



International Oaks

The Journal of the International Oak Society

*...the hybrid oak
that time forgot, oak-rod baskets,
pros and cons of grafting...*

Issue No. 25/ 2014 / ISSN 1941-2061



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p. 6: Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven (*Q. oxyodon* Miq.); p. 7: Béatrice Chassé (*Q. acerifolia* (E.J. Palmer)
Stoyloff & W. J. Hess); p. 9: Eike Jablonski (*Q. ithaburensis* subsp. *macrolepis* (Kotschy) Hedge & Yalt.).

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Oak Open Day Sir Harold Hillier Gardens United Kingdom July 29, 2013

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Introduction



1/ Jermyn's House.

The venue for this meeting was the world-famous Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Hampshire, UK, started by the late Sir Harold Hillier in 1953 and today managed as a charitable trust by Hampshire County Council. It was the site for the first of our Oak Open Days in 1995. Today it extends to some 72 hectares/180 acres and contains nearly 12,000 taxa represented by over 40,000 plants. One of the 13 National Plant Collections held by the Gardens is for the genus *Quercus* and has well over 350 taxa. Heaven for oak lovers such as ourselves! A great number of these oaks were introduced by Allen Coombes who was the Botanist at Hillier's for more than three decades and many of these accessions are from wild populations, adding greatly to their conservation value.

The day started in Jermyn's House over a cup of coffee allowing participants to chat and catch up with old friends before the day's business began. In total 41 people from six different countries attended the day. A warm welcome from IOS Tour Director Shaun Haddock was followed by greetings from Béatrice Chassé, IOS President, that included a message from Allen Coombes saying how much he would have liked to have been with us and that he hoped we would enjoy the day in the Gardens that he enjoyed for over 30 years. Just in case we had other ideas, he offered a number of suggestions on what we might want to have a look at and discuss. It was then down to Wolfgang Bopp, Director of Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, to welcome the group and lay out the plans for the day. A pack containing a list of all of the oaks in the collection, giving their location and other details, was given to every participant along with other information about the Gardens.

The morning's treasures

The group of 41 was split into two for the morning visit. The same route was to be followed by both but in opposite directions. Our leaders for this were David Jewell, Head of Collections, and Barry Clarke, Botanist. During this part of the day we concentrated on the oaks around Jermyn's House and the area known as Bentry Woodland, an area of "green sand" (formed in ancient marine environments, rich in organic detritus and low in sedimentary input) that allows for a greater diversity of plants to be grown. Many wonderful oaks were seen during the morning and this encouraged many discussions about names, how to identify species, performance in the UK, and many other interesting facts.



2/ *Quercus rysophylla*



3/ *Quercus sartorii* Liebm.

Q. rysophylla Weath. (loquat-leaf oak). This rare tree is a UK Champion and was collected by Sir Harold Hillier himself in Mexico in 1979. It is now over 18 m/59 ft tall, has survived temperatures down to $-18^{\circ}\text{C}/0^{\circ}\text{F}$, and is still growing vigorously.

Notholithocarpus densiflorus (Hook. & Arn.) Manos, Cannon & S.H. Oh (formerly *Lithocarpus*). A nice specimen near Brentry House. Discussions centered on how best to

propagate this species, with no definitive answers forthcoming.

Q. suber L. A beautiful specimen with lovely bark.

Q. mexicana Bonpl. This tree showed the lovely pachydermatous bark so characteristic of many Mexican oaks.

Q. serrata Murray (formerly *Q. glandulifera* Blume). Characterized by the bulbous spine on the edges of the leaf.



4/ *Quercus baloot*

Q. baloot Griff. This is a very rare plant in the UK and it is thought that most specimens have arisen from a collection made by Shaun Haddock, from Northwest Pakistan in 1995, at around 2,100 m/6,890 ft. It is a slow growing plant: the current specimen at Hillier's is about 2.8 m/9.2 ft tall.

Q. delgadoana S. Valencia, Nixon & L.M. Kelly (the new name for the Mexican plant that has been referred to as *Q. eugeniifolia* Liebm.).

Q. furfuracea Liebm. Certainly one of the rarest oaks in cultivation. This is an Allen Coombes collection from Mexico in 1996.



5/ *Quercus delgadoana*

Q. monimotricha (Hand.-Mazz.) Hand.-Mazz. This specimen really is one of the best you can see anywhere. It arose from a Roy Lancaster collection in 1986. It produces viable seed regularly and it was nice to see this specimen with many acorns. At best it makes a small multi-stemmed shrub.

And also: *Lithocarpus henryi* (Seemen) Rehder & E.H. Wilson; *Q. dentata* Thunb. ‘Pinnatifida’; *Q. affinis* Scheidw.; *Q. oglethorpensis* W.H. Duncan; *Q. ithaburensis* subsp. *macrolepis* (Kotschy) Hedge & Yalt.; *Q. greggii* (A. DC.) Trel.; *Q. oxyodon* Miq.; *Q. kiukiangensis* (Y. T. Chang) Y. T. Chang, which was originally identified and distributed as *Q. argyrotricha* A. Camus; and *Q. tomentella* Engelm.



6-8/ *Quercus monimotricha*

The afternoon's treasures

Lunch was served back in Jermyn's House and this gave us all time to discuss what we had seen and again to catch up with old—and make new—friends. The afternoon self-guided tours were indicated on the map we received as OF (Oak Area A) slightly to the north of the Visitor Centre and CK (Oak Area B) in the southwestern part of the Gardens. Starting off from Jermyn's House took us across the fabulous Centenary Border. It is now two years since refurbishment of the border started and the hard work was very obvious as was the quality. It well demonstrated just what can be achieved in such a short time with good quality plants, planning and implementation. We admired the rare *Xanthoceras*



9/ The National Collection Glade.

sorbifolium Bunge, one of the few plants not removed during the project. Once we had arrived at the OF/CK areas we were then left to our own devices before assembling back at Jermyn's House for tea. This gave us the opportunity to meander at will admiring the many fine oaks in these areas. Some of my personal highlights of the afternoon were:



10-11/ *Quercus longispica*

Q. longispica (Hand.-Mazz.) A. Camus. From Western China, the plant at Hillier's is from a Roy Lancaster 1981 collection and is now around 7 m/23 ft tall. Distinguished by the notably long female inflorescences, this tree now flowers and fruits regularly.

Q. guyavifolia H. Lév. There is some debate over the spelling of the species epithet and its place amongst the Chinese "Golden Oaks" but nevertheless it is a most interesting plant. (The spelling used here is the original spelling.) The seed from which this plant was grown was collected from Western China in the 1990s.



12-13/ *Quercus guyavifolia*

Q. stellata Wangenh. (post oak). This attractive tree has a wide distribution down the USA East Coast but remains a rare tree in the UK.

Q. eduardi Trel. Another plant from Mexico where it grows amongst pines at an elevation of between 1,500 and 2,650 m/4,921 and 8,694 ft.



14/ *Quercus eduardi*

We then assembled back at Jermyn's House for a cup of tea, but more importantly for the fabulous chocolate cake all decked out with sugar oak leaves and acorns provided by Dorothy Holley. Can I have a second piece please? However this was not the end of the day and we had the chance to examine some samples that had been collected from the Gardens. This was a wonderful display and contained many interesting treasures including:



15/ *Quercus miquihuanensis*

Q. rehderiana Hand.-Mazz. Collected in Yunnan by John Rippon at 2,700 m/8,758 ft in 1990. It was good to compare this with the *Q. semecarpifolia* Sm. in A. Rees that we had seen before lunch. The leaves from above look very similar but there is no golden indumentum on *Q. rehderiana*. It has also been known under its synonym *Q. pseudosemecarpifolia* A. Camus.

Q. miquihuanensis Nixon & C.H. Mull. Collected by Nick Macer from Tamaulipas, Mexico in 2005. This is a rare plant with a very distinctive leaf that has a thick golden orange indumentum on the underside.

Q. dolicholepis A. Camus. This is another Chinese species from Yunnan and was collected by Cao Ming in 1998. In its native habitat it grows with rhododendrons, pines and other shrubs, growing generally no taller than 16 m/53 ft.

It was then time to depart and say our farewells. As always these days are great occasions, we see and learn about new plants, renew acquaintances with old and familiar friends as well as making new ones. It only leaves me to thank all those who helped in making this such a special day. Our thanks must therefore go to Shaun, Wolfgang, Barry, David, and the many others involved in making it such a success.

Participants

Dirk Benoit, Christof van Hulle, Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven (Belgium); Ondrej Fous, Dusan Placek (Czech Republic); Béatrice Chassé, Shaun Haddock (France); Francesco Gandini (Italy); Gert Fortgens, Wiecher Huisman (the Netherlands); Hugh Angus, Christine Battle, Amanda Cairns, Chris Carnaghan, Barry Clarke, Sandra Curtis Gilly Drummond, John Gammon, Michael George, David & Carol Gooder, James Harris, Michael Heathcoat Amory, John Hillier, Dorothy Holley, David Jewell, Lloyd & Sally Kenyon, Arabella Killander, John Kindler, Fergus Kinmonth, David Lancelles, John Lipscombe, Nick Macer, James MacEwen, Thomas Methuen-Campbell, John Parsons, Judy Scott, Caroline Todhunter, Harriet Tupper, Peter & Margaret Wells, Stephen Wood (United Kingdom)

Photographers. Photos 1-3, 5-11, 13-14, 16-19: Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven. Photos 4, 12, 15: Hugh Angus.

For more information on the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens visit <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hilliergardens>