



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

October 2026

Welcome to October's newsletter.

In light of this year's drought and the need to think about replacing some of the plants we grow for ones that are more drought tolerant, I thought it might be interesting to highlight the work that the Royal Botanic Gardens at Wakehurst, Kew's country outpost in West Sussex, have been undertaking. Since 2019, recognizing that many herbaceous plants, both annual and perennial, will die if higher temperatures and long periods without rain become more frequent, Wakehurst have been conducting trials to identify more drought resilient plants: plants that have roots that can go down to the depth at which they find the water they need to grow, flower and seed.



To address this, scientists have identified areas of the world that have similar conditions and the plants that have evolved to deal with this. In 2019, a team of scientists and gardeners from Wakehurst went to North America to collect seeds from wild prairies. They returned with millions of seeds, some from botanical institutes and some from the wild. These all went to the Millennium

Seed Bank and the following year, were scatter- sown in a new six-acre area now known as the American Prairie. By 2024 a total of more than 50 different species were established and 11 new ones flowered for the first time. Amongst the plants which grew well in these conditions were Baptisia Alba, Monarda fistulosa, Coreopsis, Rudbeckia and the smooth-leafed aster.



Far more than just a stunning landscape, the American Prairie is a dramatic demonstration of climate-resilient planting. With their long roots, prairie plants tap into water stores metres underground and even help to store carbon in the soil. The prairie also provides multiple benefits to gardeners, requiring much less watering and management. These six acres in the heart of the Wakehurst landscape

are a proven demonstration of thriving, future-proofed gardening. **Sandra**

The Speaker for October is Ben Preston: His subject is Plants, People, Propagation.



Members may remember that when Ben last came to talk to us, it was to describe the story of the herculean task he and his partner undertook. They transformed seven years of neglect of what was once, a large, seven-acre nursery. The site, just outside Harrogate, has since been transformed into an environmentally focused nursery, specialising in ornamental grasses, choice woodland plants, unusual perennials and hardy annuals.

This time, Ben will be describing his passion for people, plants and propagation — the three elements that shape the nursery's ethos.

Plant of the month: *Bupleurum fruticosum*: Shrubby Hare's Ear.



When gardening club members visited Hooton's Walled Garden earlier this summer, they were attracted to this elegant, rounded, evergreen shrub with glossy, blue-green leaves which was growing in a corner of the garden.

It was a shrub unfamiliar to most of the members, including me. Dean was able to identify it but hadn't any plants to sell. It is a native of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean region and was introduced into cultivation more than three hundred years ago. Its shiny sea-green leaves are handsome all year- round with clusters of

chartreuse/yellow flowers in late summer. It is excellent with lavenders, Russian sage and grasses. It is also an irresistible pollinator plant that will be covered in multitudes of insects while in bloom. It typically grows to around 4-6 feet in height. It is a tough shrub that is tolerant of drought and adaptable to all but boggy soils but needs some protection in harsh winters. It can withstand temperatures down to -10°C (14°F)



Just a reminder to mention that it's a good time now to be splitting plants and taking cuttings for our plant sale next May!

Thank you!

Next month's speaker will be Samantha Hopes.

Gardening news and events:

York Museum Gardens: Curious and Creative Gardening Tour: October 9, 15, 21. Join the Gardens Team to learn about the initiatives and interventions made to make York Museum Gardens more wildlife friendly.

RHS Harlow Carr: Bath House Gift Shop. The Artisan Collective. 14 Oct -15 Nov.

RHS Harlow Carr: Northern Fruit Group Apple Display & Identification. 17-18 October. Visitors can view over 200 locally grown apples and bring their own fruit for expert identification and advice.

Fountains Abbey: Stories of colour and light: Sat 24 Oct 2026 plus 8 more dates. 10:00 to 16:30

Inspired by autumn colour, nature and the stories hidden within the trees. This event is free, but normal admission charges apply for the venue. For further information, contact:

01765 608888

fountainsabbey@nationaltrust.org.uk

Tea and coffee rota

A big thank you to the great team who volunteer to help with the rota. If you can help, please sign the rota sheet on the refreshment counter.



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