

SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Autumn 2022



CONTENTS

Chairman’s Letter	3
Programme of Forthcoming Events	4-5
Treasurer’s Report	5
Propagation Report	6
Plant Problems	7-10
Fergus Garrett Talk	10-11
Helmingham Spring Plant Fair	12-13
Suffolk National Collections Report	14
Suffolk’s National Collections 2022	14-15
New Members	16
National Events	16
A Further Instalment on the Creation of Jude Law's Garden at Stradbroke – The Damp Tree Meadow	17-21
A Garden Well Placed: The Story of Helmingham and other Gardens Xa Tollemache Pimpernel Press Ltd	22
Suffolk Group Committee Members	23

Editor: Rosie Ansell

Layout: Tuddenham Press

Cover design: Sally Geeve. www.sallygeeve.com

*The cover photo is of cones on *pseudolarix amabilis* (golden larch) in Beth Chatto’s garden, taken by Jude Law.*

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

MAGGIE THORPE

Little did we realise that the showers during the afternoon of our Plant Fair at Helmingham would be about the last rain we would see for the rest of summer and what a hot, hot summer it has been, lovely for us but dreadful for our plants. A big thank you to all our helpers on the day, we could not manage without you. I hope you will be there again on 18 September.

We have welcomed a number of new members, three of whom are keen to join our Propagation Days. Remember that we offer a £15 plant voucher to any member introducing a friend. Please just send your friend's details to our Secretary, Isobel Ashton.

I have pleasure in welcoming Catherine Bacon and Gillian Beardsworth to our Committee. Catherine will be recruiting nursery stallholders for Helmingham and Gillian will be seeking out speakers for our winter meetings at Stowupland. Alas, our Publicity Officer, Nick Stanley is retiring due to ill health and Alastair Harris is moving to Scotland. Good luck to them both.

We love having articles by you for our Journal, just send them to Rosie Ansell, our editor (see inside back cover for her details, along with all Committee members). Please do get in touch with me if you would like to be part of our Committee. We meet about once every six weeks. We would appreciate help with organising garden visits and social events.

**Contributions for the Spring
Suffolk Group Journal wanted by
9th January 2023. Please send to
rosieansell@aol.com**

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All talks will be held at Stowupland Village Hall. The programme of events may be subject to change - please check the Suffolk Plant Heritage website.

September 24th 2022: Companion Planting for a Balanced Garden by Dr Ian Bedford

From studying butterflies on the South Downs as a youngster, Dr Bedford went on to pursue a career in Research Entomology and ran the Entomology Dept at the John Innes Centre in Norwich up to his recent retirement after 42 yrs.

Many plants have properties that can either attract or repel bugs. This talk explains some of them and how they can be used in our gardens to create a natural balance system for attracting nature and keeping the pests under control.

October 29th 2022: “Shade and Semi-shade” by Colin Ward. (Re-booked from a 2021 cancellation)

Colin Ward of Swines Meadow Farm Nursery is well known among those who are interested in the rarest and most interesting plants available. The nursery sits on the edge of the fens and has a wide range of plants from all habitats but the woodland plants are some of the most interesting and will certainly feature in a talk on shade and semi-shade.

November 26th 2022: AGM and 'Conifers' by Fay Jones

The AGM will cover a short part of the beginning of the meeting and will be followed by a talk on conifers by Fay Jones. Learning all about the fascinating world of conifers. Get your pines sorted from your spruces and your cedars from your firs. Helping you work through a basic taxonomy of conifers and their key identifying features and notable species. A relaxed talk, ideal for beginners, taking a fun look at this wonderful group of plants.

January 28th 2023 “Spices, a Super Spicy Story” by Jacqueline Aviolet

Jacqueline is a popular speaker and horticulturalist from 'Rosie's

Garden Plants' in Kent with its wealth of plants from perennials to shrubs and roses.

February 25th 2023 “Miss Ellen Willmott, her life and gardens” by Sandra Lawrence.

Ellen Ann Willmott FLS VMH of Warley Place in Essex was an influential member of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Sandra Lawrence is a journalist and has written a biography of Miss Willmott entitled “Miss Willmott's Ghosts; the extraordinary life and gardens of a forgotten genius”.

March 25th 2023 “Plants in art and culture - how plants created society” by Dr Mark Spencer.

Mark is a Forensic Botanist and the author of “Murder Most Florid”. He started life as a botanist and rather fell into forensics when asked by the Police to assist in the investigation of 'Cold' cases.

April 29th 2023. To Be Advised

TREASURER'S REPORT

PAT STANLEY

This year we have been very successful in raising funds for Plant Heritage.

In March the ticket sales for the excellent Fergus Garrett talk raised £763.50 after deduction of costs.

In May our share of the Helmingham Spring Plant & Craft Fair admissions and pitch fees brought in £8772.52 after deduction of costs. Added to this were PH plant sales and plant creche donations, together with PH propagation plant sales made during the year, totalling £1156.45.

Once again our thanks go to the Committee and all our Plant Heritage volunteers for their contributions at these events.

And ... we still have the Helmingham Autumn Plant & Craft Fair to come!

PROPAGATION REPORT



You will all remember the happy Propagation Days we held at Anne Tweddle's home and the amazing number of plants raised by us all ready for selling at our Plant Fair at Helmingham.

Anne has now retired but she is willing to carry on teaching the

art of propagation along with Linda Draper and Jude Law.

We had a first session in July (see photo above).

Conservation is at the heart of all we do and four sessions are being organised for later this year and early 2023. We hope that members will enjoy learning and at the same time letting us have back some of the plants propagated.

Cost will be kept to a minimum (to cover the cost of materials and hall hire) and members will be asked to pay £20 for all 4 sessions. Each morning will cover different methods of propagation. Numbers will be limited.

15 November 2022 At Stowupland Village Hall Meeting Room, IP14 1LD

28 February 2023 Also at Stowupland Village Hall Meeting Room

11 July 2023 At The Wallows, East Barton, Bury St. Edmunds, IP31 2QU

18 July 2023 Also at The Wallows

To enrol, please contact our Secretary, Isobel Ashton, secretary@suffolkplants.org.uk

Full details and payment details will be emailed after booking.

PLANT PROBLEMS

MATT TANTON BROWN

At a recent committee meeting it was suggested that we might try and get some new topics into the Suffolk Group Journal. So, me being me, said 'what about a regular column on Pest, Diseases and Disorders of plants'. This was met with a lot of positive response and so here's the first of what I hope will be a helpful and useful guide to keeping up with the critters that may be stomping around your garden!!

With so many chemicals being banned or their chemical formulations changing, or restricted to professional outfits only, how do we control some of our more problematic beasts? I aim to look at as many control methods as possible, not necessarily chemical responses; if you like to grow as naturally as possible, like myself, then there may be more natural alternatives.

With the very hot weather we have been experiencing lately there are a lot of things out in the garden nibbling, cutting, munching and sucking the energy out of those plants I am trying to grow!!



Vine Weevil Adult

Vine Weevil. (*Otiorynchus salcatus*)

A very common threat to many plants especially those grown in containers.

What is it? – for people new to gardening, this insect, in adult form, has a pear-shaped body which is a dull black in colour, sometimes with small grooves

along its back and dirty yellow marks on the wing cases. The head is small and narrow with two rather large protruding antennae. They are roughly 9mm in length and tend to bite irregular shaped notches or holes out of leaf edges.

The larvae are found in the soil around the base of plants and are plump, white, c-shaped grubs, with a brown head and no obvious



Vine Weevil damage on Pyrus



Vine Weevil damage on Disporopsis

legs. They can be up to 10mm in length. They eat roots, especially in container grown plants.

Plants commonly affected – Sedum, Rhododendron, Hedera (Ivy), Heuchera, Primula, Taxus (Yew), evergreen Euonymus, Hydrangea, Epimedium and Begonia.

Symptoms – Adults - visible signs of feeding damage at the edges of leaves, I often think it looks like a hole-punch has been used on the plant.

Larvae – wilting plants with yellowing leaves due to root death.

Life Cycle – Mid-April - adults emerge from virtual hibernation and begin feeding on leaves.

Mid May – the adults begin to lay eggs daily for up to 3 months!!

End May – eggs hatch and larvae begin to feed on roots and stems.

Late November – larvae pupate and overwinter

Mid-April – Adults emerge, and it starts all over again!!

Control – Cultural Controls - I have found over my years of fighting them in the garden that Vine Weevils tend to like light soils that are easy to burrow into. I feel that container plants can suffer so badly with them as we have tended to use peat-based composts in containers for many years. These are light and have large air-pockets which are ideal for Miss Vine Weevil to lay her eggs. I say Miss Vine Weevil because no male has ever been detected! Over the past 10 years or so I have been experimenting with container composts to see what may have some effect on the voracious Vine Weevil.

In Mel Collins' article in the 2016 Spring Journal she mentions adding 20% sharp sand to the compost to help combat this, it does work to an extent as it blocks up the larger air pockets and therefore reduces the infestations. I still had some grubs, so I decided to try my own mixes. The one that seems to work best for me is 40% John Innes compost, be that No2 or No3 depending on the length of time the plant is in place, 25% peat free compost (sieved) as I find them a bit lumpy and that might make large air pockets, 10% sharp sand and 25% my own home-made compost (sieved) again to reduce the lumpy effect! Add whatever fertilizer you like, I tend to use Fish, Blood and Bone. For me this has worked well as the compost seems to settle well in the pot and I have had little attack from the grubs. This doesn't mean that the adults don't try and still eat the leaves!!

On a warm evening check south or west facing walls in your garden, these will be warm from the sun, where you can often find Miss Vine Weevil doing her yoga and Pilates exercises before a night-time of stuffing her face with your precious plants! Pick her off and squash her with a size 10 boot!!

Check in fallen leaf litter, under pots, under greenhouse staging or between stored pots during the day where they hide.

Encourage more wildlife into your garden as frogs, birds, hedgehogs and shrews will often eat them.

Adding gravel mulches to the tops of pots can help reduce infestations in prone plants.

Biological Control –Several species of nematode are used to control the larvae of Vine Weevil (*Steinernema kraussei* and *Heterorhabditis megidis*). These are suitable for use in containers or in the soil. For best results apply in August and early September, when the temperature of the growing medium is warm enough for good effectiveness, this should prevent the Vine Weevil grubs from causing serious damage. All nematodes can be used safely on edible and ornamental plants. These can be found available online or at some garden centres. They can work for up to 6 weeks in the soil and containers, so long as it is moist, and may require two applications in a year for complete control. 'Nemasys' is probably the most well-

known trade name but there are others have a look at www.greengardener.co.uk

There is also a trap available that contains nematodes which will infect adult Vine Weevils. Place these around affected plants on the ground and the adults will enter and be infected.

Nematodes have a very short shelf life, so only buy from a reputable company, if you see what looks like a bargain be very wary, there is no point buying cheaply if they are not in good condition.

Chemical Control – Scotts Miracle-Gro Bug Clear Ultra for Vine Weevil. Use as suggested on the packaging as a drench. Will treat other sap sucking pests such as Scale Insect and Aphids.

Provanto/ Provado Ultimate Bug Killer – has some effect.

FERGUS GARRETT TALK

In March eighty members and friends were lucky enough to hear Fergus Garrett talk to us on Designing with Plants and Plant Combinations. As usual the pace was rapid, the information extensive and illustrated by a cornucopia of stunning photos.

Great Dixter comprises six acres of garden with 70 acres of surrounding pasture. There are a lot of areas of meadow in the garden with orchids and wild flowers - if you go at the wrong time you may think it looks a bit scruffy. A recent biodiversity survey showed that there were many more types of insect in the gardens than in the surrounding areas, showing the importance of gardens in the wider landscape.

The soil is clay so what works there may not work in our local area. Everything from the garden is composted – which makes about 30 tons a year. This is all used back on the garden, with limited extras (such as bone meal).

There is a basic structure of hedges and topiary but beyond that is a mass of planting filling the borders and overflowing onto the paths. Self seeding is encouraged, or things are sown or planted to

look as though they have self seeded and are random.

There are layers of plants and the same border will look very different at different times of year depending on the permanent planting, what comes up at different times and what is cut down.

Many areas don't change at all, or in any major way, but in other areas new plants or combinations are tried every year in planting pockets.

There are many variations in form, structure and leaf shape. Looked at from one direction an area may not look special, but if looked at against a particular backdrop it makes sense.

Christo Lloyd liked bright colours, but there were some colour combinations he refused to try- Fergus had to wait until after his death to give them a go!

His advice to us - look out to your wider landscape and invite the outside in. And always experiment, even in a small garden or small space. One thing added may make all the difference. Be bold.



Layers of white honesty and euphorbia with tulip Ivory Floradale with alliums to follow
Photo taken by Fergus Garrett

We also enjoyed an update on Benton End in January from Sarah Cook and Lucy Skellorn, and a tour of Japan in the company of Barbara Segall in February. Our winter talks season ended with a talk by Richard Hobbs, who holds the National Collection of muscari in Norfolk, and who opened our eyes to the many available varieties of muscari as well as many other “little blue bulbs”.



HELMINGHAM SPRING PLANT F



photos courtesy of Amanda Clowe Wildcarrot Photography & Peter Kendall



AIR



SUFFOLK NATIONAL COLLECTIONS REPORT

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

No new collections in Suffolk but we have two new proposals.

Acer, Betula & Liquidambar held by Marie & David Ellerton – HQ says they need to keep the trees on site for a while longer before making their application.

Rosa held by Debbie Symes at Earlsway Farm, Bramfield.

I have been able to visit collection holders and all the collections are doing well.

SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS 2022

Aesculus Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203	Framlingham
Bellevalia Debbie Amor 07565 966682	Lowestoft
Dianthus (Malmaison) Dianthus (Perpetual) Jim Marshall, 01473 822400	Shelley
Disporopsis, Disporum & Prosartes Helen Chen, 07805 238680	Bures
Dryopteris Equisetum Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104	Stowmarket
Euonymus Rhus Toxicodendron Rupert Eley, Place for Plants, 01206 299224	East Bergholt
Hosta Melanie Collins, Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576	Stowmarket

Impatiens Will Purdom, team.botanico@gmail.com	Beccles
Iris (Sir Cedric Morris) Sarah Cook, 01473 822400	Shelley
Iris (Sir Michael Foster) Lucy Skellorn, 07730 507900	Stowmarket
Iris (Suffolk pre 1985) Steve Baker 07764 500104	nr Woodbridge
Narcissus (Rev. G. Engleheart) Darren Andrews, 01473 822987	Dispersed
Plants named for Ellen Willmott Nick Stanley, 07710 656757	Witnesham
Santolina Jon Rose, Botanica, 01728 747113	Campsea Ashe
Suffolk Garden Plants Suffolk Punch Trust, 01394 411327	Hollesley



Plant Centre, Garden and Café
Trees, Autumn bulbs and hardy shrubs

Visit this Autumn for all your plants we stock a first class selection of English grown ornamental trees, as well as fruit trees.

Plant Centre Open Daily 10am – 4pm
Café and Garden see website for opening times

The Place for Plants, East Bergholt Place, Suffolk CO7 6UP
Tel: 01206 299224 E-mail: sales@placeforplants.co.uk
www.placeforplants.co.uk

NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome seven new PH members to our Suffolk Group and look forward to meeting them at our events.

Welcome to: -

Mrs Lisa Matthews, Polstead

Mrs Jo and Mr Kevin Chapman, Eye

Dr Julia Haywood, Ipswich

Miss Lucinda Skinner, Wenhaston, Woottens of Wenhaston

Mrs Debbie Symes, Bradfield

Mrs Fiona Pearson, Long Melford

NATIONAL EVENTS

8 October 2022 2 pm Gardening with and for wildlife by Victoria Logue. Gloucestershire event, available on Zoom. Check plantheritage.co.uk/events

13 October 2022 7 pm Trees, a cut above the rest by Tony Kirkham. Surrey Group event available free to PH Members on Zoom. Check plantheritage.co.uk/events

10 November 2022 7 pm Creating movement whilst Frozen Still by Ben Pope. Surrey Group event available free to PH Members on Zoom. Check plantheritage.co.uk/events

Love your garden?

Brighten up your borders with our range

*perennials *shrubs *climbers *ornamental trees *soft fruit trees and bushes *grasses

Seasonal selection includes vegetable plants, herbs, bedding, bulbs plus a range of King's Seed.

*compost *logs & coal *farm shop



Rougham Hall Nurseries

A family run business for over 55 years

A14, Rougham,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

IP30 9LZ

01359 270577

Open 7 days

10am - 4pm

Major credit
cards accepted



Woottens of WENHASTON

Growing Iris, Pelargonium,
Auricula & Hemerocallis

Nursery now open Thursday, Friday
Saturday. March to October 10-4

woottensplants.com

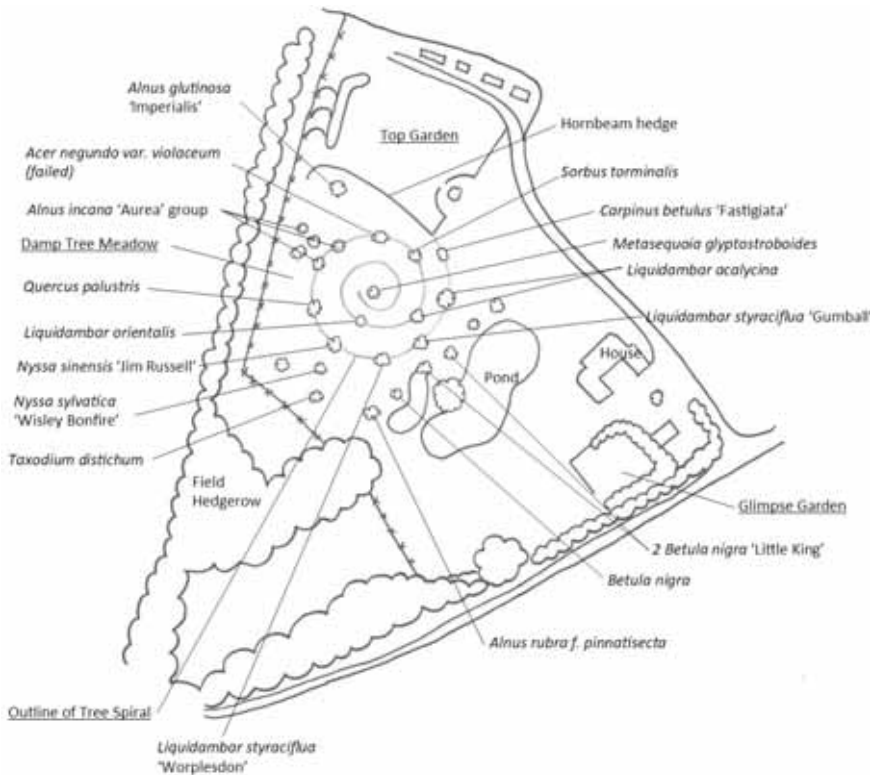
A FURTHER INSTALMENT ON THE CREATION OF JUDE LAW'S GARDEN AT STRADBROKE – THE DAMP TREE MEADOW

JUDE LAW

Yesterday, dusty and hot beneath a wide brimmed hat and feeling like I walked the pages of a Steinbeck novel, I trudged into the Glimpse Garden to see what was looking good. Very little it turned out and I could only give thanks that the desiccated plants were not my source of food or livelihood. Let us hope for rain soon for all those in that position as well as for us and our parched gardens.

Last year, I diverted from my planned article on trees to concentrate on the Glimpse which had assumed a huge importance within the developing garden, providing a place to linger and enjoy the intricacies of form and colour. What a difference a year makes! Gripped as we are by drought, there is very little in the Glimpse that is performing unscathed; beauty has taken a sabbatical and even the myrtle is crisp and dry. Dahlia blooms shrivel and brown before opening, *Rosa* 'Sally Holmes' eschews any idea of a second flowering as does *R.* 'Ghislaine de Feligonde', *R.* 'Mutabilis' and 'Bengal Crimson'. *Daphne bholua* 'Jaqueline Postill' hangs its leaves in utter dejection and only *Phillyrea*, *Escholzia*, *Ulmus* 'Jacqueline Hillier' and a few *Symphyotrichum* continue unabashed. As for other herbaceous material, it is largely blackened and crisp. For the sake of the plants and aesthetics, I should probably cut back but I hesitate; at least the debris is protecting the soil from the fiercest of the sun's heat and the wind's scorn.

So, this year, the 'Damp Tree Meadow'. The title now seems far too simplistic. Sited on the far side of the pond from the house, the land is undrained and in winter, water commonly squelches over wellies as you wander. It sits wet and waterlogged delaying planting until April, which gives little time for trees to begin to establish before the summer. It is only during the last couple of years though, that the summer drought has caused a problem. So, the trees I chose initially were those that could withstand periods of waterlogging. Now I am having to modify my selections to include those that can ALSO



withstand periods of drought. When planting, I add a watering pipe from the soil surface to the bottom of the planting hole through which I water regularly for the first year, tapering off in the second and third year after which they are on their own.

First to go in were two naturally multi-stemmed, *Betula nigra* 'Little King' as entrance pillars marking the transition from the pond area to the Tree Meadow. Both have grown well and are healthy but have lost quite a few leaves in the heat this year and others hang, prematurely gold but graceful among the green, festooned like a Klimt painting. In contrast, a species *B. nigra* nearby is showing no signs of stress. This early planting also included a group of three *Alnus incana* 'Aurea'. I hope they will emulate the social, colony-like attributes of our native alder that graces so many riversides and so they went in close together. This was followed by another beautiful riparian alder, *Alnus rubra* f. *pinnatisecta* and a few other prima donnas including a *Taxodium distichum*, placed around the perimeter

but leaving a large area in the middle bare. I had lots of ideas for trees but was faced with a dilemma of placement. Where should I plant, how should I space, why should I plant in a particular spot? I would stand and gaze at the space with my back against the hornbeam hedge which separates the Tree Meadow from the Top Garden. I was without inspiration, so I decided to continue the curve of the hedge initially adding a specimen fastigiata *Carpinus*. From there I continued the curve past an existing *Liquidamber styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' and was off. Remembering garden history lectures as I walked, the curve became a spiral and with all due respect to Fibonacci, my Fibonacci tree spiral was born.

Marked out wearing wellies, with hosepipes on the ground and defined by a mown path, it is a far cry from the elegant mathematical equation but nature's spiral at the heart of my garden struck a romantic chord. The spiral took over, its logic dictating where the next tree should go. Planting spaces were marked at regular intervals leading to the innermost, central tree, which was to be a *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. At that point, 18 months ago, I was on my own with it. A few trees, including the *Metasequoia*, went in and then last year's drought took hold.

One of the wonderful things about the development of this garden, indeed any garden, is the help and plants offered by friends. From the early placement of *Betula ermanii*, to the marking out, ground prep and eventual planting of the hornbeam hedge and beds in the Top Garden and elsewhere, and finally to the encouragement to finish the tree spiral, someone has always been on hand to help and encourage and these friendships are woven into the structure of the garden. Finishing the spiral was a huge task, errant mowing had distorted the original shape and I was so lucky to have a friend prepared to get out the hosepipe again and meticulously help me peg out the innermost curve with a perfectionist's eye. The hosepipe was tweaked many times before we were both happy that the shape was pleasing.

My final plan is to trace the innermost spiral with a *Metasequoia* hedge to lead eye and feet to the middle. I was bowled over by one growing at the Bluebell Arboretum where I source many of my trees. It clips close and tight like yew, is perfect in the wet and can also survive drought once established. Thought to be extinct, this wonderful deciduous conifer was found again in China in the 1940s



Metasequoia glyptostroboides the summer one growing at Beth Chatto's garden

in wetland locations. Still threatened in its native habitat it has since been found to be extremely adaptable and is widely planted in gardens and arboreta. Its conical outline is clothed in ferny, light green foliage that erupts into a fiery russet cone in autumn before shedding its leaves to leave the outline of a beautiful fissured, fluted trunk. What a centrepiece!

My friend helped plant the first half dozen hedgelings and pointed me to a commercial supplier of whips, but cuttings strike easily and so I shall be making it personal by adding some home-grown plants. Within this enclosure there will be a seat and some kind of informal 'meadow-ish' planting round the concluding, and I hope, majestic, *Metasequoia*.

Of the original trees on the spiral some have fared better than others. *Liquidamber styraciflua*, *acalycina* and *orientalis* have performed best, the *Alnus rubra* has fared well, the *A. incana* 'Aurea' and *A. glutinosa* 'Imperialis' are OK and showing promise. The *Taxodium*, like the *Metasequoia*, has coped well with this year's heat so perhaps their roots have already delved deep in the soil. *Quercus palustris* is OK-ish but young yet, but a couple of *Nyssa* have failed as has an *Acer negundo* var. *violaceum* which differs from the type by its

beautiful reddish-pink, tasselled, gold-anthered flowers. The *Nyssa* were weakish anyway, perhaps not liking my neutral pH, but seemed totally unable to manage drought stress but I am surprised by the *Acer* which I understood to be able to cope with brief periods of waterlogging and dry soil.

Finally, an unexpected success. I have wanted a *Sorbus torminalis* for ages, the imagery of the ancient hedgerow marker and the link with 'Chequers' pubs adding to the interest of their maple-like leaves. Finding one unexpectedly in a Suffolk nursery, I popped it on the driest edge of the spiral nearest to the drainage of the Top Garden and its so far undaunted by the weather.

I will have one last try at finding a suitable spot for a *Nyssa* and *Acer* (who wouldn't want to see those flowers) and I'm sure I will squeeze in a few more specimens. At the moment though, before the current trees grow big, any newbies will have to be able to withstand an exposed windy site with no shade. In time however, I hope there will be some protection for more fickle specimens as the meadow slowly becomes more of a dispersed wood. Let's hope too, that one day I can sit inside a *Metasequoia* hedge under the shade of a full-grown tree and enjoy five minutes peace.

PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

For an update on what's
happening at National Office
visit the current issue of
Newslines on the website
www.plantheritage.com

To find out more about
Suffolk Group activities -
including details of garden
events and openings
visit
<https://suffolkplants.org.uk/>

TO ADVERTISE IN SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE JOURNAL

Contact Rosie Ansell,
rosieansell@aol.com

Quarter page
black & white £20.00
colour £25.00

Half page
black & white £40.00
colour £50.00

Full page
black & white £60.00
colour £75.00

A GARDEN WELL PLACED: THE STORY OF HELMINGHAM AND OTHER GARDENS XA TOLLEMACHE PIMPERNEL PRESS LTD



If you were at the Helmingham Plant Fair in May you may have noticed that Xa Tollemache was selling signed copies of her recently published book (assisted by a grandchild for IT support!).

The book's foreword by Fergus Garrett comments on the similarity of Helmingham to Great Dixter – lush gardens, but with a formal structure, and a haven for wildlife and a showcase for diversity.

The book gives some of the history of the house, family and gardens at Helmingham and Xa's work in them over some 40 years. She candidly admits that when she started she had no idea what she was doing. Her father in law died relatively young and they moved into the hall with one small child and another one expected and work to do to make the hall comfortable for a family.

As well as a history the book describes the various areas of the garden and how they have changed over the years and is illustrated with copious photographs. She pays tribute to the many people who have contributed over the years, from her head gardener for many years, Roy Balaam, to Mollie Salisbury, and various horticultural students. There is also a check list of what needs doing when in the gardens.

Following on from this there is a glimpse of some of the gardens that Xa has designed over her years as a professional designer, including her first Chelsea garden, the vegetable garden at RHS Hyde Hall, and several other sites in Suffolk. She also pays generous tribute to her assistant Jane Bailey and garden build team.

As she and Tim have now left the hall to their son and daughter in law and Xa has stepped back from the garden they have returned to Framsdon Hall, where they lived when they were first married, and she is redesigning the garden there.

SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President & Chairman Margaret Thorpe, Weavers House, Swan Street, Boxford, Sudbury CO10 5NZ, 01787 211 346, maggiethorpe37@gmail.com

Vice Chairman Neil Bradfield, 2 Holmwood Cottages, Bower House Tye, Polstead, Colchester CO6 5BZ, 01787 211816, scuddingclouds2@gmail.com

Treasurer Pat Stanley, Newlands Hall Lane, Winesham, Ipswich IP6 9HN, 07793 063424, nickpatstanley@btinternet.com

Secretary and membership secretary Isobel Ashton, 6 College Lane, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1NN, 01284 754993, secretary@suffolkplants.org.uk

National collections co-ordinator Dorothy Cartwright, 605 Neptune Marina, 1 Coprolite Street, Ipswich IP3 0BN, 01473 289556, collections@suffolkplanheritage.com

Journal editor Rosie Ansell. 23 Bristol Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2DH, 01284 701252, rosieansell@aol.com

IT administrator Anthony Pigott, Kersey's Farm, Mendlesham, Stowmarket IP14 5RB, 01449 766104, anthony.pigott@btinternet.com
Website enquiries it.admin@suffolkplants.org.uk

Other committee members

Sarah Cook 01473 822400, sarahmalmaisons@gmail.com

Anne Twedde 01473 737337, anne@twedde1.co.uk

Linda Weeks linda.weeks2@aol.com

Matthew Tanton-Brown matttantonbrown@yahoo.co.uk

Catherine Bacon, baconcatherine@hotmail.com

Gillian Beardsworth, gmbeardsworth@gmail.com

www.suffolkplantheritage.com

