



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

February 2023

Welcome to February's newsletter

Welcome also to the start of the 2023 programme, which this year will run from February to May with the plant sale in early June. We are hoping you like this schedule change- coming out on a May evening should be far more pleasant than in January!

We have another varied and interesting programme for you and we will be welcoming back some familiar speakers, like Chris Beardshaw in September and Razvan Chisu in April.

In May we will welcome a speaker that is new to Oxenhope Gardening Club, Jack Wallington. Jack is a landscape gardener specialising in structured, naturalistic planting and is local to this area, living in Hebden Bridge so he is familiar with local growing conditions!

The committee hope you will enjoy the programme and we look forward to seeing you all again!

Sandra

Alpines, Past, Present and Future

Our speaker for February will be Amy Smethurst who is the Alpine Horticulturist at RHS Harlow Carr.



Amy has been the Alpine Horticulturist at Harlow Carr for 12 years and for the last 8 years has been in charge of the Alpine House.

Many of you will be familiar with the wonderful range of plants grown in the Alpine House at Harlow Carr so this will be a great opportunity to hear Amy talking about the range, variety and cultivation of alpines in the past, the present and the future. Amy

will be illustrating her talk with examples from the Alpine House.

February's Plant of the Month: White Forsythia: *Abeliophyllum Distichum*

This delightfully scented deciduous shrub is related to the forsythia but differs in that it has white (rather than yellow) flowers that open in early spring before true forsythia. It is a member of the olive family (Oleaceae). In February or early March, before the new leaves form, purplish buds all along the grey naked branches open into small, white, four-petaled, almond-scented flowers with yellow stamens. It is named for a British surgeon and naturalist, Clarke Abel (1780-1826)



White forsythia is native to a small area of central Korea. It is seriously endangered in the wild, as it is regarded as a medicinal plant with properties similar to witch hazel and is illegally harvested for the black market trade in Korea. However, as it is also widely grown as a cultivated garden plant, there is no risk of extinction other than in the wild.

White forsythia likes full sun but will tolerate some shade. It is not fussy about soil conditions but will do poorly in drought-like conditions. In the coldest areas, it is best to either protect the plant from desiccating winter winds or grow it close to a wall for extra warmth. Cut its branches and bring inside in early spring to enjoy its sweet scent. **Where to buy:** Bluebell Arboretum and Nursery Ashby de la Zouch LE65 2TA. JParker's, (jparkers.co.uk): Crocus, (crocus.co.uk)

AGM. February's meeting will start with the AGM and, as always, we would welcome new members to the committee. 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 welcome volunteers to help with teas and coffees!**

Gardening Events

Snowdrop Week: York Gate, LS16 8DW until Sunday February 19, 9-4

Snowdrop Sunday: Goldsborough Hall. HG 5 8WR. February 19, 11-4

Harrogate Orchid Society Annual Show: Britannia Hotel, Bramhope Leeds
Sunday February 26, 10-4

www.oxenhopegardenclub.co.uk