

Extending the Range of Plants for the Nursery Stock Industry

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The main objective of this project is to ensure that rare plants, or those of outstanding garden worthiness, are not lost. These plants will eventually be introduced into the trade thus expanding the nursery plant range.

Since it started in 1995 the project has successfully collected and propagated many woody, herbaceous, and alpine cultivars. The majority of these plants are very scarce and several have arisen as sports or by selections from existing plants. Several good garden plants are still scarce because of problems in propagation.

The first stage is location of the plants and, to this end, the project has targeted the most important gardens in Ireland. Assessment and selection of the plants then begins. Special attention is paid to disease resistance as well as any particular characteristics for which the plant is selected. Samples are then collected for propagation. Cuttings under mist is the main propagation method but grafting and micropropagation is also carried out with several woody or difficult cultivars which do not readily root under mist, e.g. *Eucalyptus* and *Daphne*. After propagation, plants are potted up and gradually hardened off. Some of the successfully propagated plants are then returned to their owners for replanting. A foundation stock is planted out at Kinsealy Research Station in several nursery beds for further evaluation, for a range of different uses and functions and as a further safeguard for preservation. Foliage plants with export potential are being evaluated in a number of foliage production areas in the south west. It is hoped that most or all of these plants can be released (with the owners permission) to the trade.

So far more than 100 scarce cultivars have been successfully collected and propagated, of which approximately 30% are woody and 70% herbaceous. In the case of woody plants several have been rescued and rejuvenated from sole existing trees which have since perished.

Because several of the most important Irish gardens, with their plant collections, have recently been sold, the priority has been to concentrate on these, as rare plants are generally more vulnerable under these circumstances, or in danger of being lost through neglect or ignorance. In some cases plant identification is incomplete.

TO DATE THE COLLECTION INCLUDES

Woody plants

Several *Crataegus*, *Malus* and *Pyrus* cultivars, *Philadelphus*, *Syringa*, *Betula*, *Quercus coccinea* 'Splendens', *Tilia*, *Chamaecyparis*.

Foliage plants

Elaeagnus angustifolia, several *Pittosporum*, *Leptospermum*, *Fuchsia*, *Genista*, *Cytisus*, *Eucalyptus*.

Herbaceous

Several cultivars of *Geranium*, *Dianthus*, *Erysimum*, *Campanula*, and a large range of alpines.

Old Roses

Climbing and shrub roses of superior constitution and resistance to black spot.

Rare Plants

Mostly of botanical interest.

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS

Trees

Acer pseudoplatanus

'Brilliantissimum'

Brilliant foliage colour, slow growing

Betula ermanii

Vigorous tree, cream-coloured bark

Chamaecyparis cultivar

Narrow tall golden conifer of exceptional beauty, not subject to sun scorch

Crataegus laevigata cultivar

Flowers, pink with white eye

Crataegus laciniata cultivar

Deeply cut grey foliage and berries

Crataegus laciniata cultivar

As above but more vigorous tree

Crataegus cultivar

Dwarf compact habit, very profuse berrying

Crataegus cultivar

Elegant shape

Malus species

Large tree 15 m to 16 m high, outstanding habit, and fruit bearing

Prunus 'Ukon'

Creamy/yellowish flowers, good habit

Pyrus species

Elegant tree 10 m high

Quercus coccinea

Brilliant autumn colour

Tilia 'Petiolaris'

Graceful large weeping tree, white-felted beneath

Foliage

Eucalyptus

Selection from *E.glaucescens* with juvenile foliage

Leptospermum cultivar

Grey foliage

Elaeagnus 'Quicksilver'

Striking silver foliage, small tree

Hedera helix 'Arborescens Variegata'

Larger-leaved variegated foliage

Pittosporum eugenioides

Foliage

Pittosporum eugenioides 'Variegatum'

Foliage

Pittosporum tobira

Variegated foliage, drought resistance

Shrubs

Fuchsia 'Corallina'

Long flowering season and dwarf habit

Genista / *Cytisus*

Scented flowers

Hydrangea quercifolia

Flower size and autumn colour

Hydrangea aspera Villosa Group

Lilac blue flowers

Rosa

Several cultivars of climbing and shrub

Rubus 'Benenden'

Superb hybrid for roadside or garden planting

Herbaceous and Alpine

Aethionema grandiflorum

Dark pink-flowered form

Anthyllis montana

Campanula

Several cultivars of lactiflora group

<i>Dianthus</i>	Several cultivars with long flowering season
<i>Erysimum</i>	Relatively long lived, long flowering season
<i>Geranium</i> × <i>riverleaianum</i> 'Mavis Simpson'	Long flowering season, low growing
<i>Geranium</i> × <i>oxonianum</i>	Dwarf selection from <i>G. endressii</i> 'Wargrave Pink'
<i>Geranium</i> <i>traversii</i>	Grey foliage, long flowering
<i>Hypericum</i> <i>aegypticum</i>	Neat habit, pale lemon-coloured flowers, long flowering season
<i>Moltkia</i> × <i>intermedia</i>	Blue flowers, long lived
<i>Teucrium</i> <i>subspinosum</i>	Round neat shape, grey leafed
<i>Trochocarpa</i> <i>thymifolia</i>	Compact form