



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

February 2025

Welcome to February's newsletter and the start of the 2025 Garden Club programme.



Snowdrops herald the start of the gardening year and the promise of the joys of the gardening year to come, even when the weather is decidedly in its winter mode, as it was this weekend when I visited a Snowdrop Day held in a garden in Oxenhope.



The collection of snowdrops were started as a hobby, but to an outsider looks more like a love affair, with the gift from a friend of two snowdrop plants, Barbara's Double and Merlin. That was 30 years ago, since then the collection has grown to include around 250 varieties. This wonderful collection of snowdrops, all of which are meticulously labelled, are interspersed and complimented by hellebores and two stunning witch hazels, one of which I believe is hamamelis intermedia 'Jelena'. In the past, when they wanted to increase the range of snowdrops, they were able to visit various Galanthus Galas, many of which were

held in community halls around the country. However, sadly these galas no longer take place and now, choosing and buying new varieties is done using online specialist nurseries.



Mrs Macnamara

For the owner, the criteria in choosing a new plant is that it should be something demonstrably different, that looks good and flowers early (or very late-to extend the season). This includes a favourite, Mrs Macnamara, which is a strong and reliable variety flowering early in the New Year.

The busiest time in the garden is winter; early October and November, when most of the time is spent tidying, cutting away dead leaves and most importantly, top dressing generously with spent, mushroom compost. The owner has found that the most common problem with growing snowdrops is grey mould, for which the only solution is to throw them away. He wasn't prepared to divulge what the name was of his rarest variety: some galanthophiles will go to any lengths to add to their collections!

Sandra.

February's Speaker: Jason Williams: Cloud Gardener



Our planned speaker was Peter Savage from Bowden's nursery but, at short notice, he has had to cancel due to health problems. However, we have been very fortunate that Jason Williams, The Cloud Gardener, has agreed to come and talk to us.

You will remember that when Jason was with us last May, he told us that he had been fortunate to be elected as one of the new Churchill Fellows, elected by The Churchill Fellowship, which funds research to develop solutions to inspire change that will benefit and build a better society based on global learning.



Singapore gardens

Jason chose as his research to investigate urban green spaces and the positives and negatives of eco-tourism across the world. Jason has just returned from this research journey having visited Milan, Barcelona, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. Oxenhope Gardening

Club will be one of the first organisations he will be sharing his findings with. His report will be presented to the Greater Manchester Combined Authorities as well as the leadership team of the RHS which will influence policy across the region as well as nationally. It promises to be a fascinating evening.

Plant of the Month. Ribes Laurifolium.



Ribes laurifolium, is a species of flowering plant in the family **Grossulariaceae**, and the native range of this species is in China (West Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan) where it grows on slopes, riverbanks and rocky areas up to 2100-3600 m. It was discovered and introduced in 1908 by Ernest Wilson, according to whom it was rare in the wild. It is not a showy plant, but is interesting and welcome as it flowers as early as February or March and is wonderful in shady areas where it lights up the winter months. This low-growing shrub produces large, dark evergreen leaves which are a great backdrop to the flowers. The long, pale, ghost green

flowers are produced in racemes that elongate pendulously to 75-80mm in length. Just as nice are the leaf petioles which are a dramatic madder red. It combines beautifully with Hellebores, Cardamines, and Cyclamen Coum, growing well in part shade to high overhead shade and is happy in well-drained soil with regular summer moisture. It doesn't grow more than about a metre high, but it grows outwards to make a reasonable sized shrub. Wherever the branches rest on the ground, it roots itself. A good variety is Amy Doncaster.

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 you can either pay the subscriptions via BACs or by cheque for £30 with your name, email address and phone number written on the back. The bank details you need to subscribe to the club are as follows:

Bank account name: Oxenhope Gardening Club

Sort code: 20-45-14

Account Number: 10698709

Reference: your name

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:

If you are inspired to visit snow drop gardens this month, you have many to choose from: Here are some:

Burton Agnes: 1-23 February

York Gate: February 19-23

Kiplin Hall: 7 February -31 March

Nostell Priory: All February

Goldsborough Hall: February 23

Wentworth Woodhouse: February 1-28

Mount Grace Priory: February

www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk