



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

November 2025

Welcome to November's newsletter.



Earlier this month, I visited the Marie Antoinette exhibition at the V&A. This wonderful and fascinating exhibition displays a different interpretation of Marie Antoinette's character: what struck me most was the influence that the English landscape garden of the time had on so many aspects of her style. The gardens of the Petit Trianon were inspired by the new English gardening style, which had evolved to foster a deeper emotional bond with nature, influenced by the philosophies of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the gardens, Marie Antoinette had chosen to mirror this by featuring winding paths, streams, and gentle hillocks, all arranged to create a picturesque,

seemingly untamed landscape. This naturalistic, wilder approach to gardening—characterized by its emotional connection to nature—deeply shaped Marie Antoinette's personal style and preferences.



In the gardens of the Petit Trianon, Marie Antoinette's passion and love for flowers allowed her to escape the rigid confines of court life. This love of flowers and desire to feel more in harmony with the landscape were also reflected in the softer, more casual dresses she wore at the Petit Trianon. These garments were often made from muslin fabrics imported from India and patterned with roses, one of her favourite flowers. Marie Antoinette was famous for her obsession with roses, which she cultivated in her gardens at the Petit Trianon.

Roses were a symbol of her Austrian Hapsburg family. The flower appeared in her portraits (most famously in *Marie Antoinette with a Rose* by Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun), in fabric patterns, and in the scents created by her perfumer, Jean-Louis Fargeon, who used the rich fragrance of the cabbage rose (*Rosa × centifolia*) and the "wild" look of the dog rose. This affection for roses extended beyond fashion into the design of her upholstery and china.



She cultivated other favourite blooms—such as irises and rocket larkspur—which often appeared in her bouquets and portraits. She also introduced plants with medicinal and cosmetic uses, including tuberose. In 1784 alone, she planted over two thousand dog roses. The garden also included exotic species like dahlias, newly introduced to Europe in 1787, and many of the novel tree varieties of the time. Her favourite was the tulip tree

(*Liriodendron tulipifera*), admired for its fragrant, tulip-shaped flowers.

Speaker of the Month: Zosia Berkietal- Lewis



Zosia is known for her installations, workshops and collaborative projects celebrating plants and creative design.

The studio and shop are located in Saltaire where she runs a regular pop-up shop selling plants, fresh and dried bouquets. Zosia will be demonstrating how to make the perfect Christmas wreath.

Plant of the month: *Morina longifolia*



***Morina longifolia* is named in honour of Rene Morin, a French nurseryman and was first recorded in 1621 in one of the earliest plant catalogues.** *Morina longifolia* comes from the Himalaya, including parts of Pakistan, Kashmir and Bhutan, where it grows at 3000 – 4000 feet above sea level. It is used in Tibetan medicine for the treatment of digestive disorders and is also used to make incense and as a poultice for boils and in the cure of worm-infected wounds in animals. *Morina longifolia* is a most distinctive plant. It forms rosettes of prickly aromatic foliage from which rise tall stems, bearing pagoda-like chalice-like flowers set at intervals. These are packed with jade green tubes from which spring

white tubular flowers, changing to crimson with age and flowering from midsummer to winter.

After the flowers are finished, the standing green stem with its fantastic outline is perhaps even more beautiful for green arrangements. It also dries very well. In the UK it grows best in full sun in a rich, moist but well-drained soil. It is hardy to -17 degrees Celsius.

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Next year's programme will start in February 2026. We will be taking subscriptions from January and we now can take subscriptions via bank transfer. Membership for 2026 will be unchanged at £30. Details of how you can subscribe online will be sent out to all members via email in January. Of course, you can still subscribe by cheque, or cash at our first meeting in February. The full programme for 2026 will be published on our website from January. **Also, just a reminder that videos of club meetings only stay on Facebook for 30 days before they are deleted.**

Our spring programme will be:

February: John Grimshaw, Editor Curtis's Botanical Magazine, Kew Gardens.

March: Camilla Anderson, Garden History Researcher:

April: Kevin Pratt, Garden Designer and author

May TBA

Gardening news and events.

RHS Harlow Carr: Glow: November 19 - December 23

Fountains Abbey Colour and Light: Until 21st December 2025

Hebden Bridge Open Studios: 5-7 December

Skipton Christmas Market 7-14 December

Christmas in Harrogate Valley Gardens: Sat December 6 - Sunday 14 December

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.



www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk