final touches.

OCTOBER Thursday 23rd at 7:30p.m. **Autumn Lecture** (in Association with Antrim Borough Council)
The Old Courthouse, Market Square, Antrim, BT41 4AW
In the Footsteps of Joseph Hooker - an expedition to the Himalaya by Seamus O'Brien. Seamus has travelled extensively in China and elsewhere to seek out plants for cultivation in Irish gardens, and to further his research into the Irish botanist Augustine Henry. Now he has turned his attention to the travels of Sir Joseph Hooker (1817-1911) in the eastern Himalaya in the mid-nineteenth century, an expedition where Hooker collected the seed of a wide range of plants, especially rhododendrons. This was a landmark first introduction to cultivation of many highly ornamental species. Many of the Himalayan collections of Joseph Hooker came to Kilmacurragh and formed the basis of what was to become Europe's most complete collection of rhododendrons from Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal.
Examples of this remarkable collection include the blood red R. *thomsonii,* R. *edgeworthii,* R. *wallichii,* R. *barbatum* and the magnificent R. *falconeri.*
Many of these survive as veteran specimens at Kilmacurragh to this day and in his lecture Seamus will highlight expeditions he led to Sikkim in 2012 and 2013.

ADMISSION: IGPS Members Free, Visitors £7

Old Rectory Garden Lismacloskey Ulster Folk and Transport Museum by Lorna Goldstrom

This is a short account of my experience of voluntary gardening. The garden in question came into being in the late 1980s but I wasn't involved until some twenty years later. A group from the IGPS and staff at the Folk Museum had decided to collaborate on a period garden for the Lismacloskey Rectory which would feature Irish cultivars where possible. A general layout was agreed and volunteers came down once a month from spring to autumn to plant up and maintain the garden. For some years, it worked. But when I encountered the garden there were signs that it was falling on hard times. With a pattern of once a month visits, the weeds were beginning to outstrip the efforts of the volunteers. Though there were always the few dedicated souls who drove down to do a morning's work, it must have been disheartening at times. I remember a couple of Big Digs when the beds were cleared and cleaned, perennials divided and new planting charts made once the compost was in. Hoards of helpers. Soup and sandwiches laid on. Cheery banter in the rain and mud. But once everybody had gone it was hard to keep the garden beds looking good. And though the project was regularly on the agenda of IGPS committee meetings, improvements were slow to materialise. Questions of labels for plants and the purchase of Irish apple trees were discussed for what felt like years. (We did get the Irish apple trees eventually, through a generous donation, but labels?).

So when in 2011 the Folk Museum authorities decided to put one of their young staff in charge of volunteer projects, and Lismacloskey Rectory garden was included as one of those projects, we remaining veterans scented opportunity. Our young administrator, Ruth, set about recruiting more volunteers, and we were off. The first thing we agreed was that we would try to turn up each week on a Wednesday morning. Eight of us, all told, got to work, not just on the three large beds in front of the Rectory, but also on some serious vegetable growing in the little plot beside the Hill Farm of Coshkib.

No matter that the vegetable plot was tiny – if three of us were inside the wire netting we risked each other's teeth with the rake — but we fell to, encouraged by Andy, the Folk Museum's enthusiastic head groundsman. Our new recruits were young – well, considerably younger than we veterans. And they rapidly overcame any initial shyness. One was a champion digger, one didn't turn a hair at pruning Rambling Rector (without gloves, that day), one opted to take on the weekly grass mowing, a full morning's work. Our initial eight dwindled after a while as the younger members found paid jobs, but we acquired more volunteers along the way, so even allowing for holidays, family difficulties, illness and lower numbers in bad weather, we kept up well.

Because we have no formal leader (I just do some basic liaison) and certainly no prima donnas in the group, we have been able to go forward in a fairly democratic manner. Though that approach brings its own disadvantages. If a camel is a horse designed by a committee, our plantings come close to being the floral equivalent. Themes, tasteful contrasts, complementary colours – forget it, we have the riotous cottage garden effect. And we improvise, we go backwards, we undo each other's efforts, we have inspired ideas one week, only to forget them the next. In short, we muddle through. I hear fervent discussions on Wednesday mornings about the desirability of leaving evening primroses and ragged robin where they seed, to give a pretty, informal style. 'Oh dear, I've been yanking those out all morning,' comes the response, 'they're choking everything.' Or, 'This thing must go, it doesn't fit in, it's totally out of scale' from someone, head down, bottom up. 'But it can't be taken out – it's an Irish cultivar' says someone else. (And we know we have to tiptoe round the Irish cultivars.) 'Besides, so and so brought it in, and they would be so hurt ...' But the Folk Museum and the general public love the results, so perhaps we're getting something right.

On one thing we're all agreed, we learn much from each other. We learn the names and habits of individual plants. We can deal with the tall Irish junipers that the snow has split open; we can prune a viburnum at head height to bring the flowers within reach. We divide the herbaceous plants and grow them on at home, to sell later. We'll try our hand at pruning those apple trees, and we'll happily weed all the little rows of vegetable seedlings, so that we can bask in our achievements at harvest time. Even when alien forces destroy the cabbages and beans we are not downhearted – we try again. I have the job of recording what we have in the garden, and that is hard, hard work. As fast as I log something, it moves mysteriously, or vanishes. Well-wishers come down anonymously when I'm not around to pop something into a little space they've found. I'm sure our special *Anemone nemorosa* was in front of that *Primula* last year. Has somebody weeded it out?

As to identification, there are experts everywhere who would have no trouble naming all our cultivars (so say the Committee). But these experts are never around at the magic moment. So I dither over *Rosa mundi* versus Apothecary's rose versus *Rosa gallica* and hope that the yellow crocosmia truly is Rowallane and not some sneaky imitator.

Our small team particularly enjoys the companionship of the work. Our morning's efforts invariably end with the group decamping to the nearby cafe for an extended coffee/soup/ gossip session. We have our planning meetings there too, with Andy and Ruth. The occasional lunch or tea party during the year, offered by one or another in the group, has been an unexpected delight, including, of course, a wander around the garden concerned. And there have been some very pleasant, more formal occasions when we have been entertained by the Folk Museum with music, cream cakes and thank you speeches.

We haven't confined ourselves to hands-on gardening. We've produced a little booklet of articles, poems and sketches that has drawn on various of our volunteers' talents; a photographic record is coming along; we had great fun one day last year making a scarecrow and planting up seedlings with a school group, and our plant and potting shed jumble sale with the chance to make a tussy mussy (posy) in the Rectory parlour did well.

Between weeding, planting and planning, our Wednesday mornings fly by. Our list of Irish cultivars is growing, Paddy, I'm sure you will approve. It has grown impressively with the recent donation of Irish primulas – all set out in order in our new bed, in front of the *Lardizabala biternata* and *Citharexylum ligustrinum*. Phew. Will definitely be needing the new labels.

The Irish Garden Plant Society

IGPS E-mail: igps.ireland@gmail.com

Northern email address: igps.northern@gmail.com
Munster email address: igps.munster@gmail.com
Leinster email address: igps.leinster@gmail.com

Membership Correspondence/Membership Secretary:
Patrick Quigley,
24 Areema Drive, Dunmurry, Belfast BT 17 OQG
Email: igps.ireland@gmail.com

Chairman
Paddy Tobin
"Cois Abhann", Riverside, Lower Gracedieu, Waterford
Telephone: +353 (0)51 857 955
Email: pmtobin@eircom.net

Honorary Secretary:
Maeve Bell,
1 The Drive, Richmond Park, Belfast BT9 5EG
Telephone + 44 28 9066 8435 / +44 7713 739 482
Email: maeve.bell@btinternet.com

Website: www.irishgardenplantsociety.com

https://www.facebook.com/IrishGardenPlantSociety

https://twitter.com/igpstweets

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