



## Hardy Plants and Plantings for Repton and Late Georgian Gardens (1780–1820) Case Study: The Swiss Garden

### Introduction to the site

The [Swiss Garden](#) was created by Lord Ongley in the 1820s in the ‘Swiss Picturesque’ style, and boasts 13 listed buildings and artefacts within its 3.6-hectare grounds. Embellished with Victorian features during the 1870s by Joseph Shuttleworth, the garden and its buildings sit within the wider landscape of Old Warden Park, an early 19th-century parkland. The Swiss Garden has recently been extensively restored thanks to a £2.8 million Heritage Lottery grant, and as a result was taken off the [Heritage at Risk register](#).

Planting in the various beds and shrubberies around the Swiss Garden reflects both its Regency beginnings and the later Victorian layer, which included more of a focus on the fashion for ferns and ornamental planting such as rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants. The original landscape also included a heavier boundary screen of evergreen trees, which added weight to the ‘Swiss’ or alpine references that Lord Ongley appears to have been striving for in his design, and explains the garden’s name – an unusual choice for what started out as a flat brickfield in Bedfordshire.



▶ Watch a short video on the history of the Swiss Garden

**Figure 1**

The Indian Kiosk and North Bridge c.1910 (*The Shuttleworth Trust Archive*).

Short videos on the history of the Ongley family estate and the Swiss Garden can be found on the Shuttleworth Collection website, [www.shuttleworth.org](http://www.shuttleworth.org), or click on the link above.



## Aims of the project

The aim of the recent restoration project has been to redefine the characteristics that have been fundamental to the garden in all stages of development and to make clear how different elements are distinguished by shrubbery screens and by different types of planting, and how these are unified by the strong structural presence of major vistas around the garden. In particular, the need to be clear in terms of representing Lord Ongley's original planting and distinguishing it from later embellishments by Shuttleworth is important, as both of these historical layers are given equal significance in the current conservation management plan.

The composition of the shrubberies is an important aspect and includes several categories of shrub planting – evergreen, mixed, hedged, with height variances depending on screening requirements – which generally accords with the design layout of the garden.

The [Debois Landscape Survey Group](#) report of 1992 offers a list of plants with which to make up 90% of each shrubbery. The last 10% are more floriferous shrubs and variegated plants such as the ones introduced later by Joseph Shuttleworth.

The predominant 'Ongley' plant mix contains a wholly evergreen mix with climbers and trees whose principal objective is to reinforce the structure of the garden. A second mix of evergreens includes a proportion of appropriate deciduous flowering shrubs and climbers to provide screening and also floristic interest at key points in the garden. A sinuous border of herbaceous plants and box balls forms the front of each bed in accordance with Ongley's three tiered system of planting: a semi-herbaceous border edged with box, deciduous flowering shrubs in the middle and an evergreen spine.

To reflect the importance of Shuttleworth's influence in the garden in certain areas, a combination of flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants of the period have been selected, along with appropriate ferns, ground cover plants and bulbs.



▶ Watch a short video on the restoration of the Swiss Garden

**Figure 2**  
The Swiss Cottage & Dell, 2014.  
(Photo: Darren Harba)

## Challenges in maintaining a period garden

The Swiss Garden team is committed to managing the garden in a way which reflects the vision of Lord Ongley, later Shuttleworth embellishments and of course, to providing the modern visitor with an enjoyable and informative experience. As with many historic gardens however, this sometimes presents difficulties, and some of the challenges to be faced include:

- The lack of late summer colour in the overall planting design – many of the flowering shrubs bloom in spring or early summer, and once the flush of May/June herbaceous plants is over, there is little colour to be found in the garden. The challenge is to address this in a way which does not interfere with the garden's historic brief and to provide suitable interpretation so that visitors understand the planting ethos.
- Keeping on top of the heavily planted shrub borders, and the pruning required to keep the tiered planting systems in check.
- Maintaining vistas and key views within the garden.
- Modern health-and-safety policy limitations restrict the ability to reach higher hedges and arches, and it is necessary to re-think the height of certain boundary hedges and planting on the 7-metre high floral arch, which cannot be accessed easily for maintenance/pruning purposes.

## Acknowledgements

This case study was written by Corinne Price, Swiss Garden and Grounds Manager, [The Shuttleworth Trust](#).

Images courtesy of The Shuttleworth Trust and Darren Harba.

## Further reading

Historic England 2018. *Hardy Plants and Plantings for Repton and Late Georgian Gardens (1780–1820)*.

The Swiss Garden: Ongley Mixes 1: General Evergreen Shrub Mix			
Plant Type	Plants	Common name	%
Common evergreens (70%)	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	15
	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Glossy Privet	15
	<i>Prunus laurocerous</i>	Cherry Laurel	15
	<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	Portuguese Laurel	15
	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	20
	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	20
	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Laurus tinus	20
	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	
	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	
Other evergreens (20%)	<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Spotty laurel	10
	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Broom	13
	<i>Garrya elliptica</i>	Silk tassel bush	12
	<i>Kalmia angustifolia 'rubra'</i>	Sheep Laurel	15
	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Oregon Grape	15
	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Oregon Grape	15
	<i>Persicaria affinis 'Superba'</i>	Pesicaria	20
	<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm Oak	15
	<i>Juniperus sabina</i>	Juniper	
Climbers (5%)	<i>Clematis</i> (autumn flowers)	Clematis	20
	<i>Clematis</i> 'Ramona'	Clematis	20
	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	20
	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweet Briar	20
	<i>Rosa camina</i>	Dog Rose	20
	<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>	Wisteria	20
Trees (5%)	<i>Cedrus libanii</i>	Cedar	
	<i>Larix decidua</i> (Ld)	Larch	
	<i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i> (Mg)	Dawn Redwood	
	<i>Picea abies</i> (Pa)	Norway Spruce	
	<i>Picea Nordimaniana</i> (Pn)	Caucasian Fir	
	<i>Picea pinsapo glauca</i> (Ppg)	Blue Spanish Fir	
	<i>Pinus nigra 'maritima'</i> (Pnm)	Corscian Pine	
	<i>Pinus sylvestrus</i> (Ps)	Scots Pine	

The Swiss Garden: Ongley Mixes 2: General Mixed Shrubbery				
	Plant Type	Plants	Common name	%
Spine area	Evergreens	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	14
		<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	14
		<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Glossy Privet	14
		<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Glossy Privet	14
		<i>Prunus laurocera</i>	Cherry Laurel	15
		<i>Prunus laurocera</i>	Cherry Laurel	15
		<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	Portuguese Laurel	15
		<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	Portuguese Laurel	15
		<i>Quercus ilex</i> (coppiced)	Holm Oak	12
		<i>Quercus ilex</i> (coppiced)	Holm Oak	12
		<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	15
		<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	15
		<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	15
		<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Laurus tinus	15
		<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Laurus tinus	15
Central area	Deciduous	<i>Arbutus</i>	Strawberry tree	
		<i>Azalea Davies AGM</i>	Azaelea	
		<i>Berberis gagnepainnii</i>	Barberry	
		<i>Berberis sargentiana</i>	Barberry	
		<i>Bryonia Dioica</i>	White Bryony	
		<i>Buddleia globosa</i>	Chilean Orange Ball	
		<i>Convolvulus</i>	Blue Rock Bindweed	
		<i>Corchorus japonica</i>	Kerrya	
		<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	
		<i>Crataegus monogyna 'biflora'</i>	Hawthorn	
		<i>Cytisus 'Porlock'</i>	Broom	
		<i>Deutzia scabra</i>	Fuzzy deutzia	10
		<i>Deutzia scabra</i>	Fuzzy deutzia	10
		<i>Euonymus europea</i>	Spindle Glastonbury	10
		<i>Euonymus europea</i>	Spindle Glastonbury	10
		<i>Garrya elliptica</i>	Silk tassel bush	
		<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	Shallon	
		<i>Helianthemum 'Henfield brilliant'</i>	Rock Rose	
		<i>Hydrangea 'Veitchii'</i>	Hydrangea	
		<i>Jasminium nudiflorum</i>	Jasmin	
		<i>Juniperus sabinus</i>	Savin Juniper	
		<i>Kalmia Latifolia 'Calico bush'</i>	Mountain Laurel	
		<i>Laburnum</i>	Laburnum	
		<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Magnolia	
		<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Mahonia	
		<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	Mock Orange	10
		<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	Mock Orange	10

The Swiss Garden: Ongley Mixes 2: General Mixed Shrubbery				
	Plant Type	Plants	Common name	%
Central area	Deciduous	<i>Phillyrea latifolia</i>	Green Olive	10
		<i>Picea abies var. Clanbrassiliana</i>	Spruce	
		<i>Picea abies var. Pygmaea</i>	Spruce	
		<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Cinquefoil	10
		<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Cinquefoil	10
		<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	Firethorn	10
		<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	Firethorn	10
		<i>Rheum palmatum</i> 5	Turkish Rhubarb	
		<i>Spiraea area folia</i>	Spiraea	10
		<i>Spiraea area folia</i>	Spiraea	10
		<i>Spiraea donglassi lindleyana</i>	Spiraea	
		<i>Staphylea</i>	Bladdernut	
		<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Lilac	10
		<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Lilac	10
		<i>Taxus baccata Festigiata</i>	Fastigiata Yew	
		<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder rose	10
		<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder rose	10
		<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Yellow jessamine	10
<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Yellow jessamine	10		
Front area	Groundcover and box balls	<i>Buxus semper virens (ball)</i>	Box (clipped ball)	
		<i>Persicaria affinis 'Superba'</i>	Persicaria	20
		<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	20
		<i>Helianthemum 'Heinfield Brilliant'</i>	Rock Rose	20
		<i>Marjoram</i>	Marjoram	20
		<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	Thyme	20

The Swiss Garden: Ongley Mixes 2: General Mixed Shrubbery				
	Plant Type	Plants	Common name	%
Throughout, distributed evenly	Climbers	<i>Clematis</i>	Clematis	12
		<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Clematis	14
		<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Yellow Jessamine	12
		<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	Hop	10
		<i>Vitis Vinifera</i>	Common Grape vine	10
		<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>	Everlasting pea	14
		<i>Lonicera tartarica</i>	Tartarian Honeysuckle	15
		<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>	Wisteria	13
Throughout and marked on plan	Trees	<i>Staphylea</i> (Sl)	Bladder-nut	
		<i>Cedrus glauca</i> (Cg)	Grey Cedar	
		<i>Cornus florida</i> (Cf)	Dogwood	
		<i>Cypressus macrocarpa</i> 'Goldcrest'	Cypress	
		<i>Gleditsia tricanthus</i> (Gt)	Thorny Locust	
		<i>Tsuga canadensis</i> (Tc)	Hemlock spruce	
		<i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i>	Dawn redwood	
		<i>Prunus dulcis</i> (Pd)	Almond	
		<i>Pyrus japonica</i> (Pj)	Japanese Pear	
		<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> 'Friska'	Golden Locust	
		<i>Sophora japonica</i> (Sj)	Japanese Pagoda	
		<i>Picea Nordimaniana</i> (Pn)	Caucasian Fir	
		<i>Picea pinsapo glauca</i> (Ppg)	Blue Spanish Fir	
		<i>Pinus nigra</i> 'maritima' (Pnm)	Corsican Fir	
		<i>Larix decidua</i> (Ld)	Larch	

The Swiss Garden: Shuttleworth Mixes 1: General Shrub Mix		
	Plants	%
Front	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	5
	<i>Aster novi-belgii</i>	5
	<i>Astrantia major</i>	5
	<i>Campanula lactiflora</i>	5
	<i>Crocsmia</i>	5
	<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	5
	<i>Echinops nitro</i>	5
	<i>Erythronium pagoda</i>	5
	<i>Euphorbia characias 'Wulfenii'</i>	5
	<i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i>	5
	<i>Hosta sieboldiana</i>	5
	<i>Iris reticulara</i>	5
	<i>Lavendula augustifolia</i>	5
	<i>Liriope muscari</i>	5
	<i>Nepata mussennii</i>	5
	<i>Osteospermum tresc</i>	5
	<i>Phlomis frutiosa</i>	5
	<i>Phlox rembrandt</i>	5
	<i>Salvia pratensis</i>	5
	<i>Sedum spectabile</i>	5
Centre	<i>Buddleia alternifolia</i>	10
	<i>Choisya ternata</i>	10
	<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	10
	<i>Garrya eltiptica</i>	5
	<i>Griselinia liltoralis</i>	5
	<i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>	20
	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	5
	<i>Magnolia stellata</i>	5
	<i>Osmanthus heterophyllus</i>	10
	<i>Rosa Cardinal de Richelieu</i>	20
	<i>Viburnum plicatum</i>	10



The Swiss Garden: Shuttleworth Mixes 2: Ground Cover Mix		
	Plants	%
Herbaceous	<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	12
	<i>Astrantia major</i>	8
	<i>Brunnera machophylla</i>	4
	<i>Campanula carpatica</i> 'Blaue Chips'	12
	<i>Dianthus gratianopolitanus</i>	12
	<i>Epimedium grandiflorum</i>	4
	<i>Hosta sieboldiana</i>	12
	<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	4
	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	4
	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	12
	<i>Sedum spectabile</i>	8
	<i>Vinca minor</i>	8
Bulbs (entire area m <sup>2</sup> x 5)	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	33
	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	34
	<i>Hyacithoides non-scripta</i>	33

The Swiss Garden: Shuttleworth Mixes 3: Grotto Banks Mix		
	Plants	%
Herbaceous (70%)	<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	20
	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	15
	<i>Astrantia major</i>	15
	<i>Brunnera machophylla</i>	15
	<i>Epimedium grandiflorum</i>	20
	<i>Tolmiea menziesii</i>	15
Evergreen groundcover (20%)	<i>Hedera helix</i>	20
	<i>Hedera helix digitata</i>	20
	<i>Hedera helix hibernica</i>	20
	<i>Vinca minor</i>	40
Ferns (10%)	<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	25
	<i>Blechnum</i>	25
	<i>Dryoptens filix-mas</i>	25
	<i>Polystrichum setiferum</i>	25
Bulbs (entire area m <sup>2</sup> x 20)	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	33
	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	34
	<i>Hyacithoides non-scripta</i>	33