

Oxenhope



Gardening Club News

December 2020

Hope

In thinking about how to start this, the first newsletter since March, I thought that I would focus on the hope that the vaccine now brings to us all. This has been a year like no other and its presence has affected every one of us. The committee would like to offer their sincere sympathy to all who have suffered illness or loss as a result of being infected by this terrible virus.

Living where we do, we have had the blessings of the countryside and solace of our gardens to help support us and one advantage of this year is that our gardens must have benefited from the increased amount of time we have been able to devote to them.

In anticipation of the rollout of the vaccine being able to benefit the

majority of our members, we are hoping to hold our annual plant sale at the end of May. The combination of plants and, delicious cakes will be a great appeal and the perfect way to welcome back our members and celebrate, hopefully, a returning of normality.

In the anticipation this event, please pot up as many cuttings and plant as many seeds as you can! Although we can't guarantee that this will go ahead, given these uncertain times, we are hoping it will. We will of course keep you updated as things progress, so please check your emails nearer the time. Our very best wishes to you all.

Sandra

Iris Unguicularis



In the Meaning of Flowers, Iris symbolises Hope

**“Where flowers bloom, so does hope”
(Lady Bird Johnson)**

This surprisingly sturdy winter Iris produce their jewel-like flowers from October to March and is the star of the winter garden, still more commonly called by its old name Iris stylosa. This clump forming iris has tiny rhizomes and

long, narrow, sword shaped evergreen leaves. It grows wild throughout the Mediterranean area where it is naturally winter flowering. It is extremely variable both in flower colour and size. It is native to dry, sunny soils and flowers best against a sunny wall where it can be left to form large clumps.

The flowers are a typical rounded rather open iris shape in shades of blue-purple with a striking white and gold centre to the falls. In the best forms these will start to appear in November and continue throughout the winter until they finally run out of steam in April. These are best pulled when in bud rather than cut. They quickly open in the warmth of

a room and are one of the most cheering sights for a gloomy winter.

Of the blue cultivars 'Mary Barnard' is one of the most vigorous. It is slightly smaller in stature, has narrower leaves and flowers of an intense rich purple. One of the most distinct is 'Walter Butt' which has very large flowers of the palest slate blue. Unfortunately the smallest— I.cretensis, 'Oxford Dwarf', and the slightly taller 'Bob Thompson' and 'Abington Purple' are also less hardy than the type and are probably best grown in a very sheltered position or under glass. These are only 4-8" high with more grass-like foliage.

The Committee wish you a Happy Christmas

We all Hope 2021 will be the start of a better

New Year for us all

And Keep On Gardening!

Keep our printing costs down

If you could read this newsletter online please email richard.gibson@oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk and he will add you to the mailing list.



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