



Plant Heritage

CONSERVING THE DIVERSITY OF GARDEN PLANTS

Cornwall Group Newsletter. August 2019

After a scorching early summer the rain seems to have set in. At least it saves on the watering. We have had some well attended meetings in fine weather at the start of summer but unfortunately we had to abandon plans to visit the *Hemerocallis* collection at Antony House this year, we hope to visit next summer in association with their *Hemerocallis* open day.

HPS Plant Sale, Truro. 4th May 2019.

The winter weather was clearing by the start of May as we set up for the Hardy Plant Society Plant Sale in Truro. This is an important event for the Cornwall Group of Plant Heritage, our major fund raising event of the year. Thanks to all of our members who brought plants for sale, and especially to Mike Bell who manned the stand in the morning and sold most of the plants (he's a genius).



It is a well attended event and there is always a ready market for the plants. Some low cloud blew over in the morning and perhaps there were slightly fewer visitors this year than last but we seemed to sell a lot of plants and gardeners are tough folk, not frightened by a bit of fluffy cloud (and perhaps the smallest drop of rain)!

Next years sale will be upon us before you know it. Please remember us when you propagate and split plants this summer and autumn, we will need your kind donations in the spring.

Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens, 11th June 2019.

In June we visited the remarkable garden established by Neil Armstrong on the slope above Mounts Bay in Penzance. The garden is developing very quickly and showcases a wide collection of uncommon plants that would be on the borderlines of hardy in most parts of the country. As you might expect from a bold and experimental planting, there are occasional

losses. The gardens were severely hit in the "beast from the east" but a couple of growing seasons later there is little sign of the damage that was done. A few older plants have gone but there is a steady flow of new planting and any gaps are quickly filled with equally treasured plants.



Green roof in scarlet.



Tree ferns blending into the scene.



Butia palms on the sunny terraces.

At the entrance to the garden, Surreal Succulents run the plant sales area. They have developed a green roof on the sales building planted with Aloes and other succulents. At the time of our visit it was scarlet with the flower spikes of *Aloe aristata* and I think it was the most effective roof garden that I have seen.

Further into the garden and the established oak woodland has been given an exotic edge by extensive plantings of palms and tree ferns. The garden has an informal, naturalistic style that enables the plants to merge together seamlessly into a single composition without looking contrived in any way.

Most of the ferns can be found along the side of the stream that flows down the western boundary of the garden. As well as a range of tree fern species there are giant specimens of *Lophosoria quadripinnata* and *Todea barbara* looming over the wooden streamside walkway. Further up in the garden a sunny terrace is fringed with *Butia* palms, their blue-grey foliage softening the bright light at the top of the hill.



***Impatiens stenantha* .**



***Magnolia fordiana* .**



***Puya alpestris* ssp. *alpestris* .**

I was particularly pleased to see the yellow flowers of *Impatiens stenantha* bursting from the foliage along the boardwalk. There have been a lot of perennial *Impatiens* species imported from China in the last decade or so. Many of them are more impressive than this in flower but the garden qualities of a plant are not always clear in the early years. Many of the more flamboyant species have not been reliable or have had short seasons. *I. stenantha* makes a bold clump of foliage that persists through the summer, always sparkling with yellow flowers which are dusted with red dots. It seems to be quite hardy and I am sure it will be appearing a lot more widely in gardens.

Magnolia fordiana is an evergreen species that I planted in my own garden for the sake of its scented white flowers in summer. It will be a few years before I can expect to see them so this bloom on the plant at Tremenheere served as an encouragement and a promise of the rewards of patience.

Further up in the garden the stony slopes and terraces have a southern aspect and catch the sun all day. It is a perfect location for succulents and drought tolerant plants. *Puya*

alpestris ssp. *alpestris* was enjoying the conditions and flowering freely. It is one of the smaller and hardier species. Although the name has had a confused history these smaller species are starting to emerge as useful garden plants for the milder locations. In the middle of a sloping bed where visitors were safe from its grasping prickly arms it was magnificent.

Good to see everybody on a lovely day. Thanks to Neil Armstrong for his generosity and welcome.

We were lucky with the weather and the season for this trip, but Tremenheere is worth a visit at any season, which is fortunate.

We will be back for the Tremenheere Plant Fair in September!

Changes on the committee.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the committee currently has vacancies that need filling. We particularly need a secretary prepared to act as a contact point for the group, especially for the e-mails from head office, and direct them on as appropriate. We also need committee members prepared to come up with bright ideas on places to visit and ways to raise money. We need somebody to take minutes at the committee meetings (currently two a year) and somebody to keep the momentum of the Plant Nannies Project going as it expands would be useful.

Anybody prepared to add material to the website ... the list goes on.

Anybody prepared to volunteer (in any capacity) would be very welcome!

Coming Events.

Rare Plant Fair at Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens, Penzance TR20 8YL.

Sunday 8th September, 10.00am - 2.00pm.

In September we will once again be having a stand for the Plant Nannies at Tremenheere Rare Plant Fair. We had a very successful day last year, many interesting and unusual plants were distributed and we were able to spread the message of conservation more widely.

Cornwall has an amazing heritage of garden plants and plant introductions from around the world have come through Cornwall and spread to the rest of the country. Plant flow across borders has become more restrictive, nurseries are forced to drop plants that only sell in small numbers, and fashions change. As a result plants are being lost from our gardens at a frightening rate and the diversity and uniqueness of our gardens is being eroded.

The Plant Nannies set out to reduce that loss of beauty and utility in a practical way. By taking one of our plants (for free) and looking after it in your garden, you can help to reduce the losses to horticulture. All we ask is that (one day, no pressure) you bring us a piece back to hand on to someone else and so keep the conservation bandwagon rolling and progressing.

Come and see us at the Rare Plant Fair, even just to say hello. If you have something that you think is in need of conservation, tell us about it. Better still, bring us a piece. You can walk down any street and realise that gardens make a difference. That

gardeners can make a difference.
See you there.



**Rare Plant Fair,
Tremeneheere.**



Tibouchina paratropica



Plant Nannies stand.

Plant Nannies are very welcome at our meetings. If you are coming to the plant sale in September be sure to drop by the stand and say hello, we may also have some new plants in need of help!

cornwallplantheritage@gmail.com

Cornwall Plant Heritage Website.

Many of you will have noticed that we now have a new website, accessible through a link on the national website or directly at :

www.cornwallplantheritage.co.uk

I would like to ensure that there are records of significant plants and plant collections in Cornwall that are freely and easily available. If collection holders would like to add more than the links in their entries any submissions are very welcome. Let me know about any errors and I will correct them.

General Data Protection Regulation.

New Data Protection Regulations came into force on 25th May. If the Cornwall Group of Plant Heritage hold your address, e-mail address or other data we use it communicate matters relating to Plant Heritage or the Cornwall Group of Plant Heritage. We will only use it for this purpose and will not provide it to other organisations.

If you wish your data to be deleted from Cornwall Plant Heritage Group records now or at any time in the future, please let the group secretary know.

This notice is issued in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Plant Nannies.

The Plant Nannies exist to encourage the cultivation, propagation and dissemination of uncommon, poorly known or endangered garden plants in Cornwall.

They are organised by the Cornwall group of Plant Heritage, a national charity that seeks to encourage the conservation of garden plants through cultivation.

Who can take part?

Anyone with an interest who would like to grow a plant and assist in the Cornish conservation effort.

What does it involve?

We have a few plants available that we think deserve some care to keep them in cultivation. We give them to the Plant Nannies to look after and enjoy in their own gardens. When the plant grows and they feel able to divide or propagate a small section then they return a young plant to us and keep the original. The young plants are either given out to a new Plant Nanny or we sell them to raise money for Plant Heritage.

What does it cost?

Nothing. We hope to raise money by selling surplus plants through regular Rare Plant sales in the region.

What do we ask?

We ask for an e-mail address so that we can send you Cornwall Plant Heritage Newsletters that will inform you of coming events and plant sales.

What do we get?

With your help we can keep plants in cultivation in gardens that are in danger of disappearing. Together we can raise the profile of plants that were once better known but are now endangered and we can raise some money to support the national charity.

Hope to see you soon.
John Sirkett.

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