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DAVID GILLILAND

BROOK HALL — THE ARBORETUM, WOODLAND GARDEN AND WALLED GARDEN

BROOK HALL DEMESNE is exactly two miles north of the City of Derry on the main road leading down the River Foyle toward Culmore, Moville and Greencastle (lat. 7° 17′ W., long. 55° 1′ N; average rainfall of 43.3" over the past 30 years; average rainfall of 41.2" over previous 30 years; prevailing winds from the north-west, with approximately 2 months in the Spring of easterly winds; total acreage, approximately 30 acres). The current Regency-period house faces south-south-east and looks down over sloping parklands to a walled garden and the fast-flowing river, along which ships sailed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries carrying emigrants to the New World and returning, storms permitting, laden with timber or grain. During the Siege of Derry in 1689, Brook Hall was used as the headquarters of the Duke of Berwick, commander of King James' army. Contemporary maps showing the disposition of troops during the siege identify Brook Hall by name and show the walled garden in the same location and laid out very much as it is today.

The oldest surviving trees in the parklands and woodlands include *Taxus baccata*, one of which is an Ulster champion probably dating back to the time of the siege, and reputedly with a French naval officer buried beneath it; and *Quercus robur*, *Castanea sativa*, and *Fagus sylvatica*. The latter were planted between 1780 and 1800, when Brook Hall belonged to Sir George Fitzgerald Hill, Member of Parliament for the City of Derry, who either built or rebuilt the existing house.

The demesne was purchased in 1852 by Samuel Gilliland. However, family records would suggest that he was more interested in breeding Hereford cattle in the parklands than in tree planting. In the late 1880s, probably to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887, Samuel's son, George Gilliland planted a variety of exotics in the woodlands such as *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, *Eucalyptus gunnii*, *Acer platanoides*, *Magnolia conspicua*, *Magnolia acuminata*, and *Gingko biloba*. George's son, Frank Gilliland started to build an arboretum in 1932 in part of the parkland on the South side of the house, between the avenue and the river. He initially employed the late Hugh Armitage Moore of Rowallane to design the layout of the arboretum and also to advise on planting. From the comments written by Frank Gilliland in the Brook Hall garden journal of that period, it would appear, however, that the two men had very different and ultimately irreconcilable ideas about developing the arboretum, and Frank Gilliland proceeded on his own with building what he envisioned as a "collection of rare and tender plants." His planting book records the receipt and planting of many species. It also records many losses, mostly attributed to frost damage (although today it appears likely that wind damage may also have played a significant part in the losses). Although Frank Gilliland was an avid sailor and traveled extensively, most of the plants were purchased from regional nurseries: Hillier and Sons in Winchester and Smith's in Darley Dale in England; and several Irish nurseries, Slieve Donard in Newcastle, Daisy Hill in Newry, Watson's in Killiney, Dublin, and Power's in Waterford.

Frank Gilliland spent the last seven years of his life bedridden as the result of a stroke in 1950, but this did not stop the arrival of more and more plants. The "temporary" plantings spilled over into the woodlands between the arboretum and the walled garden, and when these areas were full, into the walled garden. In 1958, when I came to live at Brook Hall, there was a large and quite comprehensive collection of immature plants including conifers as well as *Acer*, *Betula*, and *Quercus* and many woody shrubs such as Azaleas, *Azara*, *Berberis*, *Buddleja*, *Cornus*, *Corylopsis*, *Davidia*, *Deutzia*, *Drimys*, *Eucryphia*, *Ilex*, *Lomatia*, *Magnolia*, *Osmanthus*, *Pieris*, *Prunus*, *Rhododendron* (both species and hybrid), a considerable sufficiency of Gunnera, and an extensive collection of Bamboos. It was also readily apparent that there were too many plants in too small a space (in fact, in an article in the *Gardener's Chronicle* in the early 1960s, Sir Islay Campbell noted

that the garden was very much of a wilderness with some marvellous plants), and it was necessary to consider how to ensure that the best specimens had sufficient room to develop into adults and be displayed to best advantage within a mature arboretum.

The process of making judicious decisions about how to remove plants from where they should never have been planted and also the re-design and continued development of the arboretum was pre-empted in 1961 when the demesne was hit by Hurricane Debbie, one of the most devastating storms in Irish history. Arriving in September when the large trees were still in full leaf, Debbie uprooted the majority of the old oaks, Spanish chestnuts and beech in the parklands within the space of 2 hours. With the loss of the trees in the parkland, a large gap was then torn in the exposed main shelter belt planted by Frank Gilliland to the west of the arboretum. This left the young arboretum in grave danger from even normal winter storms, and so the shelterbelt was immediately re-planted with a mixture of quick-growing *Pinus nigra, Tsuga heterophylla* and *Larix decidua*.

The 30 years after the hurricane saw a continuous period of thinning and pruning in the arboretum and woodlands. Whenever feasible, plants which would have grown too close to their neighbours as they became adults or that would be unlikely to grow into reasonable specimens were removed. However, some places still remain today where thinning should have occurred but has not. For example, there is one area of the arboretum where three very beautiful specimens are spoiling each other: an *Acer griseum*, an *Athrotaxus laxifolia*, and a *Thuya plicata* 'Zebrina' each about 14 metres high and all growing into each other. Two of them should have been removed many years ago to allow the third to become a fine specimen, but it proved to be too hard a choice to make! None of this work of restoration, re-design and replanting would have been possible without the knowledge, skill and devotion of Harry Doherty. Harry had come to Brook Hall in 1937 to train under the then head gardener, James Gallick. He took over as head gardener and has remained at Brook Hall ever since, completing much of the work single-handedly.

In the 1990s, when the thinning and re-design of the arboretum and woodlands were finally close to completion, attention was turned to the walled garden. As mentioned earlier, Frank Gilliland had used the walled garden as a temporary nursery at the end of his life and the plants now were all too old and drawn to be able to plant out. It was decided that what should be done was to clear everything out of the garden, and then to re-design and re-plant it. This proved to be an overly simple strategy, however. In addition to the plants which had only been meant to be temporary occupants, there were others which had been there much longer and were now mature trees. Some were fine specimens or were of such particular dendrological interest that they had to remain, including *Juniperus drupacea* (the Syrian Juniper), huge plants of *Crinodendron hookerianum* and *Eucryphia* x *nymanensis*, and a tall, graceful *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'.

The walled garden slopes toward the river and covers approximately 3.5 acres. It has a wall running very nearly from top to bottom dividing the garden into one third which originally contained glass houses, a flower garden, croquet lawn, lily pond, and a lower area along the river laid out as a Victorian rockery; and two thirds which had been a vegetable garden and orchard. The first section now has a central path with a lawn on the upper side and the lily pond and the remains of the croquet lawn on the lower side. A variety of different camellias from Seaforde, Co. Down, growing against the entrance wall or free-standing, are now sufficiently mature to make an exciting show in the spring. The upper and central walls in this area are planted with *Ceanothus, Clematis, Fremontodendron californicum, Hibiscus syriacus, Stachyurus praecox, Telopea truncata, Wisteria*, and various creepers. At the bottom of the lower area, where the wall runs alongside the river, there are several Bamboos: *Chusquea culeou* from Chile, *Phyllostachys bambusoides 'Castillonis'* and *P. nigra* var *henonis*, and *Fargesia nitida (Sinarundinaria nitida) and Semiarundinaria fastuosa*, which together provide effective shelter for the lower part of this side of the garden. Immediately above the bamboos are three mature deutzias that produce an abundance of pink, white and lilac flowers each June. Recently planted in this area is a growing collection of kalmias that are now beginning to bear flowers. At the bottom end of the garden, beside the bamboos, is an old, almost dry pond, which is gradually being filled with primulas. The lily pond beside the old croquet lawn has also been cleaned out and the water lilies replanted. The larger section of the walled garden, in which, as mentioned above, there are mature weeping beech, *Crinodendron* and *Eucryphia* trees, had been let to the City Council for many years for use as

a nursery supplying the city with flowers and bedding plants. The remaining space is now being used for another growing collection, this time of *Magnolia*.

During the years of thinning and restoration, periodic opportunities arose to fill gaps in the arboretum and woodland areas. In these cases, plants have been selected that would add colour, either through their flowers or leaves, to contrast with the various greens of the conifers. Personal favourites include the scarlet and other bright reds of the *Rhododendron griersonianum* hybrids such as *R.* 'Tally Ho' and *R.* 'Fusilier'. Other additions have been *Buddleja, Corylopsis, Eucryphia* (particularly the two pink forms, *E.* 'Ballerina' and *E.* 'Pink Cloud' and for autumn colour, *Euonymus, Liquidambar styraciflua, Nyssa* and *Parrotia*.

In the early 1970s, the City Council decided to build a new sewage treatment plant at Culmore and the main sewer pipes were laid down the middle of an old lime avenue that ran just above the walled garden, close to the site of the original house. As a result, the soil strata were inverted and compacted, the drainage for the whole area was very badly affected, and most of the limes died. After many years of struggling with these adverse soil conditions, there is now in their place an avenue of Japanese cherries alternating with *Hamamelis* (*H. mollis* on the upper side, and *H. pallida* on the lower side).

In addition to all the restoration and redesign work, two new areas were cleared that previously had been covered by scrub and briars. The first was a large bank downstream of the walled garden that provided good shade for some of the large-leafed rhododendrons such as *R. basilicum* and its hybrids, various hybrids of *R. auriculatum*, and several fine *Magnolia sieboldii* subsp. *sinensis* plants. The brook, from which the name of the house and demesne is derived, winds down this slope through a series of stone bridges and small pond into the river. Slightly to the east is the major part of the *Escallonia* National Collection. The other, much larger area, is upstream of the walled garden and had been a rhododendron dell that had been allowed to fill up and become a frost pocket. In addition to clearing several acres of land running down to the river, a second brook was built, not only to collect and control the many drains that run through the demesne from the higher lands, but also for visual effect. The rhododendron dell has been replanted, mainly with *R. arboreum* seedlings from Yunnan province in China. The remaining area is planted with *Nothofagus obliqua* and *N. procera*, together with some unusual oaks.

Particular plants of interest in the collection as it is today include *Metasequoia glyptostroboides, Pinus patula* and *P. montezumae, Betula albosinensis* var. *septentrionalis, Lagorostrobus franklinii* (*Dacrydium franklinii*), *Nothofagus glauca, Fitzroya cupressoides, Juniperus recurva* var. *coxii*, and two conifers which received Awards of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1944, *Abies pindrow* var. *intermedia* and *Cupressus lusitanica* 'Glauca Pendula'. Listed below are particulars of the conifer collection, which contains trees from most parts of the world.

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE CONIFERS:

Chile and Patagonia:

Araucaria (Araucariaceae)
- *A. imbricata* (Chile Pine), male plants only

Fitzroya (Cupressaceae)
- *F. cupressoides* (Alerce)

Macrocachrys (Podocarpaceae)
- *M. tetragona*

Pilgerodendron (Cupressaceae)
- *P. uviferum*

Podocarpus (Podocarpaceae)
- *P. andinus* (Plum-fruited Yew)
- *P. salignus*

Saxegothea (Podocarpaceae)
- *S. conspicua* (Prince Albert's Yew)

Tasmania:

Lagorostrobus (Podocarpaceae)
- *L. franklinii* (formerly known as *Dacrydium franklinii*, Huon Pine)

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE CONIFERS (INCLUDING CENTRAL AMERICA AND TAIWAN):

Abies (Pinaceae) (Silver Firs)
- A. *bracteata* (Santa Lucia Fir, Southern California)
- *A. delavayi* (China)
- *A. grandis* (Giant Fir, Western North America)
- *A. koreana* (South Korea)
- *A. mariesii* (Japan)
- *A. nephrolepsis* (Manchuria)
- *A. pindrow* var. *intermedia* (Western Himalayas)
- *A. procera glauca* (Noble Fir)

Calocedrus (Cupressaceae)
- *C. decurrens* (Incense Cedar)

Cedrus (Pinaceae) (Cedars, Asia Minor, Syria and North Africa)
- *C. atlantica* (Atlas Cedar)
- *C. atlantica glauca* (Blue Cedar)
- *C. deodara* (Western Himalayas)

Chamaecyparis (Cupressaceae) (False Cypresses, North America, Japan and Taiwan)
- *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Columnaris'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Erecta'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Glauca Compacta'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Intertexta'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Lutea'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Lutea Smithii'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Lycopodioides'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Parsons'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Pendula'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Stewartii'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Triomf van Boskoop'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Versicolor'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Westermanii'
  - *C. lawsoniana* 'Wisselii'
- *Chamaecyparis nookatensis*
  - *C. nootkatensis* 'Lutea'
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa*
  - *C. obtusa* (Hinoki Cypress)
  - *C. obtusa* 'Aurea'
  - *C. obtusa* 'Crippsii'
  - *C. obtusa* 'Filicoides (Fern Spray Cypress)
  - *C. obtusa* 'Lycopodioides'
- *Chamaecyparis pisifera*
  - *C. pisifera intermedia*

Cryptermeria (Taxodiaceae)
- *C. japonica* (Japanese Cedar)
- *C. japonica* 'Nana'
- *C. japonica* 'Cristata'

Cunninghamia (Taxodiaceae)
- *C. lanceolata* (Chinese Fir)

x *Cupressocyparis* (Cupressaceae)
- *C. leylandii* 'Leighton Green'
- *C. leylandii* 'Castlewellan Gold'

Cupressus (Cupressaceae)
- *C. glabra*
- *C. lusitanica* (the Mexican Cypress)
- *C. lusitanica* var. *benthamii*
- *C. lusitanica* 'Flagellifera'
- *C. lusitanica* 'Glauca Pendula'
- *C. lusitanica* var. *Fota*
- *C. macrocarpa*
- *C. macrocarpa* 'Donard Gold'
- *C. macrocarpa* 'Lutea'
- *C. sargentii*

Gingko (Gingoaceae)
- *G. biloba* (Maidenhair Tree)

Juniperus (Cupressaceae)
- *J. chinensis* 'Aurea' (Chinese Juniper)
- *J. communis*
- *J. drupacea* (Syrian Juniper)
- *J. excelsa*
- *J. horizontalis* 'Glauca'
- *J. recurva* var. *coxii* (Drooping Juniper)
- *J. squamata chinensis glauca*
- *J. squamata* 'Meyeri'
- *J. virginiana* 'Tripartita'

Larix (Pinaceae)
- *L. decidua*
- *L. kaempferi*
- *L. potaninii* (Chinese Larch)

Metasequoia (Taxodiaceae)
- *M. glyptostroboides* (Dawn Redwood)

Picea (Pinaceae)
- *P. abies* (Norway Spruce)
- *P. breweriana* (Brewer's Weeping Spruce)
- *P. jezoensis var. hondoensis* (Hondo Spruce)
- *P. likiangensis*
- *P. mariana* (Black Spruce)
- *P. omorika* (Serbian Spruce)
- *P. orientalis* (Oriental Spruce)
- *P. orientalis* 'Aurea'
- *P. pungens* 'Koster'
- *P. sitchensis* (Sitka Spruce)

Pinus (Pinaceae)
- *P. armandii* (Armand's Pine)
- *P. ayacahuite* (Mexican White Pine)
- *P. coulteri* (Big Cone Pine)
- *P. koraiensis* (Korean Pine)
- *P. nigra* (Austrian Pine)
- *P. nigra subsp. laricio* (Corsican Pine)
- *P. patula* (Mexico)
- *P. peuce* (Macedonian Pine)
- *P. radiata* (Monterey Pine)
- *P. sylvestris* (Scots Pine)
- *P. sylvestris* 'Aurea'
- *P. wallichiana* (Bhutan Pine)

Sciadopitys (Taxodiaceae)
- *S. verticillata* (Umbrella Pine)

Sequoia (Taxodiaceae)
- *S. sempervirens* (Coast Redwood)

Sequoiadendron (Taxodiaceae)
- *S. giganteum* (Giant Redwood)

Taiwania (Taxodiaceae)
- *T. cryptomerioides*

Taxodium (Taxodiaceae)
- *T. ascendans* 'Nutans'
- *T. distichum* (Swamp Cypress)

Taxus (Taxaceae)
- *T. baccata* (the English Yew)
- *T. baccata* 'Adpressa Variegata'
- *T. baccata* 'Fastigiata' (the Irish Yew)
- *T. baccata* 'Fastigiata Aureomarginata'

Thuja (Cupressaceae)
- *T. plicata* (Western Red Cedar)
- *T. plicata* 'Zebrina'
- *T. standishii* (Japanese Arbor-vitae)

Thujopsis (Cupressaceae)
- *T. dolabrata* (Japan)
- *T. dolabrata* 'Variegata'
- *T. dolabrata* 'Pendula'
- *T. dolabrata* 'Hondae'

Tsuga (Pinaceae)
- *T. heterophylla* (Western Hemlock)
- *T. mertensiana* 'Glauca'

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JOHN DUCIE

CLOUGHJORDAN NURSERY PAPERS

THIS is the story of the discovery of the Hodgins Nursery Archive at Cloughjordan House in County Tipperary, a discovery that subsequently resulted in the identification of *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Lawsoniana' as an Irish-raised cultivar and one of the earliest variegated clones, and the depositing of the most extensive nineteenth-century nursery archive now known in the library of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

In 1986 Brian Sinclair of Donabate, County Dublin, husband of my sister Anne, asked me if I would like to look at some nursery papers which he had found as a schoolboy twenty years previously. He had found them in the attic of the medieval tower house wing of his uncle Val Baker's house at Cloughjordan. The papers consisted of seed lists from the 1870s together with invoices and order forms from the long defunct Hodgins Nursery, which had operated on his uncle's farm prior to his grandfather Samuel Baker's purchase of it in 1919. The papers were in good condition and had been retained as a result of pressure from his mother and uncle when they realised that he had removed them to take the penny black and twopenny blue stamps for his stamp collection. They urged him to retain the papers as provenance for the stamps.

I telephoned Charles Nelson, then taxonomist at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, to tell him of the discovery of the Cloughjordan papers. He was excited at the news, for he had recently found a letter by William Gumbleton written in 1888 and claiming that the Golden Hodgins Holly (*Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Lawsoniana') had been raised at the Hodgins nursery at Cloughjordan, County Tipperary, and not in Scotland as everyone had assumed. As no one then had any knowledge of a Cloughjordan nursery, the claim that the plant was Irish was not considered valid and the plant was presumed to be Scottish in origin. Here might be the proof required! It was arranged that the papers would be loaned to Charles.

Brian Sinclair's mother Mabs Sinclair (neé Baker), who grew up in Cloughjordan, was asked what she remembered of the nursery. She knew of the Cloughjordan holly and remembered it growing in the garden of Cloughjordan House. She also remembered hearing about the Hodgins, who were friends of the family, and she confirmed the existence of a large amount of archival material relating to the nursery still in the attics of Cloughjordan House. She was able to produce correspondence on official New York Parks Department notepaper from members of the Hodgins family to her father dating from the 1880s, as well as old glass-slide negative photographs including a family group with William Hodgins outside the front door of Cloughjordan House.

In the spring of 1987 I paid a visit to Cloughjordan House. The house proved to be a remarkably attractive building, consisting of a medieval tower house, a main seventeenth-century block complete with barley twist staircase and Venetian windows, and an early nineteenth-century (or earlier) ballroom wing. The whole had an appearance of a French manor rather than that of the usual Irish farmhouse. Outside the gardens were full of trees and shrubs apparently untouched since Hodgins's day and a series of old walled enclosures that were in the process of a rather heavy-handed restoration by a FÁS scheme. The nursery papers were confirmed to be in the attic of the medieval part of the house. Our charming hosts the late Val Baker and his wife Sylvia filled me in on what they knew of the grounds and invited me to return.

Charles Nelson meanwhile researched the Hodgins family nurseries, publishing with Susyn Andrews in *Glasra* in 1992 an account of the origin of the Golden Hodgins Holly as well as of the two other Hodgins holly clones *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Hendersonii' and 'Hodginsii' that were raised at the Hodgins Nurseries at Dunganstown, County Wicklow, *c.* 1830.

The Hodgins papers were removed from the attic during renovations about 1990, and stored temporarily in ten large plastic bags in the disused ballroom. When Anne Sinclair heard of this, she contacted me, and I in turn contacted Charles Nelson, who wrote to the then gravely ill Val Baker requesting the papers for study and conservation. The Bakers readily agreed; Val Baker died shortly afterwards. Brian and Anne Sinclair drove to Cloughjordan and brought the papers to Glasnevin where, after fumigation, they were stored in airtight cupboards in the old herbarium building. At this point Charles Nelson left Glasnevin. The librarian and staff were preoccupied with the move into the new library and herbarium and no more was done with the papers at that time.

In 1998 I was contacted by Sarah and Peter Baker and asked to prepare a report on the archive and the heritage importance of the grounds as they were applying for Heritage Council grant aid for a new roof for the house and renovations to the ballroom wing. The report was prepared and they duly received a grant. To write up the gardens of Cloughjordan House I visited and Sarah and Peter produced a plan of 1844 showing the house and nursery which they had discovered while tidying up Val Baker's study. By examining it and walking the farm in frosty weather a number of things became apparent. Much of the path network was still discernible as shown on the plan of 1844. The origin of most of the plants remaining seemed be from the Hodgins's time and there were many camellias and hollies, as well as massive yews, incredible box plants and lots more, all in a jungle of seedling trees, brambles and ivy.

On some of the walls there were fruit trees (some kind of pear) and in the shade of evergreens there were traces of lime wash which might have dated back to the Hodgins's time. But where in this vast and almost impregnable jungle of plants on almost 3.7 acres of the present 'garden' might there be a specimen of the Golden Hodgins Holly? I collected for Matthew Jebb, the then new taxonomist at Glasnevin, samples of extremely large and venerable hollies, attaching numbered plastic tags to the trees. Matthew sent them to Susyn Andrews at Kew and the verdict came back: *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* crosses, but no sign of any particular clone.

On a return visit I looked up and saw growing in a particularly large *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* a variegated branch more than twenty feet from the ground. Using field glasses I could see that the variegation matched that of *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Lawsoniana'. Could this be the original plant? Given its location in the middle of a wilderness of other plants and seven metres from the ground, getting a specimen for verification is not a simple matter and remains to be done. There may well be hidden riches at Cloughjordan House in the form of 'lost' plant cultivars, in particular Hodgins varieties of trees and shrubs that only patient research will uncover.

I have since sifted through the papers stored at Glasnevin, untouched since their arrival except for basic conservation work. They consist of fifty years of the ephemera of the nursery business from 1862 to 1912, as well as material relating to the Hodgins's role as agents to the local landlord, Lord Dunally. The nursery papers consist of:

1. Orders to the nursery including seed lists and letters.
2. Invoices to the nursery from a variety of suppliers, including other nursery companies both in Ireland and abroad (both British and French suppliers are represented).
3. Correspondence to the nursery from famous Irish gardens of the period such as Heywood, Birr and Emo Court; of particular interest are letters from gardeners seeking advice and also asking for information on new employers and grumbling about their conditions.
4. Books of account, including sales books recording sales to literally thousands of Irish gardens; cash sales books, debtors books and wage books. The sales books show sales to as far away as South Africa, Russia and the United States. The wage books, in addition to recording the names of staff and the number of days worked, reveal that payment was made in sacks of potatoes and other vegetables as well as in cash.

The papers are in dirty condition with the outside of the books and bundles covered in a hundred years or more of dirt. To make it possible to research them properly, cleaning and transfer to conservation covers is required. In 2000 the estimated cost was in excess of £7500 (9500 euro). The National Botanic Gardens does not have funds for this kind of conservation work, as its own extensive archival material must take precedence over material relating to other sources. It is necessary, therefore, to find funding for conservation to allow the papers to be properly researched and published.

This research when completed will cast a new light on the history of Irish gardens and in particular on nurseries and the trade in plants in the nineteenth century. The Cloughjordan Nursery archive is unique in that it is apparently the only Irish nursery archive to have survived. Its survival itself is something of miracle as paper is so fragile and prone to damp, fire, and to being eaten by a variety of creatures. Its discovery, as Charles Nelson said at the time, is a true case of serendipity.

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10 Lr. Prince Edward Terrace, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

CARMEL DUIGNAN

THE GENUS *PSEUDOPANAX*

I SAW my first *Pseudopanax* some fifteen years ago in the walled garden that houses the garden centre Carewswood in Castlemartyr, Co. Cork. The plant was *Pseudopanax* 'Sabre' — an upright, evergreen, large shrub with dark, leathery leaves and an ashen-coloured bark striated with dark grey. It was not available for sale at that time but it was the start of a love affair that has lasted ever since and that has led me on many treks to nurseries here and in the UK seeking ever more and different species and varieties.



Pseudopanax crassifolius

Pseudopanax is a genus of small trees or large shrubs that belong to the Araliaceae family and are native to New Zealand, Tasmania and Chile — with some fifteen species endemic to New Zealand alone. They are distinctive in that the juvenile foliage can be markedly different from that of the adult plant. Generally, the leaves, as with most araliads, are palmate — that is compound leaves of several distinct leaflets spreading like the palm of a hand. The plants may be monoecious in that male and female flowers are borne on the same plant or dioecious when male and female flowers are found on separate plants. The flowers are not striking and are similar to those of ivy — grouped into inflorescences or umbels with many flower stalks radiating from a single point.

Among them are some remarkable and arresting plants. They all carry distinctive foliage and are very suitable for creating exotic effects in the mild garden. The epithet "architectural" can be applied to every plant in the genus. In Sander's *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* they are described as "greenhouse, evergreen shrubs" but, in fact some species and varieties, when mature, can withstand temperatures of -10° C. However, in colder parts most are adaptable to pot culture and take well to pruning. In many of the species and varieties propagation of semi-ripe cuttings is relatively easy — the only requirement is patience! They can take up to six months to root even with the assistance of gentle bottom heat. Root cuttings and grafting are the other means of propagation. They are tolerant of a wide range of soils, have good wind resistance and will grow in sun or semi-shade. In general, they are drought tolerant and should not be planted in wet soil where they can be susceptible to root rot.

Sixteen years ago, when I moved to my present garden I found myself with a quarter acre of virtual wilderness. The soil was alkaline (pH 7.4), heavy and of poor quality. My quarter-acre garden is situated about 400 metres from the sea in south County Dublin. Winters are generally mild but temperatures can occasionally get down to -5° C. This would be exceptional — in the winter of 2003/2004 a low of -2° C was recorded. The garden was open to the prevailing south-westerly wind and my first thought was evergreen trees to provide shelter and to define the bones of the garden. So the conifers (mercifully, not *Cupressus leylandii*!) were planted. I very soon realised that I had made a mistak! They were gloomy and uninteresting and, in most cases, too large for my small garden. The search started for replacements. Evergreen trees and shrubs were needed to provide the bones of my garden. By happy happenstance, it was around this time that I saw my first *Pseudopanax*. Over the years, the collection grew to about twelve species and hybrids.

Some of the *Pseudopanax* grown:



Pseudopanax crassifolium

Pseudopanax crassifolius

Common Name: Lancewood or Horoeka

Distribution: Throughout New Zealand in lowland forest

Pseudopanax crassifolius in its juvenile form — which can last up to twenty years — is a striking and remarkable foliage plant. The long, narrow, coarsely toothed, leathery leaves droop downwards from a single stem rather like a half-closed umbrella. Its colour is dark green with a yellow stripe along the midrib and the veins. When maturity sets in these leaves undergo a remarkable metamorphosis. They become short, thick and leathery, branches develop and the stem thickens. The trunk is in itself an attraction in that it develops a braided appearance — as if many stems had wound together to form a strong, dark brown plait. It is one of the most frost resistant of the genus and mature plants can withstand temperatures of -10° C. The leaves are so different in their juvenile and adult stages that earlier botanists decided that mature and immature forms of the same plant belonged to different genera. In *Plants of New Zealand* by R. M. Laing and E. W. Blackwell, the authors relate that *P. crassifolium* was discovered on Captain Cook's first voyage in 1769–1770. The young form was named *Xerophylla longifolia* and the mature plant *Panax crassifolium*. The authors go on to state — 'Even so late as 1867, Sir Joseph Hooker, one of the greatest of all systematists, described the mature state and *Panax crassifolium*, and the young state as *P. longissimum*, and yet he had had the plant under cultivation at Kew for fifteen years!' It is perhaps unfair to blame Sir J. Hooker for not recognising that he had the same plant rather than two different ones since a fifteen-year old *P. crassifolium* is still a juvenile!



Pseudopanax ferox

The late and much lamented Dr David Robinson had a theory that *P. crassifolium* developed its tough, leathery, notched, juvenile leaves as a defence against the grazing of the Moa — an ostrich-like, flightless, giant bird that was native to New Zealand. When the tree reached adulthood and was tall enough to be out of the reach of the Moa it developed normal leaves. With the customary twinkle in his eye, Dr Robinson remarked that the Moa had been hunted to extinction some three hundred years ago but the *Pseudopanax* didn't yet know that!

Pseudopanax ferox

Common Name: Toothed Lancewood

Distribution: Throughout New Zealand

Pseudopanax ferox is very like *P. crassifolius* with similar juvenile foliage but with a much slower growth rate. It is dioecious with bronze-green leaves that are jaggedly toothed and downward pointing. The leaves are shorter than those of *P. crassifolius* and are more coarsely serrated. It is a smaller plant and grows more slowly. In adulthood it also develops shorter leaves and branches. It is more frost tender.



Pseudopanax 'Adiantifolius'

Pseudopanax lessonii

Common Name: Houpara

Distribution: North of North Island, New Zealand

Pseudopanax lessonii is a large, upright shrub with attractive leathery leaves composed of three or five leaflets that are oval and serrated at the tips.

The following are all considered to be hybrids between *P. lessonii* and *P. crassifolius*.

Pseudopanax 'Adiantifolius' is perhaps the most beautiful of the genus. As its name suggests it has very attractive foliage that resembles those of the maidenhair fern — *Adiantum*. The three to five lobed leaves are green and glossy. They are deeply indented and have serrated margins. As I write, in June, 2004, flower buds are forming for the first time on my nine year old plant. It makes an erect, multi-stemmed large shrub. It is recommended as a good salt and wind resistant plant and grows slowly to a height and spread of approximately 3m. Mature plants are said to be capable of resisting frost to about -10° C but I found that in the relatively harsh winter of 2001 where the temperature in my garden dropped to -6° C, the growing tips were frosted. However, the plant recovered very well.

Pseudopanax 'Cyril Watson' differs from *P.* 'Adiantifolius' in that the leaflets are fused together to form a single leaf.

Pseudopanax 'Linearifolius' is an especial favourite because it was the first of the genus that I found. It is suggested that it is a possible hybrid between *P. lessonii* and *P. crassifolius*. It grows, very slowly, to a height of 2m with a spread of 1–1.5m. The graceful, slender leaves are five lobed and are a dark, glossy green colour. It too is wind and salt resistant; it can tolerate temperatures to -10°; it will grow in deep shade and, in cold areas, can be grown in a pot.

Pseudopanax 'Trident' is an aptly-named, large, upright shrub or small tree to 3m or more. The large leaves are three-lobed and trident-like. It requires full sun in a well-drained soil. Another wind-resistant variety, it is quite hardy — down to -10°. It makes a fine specimen, architectural plant — very useful in creating an exotic effect in the garden. In addition, in early spring, my plant produces small black ivy-like berries that are very attractive to hungry birds. When in flower or berry it is very easy to see the family resemblance to its cousin Hedera.



Pseudopanax 'Trident'

Pseudopanax 'Sabre' is a narrow, upright, multi-stemmed small tree to about 3m. The long, leathery leaves point downwards and grow to about 30cm. They are lance-shaped, serrated, dark green with a striking yellowish midrib. The bark is also attractive with its dark beige colour liberally streaked with brown. It too is quite hardy — will probably endure temperatures down to -7° C.

Pseudopanax 'Gold Splash' is a very attractive shrub with oval-shaped, dark green leaves composed of 2–5 leaflets. These leaflets are liberally splashed with bright yellow along the veins and midribs. It is one of the hardiest of the genus and can be grown successfully in a pot. Propagation of semi-ripe cuttings, as with *P.* 'Adiantifolius', is easy but slow. In my garden, *Bupleurum fruticosum* has decided to entwine itself through the *Pseudopanax* and the effect of the star-shaped umbels of the lime-green flowers of the *Bupleurum* coming through the variegated foliage of the *Pseudopanax* is very pleasing.



Pseudopanax 'Gold Splash'

Pseudopanax lessonii 'Purpureus' is very similar to the species except that the leaves are dark bronze with best colour in winter.



Pseudopanax laetus

Pseudopanax laetus

Distribution: North Island, New Zealand

Pseudopanax laetus is the most exotic of this dramatically leaved genus. The shining, thick, large, oval leaves grow to about 30cm. They too are palmate with five to seven leaflets and are serrated at the tips. *Pseudopanax laetus* is more susceptible to frost damage than its other relatives. Mature plants can survive to -5° C but should be protected from frost when young. It grows in sun or semi-shade; takes well to pot culture and pruning and is an ideal specimen for achieving a tropical effect.

Pseudopanax laetevirens

Distribution: Southern Chile

Pseudopanax laetevirens is the only non-New Zealand representative in my collection. It is a late acquisition and, as yet, has not experienced an Irish winter. It bears a close resemblance to that very fashionable plant of the moment — its cousin — *Schefflera*. The glossy, palmate foliage is composed of five-lobed, narrow, green leaflets. It will spend next winter being cosseted in a pot and, next spring, will be planted out in a well-drained, semi-shaded spot. Cuttings will hopefully have rooted by then and, should disaster strike, replacements will be available to try again.

For anyone who gardens in the milder parts of Ireland I can absolutely recommend growing some *Pseudopanax*. They make handsome and sometimes exotic plants and are completely trouble-free. Their only drawback — and it is a minor one — is that, over the summer months, they shed their tough, uncompostable leaves. I grow very few plants that are so rewarding and undemanding.

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21 Library Road, Shankill, Dublin 18.

PHEMIE ROSE

RESTIONACEAE — THE PROGRESS OF THIS FAMILY IN KILRAVOCK GARDEN, WEST CORK

HAVING seen a magnificent specimen of *Ischyrolepsis subverticillata* in a Cork garden I had an instant desire to acquire this plant. At this point I had no idea of the size and diversity of the family Restionaceae. Becoming an associate member of Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens in South Africa was the start of a very steep learning curve.

There are some 480 species of Restionaceae globally, mainly in the southern hemisphere. Cape Reeds or Restios form one of the most important structural components of the heathland or 'fynbos' of South Africa. About 330 are endemic to the Cape Floristic Region. A few species occur further north in South Africa, with one species in Republic of Congo and another in Madagascar. About 100 species occur in Australia, three in New Zealand and one each in Malaysia, S.E Asia and Chile.



Elegia capensis

Restios are generally tufted, reedy looking plants which vary in height from about 200mm to over 3m. Some are compact plants and others have spreading rhizomes. Many of the restios have large, loosely branched, grass like inflorescences, golden brown in colour and dark brown seed heads. One of their most attractive features is their papery bracts ranging in colour from pale gold to orange red, brown and ebony. They do not produce striking flowers but have a very impressive sculptural form and lovely long lasting seed heads. They are used for foliage in the cut flower industry and as thatching reeds. I personally could never bring myself to cut these outstanding plants for thatching!

Cultivation from seed

Having acquired seed, now I all I needed to do was germinate them. (My first attempt was less than successful with very poor results.) Further research told me that I should be smoking them, but the prospect of lighting a fire and perhaps burning my precious seeds was horrendous. Then 'Smoke Primers' specially prepared by Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens for seed germination were discovered. Even with smoke primers germination can be a tricky business. I have found it best to sow seed in late summer as they need warm days and cool nights (I take them out of the

greenhouse at night to provide a bigger contrast in temperature). After pricking out they take quite some time before they 'take off' and it can take up to six months before they really start to move.

During their first year the seedlings look very different from the adult plants and have numerous finely-branched culms. In the second year, a new set of culms is made, usually still with the seedling form and structure, and first year's growth dies back. Only in the third year do the plants reach the typical 'adult' form and structure. These new adult culms terminate in inflorescences which set seed.

My first venture into the germination of Restionaceae was the germination of seed of *Elegia capensis* (the easiest restio to germinate I find) in 2000. This is now a striking and much admired plant 210cm tall with a basal diameter of 150cm. At present it has about 50 new strong thick culms with brown bracts at each nodule of spikelets. It is a fast growing clumping plant with spreading rhizomes and bears wonderful brown/gold inflorescences at the tips of its culms. The foliage is feathery and tactile. This plant is a female, and more *Elegia capensis* seed is now being propagated in the hope of finding a male, so that a comparison can be made. Max H. 1–3m and basal diameter 0.5–10m. Not a plant for the small garden!

Ten more restios were purchased from a Cornish nursery in 2001. These are, with present heights and diameters:

Askiosperma chartaceum. a compact plant without spreading rhizomes or stolens. It has numerous dark green slender culms which arch outwards. Foliage is just developing. Height at present 95cm basal diameter 35cm. Growing well but no inflorescences as yet. Max H. 0.3–1.3m.

Dovea macrocarpa. Not a strong grower and is struggling. Has blue/green culms with brown bracts which are isolated and widely spaced. Compact plant without spreading rhizomes and stolens. No infloresences as yet. H55cm Basal diameter 19cm. Max H. 0.8–1.5m and basal diameter 2–5m.

Elegia grandis. Plants tufted with reed- like culms. Compact without spreading rhizomes or stolens. As of now an uninspiring plant with thick lax culms. No foliage or inflorescenses as yet. 20 culms at present. Only 81cm high with Basal diameter 20cm. Not doing well. Max H. 0.9–1.5m and basal diameter 0.3–1m.

Elegia spathacea. Did not survive.

Ischyrolepsis subverticillata. In cultivation for at least a century. One of the most handsome of the family. Compact without spreading rhizomes or stolens. It has strong slender graceful culms with light green spikelets of foliage emerging at intervals from brown bracts. The brown/gold inflorescences are at the tips of the spikelets. The mature foliage turns red/gold and fans out on the ground with the new culms emerging in the centre. Has around 40 culms. H. 130cm and basal diameter 30cm. Max. H. 1.2–4m and basal diameter 0.5–1m.

Chondropetalum tectorum. A tall tufted plant with reed-like culms, dark green in colour with brown bracts. Dark brown inflorescenses are carried at the tips of the 50 or so culms. H. 140cm and basal spread 36cm. Max H. 0.5m–1m and basal diameter 0.1–0.3m. A male plant.

Rhodocoma gigantea. Very aptly named, a large plant. H. 105cm, basal diameter 64cm with around 60 culms. Compact plant without spreading rhizomes or stolens. Erect with masses of bright green foliage on spikelets from light brown bracts with inflorescences at the tips. The mature culms fan out on the ground as the new foliage emerges in the centre. Max H. 2–3m and basal diameter 0.1–0.5m.

Rhodocoma fruiticosa. Did not survive.

Thamnochortus insignis. A striking reed-like plant used as a thatching reed in its native South Africa, with very attractive golden brown seed heads at the tips of the culms, which fan out from the base. Has around 60 culms with a H. 150cm, basal diameter 25cm. Max H. 1–2m and basal diameter 0.1–0.4m. A male plant.

Thamnochortus cinereus. Compact plants, tufted, without spreading rhizomes or stolens. Spectacular plant with about 50 strong culms with spikelets of silvery foliage and silver inflorescences at the tips. Lax mature

foliage with new culms rising erect from the centre. Fast growing. H. 150cm and basal diameter 40cm. Max H. 0.8–4m and basal spread 0.1–0. A male plant.

Balaskion tetraphyllum (Restio tetraphyllus). Only Australian at Kilvarock so far. A very compact plant with light green culms, just 61cm high with a basal diameter of 16cm at present. It forms a tall elegant clump with erect main culms and arching, fine, green branches. The rhizomes creep horizontally, buried up to 2cm deep and up to 10mm in diameter. Max H 50–160cm.

Also purchased in Irish garden centres in 2001/2002

Rhodocoma capensis. A dark green bushy plant without spreading rhizomes or stolens. Has around 20 slender culms with brown bracts from which feathery foliage emerges. Light brown inflorescenses are borne on the tips of the spikelets. 155cm high with a basal spread of 50cm. Max H. 1–2m and basal diameter 0.3–1m. A male plant.

Rhodocoma arida. Plants tufted, compact, without spreading rhizomes or stolens. Culms reedy blue/green and rather straggly in appearance. Slow growing. No inflorescenses as yet. H. 60cm. Basal diameter 16cm. Max H. 0.8–2m and basal diameter 0.2–05m.



Thamnochortus insignis

Thamnochortus lucens. Compact, slow growing tufted plant without spreading rhizomes or stolens. Small plant as yet H. 36cm, basal diameter 25cm. The mature light green foliage has formed a mat like mound with the 30 or so new culms emerging from the back of the clump. It has light brown inflorescences at the tips of the culms. Max H. 0.3–0.6m and basal diameter 0.05–0.2m

Calopsis paniculata. 50 strong culms with light green feathery foliage with silvery inflorescences borne on spikelets spaced at intervals along the culms. Strong grower and very tactile. Likes damp conditions and grows quickly, with spreading rhizomes. At present 130cm high with a basal diameter 150cm.Max H. 1–2.5m and basal diameter 0.5–5m.

From seed 2002 from Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens

Thamnochortus spicigerus. A clumper with spreading rhizomes. Upright young plant with dark green culms. Foliage dark green carried on spikelets along the culms. No inflorescenses as yet. H. 46cm, basal diameter 13cm. Max H. 1–3m and basal diameter 1–4m. It has a lot of growing to do.

Thamnochortus pellucidus. A tufted compact plant without spreading rhizomes or stolons. Feathery light green foliage on lax culms. Young plant still in its pot. H. 20cm basal diameter 3cm. Max H. 20cm and basal diameter 12cm

Elegia filacea. Plants tufted, compact, without spreading rhizomes or stolens. Very slow growing. Has 20 lax dark green culms, brown bracts and golden inflorescences at the tips of the culms. H. 15cm basal spread 9cm. A potted-up seedling is growing much more strongly than one palnted out. Max H. 0.2–0.8m and basal diameter 0.01–0.1m.

Maximum heights and basal diameters are those quoted by H. Peter Linder on his CD on Restionaceae of South Africa.

Kilravock is a 2 acre terraced garden on Dunmanus Bay, Durrus, West Cork. Soil pH is 7.2–7.5 and is very stony with outcrops of rock. The climate is very mild with the temperature rarely dropping below zero centigrade. The lowest mean temperature being -3 °C. Growing conditions are very good due to the warming influence of the North Atlantic Drift, which results in a growing period of 10–11 months per year. (As found by a UCC student doing a PhD thesis). Average annual rainfall is between 1000–1250mm. Winds are predominantly south westerly from which the garden is somewhat protected by a small headland to the west of Kilvarock.

Most of the Restios are planted on a bank into which lots of gravel was dug in preparation for planting. They grow happily as specimen plants alongside bananas, palms, agaves, cordylines and puyas providing good foliage contrast and wind movement. All are growing within 20 metres of Dunmanus Bay. There is a 31/2 metre hedge between the bank and the Bay, but because of the contours of the ground the hedge does not provide complete shelter.

Lifting and dividing Restios is no mean feat. Digging them out is very labour intensive usually involving the use of an axe. Further divisions have seen the use of hatchets and bread knives and they then sulk for a few months before growing new culms. Restios will grow in almost any well-drained soil but grow much better in acid soil in full sun in an airy position. They need space, both to grow and develop and to be seen at their sculptural best.

They are difficult to identify as males and females of the same species can look very different. With the aid of a CD from the University of South Africa it has been possible to determine the sex of five grown at present, four males and one female. So far I have been unable to access information or seeds from New Zealand, but I have recently acquired a book on Australian Rushes, so now I am on the hunt for seed sources. I would also like to acquire the opposite gender of the species we are already growing so that comparisions can be made.

Further Reading

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Kilravock, Durrus, Co. Cork.

KEVIN J. HALPENNY[1] AND WILFRID F. SIMMS[2]

THE NATIONAL COLLECTION® OF SHRUBBY POTENTILLAS AT ARDGILLLAN DEMESNE, BALBRIGGAN, CO. DUBLIN

Introduction

THE National Plant Collection® of Shrubby Potentillas at Ardgillan Demesne, Balbriggan came about as a result of a number of happy coincidences. In 1996 an invited RHS Woody Plant Trial of *Potentilla fruticosa* L. commenced at RHS Wisley (Miller 2002). Staff from the Parks Division of Fingal County Council visited the trial and met with the RHS Trials Officer Linda Jones and a potentilla specialist Wilfrid Simms who himself held a collection of more than 100 cultivars for which he wished to find a new home. Plants provided by W.F. Simms together with material from the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) trial material formed the initial core planting of the Ardgillan Collection.

W.F. Simms has continued to assist Fingal County Council Parks Division with the enlargement of the collection. On behalf of Fingal he contacted and obtained material from many European growers specialising in shrubby potentillas, including the famous Dutch nurseries of Darthuizer and P. Kolster. The collection now boasts more than 230 cultivars and varieties of shrubby potentilla and in June 2004 was augmented by some 61 unnamed seedlings from the Orkney breeder Alan Bremner which will be trialed at Ardgillan over the coming years.

Botanical Information

Shrubby potentillas are members of the family Rosaceae. They are densely branched deciduous shrubs of erect or spreading habit with peeling bark which under ideal conditions can exceed 2m or more in height and spread. (Most modern cultivars are of far more limited proportion ideal for the smaller town garden.) The leaves are numerous, each composed of between three and seven (usually five) leaflets. The generic name is taken from the Latin 'potens' meaning powerful, an allusion to the medicinal properties attributed to some of the species in the genus.

Potentilla fruticosa L. is commonly known as Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Tor Cuigmhearach*) in Ireland, *Fingersträucher* in Germany, and Gold Hardhack or Widdy in North America Staff of the L.H. Bailey Hortorium (1976). The botanical nomenclature for shrubby potentilla is unfortunately rather confusing with botanists divided as to which should be given specific status.

Today botanists favour grouping shrubby potentillas into four species, *P. fruticosa, P. parvifolia, P. arbuscula* (synonym *P. rigida*) and *P. davurica*. However, for the purposes of the National Plant Collection® all have been placed under *Potentilla fruticosa* and the other species given varietal status.

Under cultivation the botanical classification has become further confused by the development of many hybrids, usually resulting by chance from unknown parents; the earliest examples of which were confusingly given names of Latin form. It is unlikely that any of the commercially available plants in Europe now represent the wild species or its natural varieties as originally described in botanical literature.

With a world-wide circumpolar distribution in the Northern Hemisphere through America, Northern Europe and Asia it is natural that many regional variations exist — even a single local population (such as in the Burren) exhibits numerous individual differences in flower, leaf size and colour.

Their natural habitats vary considerably and they can cope with a wide range of conditions varying from wet wind-swept locations in England, seasonally flooded limestone pavements in Ireland and Scandinavia to dusty prairie-like parts of the Caucasus.

The species was named by Carl Von Linné (1707–1778) who recorded it on the Baltic Islands of Gotland and Öland in 1741 during a botanical expedition. The date of the introduction of the shrubby potentilla to English gardens is not recorded but no doubt their floriferous nature had long been noted by those walking in Teesdale.

It wasn't until the introduction of seed from Asian populations by such plant hunters as George Forrest, Reginald Farrer, Joseph Hers, E.H. Wilson and Frank Kingdon Ward in the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th century that serious development of the species as an ornamental plant commenced.

A gardening encyclopaedia of 1829 gave only four variants (Loudon, 1829) yet some one hundred and forty years later the famous Hillier Nurseries of Winchester, England listed thirty-seven (Anon. 1973). Today over one hundred and fifty cultivars have been recognised although few nurseries offer more than a dozen or so.

With such a wide range of shapes and sizes the cultivars have found many uses in the garden. The prostrate types are ideal for the alpine rockery, on low hollow walls or as groundcover; the medium height spreading forms as specimen shrubs and those which are tall and upright are useful as low hedges or screens.

Why form a National Shrubby Potentilla Collection ?

Potentilla fruticosa L. occurs naturally in four counties in Ireland being especially prevalent in the Burren area of County Clare. Dr. E.C. Nelson formerly taxonomist at National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, was instrumental in establishing a collection at Glasnevin (a precursor of the National Plant Collection© at Ardgillan). In his recent publication *A Heritage of Beauty: The Garden Plants of Ireland an Illustrated Encyclopaedia* Nelson (2000) lists all cultivars of Irish origin.

In the collection at Ardgillan the Irish form of *Potentilla fruticosa* L. (described as var. *hibernica* in some literature) is represented as well as a number of selections; some of which have yet to be introduced to Irish horticulture such as 'Burren Blue', 'Ceo Gorm' (Blue Mist) and 'Ór Bhoirne' (Burren Gold). This material although not yet introduced commercially has definite potential for landscape use.

Other shrubby potentillas classified as of Irish origin are usually the result of accidental hybridisation of mainland European or Asian material. Many of the cultivars listed below originated from the famous Slieve Donard Nursery, Newcastle, Co. Down.



P. fruticosa 'Longacre Variety'



P. fruticosa 'Sophie's Blush', one of the first pinks to come onto the market but now replaced by newer varieties which hold their colour better.

Table 1: Some Shrubby Potentillas of Irish Interest:

Cultivar	Date	Flower Colour	Origin	Introduced By
'DAYDAWN'	Pre 1968	Peach pink / Cream	Branch sport of 'Tangerine'	Slieve Donard Nursery, Newcastle, Co. Down.
'DODONA CAMEO'	1980s	Pink fading to white	'Snowflake' x 'Royal Flush'	Lynn Mitchell / NBG Glasnevin. Dublin. 9
'ROWALLANE SEEDLING'	Pre 1955	Golden yellow	Chance seedling	Slieve Donard Nursery as 'Donard Gold'
'DONARD ORANGE'	1980s	Orange fading to golden yellow	Chance seedling	Northumbria Nurseries U.K.
'LONGACRE VARIETY'	Pre 1950	Mid-yellow	Chance seedling	Slieve Donard Nursery
'MARROB'	Pre 1990	Deep cherry	Chance seedling Red	Blooms of Bressingham U.K. as 'Red Robin'
'SOPHIE'S BLUSH'	Pre 1980	Shell pink fading to white	Chance seedling	Abercorn Nursery, Baronscourt, Newtownards, Co. Tyrone.
'TANGERINE' 'TILFORD CREAM'	c. 1955 c. 1970	Tangerine-orange Creamy-white	Seedling selection Chance seedling	Slieve Donard Nursery Kevin Lawrence Nurseries, Tilford, U.K.
'WINIFRED WYNNE'	Pre WWII	White	Seedling of var. *Davurica* parentage	NBG Glasnevin, Co. Dublin

Note: The cultivar 'Daisy Hill' a yellow flowered variety which originated in the Daisy Hill Nursery, Newry, Co. Down, appears to have been lost to cultivation.



Left:
P. fruticosa var. *fruticosa* from seed collected on Öland (a Swedish Baltic Island) in 2001. These plants are the direct decendants of those recorded by Carl Von Linné in 1741



Right
P. fruticosa 'Ceo Gorm' ("Blue Mist")



Left
P. fruticosa 'Marrob'
(Sold commercially as 'Marian Red Robin' or 'Red Robin')



Right
P. fruticosa 'Abbotswood' one of the older good white varieties whose freely produced flowers contrast with the dark foliage

Design and Layout of the Collection

Ardgillan Demesne a 185 acre (75 ha.) public park with an important period residence is situated in a dramatic coastal location between Skerries and Balbriggan in north County Dublin. It has been managed by Fingal County Council (formerly Dublin County Council) since the early 1980s. As well as restoring the original formal Rose Garden and Victorian Walled Garden at Ardgillan; the County Council Parks Division has been steadily increasing the plant collection. The establishment of The National Plant Collection® of Shrubby Potentillas at Ardgillan is in line with this programme. Dominica McKevitt, the head gardener at Ardgillan, has been involved at all stages in setting up the collection.

The purposes of the Ardgillan Demesne collection are:

A) preserve as a "living library" all known varieties and cultivars of shrubby potentilla.

B) assess and compare both existing and new introductions for garden suitability.

C) determine correct nomenclature.

D) provide both an ornamental and educational feature.

Potentilla fruticosa has a great propensity to set viable seed and can produce prodigious quantities of seedlings during a single growing season. Due to the large numbers of very similarly named cultivars, it was vital that the layout of the collection would help avoid confusion between varieties or mistakes due to the emergence of seedlings in the collection. To this end an alpha-numeric grid system was devised with 3 specimens of each variety having a grid location within the collection. As an insurance policy against disease or other problems, a backup collection of 2 stock plants of each variety is maintained at the county council nursery at Turvey some distance from Ardgillan. The collection has been planted in the small rectangular paddock at Ardgillan which at some stage in the past was an orchard for the castle. Financial assistance for the restoration of the path system was provided under the Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Programme and the main planting of the collection took place in 2000 and 2001. In 2002 National Plant Collection® status was granted by the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG). The NCCPG is a British charity established in 1978 and dedicated through the National Plant Collection® scheme to conserving plants in cultivation.

Other design issues of key importance were the minimisation of maintenance, allowances for size changes within the collection, plant material requirements including irrigation and the provision of easy access for visitors. On account of the very seasonal aspect of the collection it was vital to provide good structure to the

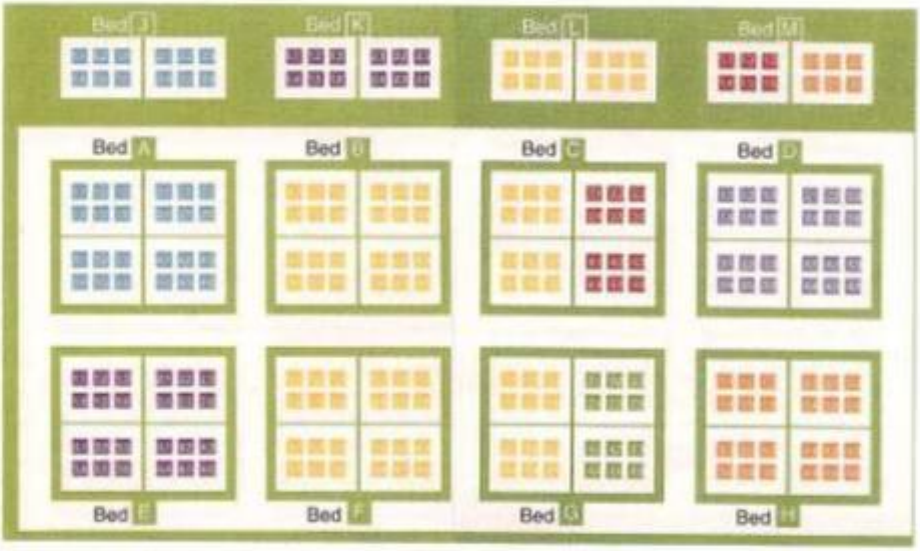


Fig 1: Shrubby Potentilla Collection — beds laid out in alpha-numeric grid

collection layout and a pleasing backdrop to plant material was provided by a grid of yew hedging. The provision of accurate interpretative material is also essential and a brochure listing the types of Potentilla in the collection is available. The collection has been themed from bed to bed on the basis of country of origin and or time of introduction and due to the proximity of the various varieties it provides excellent opportunities to compare one against the other and this aspect will it is hoped lead to the unravelling of some nomenclature issues.

Advantages of Holding a National Plant Collection®

The advantages of holding a recognised national collection are many. At Ardgillan the potentilla collection provides an additional new dimension to the gardens. It is an important attraction for visitors to the gardens and it is in keeping with a 'Centre of Horticultural Excellence' ideal for Ardgillan. The potentillas complement the National Collection of Olearia at Talbot Botanic Gardens, Malahide Castle. It is a source of inspiration and pride for staff involved in the project. It is an important educational resource and provides a focus for contact with other collections and experts in various related aspects of horticulture and botany. The Collection is helping to conserve some of the now very rare varieties of the species as well as demonstrating the wide range of varieties which exist both new and old. It is a very useful focus for publicity for attractions and events at Ardgillan.

The Collection does however require a long term commitment of resources and in particular is demanding in terms of the discipline required when it comes to the maintenance of accurate records and the ongoing need to source and or propagate new material. It is essential to maintain enthusiasm for the project over the long term

Future Plans for the Collection

It is hoped that the collection will continue to increase in number albeit at a slower rate than in recent years. It is intended that the collection will continue to be the focus for open days, talks, seminars etc. and that photographic records of the collection will ultimately be available. Is also intended to continue to develop local expertise in propagation and management of the collection. Copies of the collection brochure and collection list can be obtained from Fingal County Council Parks Division, County Hall, Swords, Co. Dublin

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[1] *Kevin J. Halpenny, Parks Division, Fingal County Council, County Hall, Swords, Co. Dublin*

[2] *Wilfrid F. Simms, 9 Briars Ryn, Pillaton, Saltash, Cornwall, PL126RA*

KEITH LAMB

THE GARDEN AT WOODFIELD

WOODFIELD HOUSE was built in 1733. During the centuries there were three changes of family name due to the lack of a male heir — first Gee, then Fuller and now Lamb.

The earliest record we have of a garden here is an estate map dated 1765. This shows a formal garden in front of the house, with topiary. To the west of the house was a hop yard, on the other side an orchard. The latter was the last feature to survive, into the early years of the twentieth century. Otherwise, scarcely a trace remains of these landscaped efforts, though there are fine groups of beech trees close to the house.

Never again was there to be such an elaborate layout. The house was let for a brief period in the early nineteen hundreds. The tenants did not leave much trace behind them but a wall studded with nails for fruit trees, the site of an extensive vegetable garden and a grass tennis court in front of the house.

From then on, gardening was of the informal kind, with emphasis on plant species rather than garden hybrids. This fitted in well with my parents' mode of using Woodfield as a holiday home until their retirement.

My father laid out a small rock garden during the nineteen twenties, based on the precepts of Reginald Farrer. He utilised two embankments, one facing west, the other south. Among the plants he grew I recall encrusted and porphyrion saxifrages on the banks, with *Gentiana septemfida* var. *lagodechiana, Roscoea* spp and spring bulbs (fritillaries, chinodoxas and scillas) on the flat. In a shady corner grew *Meconopsis betonicifolia* (then a new plant in gardens) and primulas. *Cypripedium pubescens* flourished for several years. In a trough *Calceolaria darwinii* was a success.

My late brother was not a plantsman but kept the place going during his retirement in the nineteen sixties. Then, in turn, Helen and I retired here and took over the garden. From my father I inherited the love of natural wild species, with some emphasis on rock garden plants.

As I write this in April the most attractive area is the woodland garden. My mother's initial efforts to make a woodland garden under the beeches have led to sheets of wood anemones — the blue *Anemone apenina*, the yellow *A. ranunculoides* and the large-flowered form of our native *A. nemorosa*, *A.* 'Lady Doneraile'. Accompanying this is a sheet of the deep pink scented *Cyclamen repandum*, the most-free seeding of the several species of cyclamen grown here. Unlike the more familiar species, the tubers of this one bury themselves deep in the soil, even while still seedlings.

At this time of year trilliums are a striking feature near the beeches. The most conspicuous is *Trillium chloropetalum*, spreading widely from seed, which comes up freely even in the limestone gravel. Bluebells tend to be a nuisance and would not be admitted were we to start planting this area again.

During summer there is not much to see under these trees, though ferns and solomon's seal do well. The rains of autumn bring to life the dormant flowers of *Cyclamen hederifolium* and these are the last great features of this part of the garden.

Part of the rock garden suffers from being rather near the trees. This means we rely mainly on spring bulbs (*Scilla siberica, Chionodoxa luciliae, Fritillaria meleagris, Anemone blanda*, and *Corydalis* species) though celmisias and dodecatheons do well. Primulas and meconopsis brighten a shady corner. Nearby, a large yew tree is a survivor from early times. Under its branches the tender *Cyclamen libanoticum* has flourished for years, along with the small-flowered *C. balearicum*. *Cyclamen cilicium* does well too and seeds itself

freely. An adjacent small peat bed accommodates two dwarf rhododendrons. In the partial shade of these we grow our bravest venture — hardy cypripediums. We were set off by a very generous gift of *C. reginae*, which has formed a nice clump. We also recall that my father grew *C. pubescens*, so we have ventured to try others — success or failure to be reported in due course.

The other alpine area is a walled enclosure — the kennel yard. Here we have made a series of raised beds, mainly of lime-free soil. Numerous small species grow here — species that might be overlooked in the main garden.

The last remaining area to be mentioned is the Jungle Garden. This area once bramble-infested and with poplar trees, was gradually reclaimed. The guiding idea here was to plant species with big leaves which would keep their own ground. A few small trees were put in, (*Sorbus, Magnolia, Prunus* etc.) but the major impact on entering this area is the huge-leaved *Gunnera manicata*. Hostas grow here with different species of solomon's seal. In spring, the light green fronds of shuttlecock fern are quite spectacular under the trees. Otherwise it is a summer garden, so we have to put in various erythroniums, double bloodroot (*Sanguisorba canadensis* 'Plena'), trilliums and other early flowering plants to brighten up what is otherwise a rather dull area in springtime. Maintenance is low. We even let the leaves and foliage of all the plants fall back as in nature, but this could not be done in an area visible from the house as it would look too untidy during the winter months.

Gardening can be practised in many ways, from the strictly formal to the semi-wild. The garden at Woodfield could be described as approaching the latter. We feel that this style is suited to this rural area and has the advantage of relatively low maintenance.

Woodfield House, Clara, Co. Offaly.

E. CHARLES NELSON

WILLIAM ROBINSON'S *THE WILD GARDEN*: ORIGINS AND EDITIONS, 1870–2003

Introduction

IT is undeniable that relatively few people have ever owned a copy of *The wild garden*, yet it is also undeniable that it has been one of the most influential horticultural books ever published. *The wild garden* has a special resonance for Irish gardens and gardeners, not simply because the author was born, educated and trained as a gardener in Ireland, but because the style of gardening advocated in the book fits so well into the Irish landscape, succeeds so well in the Irish climate and, some might say, appeals to the Irish character. [1]

The wild garden was a young man's book, yet it was not the author's first book, nor was it to be his last. William Robinson (1838–1935) was just 32 years old when *The wild garden* was published — he had already made his reputation as an iconoclast among horticultural authors with *Gleanings from French gardens* and *The parks, promenades and gardens of Paris*. Most remarkably *The wild garden* was the last and arguably the most original of a diverse trio of books that Robinson was writing during 1869 and which were published in 1870. Its "companions" were a now little-known work entitled *Alpine flowers for English gardens*, and the even more obscure *Mushroom culture: its extension and improvement*.

Writing *The Wild Garden*, 1869–70

Counting editions and re-issues, William Robinson published or contributed to around seventy books during his lifetime. The first was *Gleanings from French gardens: comprising an account of such features of French horticulture as are most worthy of adoption in British gardens*, published by Frederick Warne & Co. about May 1868; the author himself described it as a "very poor affair".[2] Robinson sent an inscribed copy to the Revd Samuel Reynolds Hole on 18 May,[3] and the book was reviewed in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* on 23 May and in *The Athenaeum* on 27 June.

John Murray, famous as publisher of Charles Darwin's *On the origin of species* (1859), issued the sequel, *The parks, promenades, and gardens of Paris, described and considered in relation to the wants of our own cities and of public and private gardens*, twelve months after *Gleanings* — Vernon Lushington QC acknowledged a copy on 21 May 1869,[4] and *The Gardeners' Chronicle* and *The Athenaeum* reviewed this work on 29 May and 12 June respectively. Lushington commented that "I think your book is too profuse in illustrations. Of useful illustrations you can't have too many; but here views of gardens, and garden work wh. you *don't* recommend for imitation, are cumber and cost both you & the purchaser money."[5] In May 1869, when this work was issued, Robinson told Dr Dickson, his correspondent, that:

> ... I am now at work at "alpine plants" ... & shall have it and 3 other books ready before Xmas, in some of which I hope you will feel an interest. The first time I find myself in your neighbourhood I shall have great pleasure in calling upon you but I am so full of work & plans of work that I fear I am bound to remain in London without a holiday for a long time to come.[6]

This letter indicates feverish activity by Robinson in the spring and summer of 1869. His letters to his publisher corroborate this. On 18 July, writing to Robert F. Cooke, John Murray's kinsman and partner, William stated that "as soon as I can get three or four smallish books finished & have gathered a little more force, I propose to bring out the most complete cyclopædia of Horticulture ever written — alphabetically arranged and profusely illustrated."[7] By September, the possibility of a major garden flora was also being mooted by him.

The reference to work on "alpine plants" clearly signals *Alpine flowers for English gardens* which Robinson continued to write into the winter of 1869–70. John Murray published it in the spring of 1870 — reviews appeared in *Journal of Horticulture* on 7 April, *The Field* on 16 April, *The Gardeners' Chronicle* on 30 April and *The Athenaeum* on 9 July. The preface is dated 17 March, and the book included a chapter on plant-hunting which was an account of his visit to the Swiss and Italian Alps in June 1868. In his preface, Robinson related that he had "visited the Alps specially to see alpine flowers in wild state", and went on to make this apology:

> A word in explanation of the non-appearance of this book a year ago, as announced. It was to have been my first book; but I was unwillingly obliged to forsake it for a time to confute the argument and counteract the effect of the prejudice of various persons, who endeavoured to discredit my statements on the decided superiority of the French in some branches of horticulture of great public importance. This I first had to do to a large extent in various journals; then followed a book on the subject and that led to a much larger work, all of which delayed 'Alpine Flowers'.[8]

Indeed, Frederick Warne & Co. had advertised a book on alpines in *Gleanings from French gardens*, but it was eventually published by John Murray, with Robinson meeting much of the cost himself[9] as he had done for *The parks, promenades, and gardens of Paris*.[10]

Frederick Warne did publish the second of Robinson's 1870 books *Mushroom culture: its extension and improvement*. Both *The Gardeners' Chronicle* and *The Athenaeum* reviewed this on 9 July 1870.

Lastly, *The wild garden. Our groves and shrubberies made beautiful by the naturalisation of hardy exotic plants: with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers* was issued by John Murray in October 1870 while William was in the United States.[11] Contrary to what Judith Tankard stated in her introduction[12] to a 1994 facsimile of the "fifth" edition of *The wild garden*, Robinson had not been to America prior to completing the book and there is no evidence that he altered the text while he was abroad. Thus the original editions of *The wild garden* and *Alpine flowers for English gardens* were not informed by North American gardens and landscapes.

Reviews of *The wild garden* appeared in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* on 19 November, in *The Athenaeum* on 26 November (written by Dr Maxwell T. Masters, editor of *The Gardeners' Chronicle*), and, parsimoniously, in *The Field*, Robinson's employer at the time, on 3 December:

> It is due to our readers to say that portions of these lists, as well as of the essays on "wild gardening" which precede them, have already appeared in THE FIELD, for which reason we have contented ourselves with giving a brief description of the scope of the book.

The reviewer (probably Maxwell Masters, again) in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* opined that *The wild garden* was "a blow aimed at the vulgar craving for mere colour-effect in flower gardening and as such has our sympathy."

The Wild Garden: contents

A characteristic of Robinson's books is his economy with text. I do not mean that he used only as few words as necessary — he often did otherwise — but that once written and printed, he re-used entire articles, not just sentences and paragraphs, albeit with a small amount of editing. He was careful to make sure that neither publishing opportunities nor text were wasted. Many examples can be cited of Robinson re-using, with little or no alteration, extensive blocks of text — one must suffice. In November 1870 he stopped at Summit House, the highest point on the recently completed transcontinental railway as it traversed the Sierra Nevada in California.[13] He wrote a long article that was published in *The Field* on 24 December 1870. Five years later, the entire article, with some minor amendments and corrections, became a chapter in the second edition of *Alpine flowers for English gardens*. Of course, publishing an article in a periodical or newspaper earned him his basic income, while publishing the same text in a book provided royalties or profits.

The earliest traces of text re-used in *The wild garden* appeared in *The Field* on 9 May and 30 May 1868, when

unsigned articles headed "The naturalising of beautiful hardy plants" were published. These contain passages later incorporated into the first section, "Explanatory", and so were undoubtedly penned by him. But *The wild garden* had an even longer gestation. Robinson's articles on the gardens he visited in August 1863, published in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* between November 1863 and January 1865 contain comments that herald the main themes of *The wild garden*.

The main thrust of Robinson's argument in *The wild garden* is one of economy. He clearly saw the bedding-out fashion as extremely wasteful, not just of plants but also of the talents and energy of gardeners. "It should be distinctly borne in mind that the expense for this system is an annual one; that no matter what amount of money may be spent in this way, no matter how many years may be devoted to perfecting it, the first sharp frost of November merely prepares a yet further expense and labour." Instead of raising thousands of frost-tender plants for seasonal displays which had to be replanted again and again, hardy perennials and hardy annuals could be planted throughout a garden to provide long-lasting, long-lived and self-perpetuating displays at much less cost. By implication, gardeners could be released from this unending, repetitive work and could concentrate on more productive and profitable activities. He returns to the theme of economy when he relaunches his attack on the digging of beds and borders:

> ... every shrubbery and plantation surface ... is so needlessly and relentlessly dug over by the gardener every winter ... As I have said in "Alpine Flowers", no practice is more general, or more in accordance with ancient custom, than that of digging shrubbery borders, and there is none in the whole course of gardening more profitless or worse.

It is often said that in *The wild garden* Robinson sought to banish bedding-out from gardens — in fact he did not.[14] While he lambasted the "highest results ... in the shape of beds filled with vast quantities of flowers, covering the ground frequently in a showy way, and not unfrequently in a repulsively gaudy manner", he was careful not to utterly antagonise his likely readers. "It is also clear that, base and frightfully opposed to every law of nature's own arrangement of living things as is the bedding system, it has yet some features which deserve to be retained on a small scale."

> My object is ... to show how we may, without losing the better features of the mixed bedding or any other system, follow one infinitely superior to any now practised, yet supplementing both, and exhibiting more of the varied beauty of hardy flowers than the most ardent admirer of the old style of garden ever dreams of. We may do this by naturalising or making wild innumerable beautiful natives of many regions of the earth in our woods, wild and semi-wild places, rougher parts of pleasure grounds, etc., and in unoccupied places in almost every kind of garden.

Gaudy carpets of flowers were not Robinson's only *bête noir* at that time — as already mentioned, the winter-time digging of shrubberies, and the concomitant mutilation of shrubs were equally abhorrent to him.

There is one part of the first edition of *The wild garden* that rarely if ever receives comment[15] — the final part, Robinson's essay entitled "The garden of British wild flowers". As far as I can determine this portion of the book is the first attempt at the promotion of the planting of native plants in gardens in Britain and Ireland. By the nineteenth century the deliberate cultivation of indigenous species had been supplanted by the use of exotics, with the notable exception of ferns which were so extraordinarily fashionable during the mid-1800s. The regrettable excesses of the fern craze — pteridomania — were in terminal decline by the time Robinson started writing *The wild garden*. David Allen, the authority on Victorian pteridomania, noted that there was an abrupt falling-off of the market for books about ferns in 1869 as this particular gardening mania ran out of steam.[16] Robinson did refer to ferns in several places in *The wild garden*, but rather perfunctorily:

> As for the Ferns, it is needless to mention them, considering the immense attention that has been paid them of late years. Whole nurseries are now almost exclusively devoted to the production of British ferns and their varieties. My object is to encourage the culture of things that are comparatively neglected, and however graceful and beautiful ferns may be, and however indispensable the fernery,

> as an adjunct to the flower-garden, my readers have but to attempt the culture of the handsome British flowering-plants, combined, if the cultivator so desires it, with the best alpines, spring flowers, and herbaceous plants of all countries, to find infinitely more enjoyment therefrom than ferns are capable of affording.

While his espousal of the cause of wild plants is an exception to the rule, present-day readers may find aspects of the chapter reprehensible, especially his advocacy of removing orchids and other species from the wild and transplanting them into gardens — such activities were a hallmark of the fern craze and have been responsible, at least in part, for the decline of some of the rarer native species. But Robinson was writing at a time when conservation of wild species in natural habitats was not a concept familiar to gardeners, horticultural authors, or even to amateur and professional botanists.

Although it is often stated that the Robinsonian concept of the wild garden should not be confused with gardening with wild flowers or gardening for wildlife, the first edition of *The wild garden* contradicts that notion. Robinson promoted both the indigenous and the exotic for naturalisation. Why he removed the chapter from the second edition (1881) is a puzzle; it was only restored in the "fourth" edition (1894).

Editions of *The Wild Garden*

William Robinson not only recycled text — many extracts from *The wild garden* were reprinted in *The Field* throughout 1871 — but he also remodelled his books. *The English flower garden* is the prime example; sections were dropped or rewritten, and new ones added, through the various editions. The same occurred in the life of *The wild garden*.

It is generally stated that seven editions of *The wild garden* were published during William Robinson's lifetime, and that he had prepared material for an eighth edition which was not produced.[17] However, several of the editions are really only reprints or reissues without any alteration to the text. Since Robinson's death, three facsimiles have been published, each one using the text of the "fourth edition" of 1894 or the "fifth edition" of 1895 (for details of all editions and issues, see Table 1).

The first edition, as already noted, was published in the autumn of 1870 when Robinson was travelling in the United States. It was a plain, workaday volume without any illustrations save the anonymous, engraved frontispiece which showed a woman and a girl walking along a path in a presumably idealised garden that does not have any formal bedding-out.

The second edition, published in 1881, is in some ways the strangest edition. The new subtitle is virtually a political manifesto: *The wild garden: or, our groves and shrubberies made beautiful by the naturalisation of hardy exotic plants; being one way onwards from the dark ages of flower gardening, with suggestions for the regeneration of the bare borders of London parks*. There is a preface dated 28 May 1881, and the text and plant lists have been split into fifteen chapters. As already noted, the chapter on native wild flowers was removed. Like all the subsequent editions, it was illustrated with woodcuts mostly based on the work of Alfred Parsons.[18] For whatever reason, this edition bore the imprint "The Garden Office" indicating that Robinson published it himself under the auspices of his own periodical *The Garden*.

John Murray's name was restored as the imprint on the "third" edition, issued in 1883, but otherwise the chapter on wild flowers was still excluded and the polemical subtitle remained. Little if anything has been altered and this therefore is best regarded as the second issue of the second edition.

In the early 1890s Robinson decided that a revision was needed, and this was published as the "fourth" edition in 1894 by John Murray. "Forewords to new edition" are dated 18 April 1894, and the title has been shortened to *The wild garden or the naturalisation and natural grouping of hardy exotic plants with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers*. Given the textual alterations, including the restoration of the chapter on native plants, this is a veritable new edition and should have been numbered the "third". Some copies of this edition were bound in vellum, with silk ties, and possibly were intended for private distribution.[18]

Table 1 — EDITIONS, ISSUES AND FACSIMILES OF *THE WILD GARDEN* 1870–2003

DATE	TITLE	PLACE: PUBLISHER: PRINTER	EDITION/ISSUE
1870	*The wild garden. Our groves and shrubberies made beautiful by the naturalization of hardy exotic plants: with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers*	London: John Murray.	1st edition.
1881	*The wild garden: or, our groves and shrubberies made beautiful by the naturalization of hardy exotic plants; being one way onwards from the dark ages of flower gardening, with suggestions for the regeneration of the bare borders of London parks ... .*	London: The Garden Office; printed by R. & R. Clark, Edinburgh.	2nd edition (illustrated by Alfred Parsons).
1883	*The wild garden: or, our groves and shrubberies made beautiful by the naturalization of hardy exotic plants; being one way onwards from the dark ages of flower gardening, with suggestions for the regeneration of the bare borders of London parks ... third edition.*	London: John Murray; New York: Scribner & Welford.	2nd edition, reissue (illustrated by Alfred Parsons).
1894	*The wild garden or the naturalization and natural grouping of hardy exotic plants with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers ... fourth edition.*	London: John Murray.	3rd edition (illustrated by Alfred Parsons)
1895	*The wild garden or the naturalization and natural grouping of hardy exotic plants with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers ... fifth edition.*	London: John Murray: printed by Horace Hart, Printer to the University, Oxford.	3rd edition, second issue (illustrated by Alfred Parsons).
1903	*The wild garden or the naturalization and natural grouping of hardy exotic plants with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers ... fifth edition.*	London: John Murray: printed by the Edinburgh Press.	3rd edition, third issue (illustrated by Alfred Parsons).
1928	*The wild garden or the naturalization and natural grouping of hardy exotic plants with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers ... seventh edition.*	London: John Murray: printed by William Bredon & Son, Mayflower Press, Plymouth.	3rd edition, fourth issue (illustrated by Alfred Parsons).
1977	*The wild garden.*	Ilkley: Scolar Press.	Introduction by Robert Lane Fox; facsimile of 1894 "fourth" edition.
1983	*The wild garden or the naturalization and natural grouping of hardy exotic plants with a chapter on the garden of British wild flowers.*	London: Century Hutchinson & The National Trust (National Trust classics).	Introduction by Richard Mabey; facsimile of 1894 "fourth" edition.
1994	*The wild garden.*	Portland, Oregon, USA: Sagapress (a Ngaere Macray book).	Foreword by Peter Herbert; Introduction by Judith B. Tankard; Botanical revisions by Graham Stuart Thomas; Appendix II "Material supplied ... for the proposed eighth edition of 1932"; facsimile of 1895 "fifth" edition.
2003	*The wild garden.*	Dublin: Strawberry Tree (digitally printed, limited issue)	"A new illustrated edition annotated by E. Charles Nelson"; reprint of 1st edition text, with introduction by E. C. Nelson, and colour illustrations.

In 1895 John Murray released the "fifth" edition. In fact, again, this was not a new edition but a revised issue of the previous year's so-called fourth edition with a new title page. Some minor alterations were made in the illustrations and captions, but the index was not amended, so that the reference to *Aristolochia* is incorrect remaining as "74" whereas it should have been altered to 73. Two entirely new illustrations were inserted, an engraving of "Woodland Walk (Belvoir)" (p. 74) and "White willows in Hampshire ..." (p. 258).

Only 280 copies of this issue were produced; they cost one guinea each. Printed on handmade paper from a French paper mill by Horace Hart, "Printer to the University", Oxford, the copies had gilt decorations and were bound in vellum.[20] There were apparently copies of this issue in John Murray's stocks in 1920 (company records indicate that 34 "vellum" copies were disposed of in 1920 and 38 in 1921).[21]

The revised issue was again reissued in 1903, when William Robinson was 65 years old. This third issue was printed by the Edinburgh Press, 9 & 11 Young Street, and again was mis-numbered the fifth edition.

When he was almost 81, in 1919, Robinson decided it was time to declare that he was giving up supervision of his books, so he wrote to John Murray:[22]

> I have given up printing, engraving and publishing and now trust to you to take the books — that is any deserving of life — into your hands.
>
> The *"Wild Garden"* needs no change. It has passed through several editions and is well drawn and engraved, and deserves reissuing, perhaps, if the ways of the trade allow it. All the illustrations being good woodcuts, [it] should be printed on real paper by some house accustomed to deal with woodcuts, of whom there are, I fear, few left.

Nothing happened for several years, perhaps mainly due to the stock of copies of the 1903 re-issue and also of the vellum-bound 1895 issue. On 10 April 1923 Robinson wrote to John Murray pointing out that in his opinion "the last & best edition was [that] printed at Oxford", and that very slight changes were needed by him. He wanted Murray to publish a new edition on the same basis as before — a half-share in profits.[23] But by now the aged author was not just irascible but quite out of touch with reality and Murray responded tactfully:

> We could not undertake the book on the half-profit system, for even if all are sold we should realise a loss; but if you care to allow the profits to be divided 2/5 for yourself and 3/5 for us we would engage in the speculation for old friendship's sake and because the book is a really good one. I am afraid that is the best offer we can make.[24]

Again stalemate. But in 1928, contrary to his previous announcement about giving up book production, Robinson decided to have *The wild garden* reprinted anyway and informed John Murray that "I am having the / what is to be / last edition of the *"Wild garden"* [reprinted] & printing it at my cost."[25] William Brendon & Son (Mayflower Press) of Plymouth was the printer he chose, but the relationship was fractious, William Brendon complaining to John Murray "You know the difficulties, dealing with the old gentleman, positively. I cannot decipher some of his writing."[26] When finally produced Robinson, ever the perfectionist but also, more crucially perhaps, prone to swings of mood, complained furiously about the binding and threatened to sue. Asked by John Murray about promoting it, he responded that "The main thing to say is the revision of the book nearly 60 years after the first issue & the author well as ever in his own garden."[27] This Plymouth-printed version is called the "seventh" edition, but is yet another reissue of the 1894 edition.

Three years later, on 4 June 1932, William Robinson sent John Murray material for a new edition: "Could you add this to my Wild garden as a little supplement and oblige."[28] John Murray declined to oblige. *The wild garden* had run its course, for a time. The text Robinson wrote for this has survived and was printed in 1994 as an appendix to the most recent facsimile. The first sentence, however, displays that the 94-year-old Robinson was no longer able to remember accurately:

> As to the origin of my ideas of the Wild Garden, I think they first occurred to me along the banks of the Southern Railway between East Grinstead and West Hoathly. Sometimes when I went through the station I had a pocketful of seeds of some bush or plant which I used to scatter about, usually forgetting all about them afterwards, but most certainly they all came up again. These adorned the banks for some time, but the powers in the office decreed that all bushes and plants along the banks were to be destroyed, and so mine perished, but I think the roots are there yet.[29]

Apart from the lack of any mention of railway embankments in the original edition of *The wild garden*, and the equally obvious omission of any suggestion about deliberately sowing seeds of bushes or other plants in places outside the confines of a garden, Robinson was mis-remembering the true origins of his book much more than six decades previously. The Lewes and East Grinstead Railway,[30] which linked West Hoathly and East Grinstead, did not open until 1882, twelve years after the publication of *The wild garden*.

Envoi

William Robinson's friend Sir Frederick Moore, Keeper of the Royal (now National) Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, wrote to him on 12 December 1916: this incomplete fragment of the letter was published in a previous issue of *Moorea*.[31]

> Dear Mr Robinson
>
> I did not want you to trouble replying to my letter. Thanks very much for doing so. I am afraid I am a Philistine and I always maintain that in front of a building on formal ground, uneven herbaceous bedding is unsuitable, but I freely admit that so called bedding out can be well done and can be badly done. I only saw Kew in July. I never look at the bedding out as it does not interest me in any way, so I am not in a position to speak about it. I do know that I am getting pretty sick of paved gardens, stone paths, etc, which have now become very fashionable. I consider those paved paths are hot in summer and uninviting and I do not care for pergolas in our climate. On a small scale in a suitable place I can tolerate them. In Ireland we court sunshine and a winter pergola to my eye is absolutely repellant. It is well there is so much divergence in thought and view and also so much independence, that is what makes English flower gardening so good. The architect, whether you call him garden architect or not, runs on definite lines which are rarely varied. I have a clear recollection of your grand fights in the eighties for Nature development in the garden, which appeals to me immensely, and your "English Flower Garden" is by far the best thing ever done in that way, that is why I do not like to see even the name of "architect" mentioned by you in connection with gardening. I have tried to keep formality of every sort out of Glasnevin, and I think the lower part of the garden about the pond, rock work, etc, would please even as severe a critic as you are.

William Robinson, it is sometime argued, was inconsistent, modifying, even reversing, his opinions, not infrequently altering his current horticultural *bête noir*, yet the concept of the wild garden was something he did not disavow or radically alter. Perhaps more than any other Victorian author — and almost all his important books were published, and all his journalistic endeavours took place within Queen Victoria's reign — he contributed to the divergence of thought and view referred to by Sir Frederick Moore. Diversity and independence remain the cornerstones of all good gardens. Moore did not say so directly but he implied that good gardens also need diverse gatherings of good plants. William Robinson must also be acknowledged as a writer who promoted only the best as he knew it — he had no time for the inferior and was as severe a critic of the gaudy as of the downright weedy among plants.

The wild garden is shot through with diversity, economy and simplicity. For its time it was audacious, and it is very remarkable that the ideas and schemes that Robinson proposed in it took hold. It is not too much to assert that *The wild garden* is a quintessential book and that the best Irish gardens, small and large, would not be so brilliant and so diverse had it never been written.

NOTES AND SOURCES

1 This article is a revised and augmented extract from E. C. Nelson, 2003. Introduction, pp ix-xxiv in W. Robinson, *The wild garden*. Dublin, Strawberry Tree (ISBN 0-904004-05-9).

Only one full-length biography of William Robinson has hitherto been published: Mea Allan, 1982. *William Robinson 1838-1935 father of the English flower garden*. London, Faber. Unfortunately we are often left guessing where Mea Allan obtained her reported facts, as she did not provide a comprehensive bibliography and notes about her exact sources. Subsequent accounts of Robinson's life are usually derived uncritically from Allan.

That he was born in Ireland on 15 July 1838 is not doubted, but neither the parish nor the county of Robinson's birth has ever been established. Much nonsense has been written about his origins, and many dubious statements made regarding his family's background, but the fact remains that he himself never accounted for his birthplace and no documents have been found to prove any of the claims that he was, for example, as too frequently stated without any justification, a native of County Down. For commentary on Robinson's early life, based on new research, see the essay cited at the start of this note, the papers noted in following paragraphs, and E. C. Nelson, 2004. William Robinson, in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

It must also be repeated (see E. C. Nelson, 1983. An Irish bachelor as father of the English flower garden. *Moorea* **2**: 54–56) that there is no evidence Robinson ever worked in the Royal Dublin Society's Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. Only one man with that surname (his Christian name was John) is known to have worked there between 1795 and 1945 (see E. C. Nelson, 1990. They gardened Glasnevin: a register of gardeners, labourers, student-apprentices and lady gardeners in the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, Dublin, 1795–1945. *Occasional papers (National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin)* no. 4).

Regarding Allan's presumption that William Robinson and his younger brother had a reunion with their estranged father in San Francisco during 1870, see W. H. King & E. C. Nelson, 2004. William Robinson in North America 1870. *Studies in the history of gardens and designed landscapes* 24 (2): 116–132 (an illustrated summary was published in *The Irish garden* **12** (8): 54–57. (September 2003)). We conclude that "The San Francisco reunion between father and sons seems to be of Miss Allan's imagining."

2 William Robinson (hereafter WR) to Dr Dickson (possibly Dr Robert Dickson (1808–1875) who lectured on botany at St George's Hospital, London), 22 May 1869; original ms in Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia (tipped into a copy of W. Robinson, 1869. *The parks, promenades and gardens of Paris*).

3 Allan, 1982: 79; original ms in Lindley Library, Royal Horticultural Society, London (tipped into a copy of W. Robinson, 1868. *Gleanings from French gardens*).

4 Transcribed in Allan, 1982: 94; original ms in Lindley Library, Royal Horticultual Society, London.

5 Allan, 1982: 94 (see note 4).

6 WR to Dr Dickson, 22 May 1869 (see note 2).

7 WR to Robert F. Cooke, 18 July 1869; original ms in archives of John Murray Ltd., London (hereafter cited as JML). This remarkable archive has recently (March 2004) been acquired by the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

8 W. Robinson, 1870. *Alpine flowers for English gardens*. London, John Murray.

9 e.g. WR to Robert F. Cooke, 18 July 1869, 28 December 1869; original mss JML.

10 WR to Dr Dickson, 22 May 1869 (see note 2).

11 For a detailed account of Robinson's 18-week visit to Canada and the USA, see W. H. King & E. C. Nelson, 2004 (note 1 above).

12 J. Tankard, 1994. Introduction, pp [xi]–xix, in W. Robinson, *The wild garden*. Portland, Oregon, Sagapress. Furthermore, referring to Frederick Law Olmsted, Tankard (1994: xiv–xv) noted that Olmsted owned a copy of *The wild garden* and that he had "suggested that Calvert Vaux should follow the book carefully in laying out The Rambles [sic] in Central Park". This is unlikely given that The Ramble had been designed and laid out before Robinson's visit to North America and, moreover, before *The wild garden* was published. In fact, Robinson saw "The Ramble" during his visit to New York and later wrote (1872. *The Garden* **2**: 60) praising this feature of Central Park: "The many tortuous walks near the lake are those of the "Ramble", a densely-wooded and wild plantation, full of wild flowers in spring and early summer. The want of openness shown in it is the result of design, and good design."

13 W. H. King & E. C. Nelson, 2004 (note 11 above).

14 For an exemplary review of Robinson's opinions, inconsistencies and misrepresentations, see B. Elliott, 1985. Some sceptical thoughts about William Robinson. *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* 110 (5):

214–217. (Dr Elliott spoke on these topics at an IGPS symposium, marking the 50th anniversary of Robinson's death, on 21 November 1985; see R. Sullivan, 1986. William Robinson symposium. IGPS *newsletter* **19**: 6-7.)

15 One laudable exception is A. L. Helmreich, 1997. Re-presenting Nature: ideology, art, and science in William Robinson's "Wild garden", pp 81–111 in J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (editor) *Nature and ideology: natural garden design in the twentieth century*. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC (Dumbarton Oaks colloquium on the history of landscape) (available on-line via http://www.doaks.org/WONAC.html). However, when commenting on botanical matters, Helmreich displays a lack of understanding of the botany of, and the history of botany in, Britain and Ireland, and manages to makes several false statements, including these: "But Robinson's argument for British gardens was flawed. He failed to distinguish between wild and native plants, using the terms interchangeably. In addition, although he spoke of gathering plants from the entire [sic] Isles, most of his discussion focused on "English trees, shrubs, and plants"."

16 D. E. Allen, 1969. *The Victorian fern craze. A history of pteridomania*. London, Hutchinson.

17 Appendix II "Material supplied by William Robinson for the proposed eighth [sic] edition of 1932", pp [313]–318, in W. Robinson, 1994. *The wild garden*. Portland, Oregon, Sagapress.

18 J. Tankard, 1993. William Robinson and the art of the book. *Hortus* 7 (3) (no. 27): 21-30.

19 J. Tankard, 1994 (see note 12 above).

20 J. Tankard, 1994 (see note 12 above).

21 Archives of John Murray Ltd, London.

22 WR to J. Murray Ltd, 9 July 1919; original ms JML.

23 WR to J. Murray Ltd, 10 April 1923; original ms JML.

24 J. Murray Ltd to W. Robinson, 20 April 1923; copy in archives JML.

25 WR to J. Murray Ltd, 28 November [1928]; original ms JML.

26 W. Brendon to J. Murray Ltd, 10 December 1928; original ms JML.

27 WR to J. Murray Ltd, 14 February [1929]; original ms JML.

28 WR to J. Murray Ltd, 4 June 1932; original ms JML.

29 W. Robinson, 1994: 313 (see note 17 above).

30 This line was built following an 1877 Act of Parliament, promoted by the Earl of Sheffield, which, with a subsequent Act (1878), laid down that four passenger trains should run each day between Lewes and East Grinstead with stops at Sheffield Bridge, Newick and West Hoathly. Thus, Robinson could not have begun sowing seeds at West Hoathly until 1882 at the earliest, and most probably did not do so until after he had become established at Gravetye Manor, after 1885. (Information from http://www.bluebell-railway.co.uk/bluebell/chist04.html accessed on 10 February 2003.)

31 See E. C. Nelson, 1986. William Robinson's letters to Frederick and Phylis Moore. *Moorea* **5**: 29–37.

Acknowledgements

For my research on William Robinson, which began more than 20 years ago and continues, I have received facilities and help from Lieutenant-Colonel Philip Haslett, Major-General, F. D. Moore, Gordon St George Mark, Mary Taylor, Ruth Duthie, Nick Robinson, Virginia Murray (John Murray (Publisher) Ltd, London), and the staff of the following institutes and archives; National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin; Representative Church Body Library, Dublin; Lindley Library, Royal Horticultural Society, London; Linnean Society, London; Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia.

Paddy Reilly delved into dusty archives in Dublin. Bill King has "ransacked" the extraordinary Family History Library of the Church of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, for traces of William Robinson and his family. If I have omitted anyone, I apologise.

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IRELAND'S WILD ORCHIDS

Plates by Susan Sex; text by Brendan Sayers
2004. Large format hardback 13ins x 19ins; 200 pp.
Limited edition of 700. Privately published by the authors, Co. Dublin

Ireland's Wild Orchids is a beautiful book the publication of which must surely rank as one of the botanical publishing highlights of recent years. It essentially consists of an iconography of Irish native orchids and associated text. As the author and artist explain, the project took some six years to complete — a remarkably short period for such a fine work.

Philip Cribb of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, has contributed an excellent overview of the subject of the book in its foreword. He finishes with a timely reiteration of the dangers that the orchid flora faces from the profound, one might say even disastrous, changes in the Irish landscape which have been wrought by the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union.

The author of the text, Brendan Sayers, a well-known authority on Central American orchids is based at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin; here he has turned his attention to the wild orchids of his native island with an excellent text that complements Susan Sex's beautiful watercolour illustrations. Susan has been associated with Glasnevin as a botanical artist for a number of years and has been awarded successive Gold Medals by the Royal Horticultural Society, London, for her work. The originals of all the thirty-five plates found in this book have been donated to the collections of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

The first section of the book is occupied by a series of short chapters on the biology and taxonomy of the Orchidaceae, with fairly detailed accounts of the structure of the flowers, the leaves, stems, pollination biology and hybridisation, finishing with an account of the ecology and habitat preferences of the Irish orchids and once again a plea for their continued protection and conservation.

The bulk of the work is made up of the plates and the one page of text which accompanies each of the thirty-five taxa represented. The scientific nomenclature used will be unfamiliar to many because it takes recent work on DNA into account which has resulted in such new combinations as *Anacamptis morio* and *Neottia cordata*. The plates and text are arranged in taxonomic order.

Everyone will have their own favourite plate, and indeed their own favourite orchid. For some the bee orchid with its remarkable bee-like flowers holds sway as the archetypically rare and exotic member of the Irish flora — although in truth it is not such a rare species as for example the tiny bog orchid, so difficult to find in its habitat that the field botanist who stumbles across it will feel truly that his day has been well spent. For some others Susan's majestic illustration of the common northern marsh orchid will strike home just how marvellous these wild orchids actually are. But my choice goes to the Irish Lady's Tresses orchid, both the real plant which is such a lovely and enigmatic thing, and the illustration, where it appears, like all the other species, in a naturalistic composition of associated plants. Indeed we get three for the price of one here, for it is shown accompanied by detailed studies of what I think of as Ireland's most beautiful wild flower, the grass of Parnassus, and by the purple loosestrife.

ICONOGRAPHY OF ITALIAN ORCHIDS

Plates by Anne Eldredge Maury; text by Walter Rossi
2002. Large format plates, unbound 340mm x 530mm and A4 paperback text 242pp.
both contained within outer card case.
Istituto Nazionale per la Fauna Selvatica "Alessandro Ghigi", Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO), Italy
Distributed *gratis* to *bona fide* institutions.

By sheer chance, there landed on my desk within the same week as Brendan Sayers and Susan Sex's work, another large-format iconography dealing with orchids, in this case Walter Rossi and Anne Eldredge Maury's work on the orchids of Italy, and it is perhaps interesting to compare these two publications.

The Iconography of Italian Orchids is in two parts: the plates which are unbound and of large format, and the text which is in a substantial A4-sized paper-bound volume of some 240 pages. A stout board outer case holds both the plates and book, but the danger of the loose plates becoming separated or damaged is obvious. The text, by Walter Rossi, is in Italian and English and follows a standard format for each of the taxa covered by the work: a map shows distributions by region within Italy (including Sardinia) and this is followed by a description and notes on the biology and ecology of the taxon. Altogether there are accounts and illustrations of 131 taxa (how much richer is the continental European flora than that of Ireland or Great Britain!).

The style of the plates is totally different to that of the Irish work. Each taxon is represented by a handsome watercolour illustration which sits in stark isolation on the page; the semi-naturalistic assemblage of associated plants favoured by Susan Sex has not been attempted. There are some detailed studies of individual flowers for some of the species. It is interesting to compare the works of the two artists — Susan Sex's freer, flowing style contrasts with Ann Eldredge Maury's more controlled, bolder approach.

The execution of the Italian illustrations is excellent and accurate, and it was interesting to peruse the various taxa within the *Ophrys sphegodes* group which in recent years have provided me with such bewildering but enjoyable problems of identification. Rather surprisingly, perhaps, and I must confess rather irritating, is that both the text and plates are arranged in alphabetical order of Latin name, so that closely-related species or varieties are not automatically adjacent to one another. Unlike the Irish publication, the author has adhered to a traditional classification and nomenclature throughout.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this work is that it is published and distributed free to bona fide institutions. How different in this respect is the attitude of the governments of so many of our EU partners to those of the UK and Ireland!

Paul Hackney

THE Irish Garden Plant Society was formed in 1981 to assist in the conservation of garden plants, especially those raised in Ireland. It also takes an interest in other aspects of the preservation of Ireland's garden heritage.

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