

# About **NOW**

## Two Dragons garden takes shape

It links partnership between East and West

A garden symbolising a partnership between British and Chinese institutions is being developed in North Wales. The Two Dragons garden project at Treborth Botanic Garden, near Bangor, celebrates the partnership between the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden in Yunnan, with funding by the Confucius Institute at Bangor University and the British Council.

An important aspect of the project is the development of a 645 square yard Chinese

medicinal garden designed to demonstrate aspects of the native plants of China and the ancient philosophy of plant use in Chinese culture.

The garden also facilitates scientific research into the medicinal properties of important Chinese plants, such as *Artemisia lactiflora*, used to treat menstrual and liver disorders. Existing plants from China, such as bamboos and crab apple, have provided a mature setting, along with recent plantings of other significant oriental plants such as ginkgo, hamamelis and tetrapanax.

The design is inspired of Chinese landscape architecture, such as artificial mountains (jashan), borrowed landscapes (shakkei), tray landscapes (pinging) and scholars' stones (gonshi), using Welsh slate for rock features and paving.

"I'm really excited to be developing such an important garden and hope it will inspire research, reflection and creativity," said Treborth's curator Natalie Chivers.

The garden will officially open in summer 2018. Visit [www.treborth.bangor.ac.uk](http://www.treborth.bangor.ac.uk) for more information.

Friends of Treborth Botanic Garden celebrate completion of the Moongate



The symbolic moongate was constructed from locally-sourced larch by Welsh craftsmen



Photos: Tony Howard

## Fancy a £1,000 Monet pot?

A plant pot that once graced a garden created and painted by Claude Monet is to go on sale. The blue and white ceramic, two-handled jardinière that's 43.5cm (17½in) tall, can be seen in some of the celebrated artist's paintings, such as *The Artist's Garden at Vétheuil*. Expected to fetch between £750-£1,500, the ceramic pot is to be sold by Christies in a 54-lot international sale in Hong Kong in November. The item forms part of a recently discovered collection of Monet's paintings, drawings and personal effects, which also includes personal photographs and a pair of his spectacles, along with works by his artist friends, such as Rodin and Manet. The collection was owned by Rolande Verneiges, who died in 2008, and was the unacknowledged daughter of Monet's son

The decorative pot is often depicted in Monet's paintings



Claude Monet was a keen gardener



Michel, who gave the gifts to her over the years. Michel, who died in 1966, had already bequeathed nearly everything to France's Academie des Beaux-Arts and its Marmottan Museum. An 1887 painting by Monet of poplar trees entitled *Trois Arbres à Giverny* is expected to fetch £1.5-£2.3m. The items can be viewed before the sale on November 26 at Christies at 8 King Street, London SW1Y 6QT from September 30 to October 7.



Hacker T. Dog gives Peter a few 'expert tips'

## Onion man and his dog!

Giant veg supremo Peter Glazebrook came face to face with his nemesis at the Harrogate Autumn Flower Show. Hacker T. Dog, celebrity character from CBeebies children's TV, had entered the giant onion competition with a beady eye on first prize. With a potential champion grown in the *Blue Peter* garden, lippy glove-puppet Hacker was confident at the tense weigh-in, but his weedy 1 gram bulb was no match for Peter's 6.65kg (14.66lb) monster. Impolite in defeat, Hacker berated a bemused Peter with a tirade of excuses, before rushing off to lick his wounds. Peter went on to sweep the board with a trio of onions weighing in at 17.445kg (38.46 lb). Hacker's Harrogate escapade was part of an online children's science series to be aired in spring.

**VIP**  
Very Important Plant

## Rowan

Trees with a cast-iron constitution, are beautiful to look at and useful to wildlife are to be treasured. The British native rowan or mountain ash, *Sorbus aucuparia*, is one of them, perfectly at home battling the poor soil and austere weather of the uplands, as it is in the more luxurious shelter of valley life.

Although a root association with fungi helps it make the best of a spartan low-nutrient diet, it won't tolerate salty soil or ones that are constantly waterlogged. The tree is fast-growing, preferring open, sunny positions rather than shade, achieving 12m (40ft) and 5m (17ft) across, but much less in challenging situations, making a useful nurse species for shelter-belts.

In terms of other forest tree species, it's not long-lived, usually around 80 years. The slender trunk forks into a number of branches clothed in deciduous pinnate leaves. The dense clusters of small, white flowers that appear in spring are filled with nectar, making it attractive to the bees and flies that pollinate it. The large clusters of orange-red berries mature from late summer, food for more than 60 different species of bird, particularly songbirds, such as thrushes and blackbirds, as well as migrant species of winter birds such as waxwings. It has spawned a number of garden-worthy varieties such as cut-leaved 'Asplenifolia', columnar 'Fastigiata', edible-berried form *S. edulis* and warm russet-stemmed 'Beissneri'.



## Bedside Books



**Head Gardeners**  
Ambra Edwards  
While we marvel at the fabulous gardens we visit, we frequently pay scant regard to the folk who create and maintain them. This book profiles the lives, visions and achievements of 14 of the nation's professional head gardeners. Award-winning author Ambra Edwards speaks to Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter, Troy Scott Smith at Sissinghurst and partners Jim Buckland and Sarah Wain at West Dean Gardens in West Sussex.  
Pimpernel Press, £35