



ProVar Demonstration Planting

SAC – Ayr Campus, Auchincruive Estate



The Scottish Agricultural College teaches Horticulture and Garden Design to HND level at its Ayr campus. Practical classes are held at the gardens of Auchincruive Estate. These gardens were first laid out in the 18th century by Richard Oswald, a London merchant who also led the negotiations for the British to end the American War of Independence. In the 1920's the estate was donated to the Agricultural College for the provision of practical training. The Gardens are now shared with Gardening Leave a Horticultural Therapy charity working with ex-servicemen. The charity is in the process of restoring the glasshouse in the lower (pleasure) garden and increasingly using this area for their therapy work. The upper gardens, that originally grew fruit, vegetables and flowers for the mansion house, is now principally used for education purposes and has a nursery area, plots for vegetable production and ornamental borders for plant identification and the management and maintenance of plant collections. At the present time the borders are being re-developed to better reflect teaching requirements. The gardens are also on one of several footpaths on the estate open to the public.

In 2009 while at the annual IPPS conference in Ireland a demonstration planting of ProVar plants was seen at Fitzgerald Nurseries, Kilkenny. It was felt that a similar area at Auchincruive gardens would fit well with the re-development of the gardens and show students and the general public some of the new shrub varieties available at garden centres or for use in design projects. This led to a request to ProVar through Charles Carr to donate a range of shrubs for planting in a border outside the gardens lecture room. This was agreed and young plants were delivered in early 2010 and potted on by the students so that they could be planted out the following year. Cuttings were also taken from the plants to enable reserves to be held in case of losses over winter.

Two assignments given to HND2 Horticulture students were to plan the planting and information posters for the collection. Kenneth Hutcheson and Lachlan McNee prepared a planting plan which they decided would be better done as a mixed border rather than just displaying the plants in rows. Rosie Burgon and Annie Whitehead prepared posters to explain what ProVar is, features of some of the plants in the collection and background about some of the breeders and nurseries who have introduced the plants.

The planting was carried out in May 2011 and although we complained about a poor, wet summer in the West of Scotland it was an excellent growing season to get the plants established. This autumn students are developing a maintenance plan with particular emphasis on how to protect the young plants over the winter if required.

The support and generosity of the nurseries to supply plant material for our gardens is gratefully acknowledged with special thanks to John Hedger for organising their delivery.

About ProVar

Protected Varieties Limited (ProVar) is a non-profit organisation, founded to raise awareness to new ornamental plants. Any funds received from its members are used to cover cost and to keep the organisation evolving. The company acts as a one-stop-shop for organisations from every level in the industry, from breeder and grower to Retailer and even horticultural journalists, with a wide range of services and information. ProVar received support and funding for its initial set-up and website development from the Horticultural Development Council (HDC).



Plant Breeders Services

ProVar offers various services to its member, if a breeder is in the initial stages of applying for Plant Breeders rights ProVar will complete application forms and have the plant sent to an appropriate testing centre. Once the plant has gained certification ProVar undertakes marketing the variety but including it in its plant listing and catalogue as well as issuing information of its release to growers, retailers and journalists. The role of policing illegal plant duplication and the collection of royalties will also be done on the



Plant Breeders Rights

Under the Intellectual property legislation (UPOV agreement) a breeder can apply for Plant Breeders Rights, this gives the breeder the right to register the new variety as their own property and to therefore collect the royalties due from sales of that plant. To gain this status the plant must be tested against three core criteria. The plant must be "Distinct" in at least one characteristic from others other varieties available and must remain "Uniformed" and "stable" in form and description after repeated reproduction.



John Woods Nurseries Ltd

This is a large modern nursery that grows a full spectrum of plants.

John Woods nurseries work with a range of breeders to help develop and improve exclusive varieties.

They sell to both trade and the general public.



Branford Webbs Plant Company

Branford Webbs also just grows plants for the trade industry.

They grow wholesale plants, which are then distributed to garden centres and markets throughout the country.

Branford Webbs specialise in promotional and new variety plants.

Lowater Nursery

Lowater Nursery only grows plants for the trade industry, and therefore supplier to many garden centres throughout the country.

They specialise in Hebe production and plants from the Southern hemisphere.

Lowater has their own Hebe breeding programme and has bred many new varieties.



