Oxenhope
Gardening Club News
June 2025

Welcome to the June newsletter.

As a committee, we always strive to give you a varied and interesting programme. In order to provide this, we like to feature, as much as we are able, up and coming gardeners as well as established ones.

So the committee were delighted when two of our speakers were featured on the BBC's coverage of the 2025 Chelsea Flower Show: Jason Williams, the Cloud Gardener who was our speaker in May 2024 and Colin Hickman of Hoyland Plant Centre, our speaker in April this year.

When Jason Williams applied for Chelsea he stressed that he wanted his show garden to be accessible "to show what can be done in a realistic way". His target audience was "people who would never even think about Chelsea". All of the plants in his Chelsea garden had been tried and tested on his Manchester balcony, and could be bought in a bog-standard garden centre. "What I didn't want to do is create some show garden masterpiece that people cannot replicate, or if they did, they would fail and be like, 'Ah, I don't have the green thumb', and stop.

"I'm hoping that there'll be some young gardeners and some budding young designers out there, who will see me and it might give them the belief that they can actually appear at Chelsea too. I mean, I have no gardening or landscaping experience whatsoever. So if I can make it, then so can they."

Colin Hickman from Hoyland Plant Centre also featured in the BBC coverage of the Chelsea Flower Show which highlighted them as double gold winners for their display. This year's display at Chelsea once again paid homage to miners such as his father, who worked at Elsecar Main Colliery for 45 years by featuring Nerines and Agapanthus blooming from the bells of brass instruments, previously used in the colliery band, which Mr Hickman fondly remembers playing in as a child.

 One of the first new plants they bred was a large leaf variegated Agapanthus called "Yorkshire Dream", which was displayed at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2007.(Our) first ever Chelsea was very nerve-wracking," Mr Hickman recalled. "I don't think we slept well for a few weeks before we went. Hoyland Plants will also be at the upcoming RHS Wentworth Flower Show in July.

Plant of the month: Veronica Gentianoides

Veronica gentianoides. This plant produces a mass of short spikes with pretty small pale blue flowers with sky blue whiskers which are carried above a thick carpet of evergreen, shiny, deep green leaves. The tall spires of light blue flowers appear in early summer. It's a magnet for bees and looks good growing among other perennials at the front of a mixed herbaceous border and is lovely for edging a border. It's particularly well suited to cottage garden schemes. Grow Veronica gentianoides in moist but well-drained soil in full sun to partial shade. Cut back the flower spikes after flowering.

Veronica is the largest genus in the flowering plant family Plantaginaceae, with about 500 species. Common names include speedwell, bird's eye, and gypsy weed. The genus name Veronica was chosen by Carl Linnaeus based on pre-existing common usage of the name veronica in many European languages for plants in this group. Its use in English was noted as early as 1572. The name probably reflects a connection with Saint Veronica, whose Latin name is ultimately derived from Greek, Berenice.

Veronica Americana is edible and nutritious, as are most species in the genus Veronica, and is reported to have a flavour similar to watercress. Native Americans used Veronica species as an expectorant tea to alleviate bronchial congestion associated with asthma and allergies. Veronica sp. herb has been used in the traditional Austrian medicine internally (as tea) for treatment of disorders of the nervous system, respiratory tract, cardiovascular system, and metabolism.

All Veronica flowers are a magnet for a range of pollinators, those with a dense, spike-like flowering structure being especially valuable for bumblebees and day-flying moths. The patch-forming perennial species also help to conserve water in dry gardens and provide a refuge for beneficial predators such as ground-beetles. Speedwell (Veronica) is a tough ornamental that is tolerant of different soils and watering needs, with varieties that are hardy in most regions. Sizes and forms range from creeping ground cover plants a few inches high to upright flower spikes reaching several feet tall. Low growers are suited for containers, border edging and rock gardens, while taller veronicas make good cut flowers and combine well with other plants in beds and borders. Ground cover plants tend to bloom in spring, while spiky forms produce flowers during the summer.

You will be able to buy this plant at the plant sale (first come, first served!) as one of our committee members has been diligently growing on cuttings of this plant!

Plant Sale. Thursday June 5th
We hope you have all been sowing seeds and dividing and splitting plants to donate to our plant sale that takes place on Thursday June 5th at 7.30 pm. Please can our lovely members who are donating plants arrive by 7.00 pm and have their plants labelled. The selling of plants will definitely not begin before 7.30pm. We are always grateful to members who make cakes for the sale, they are always delicious!

Garden visits.
Stillingfleet and Breezy Knees: Tuesday, August 5th.
There will be a morning visit to **Stillingfleet** at 11 am, where Vanessa Cook will give a 15 minute presentation. Cost £7.50.Teas and coffees are available. **Members will need to pay at the June plant sale.** In the afternoon, at 1.30 pm, we have arranged a visit to **Breezy Knees** where you can pay on the day and lunch and teas are available at their cafe.

We would like members to arrange car sharing. At the June meeting, can members who are willing to share, make themselves known and thereafter make their own arrangements.

Garden Events
NGS Shipley gardens Sunday, June 8th 11-4pm.
Shipley Open Gardens: June 14 and 15 June

Tea and Coffee: We always welcome volunteers to help with teas and coffees!

www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk