

Garden diary number one.

For the first garden diary I thought I would show a few photos from a recent trip to Bodnant Gardens in North Wales, and my own plants. We were at the stage where you could go out but self-isolate, staying a minimum distance of two metres apart. This allowed a walk around a wonderful garden and a visit to Aberconwy nursery on the way in. The gardens were a few weeks off their spring best but still had some magnificent magnolias, rhododendrons and a wealth of spring flowers giving a wonderful display.



Ypsilandra tibeticum

Heloniopsis orientalis

Woodland gardens are some of my favourites when they are in flower. The *Erythronium revolutum* is one plant I particularly like and there is a superb clump as seen in one of the photos above. It is a native of California but is equally at home in Bodnant. The plant is variable which prevented it getting an AGM but still bulks up well and is a worthy addition to any garden. The bottom two photos above are both hardy asiatic plants and I have both in my collection but mine are well behind these two.



We had a visit to Aberconwy nurseries and we were the only visitors there. Tim Lever spent some time talking with us and gave us plenty of advice as well as relating the effect on the business. As usual he was very upbeat and informative. Some of the plants we bought are shown on the left. They are from L-R Saxifrage Allendale Beauty, *Gentiana oppositifolia* Seren Y Gwanwyn, *Draba ossetica* JJ04-55 and *Dianthus* Rivendell's daughter.



E. multiscapedium cliftonii, above left, is a choice species rare in cultivation and one new to me. E. Bryn Meiford is a chance seedling from *E. revolutum* which arose in their garden. The leaves have a beautiful dark mottling which complements the strong pink of the flowers. Both of these will find a home where they can clump up undisturbed and be readily seen.

Another plant we bought was *Trillium rivale?* x *ovatum* which is the white one in the lower left photo. Tim was not sure of the exact parentage but it was still a stunning plant. The other plant next to it is *T. rivale* which was a recent purchase from Fred Bundy at the last meeting. All Fred's plants are extremely well grown and I could have bought all these they were that good. This particular one was a lovely pink with deeper pink mottling. The RH photo is *T. kurabashayii*, this has large leaves which are stunningly marked. This was another of Fred's from the same meeting and was another top specimen. A big plus for me as a member is access to more plants and knowledge from other growers.



I have become one of the galanthophiles this year despite trying not to, the variety below is *G.elwesii* Polar Bear and the last of mine in flower. The other new ones are in pots being fed and watered and will be planted out later. The Hellebores are also starting to go over and the yellow one is a very large flowered pure colour variety.



Just as some flowers start to fade others take over and I bought some lovely *Primula allionii* specimens at the November meeting. Some are shown below and have flowered very well. I will be asking advice from other growers at later meetings since they are new to me. The *Haquetia epipactis* on the right is an unusual plant that does well in my shady areas.



More plants that are just coming into their own are *Clematis alpina* Constance growing through a *Pyracantha* and *Primula elatior*. The latter, although common now, is very welcome to seed around in my garden, I find it reliable and a nicer plant than a lot of the modern hybrids.



Below is an established clump of *Erythronium dens canis* Frans Hals variety. This is very reliable for me and produces good clumps of pink flowers set off against the mottled foliage. The Peony on the right is P. Bartzella which is one of the hybrids between the herbaceous and tree varieties. The flowers are yellow, scented and up to 8" across and it sent out its first bloom last year. This is the one plant I am really looking forward to seeing how it performs.



This is the first of the "Garden diaries" and I have a couple more to put together from photos that I have already received. I would like to do more though - if people want to send me photos of their garden and a bit of information on the plants and garden conditions etc. There is also the option of putting photos of specimen plants on to our website as mentioned in an earlier email. This is instead of our annual show and photos can be sent to me or Matthew Childs.

Regards

Charlie Philpotts