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Dublin Core

Title

Dyffryn Fernant

Subject

Dyffryn Fernant

Gardens

Pembrokeshire

Creator

Maria FitzGerald Houlihan

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/RG5J-VM8M>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Coverage

51.999191435504656, -4.922966358231937

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

A fifteen-minute drive from Fishguard/Goodwick port Dyffryn Fernant lies at the end of a narrow lane where hedgerows are spangled with rose-red campion and cow parsley. This six-acre garden is tucked neatly into the Preseli uplands; the Irish Sea is only moments away

Story

A fifteen-minute drive from Fishguard/Goodwick Port Dyffryn Fernant lies at the end of a narrow lane where hedgerows are spangled with rose-red campion and cow parsley. This six-acre garden is tucked neatly into the Preseli uplands; the Irish Sea is only moments away. Over the course of twenty-six years its creator, Christina Shand, has designed a distinctly unique garden.

Dyffryn Fernant does not impose itself upon its surroundings. Indeed, the margins of where the garden begins, and ends blend seamlessly with the parcels of land that surround it giving the space a sense of adventure and mystery. The foreground of the garden provides colour and texture and in the distance the contours of the southwest Wales landscape. This is a contemporary garden. Yet its naturalistic design, aspect, and sensitivity to the naturally occurring geography of the garden, such as its wetlands, provides places for plants to thrive and a space of contemplation, inspiration, and relaxation for its visitors.

Following the garden map provided at the entrance to the garden there is the sense that an adventure is about to begin maybe this is because of the whimsical nature of the garden's names: The Between and The Beyond, Hopeful Wood and Nicky's Garden. On the main approach into Dyffryn Fernant the Magic Garden, a grassy mound with an array of wild plants, takes you up, and above the farmhouse and Front Garden where there is a spectacular view of the Preseli uplands. Visible too is the Courtyard below where there is a curious collection of ceramics and coloured-glass curated atop the slate wall that hugs the coral-coloured farmhouse.

A plant lover's dream, everywhere plants play hide and seek and spill from corners, nooks and crannies and a particularly stunning pink rose drapes the whitewashed walls of an outhouse. The eighteen garden spaces are densely packed with familiar and unfamiliar plants. Tender plants such as dahlias and salvias and architectural herbaceous perennials like acanthus and gunnera lend an exotic touch to the Bog Garden situated near the main dwelling house. Pure white calla lilies (*Zantedeschia*) stand tall and glimmering alongside a stainless-steel obelisk as do the pale-pink spike flowers of common bistort; there is harmony in the planting scheme and the keen eye of its owner is to be found throughout in swathes of vigorous plants. Across the gravel path in the Rickyard, traditionally the area on a farm where hay or fodder is stacked, there are peonies as big as dinner plates, red and dazzling, beneath the early summer sun a hint of what will follow during the height of summer.

Further beyond in Nicky's Garden fifty beds of ornamental grass and sedge are set between wide grass paths. This bold planting scheme provides structure highlighting the perennial grasses adding a coherent and satisfying shape to this informal space. A space reminiscent in style to Dutch designer, Piet Oudolf. Garden sculptures help express the sense of place. The steel obelisk is located near the buildings but venture a little further into The Beyond and 'Looking Up' a stone sculpture by Welsh Postwar artist John Cleal is a natural resting spot to do exactly that. In Hopeful Wood, a cartwheeling sculpture, 'Head Over Heels' by artist Pete

Moorhouse situated in the centre of the space calls to mind the joys of childhood and a palpable sense of nostalgia is present.

Dyffryn Fernant is a place that does not boast about its distinctive attributes. It is a place of abundance and of quiet and confident design. It is a place that does not weigh heavy on the senses. To discover it once is a treat and to return, a joy.

Factoid

Related Resources

Official Website

<https://www.dyffrynfernant.co.uk/about/dyffryn-fernant/>