



HERGEST CROFT GARDENS

Newsletter September 2011

The Garden



Lower Terrace Border

I can never remember the garden looking better in high summer; we have been very fortunate in having a reasonable amount of rain; the park is nice and green whereas if you drive even a little way north into Powys and Shropshire the fields are scorched and brown. The borders below the terrace are a spectacular mixture of blue and white with agapanthus, cosmos and lavatera; I am not quite so sure about the pink lavatera but it makes a brave show. We saw a wonderful planting of agapanthus and *Galtonia candicans* (summer hyacinths) in the Savill Garden at Windsor earlier in the month and are tempted to add them to the mix; there were groups of orange and red *Crocsmia* amongst them and in my view that was clearly a mistake. Many years ago in the Kitchen Garden my mother planted a magical blue and white border of delphiniums and regale lilies that sadly had to be removed when the lilies were infected by virus and it is good to have this charming colour combination back in the garden; on reflection the pink will have to go next year. Lavatera seems to have done especially well this year and the pink and white combination in the old fashioned rose bed in the Kitchen Garden is really jolly and surprisingly not at all vulgar! There is a good display of *Hydrangeas* especially various collections and cultivars of *Hydrangea paniculata* and some new cultivars of *Hydrangea arborescens* though I don't much like the names of 'Incrediball' and 'Invincibelle Spirit' I fear we might have 'Unbelievabelle' next!

The *Clematis viticella* hybrids on the gazebo above the meadow in the Kitchen Garden are doing wonderfully well, they are an international group *Clematis* 'Betty Corning' (USA), 'Polish Spirit' (Poland) 'Margot Koster' (Holland) and I think, 'Huldine'. Above the gate to the orchard is the charming free flowering *Clematis x triternata* 'Rubromarginata' and below in the hedge *Clematis orientalis* 'Helios' both of which are in flower for at least two months. There are three herbaceous clematis to look out for, the dusky white 'Mrs Robert Brydon', a form of *Clematis heracleifolia* collected by Roy Lancaster from the Great Wall of China outside Beijing, both on the entrance path, and *Clematis heracleifolia* 'Wyevale' in the Herbaceous borders which has the added virtue of being scented and is probably the best of all.



Clematis x triternata 'Rubromarginata'

Trees and Shrubs.

Without any question the star of the show are the Eucryphias in the Maple Grove, the large and spectacular *Eucryphia*. *x* 'Nymansay' and the more delicate *Eucryphia x intermedia* 'Rostrevor'. However there are many other plants for the connoisseur; many of the species roses have orange and red hips, especially *Rosa moysi* and its cultivar 'Geranium'. The birch stems in the Maple Grove seem particularly good this year and I noticed *Betula ermanii* 'Hakoda Orange' and *Betula utilis* 'Forrest's Blush' both very fine selections from very fine species! Amongst the plants of botanical interest is *Aristotelia chilensis*, described in Hillier's Manual as too tender for exposed positions in all but the mildest districts; well here it is growing at about 800 feet at the top of the Maple Grove and hasn't turned a hair at last winter's temperatures and is covered in small black fruit. Some early colour is beginning the first being the very fine *Acer ginnala* by the entrance

Back from the dead

We made a conscious decision to wait until July before writing anything off as dead and what a good decision it was; recoveries include *Daphne bholua* and Bleddyn and Sue Wynn Jones's collection of *Tetrapanax papyrifer* 'Rex' both of which have thrown up root suckers that will need careful protection next winter. The new and very rare *Juglans sigillata* from China has broken from the base of the trunk; it is however clearly planted in too cold a spot in the Orchard and should be moved up the hill to lessen the effect of frost, I hope and expect that it should prove more hardy when it gets up a little more in height as is sometimes the case with walnuts.

Building and other works

Work is about to start on rebuilding three of Hergest Croft's chimneystacks damaged by frost. There will be scaffolding on the house for some time and I hope that it does not cause too much inconvenience to visitors. At the top of the Azalea Garden work is in progress converting an old byre into what the office describes as "a luxury holiday en suite one bedroom cottage" it will be available to let next year so if you have any possible interest let the office know and they will let you have details when available. You will also notice that various fences are being painted for the first time for many years – nothing like new owners to tidy up what the previous ones did not!

Plant Sales: There are a wide range of plants and some rare trees.

Tea Room in the Dining Room

Gift Shop: unusual gift displayed in the Hall

EVENTS

PLANT FAIR

RHS Celebration of Apples

Sat 15—Sun 16 October

Apple displays over 400 varieties by RHS Wisley,

Frank P Matthews and

Marcher Apple Network

Apple Identification & Tasting

Local Apple Products

Demonstrations of Cultivation

Talks on the Heritage of Apples

See the spectacular Autumn Colour in the gardens

The Receptionists, Jill, Sandra, and Melissa welcome any comments

Hergest Croft Gardens, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3EG

Tel: 01544 230160 Fax: 01544 232031

Email: gardens@hergest.co.uk

www.hergest.co.uk