



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

March 2025

Welcome to the March newsletter



Jardin des Plantes

Last week I visited relatives in Paris and while I was there, taking advantage of the beautiful weather, I visited two very different gardens. The first one, the Jardin des Plantes, which I haven't visited for about 20 years, follows a very formal and typical French garden design, and which hasn't changed since I last saw it. The other garden was the new garden in the grounds of the newly refurbished Bibliotheque National in the

centre of Paris. This garden, in such a contrast to the Jardin des Plantes, illustrates in its use of plants and planting, just how far garden design and thinking has changed in the last 20 years.

The Jardin des Plantes, also known as the Jardin des Plantes de Paris, is the main botanical garden in France but was formally known as the Jardin Royal des Plantes Médicinales ("Royal Garden of the Medicinal Plants"), which relates to the original purpose of the garden back in the 17th century. When I visited, there was very little of interest, apart from the magnificent buildings, as most of the planting is traditionally seasonal.



Bibliotheque National de France

The second garden I visited surrounds the front courtyard of the Bibliotheque National de France, which is the national repository of all that is published in France. It was built in the 17th century and was originally the palace of Cardinal Mazarin. In 1721, the Bibliothèque du Roi was moved here. The garden is located on the exact spot that Cardinal Mazarin had his palace garden created in the 17th century.

The new garden was designed by Gilles Clément, an artist and gardener, Antoine Quenardel, a landscape designer and Mirabelle Croizier, a heritage architect. Their project, "Hortus papyrifer", introduced a number of papyriforous plants known to be used in the making of writing and printing media, such as mulberry, bamboo and papyrus. The garden traces a link with the Bibliothèque, an emblematic place where works on paper are kept. It also makes great use of a variety of grasses and architectural plants which are left uncut after flowering, thus providing interest and movement even in late winter, which complements perfectly the imaginative refurbishment of the historic building it surrounds. The original fountain has been transformed into a pond, decorated with aquatic plants, creating a specific environment and a new ecological habitat. **Sandra**

Walking on Flowers: Spring in the Peloponnese. This month's speaker is Razvan Chisu:



Silene colorata in the Peloponnese in spring

This beautiful corner of the world is not only rich in autumn bulbs, but also in spring flowers. Be prepared to be amazed by intricate carpets of annuals, bulbs and perennials that sometimes stretch as far as the eye can see. Orchids, especially bee-orchids come in great numbers and in a dizzying diversity.

A welcome visitor back to the club, Razvan is currently working as the Social Media Manager for the Alpine Garden Society and writes for various gardening magazines. Razvan also organises and leads tours. Razvan

was fortunate to grow up in Transylvania in a town surrounded by vast woodlands and species-rich wild life meadows, a fact that has influenced the way he designs and maintains gardens.



Plant of the month: Synthyris Missurica- Mountain Kitten tails.

Mountain kitten tails, *Synthyris missurica*, the common name of “kitten tails” for this showy, deep blue wildflower comes from the elongated raceme that resembles the tail of a kitten. It is a pretty, evergreen woodland perennial with glossy heart-shaped deep-green leaves and a compact habit with dense heads of violet-blue flowers. It is native to the Pacific Northwest of the United States,

where it grows in moist areas in forests and other mountain areas with cool north-facing slopes above 6,500 feet. (North-eastern California, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon). It is often one of the first wildflowers to bloom in its mountain habitat, sometimes coming up before the snow is melted. It was discovered by Lewis and Clark who gathered the first collection on June 26, 1806, from the headwaters of Hungry Creek, a tributary of the Lochsa (“Kooskooske”) River in Idaho. In the UK, it flowers from March to May and is happy in in shade or part shade and moderately fertile, humus-rich soil which is not too dry.

Future speakers: April: Colin Hickman, Hoyland Plants. Specialists in Agapanthus, Tulbagia and Amarines.

Gardening news and events:

Goldsborough Hall: Gardens Open. March 25th

Harrogate Spring Show. April 24-April 27

Burton Agnes Orchid Festival April 5 –April 21

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