

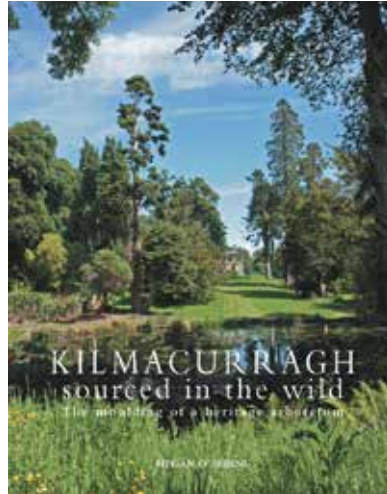
Kilmacurragh: Sourced in the Wild The Moulding of a Heritage Arboretum.

Megan O’Beirne

Systems Publishing, 2015.

Hardback 183 pages. ISBN: 978-1-905404-21-6.

€30.00



Ireland is blessed to have such a wonderful gem as the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin in Dublin. It is often mentioned in the same sentence with Kew and Edinburgh. The relatively recent acquisition of Kilmacurragh Arboretum as a sister property is seen as a wonderful addition to the Glasnevin Gardens. Kilmacurragh is located in Co. Wicklow aka “The Garden of Ireland”.

Any arboretum or garden of the standing of Kilmacurragh deserves to be celebrated by being the subject of a quality book.

In her book, the author, Megan O’Beirne, is brave enough to attempt such an ambitious task. She is brave in that she is not a professional horticulturist or botanist. On the cover of the book she is described as a writer and visual artist who became enchanted with Kilmacurragh.

The author is also brave in that she sets out not only to describe and photograph the arboretum and its plants but to chart the history of the property and its former owners, the Acton family, in the context of Irish history – a daunting task.

The book succeeds on a number of levels:

- it is beautifully illustrated with photographs taken by O’Beirne herself;
- it provides a large body of information, horticultural and historical;
- it is well designed and laid out.

However, even by the author's own admission as evidenced by a list of errata on her website, it contains several inaccuracies. This is unfortunate and could have been avoided either by having a suitable professional as a co-author or by more judicious editing. Nevertheless, the book is a suitably impressive addition to any coffee table and is an entertaining and engrossing read for anyone interested in trees and gardens.

Kevin J. Hutchinson