

OXENHOPE GARDENING CLUB

NEWSLETTER

October Meeting 2008

Tonight we welcome Peter Holden

Yes Autumn is Here

Swallows and house martins are long gone, winter visitors are filtering in, harvest festivals are happening all around us, gardens are beginning to glow – it must be autumn.

Electronic tagging has shown that ospreys have passed through Oxenhope, joining the long migration south to Africa.

Blackbirds are attacking the cotoneaster berries with a vengeance. Flocks of goldfinch and greenfinch are back in the gardens, fighting over the sunflower hearts and peanuts, while blue tits and coal tits nip in when they have the chance. Dunnocks skuttle among the undergrowth like field mice and occasionally the song thrush too.

The hydrangea petiolaris is turning a golden yellow and the acers are producing their brilliant reds and golds. Clematis, roses, aconitum, cosmos, and colchicums add a smattering of late flower but it is the acer griseum that is having its moment of drama with its beautiful peeling cinnamon bark (giving it its common name of paper bark maple). Yes autumn is here.

A few weeks ago in Stockholm the brilliant colours were reflected in the sea, the canals and the freshwater lake, doubling their potency. It no longer matters if summer didn't quite happen when autumn glows.

Anne Collinson

Gardens in the Rain

Every time Jan and I have visited a garden this year it has rained!

We had two trips away over the summer both in August. We went south-east in the hope of better weather. East Anglia has the lowest rainfall in the country, so we thought we would try there to get away from the rain.

Garden number one - Sandringham House. I don't really know what I expected but it wasn't what I got! The Garden is mainly laid out as parkland with a small formal garden at the side of the house. It was well planted and very pleasant to walk around which took ten minutes.

Garden number two - Blickling Hall. Four times the size of the garden at Sandringham but very well stocked and in the first week of August a blaze of colour. The plants on the plant stall were all very healthy as well. We didn't buy many as they had to live in the car for a further four days.

Garden number three – Beth Chattos Garden. Boy did it rain while we were there. Oh! I failed to mention that we were rained on in all the gardens. I was disappointed with the garden, it had finished flowering by the time we were there and didn't look particularly good. But the Garden Centre!!! Boy was it good!! And cheap!! Everything was so very reasonably priced. We bought a few things, well about ten to fifteen plants. It would have been rude not to. We were very mindful of the different climate between there and Oxenhope or we would have bought a lot more. It was heaven!

Garden number four – Barnsdale outside Oakham. Mum had been there a few years ago and said that the Garden was very well kept. I am glad we went. I suppose it wouldn't have been everyone's cup of tea because it is in fact a series of small gardens all separated from the next by some sort of boundary. I loved it, even in the rain. I saw lots of things in the garden that I hoped I would be able to buy in their plant centre. We were coming home the next day and we still had some room in the boot of the car. We were so disappointed, there wasn't a lot of choice at all. The café wasn't up to much either! Five days, four gardens and a few miles. I can't remember what we did on the fifth day! Yes I can – we went for a walk IN THE RAIN.

Two weeks later we had two days in North Wales and went to Bodnant Gardens. I'm sure it would be very nice on a dry day, because it wasn't bad on a rainy one. Take your walking shoes, it's not for the faint hearted as it is on a grand scale and a very steep hillside.

Richard Berry

Wendys Sponge Cake

At the summer lunch this year I was asked by several people for the recipe of the sponge cake I served with cream and fruity compote. Well here it is.

Sponge Cake

4 – eggs

8oz caster sugar

5oz plain flour

1 tablespoon boiling water

Grease well a circular loose-bottom cake tin and dust with an equal mixture of flour and caster sugar – about 1 tsp. each.

Whisk eggs and sugar until thick and creamy and stir in gently the sieved flour, finally adding the boiling water and stirring lightly again,

Bake at 145degC (fan) or 170-180deg (non-fan) for about 45 mins or until firm.

Cool slightly and turn out of tin from the bottom. It can help to stand the tin on a wet cloth for a few minutes before turning out.

Serve with whipped cream with a touch of icing sugar and fruity compote or jam.

Fruity Compote

Any soft fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries or a mixture including blackcurrants and redcurrants – I use whatever is in season as the fruity compote freezes well.

Put fruit in pan with no extra liquid and add sugar to taste. Simmer on a very low heat until slightly thickened. It is also delicious with yoghurt or ice cream.

Wendy Parkin

Thank you Wendy – my mouth is watering!

Volunteers Needed at Manorlands

Does anyone have any spare time to help with the gardens at Manorlands as we endeavour to tidy up the grounds for winter.

We also have a new leaf collector for the grounds would anyone be interested in learning how to operate it and help with the task of clearing leaves in the grounds. As you can imagine we have plenty of leaves!

If you are interested in helping in the garden or would like to help as a volunteer in the hospice please see me for further details.

Lynda Yewdall