



# Oxenhope

## Gardening Club News

February 2024

### Welcome to the February newsletter.

A happy New Year to you all. We hope you will enjoy the 2024 programme, which is listed at the end of this newsletter. We are looking forward to introducing you to some exciting, up and coming, talented gardeners, as well as welcoming back some familiar faces.



I spent Christmas this year in Marrakech where as well as enjoying the sights and sounds of the wonderful medina, I also visited a number of the wonderful gardens for which Marrakech is famous: le Jardin Majorelle, Yves St Laurent's garden and le Jardin secret. But my favourite garden was The Anima garden, which is some way outside Marrakech on the road towards the Atlas Mountains.

This garden is the creation André Heller, one of the most influential multimedia artists in the world, who is known for his songs, texts, sculptures. An enthusiast of flora, he bought the botanical garden on Lake Garda in Italy, where hundreds of plant species from five continents are gathered. After falling under the spell of Morocco, André settled there in 2006 and undertook the project of another botanical garden in Marrakech. In 2016, after 8 years of work, in what was an 8-hectare wasteland, he finally created what is considered one of the most beautiful and imaginative gardens in the world. (The word Anima means literally "soul" in Greek). This lush space is

planted with 1001 plants including bougainvilleas, banana trees, palm trees and varieties of cactus, all in harmony with amazing sculptures.



Walking along the shady paths, between spectacular trees and shrubs, flowers and fragrances, pavilions and sculptures, with the view in the background of the snow-capped Atlas Mountains, was an unforgettable experience.

**Sandra.**

## Ben Preston, Cliff Bank Nursery: our speaker for February.



**Ben Preston, who is originally from Boston Spa, has worked at gardens across the UK.** He was at Goldsborough Hall, near Knaresborough and oversaw the expansion of York Gate Garden as head gardener from 2017 to 2022. He is also a lecturer at the Yorkshire School of Garden Design.

Members will remember Ben for the wonderful talk he gave to the club when he was head gardener at York Gate. Ben will be describing how he and his partner undertook the challenging work of bringing Cliff Bank nursery

at North Ripton back to life. The nursery was run for years by Joe Maiden, who was on radio gardening shows for 40 years until he died in 2015.

“Being a local lad and having a passion for plants, it has been a dream to open our own nursery so close to where I grew up. Our aspiration is to become a popular local nursery with a national reputation for growing interesting and unusual plants here in Yorkshire.’ The nursery specialises in rare woodland plants, unusual perennials and ornamental grasses as well as offering a yearly selection of hardy annuals

## Plant of the Month. *Lonicera syringantha*.



**Mention honeysuckle to anyone and the immediate image that comes to mind is the scented clambering climber.** Mention honeysuckle to gardeners and they will also think of the winter flowering scented shrubs such as *Lonicera purpusii* or *Lonicera frangantissima*. But how many of you know of *Lonicera syringantha*? This is rare & very lovely form of shrubby honeysuckle having grey-green foliage and producing masses of highly scented, tubular, pale lilac flowers. From April it blooms prolifically for many weeks on arching branches which will have

almost translucent red-orange fruits following on in autumn. The shrub originates in parts of China and Tibet where it grows in scrub at 3,500m and was introduced to Britain around 1890. A rare and unusual species well worth its place in a garden. Prefers well drained fertile soil in full sun/part shade. Deciduous & fully hardy in the severest continental climates including exposed upland locations in the UK and can withstand temperatures -20 (-4°F)

# Programme for 2024

**15<sup>th</sup> February** – Ben Preston – Cliff Bank Nursery

**21<sup>st</sup> March** – Samantha Hopes – Ashwood Nursery/ Hopes Garden Plants

**18<sup>th</sup> April** – Dr Andrew Ward – Norwell Nurseries & Gardens

**16<sup>th</sup> May** – Jason Williams, Cloud Gardener & Chelsea Medal winner

**6<sup>th</sup> June** – Club Plant Sale

**July** – Garden visits TBC

**August** – Garden visits TBC

**19<sup>th</sup> September** – Katy Merrington, the Hepworth – Our Key Speaker for 2024

**17<sup>th</sup> October** – TBC

**21<sup>st</sup> Nov** - Martin & Jill Fish – Simply Gardening & Senior RHS Show Judge

**AGM. February's meeting will start with the AGM and, as always, we would welcome new members to the committee so please think about joining us – we need you!**

We will be collecting subscriptions for the year, so could you either bring a cheque for £25 with your name, email address and phone number written on the back. If you prefer to pay by cash, please put it in a sealed envelope with your name, email address and phone number on the front of the envelope. To be more environmentally friendly, we will not be providing membership cards, just a receipt, which will be given out at the March meeting. All dates and details of meetings will be on the website, but if anyone wishes to have a print- out of the programme details, we can provide them

**We would also welcome volunteers to help with teas and coffees!**

## **Gardening Events:**

**RHS Harlow Carr:** Bath House Japanese Shop Feb 29-May 5

**Burnby Hall, York:** Snowdrop Sunday Feb 10, 10-1600

**Goldsborough Hall:** Snowdrop Sunday Feb 4 11-1600

[www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk](http://www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk)

