

## 2026 Talks for Gardening Clubs by Liz Livermore

### **Talks based on trips to see plants in the Wild**

#### **Chile - Top to Toe**

Based on two trips to Chile with expert botanists, this talk includes flowers in the wild and a couple of private gardens and covers four regions of Chile, from the hot, dry Atacama to the cold and windy Southern Patagonia.

#### **The Flowers of the Upper Engadine**

A look at the early summer flowers which grow in the mountains surrounding the valley of the river Inn in the east of Switzerland - better known for winter sports and the up-market resort of St Moritz.

#### **The Burren**

This talk is based on a few days in this botanically rich area of south west Ireland organised by Wildlife Travel based in Cambourne, near Cambridge. The famous limestone pavements at sea level reveal a hotch potch of plants, some familiar sights near the coast, but others more often seen high in the Alps.

#### **The Pyrenees**

The mountains which form the border between France and Spain are home to some beautiful flowers – the star of the show being the fabulous Ladies' Slipper Orchid. This talk is based on two trips to the area. The first to the tiny Principality of Andorra and the second based around the picturesque mountain village of Berdun on the Spanish side.

#### **Floral Highlights of Costa Rica**

This talk combines the best bits of my two trips to Costa Rica. My first trip to Costa Rica was to the north with its well-known tourist hot spots. But no relaxing by the pool on this holiday, we were soon off to look at the amazing plants which this beautiful country has to offer with our expert botanist. We looked at plants in the wild, botanical gardens and private gardens. My second trip, again with an expert botanist, was in the south of the country, an area less developed for the tourist industry. Accommodation was often within a botanic garden or nature reserve making for a unique experience of the flora and fauna.

#### **Early Summer in Gotland**

Gotland is an island in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Sweden, which (together with the neighbouring island of Oland) was visited by the famous botanist Carl Linnaeus in July 1741. We follow in his footsteps (albeit a month earlier than his trip) and see the flowers that he may have seen. This is certainly a place for the orchid lovers!

### **Talks based on trips to see famous and not so famous gardens, both at home and abroad**

#### **Carl Linnaeus and the Botanic Gardens of Uppsala**

A brief look at the life of the famous botanist, Carl Linnaeus, and tours round the botanic garden he developed at Uppsala University in the second half of the 18th century, and the "new" botanic garden founded just after his death and still in use as a teaching resource by the University today.

#### **Gardens of Lazio**

A whistle stop tour around several gardens in the region around Rome. We see gardens of the High Renaissance, the Pope's garden at Castel Gandolfo and the beautiful garden developed within the ruins of the medieval village of Ninfa.

### **Villas and Gardens of the Veneto**

The Veneto is a region in North East Italy, famed for its Renaissance Villas designed by the 16<sup>th</sup> century architect, Andrea Palladio. We start with a tour around Padua Botanic Garden, one of the oldest Botanic Gardens in the world and founded during Palladio's lifetime. Then we look at some of the fabulous gardens from the Renaissance period through to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Going Dutch**

First we take a look at the Botanic Garden in Leiden which dates back to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. In Amsterdam we visit the Tulip Museum and the Van Loon House, then we go east to look at two more 16<sup>th</sup> century gardens, De Wiersse Castle and the former Royal Palace at Het Loo. Our final garden is the famous Keukenhof Garden, created just after WW2 as a showcase for the Dutch bulb industry

### **Gardens of the Isle of Wight**

The Isle of Wight benefits from a mild climate and lots of sunshine and we visit four gardens there which make the most of it. We start in the south at Ventnor Botanic Garden founded by Sir Harold Hillier in 1970. Next is Mottistone Manor Garden, developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries around an Elizabethan house. Our third garden is the garden created for Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, at Carisbrooke Castle. Finally the garden of the Queen herself at Osborne House.

### **The Gardens of Burns Country**

A tour of three gardens in South West Scotland - the area where the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns was born and spent most of his life.

### **Kent – Orchids and Orchid Hunters**

The county of Kent is often called the Garden of England – mainly due to the abundance of fruit and vegetables grown there commercially. But it is also home to large numbers of our native orchids. In this talk we take a look at the orchids I have seen growing in the wild, either on roadside verges or in publicly accessible nature reserves. We also visit Down House, home of Charles Darwin who did so much research on orchids, particularly their pollination. Finally, a visit to the World Garden at Lullingstone Castle, home of Tom Hart Dyke who was famously kidnapped in Central America while hunting for tropical orchids.

### **Murder, Drama & Invention – the Gardens of the South Hams**

Three gardens in South Devon associated with people more famous in fields far removed from horticulture. Includes a visit to Agatha Christie's house at Greenway.

### **The Gardens of Shakespeare Country**

A look at some of the gardens in and around Stratford-upon-Avon associated (sometimes rather loosely!) with William Shakespeare and his family.

### **'Twixt Tweed and Tyne**

We visit four gardens in Northumberland. Each garden represents a different period in garden history. First we go to Belsay where the present garden was developed in the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then on to Cragside, a garden and house built by engineer and inventor, Lord Armstrong in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Into the 20<sup>th</sup> century for our third garden, a small but perfectly formed garden designed by the famous Miss Jekyll. Then we come right up to date with the garden at Alnwick Castle created by the Duchess of Northumberland in 2001.