



Oxenhope

Gardening Club News

October 2024

Welcome to October's newsletter

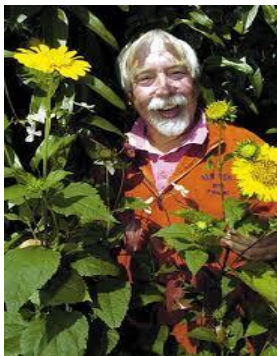


It was good to welcome you all back at September's meeting!

In early September I visited **Cambo Estate Gardens**, which is near **St Andrews in Fife, Scotland** and is of one of the most dynamic gardens in the country. Cambo House is the home of Sir Peter Erskine and Lady Catherine Erskine. The house was remodelled in the late 18th century by Thomas Erskine, 9th Earl of

Kellie, who also laid out its ornamental gardens. Dense woodland separates the garden from the shore, however the real magic of Cambo is within the two and a half acre walled garden, with its cleverly-designed planting schemes providing year-round interest. When I was there, on a wonderful sunny day, the later flowering prairie species were dominating with their fiery blaze of verbenas, salvias, kniphofias and other Mediterranean species, including many varieties of grasses. If you are in the area, not only is this a wonderful place to visit but this part of Fife has a number of stunning coastal fishing villages with great cafes and scenic views across the Firth of Forth to North Berwick. **Sandra**

Payback Flowers: The speaker for October is **Bob Brown: Cotswold Flowers**



In 1990, Bob Brown bought an acre of land on the edge of the Cotswold, which had been original intended as a burial site. Prior to his purchase, all the top soil had been stripped off, so he had to import 70 tonnes of mushroom compost to make the soil workable. Bob's ethos is to grow and sell all perennials which are easy and unusual and Bob is renowned as a plantsman who has introduced and discovered many cultivars. The nursery became so well known in the industry that the business is more often than not referred to by his name rather

than by its correct title; one of the signs in Badsey village even points you towards 'Bob Brown' with the legend Cotswold Garden Flowers almost as an afterthought

underneath. Bob is the holder of the prestigious Gold Veitch medal and a regular guest speaker and writes for the Which! Gardens magazine. **Bob will be bringing plants to sell at the meeting. Please bring cash if you wish to buy them!**

Plant of the month: *Heptacodium Miconioides*: The Seven- Sun Flower of Zheijiang



The Seven Son Flower, *Heptacodium miconioides* is a handsome and unusual shrub native to parts of China. It is grown for its distinctive, long lasting clusters of fragrant white flowers in autumn. 1907, the plant collector Ernest Henry Wilson collected a specimen of an unfamiliar shrub in western Hubei Province, China. The ten-foot-tall plant had small white flowers and was clinging to a cliff. Wilson noted that it was "very rare!" A few months later, Wilson returned, presumably expecting to collect seeds, but the fruit was mostly undeveloped and,

the plant was still flowering. He collected a second specimen that included only a single fruit with ripe seed. The specimens were sent back to the Arnold Arboretum. In 1916, Wilson's colleague Alfred Rehder determined that the specimens belonged to a new species. He named it *Heptacodium miconioides*.



Heptacodium miconioides, also known as the Seven Sons Plant, has only been grown in the UK in the past thirty years, and has the fragrant flowers that you would expect from a member of the honeysuckle family. It blooms from late summer to late autumn at a time when many other shrubs have finished flowering. The small white flowers bloom at the ends of the branches, followed by calyxes which deepen from pink to burgundy, and sometimes red berries, which remain for winter interest. In the spring and summer, the narrow, dark green glossy leaves provide reliable foliage in the garden before the

late-season flowers take centre stage. In the winter, the tan-coloured outer bark peels back to reveal a darker brown bark underneath, adding to the year-round appeal of this relatively rare shrub. It has been given the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

The Seven- Sons plant is not overly fussy in regards to growing conditions. It prefers mildly acidic, moist, loamy soil similar to a woodland setting, but it will also grow quite happily in sand, clay, or chalk. However, it does need a well-drained soil. Although it is reliably hardy and will survive even severe winters in most parts of the UK, it is probably best grown in a sheltered position, with an east, south, or west-facing aspect, in full sun or partial shade. It is usually unaffected by insect pests or disease. It will take 10 to 20 years to reach a height of 4-8 metres and spread of 2.5-

4 metres. It requires little or no pruning. Stockists include, Burncoose nurseries, RHS plants, Daleside Nurseries, Beardsworth nurseries.

Behind the Scenes as an RHS judge. November's Speaker will be Martin Fish, Horticultural expert, RHS judge and broadcaster.

We will be accepting subscription in November for next year's programme, which will start in February 2025. Details of the programme for 2025 can be found on the club's website or on the list displayed on the table at the entrance to the club.

Due to the rising costs of speakers, insurance and hire of venue, we will be increasing the subscription to £30. Which still works out at only just over £4.28 per meeting. Pretty good value!



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

Thank you!

Gardening news and events:

Harlow Carr: Bath House Gallery: Autumn Craft Fair. 3rd October to 3rd November

Harlow Carr: Northern Fruit Group Apple Display & Identification. 18 -20 October

Middlethorpe Hall: Garden Tour & afternoon tea: Oct 24

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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