



# Oxenhope

## Gardening Club News

September 2025

### Welcome to the September newsletter.

It has seemed such a very long summer, no doubt due to the hottest and driest summer ever. I hope your gardens have survived – at least your arm muscles have been strengthened by all the watering cans you must have been carrying around the garden!

Thank you to everyone for supporting the plant sale in June by either donating wonderful plants or buying them – or both! Thanks to you, the club made over £600, the largest amount we've ever made, which will help fund the cost of our speakers. **You are the best!**

### Summer garden visits



Harry's garden

Many of you will have visited the NGS gardens in Nab Wood in June; gardens owned by two of the members of the Oxenhope Gardening Club committee, Kathryn and Harry. Stunning gardens with lots of interesting plants. It was the first time these gardens were included in the NGS scheme and they had over 300 visitors.

### Circles Garden.



On June 11, a group of members had a wonderful day out visiting the Circles Garden, an organic and self-sustaining garden near Wakefield.

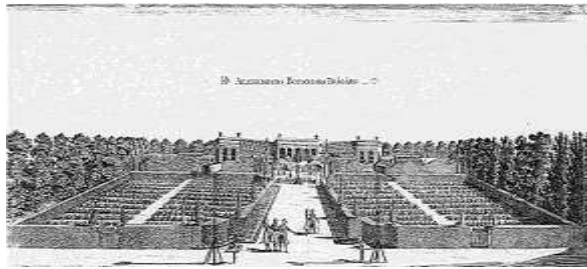


## Stillingfleet and Breezy Knees.

**On August 5<sup>th</sup>, members visited two gardens: Stillingfleet and Breezy Knees.** At Stillingfleet, members were given a guided talk around the gardens by the owner, Vanessa Cook. Vanessa identified and described many of the more unusual trees and shrubs in the garden. This was followed by very delicious homemade cakes and coffee. Many of us took advantage of the opportunity to buy plants we couldn't pass by at the nursery!

The group then went on to visit Breezy Knees, a garden near York described by Monty Don "as a beautiful modern garden on the grandest possible scale". A truly stunning garden, and, as for every visit this year, the sun shone.

## Carl Linnaeus Garden, Uppsala Sweden.



In July, I visited the botanical garden curated and developed in 1741 by Carl Linnaeus in the beautiful university town of Uppsala in Sweden. Carl Linnaeus started studying at Uppsala University in 1730 where he later became professor of botany. The garden has been restored and is kept as an 18th-century botanical garden, according to the specifications of Carl

Linnaeus. Today, approximately 1,000 species are cultivated here.



Peltaria in Kathryn's garden

I was especially interested to see that one of the plants he had chosen to include in the garden was *Peltaria alliacea*, which I and many other visitors so admired when visiting Kathryn's garden!





I had always wanted to visit this garden after I had discovered the history of this fascinating man who had instigated the changing of the previous confused naming of organisms. Before Carl Linnaeus, plants were known by their local, common name or a long descriptive name written in Latin by scientists. These methods were problematic as they varied from person to person and place to place; for example, a Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) in England is a different plant to a Bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) in Scotland. He created a brilliant standardised, hierarchical system for classifying and naming organisms- the binomial nomenclature system. Using this system means scientists, botanist and gardeners from around the world can all recognise the plant they are discussing. **Sandra.**

## Speaker of the month. Andrew Willcocks.



**Andrew is a horticulturist working in the woodland team at Harlow Carr. Andrew will be talking about wildlife and gardening:** This will include highlighting the issues in relation to insects and invertebrates found in gardens that are perceived to be a problem but are often actually beneficial.

Andrew will be donating a bird box, a bat box and a ladybird/lacewing box for the raffle.

## Plant of the Month: *Dictamnus albus*. Dittany or Burning Bush



**I saw this plant, which I hadn't encountered before, in the Carl Linnaeus garden, so I couldn't resist choosing to feature it as plant of the month: The genus was first described by Carl Linnaeus in 1753.** The burning bush, as known from the Book of Exodus, may or may not refer to this genus. It's natural range, from Western Europe, through the Middle East and all the way to Eastern Asia doesn't match (although it's close) with the events in the bible. However, the plant is so full of volatile oils, that it is possible for the plant to burn under the right conditions! The name "burning bush" derives from the volatile oils produced by the

plant, which can catch fire readily in hot weather, hence the comparison to the burning bush of the Bible. The daughter of Carl Linnaeus is said to have ignited the air once, at the end of a particularly hot, windless summer day, above the *Dictamnus* plants, using a simple matchstick!

The erect stems of the Dictamnus have aromatic leaves that carry heads of lily-shaped flowers, soft pink with purple veins. Its flowering period is from June to August and the flowers are followed by curious, star-shaped seed pods which are good for dried flower arrangements. The showy pink flowers are pollinated exclusively by bees, and only the largest visitors achieve what the plant is hoping for (pollen transfer) given the distance between the anthers and the style. The oils in all parts of the plant deter insects from eating them, as well as helping keep the plant cool in hot conditions through the botanical equivalent of sweating. Rabbits do not like them-their leaves are toxic! Caution, skin irritant in sunlight. In Central Europe, the Burning Bush can be found growing wild, along sunny borders of woods and in classic wild perennial borders. In the UK it can be grown in sun or part shade and is fully hardy, but needs a light, well-drained soil.

## **Speaker for October: Dean Charlton: Hooton's Walled Nursery.**

**The club had originally booked John Grimshaw for the October meeting, but he had to cancel at short notice.** We were very fortunate that we were able to book Dean Charlton, the young gardener recently featured on the Gardeners World programme covering the RHS show at Wentworth Woodhouse in July. Dean was a student at Great Dixter before setting up his nursery in the village of Hooton near Rotherham.

**The October meeting will offer all new visitors a free taster session.**

## **Gardening news and events:**

**Harrogate Flower Show: Newby Hall. September 19-21.**

**Hepworth Wakefield: Harvest Festival. September 20/21.**

**Apple Day: Newby Hall. September 28.**

**NGS Garden: Hutton Wandesley, Hutton YO26 7NA. September 14 10-4.**

**NGS Garden Jervaulx Hall, Ripon HG4 4PH. September 17 12-5.**

## **Tea and coffee rota**

**A big thank you to the great team who volunteer to help with the rota.** If you can help, please sign the rota sheet on the refreshment counter.



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