



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

April 2024

Welcome to the April newsletter.

I spent the month of March visiting parts of Australia and New Zealand where I visited as many gardens as I could, including the botanical gardens in Sydney,



Secret Garden

Adelaide and Brisbane. But one garden in Sydney that I especially enjoyed was a secret garden close to Sydney Harbour Bridge. It is called Wendy's Secret Garden after its creator, Wendy Whiteley. Wendy and her artist husband, the late Brett Whiteley, set up their family home in Lavender Bay in 1970 and lived there together for two decades. When Brett died in 1992, Wendy channelled her grief into cleaning the piles of overgrown rubbish which had been deposited over the years on the large valley, part of unused railway land at the foot of her house.



Brugmansia

Wendy and two friends cleared away blackberry vines and privet, removed dumped bottles, rusty refrigerators, rotting mattresses; Wendy never asked any authorities for permission, and no one told her to stop, so she kept on going. As Wendy cleared the site, she began creating a garden, as she said, like a giant painting. Rather than being horticulturally inspired, her gardening was driven by aesthetics, colour, form and beauty, and this has become a glorious collection of shrubs – both natives and exotics with herbs and towering trees that run along winding gully paths.

It is a wonderful tranquil place where the earthy scents of the rain forest undergrowth were combined with the scent of the flowers of the frangipani and brugmansia which were flowering when I was there. All this, as well as the majestic views of the sparkling harbour foreshore, framing the Harbour Bridge made it a magical place. **Sandra**

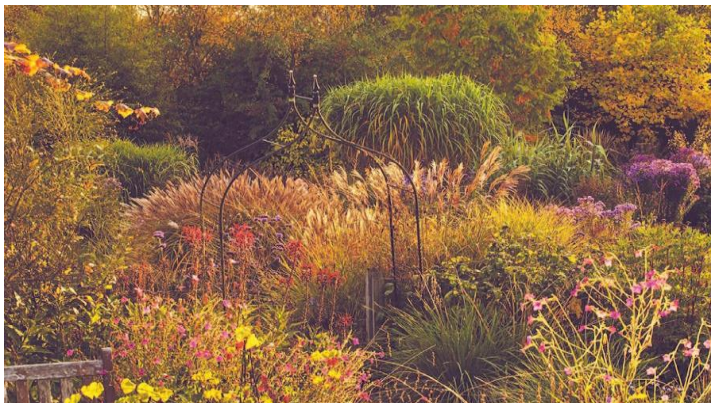


Earina orchid

However, New Zealand's South Island was no less magical with its stunning grandeur and the unforgettable magnificence of its landscapes. The rainforests, glaciers, and fjords were truly unforgettable. That, and seeing (what I later identified) as *Earina autumnalis* orchids growing on trees in the rain forest on the way to the Franz Joseph glacier, made it one of the special moments of the whole trip.



Welcome to April's speaker: Dr Andrew Ward. The subject of Dr Ward's talk will be Indispensable Plants.



Norwell Nursery Garden

Dr Andrew Ward and his wife Helen own and run Norwell Nurseries near Newark, Nottinghamshire specialising in rare and unusual herbaceous perennials. Dr Ward trained as a Plant Breeder and started Norwell Nurseries and Gardens 29 years ago with his wife Helen. The nursery is based around a one acre plantsman's garden which holds over 2,500 different species. The garden

has featured in many magazines including *Country Living*, *Country Life*, *English Gardener*, *Gardens Illustrated*, and the *RHS Garden* magazine. It has been included since 2013 in the highly prestigious publication *Great Gardens to Visit*. It is renowned for colour from spring but especially in the autumn. They also hold the National Collection of *Astrantias*. As Dr Ward says, "... the reason that we sell plants is because we are first and foremost gardeners, plants people who love creating beautiful scenes with flowers". Bring your cheque books as Dr Ward will be bringing plants to sell.

Plant of the Month. *Libertia grandiflora*, New Zealand Satin Flower. Tukauki or Mikoikoi



Having spent so much of my time recently immersed in plants from Australia and New Zealand, I had to choose one of their natives as plant of the month! The New Zealand Satin Flower, *Libertia Grandiflora* originates from New Zealand and was first seen by Joseph Banks on his expedition in late 1769 to February 1770. It is also known as the New Zealand Iris. In fact, *Libertia* is the only New Zealand genus in the worldwide Iris family. The genus receives its name from a nineteenth century Belgian woman, Marie-Anne Libert and it grows alongside streams and within forests on the North Island and to the north of the South Island..

This plant is very attractive and is best used as a textural addition to a planting scheme with its striking narrow, dark-green, grass-like leaves forming a clump of leafy fans. In early summer it produces beautifully delicate looking, long lasting bright white, orchid-like flowers on spikes to 1.2m, followed by round seed pods in autumn which turn black when they mature. It is equally good in mixed borders or for prairie planting. Cleve West used it extensively in the planting of Horatio's garden in Salisbury. It needs a sunny well drained spot. Soil not too wet. 2-3cm across, height 70cm-90cm

Club news: Visits



Gresgarth

We have organised two visits to gardens this summer. The first is to the famous garden at Gresgarth owned by renowned gardener Arabella Lennox-Boyd on Thursday, June 27th where we have arranged a private visit for the club and a talk by the head gardener. We will be meeting at Gresgarth at 11 am. Gresgarth is near Kirkby Lonsdale. The cost of the visit will be £15 which can be paid on the day. We will be making a list of people who want to visit the garden at the April and May

meeting and also a list of people wishing to car share/ give lifts.

The second visit that we have arranged is to Goldsborough Hall on Monday, July 29 at 2pm. The visit includes a tour of the house at 2pm, a garden tour at 3pm followed by tea and scones at 4pm. The cost of this visit is £22. We will need full

payment of this at the latest by the May meeting as the club has to pay the deposit for this by the end of April.

May's speaker: Jason Williams. Cloud gardener.

Improving the sound quality of our talks.

We have invested in a new audio system which is the same system used by our March speaker. We have done this so that in future every member in the room will be able to hear the speaker clearly. As a result of this investment, through better sound quality, it will be possible to invite people to join the club who are not able to attend in person. These new members will be able to access the talks online, meaning that any friends and relatives who wish to, will be able to whenever and wherever and they live in the world.

Gardening news and events:

Burnby Hall Tulip Festival: April 27 – May 11

Helmsley Walled Garden: Free tour of the garden with £7.50 entry fee Saturday May 4, 10.30

Stillingfleet NGS: Sunday May 12.1pm

Shipley Open Gardens: June 8 and 9 June

Midgley Open Gardens: 15 and 16 June



Once again, thanks to our volunteers who help with teas and coffees!

www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk