

IPPS 2009 International Tour: Ireland[©]

Douglas Justice

University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Email: douglas.justice@ubc.ca

Every year, the International Board of IPPS meets in one of the Society's eight regions. An extensive tour — usually 10 days to 2 weeks long and immediately preceding the host region's annual meeting — is organized by a committee from the host region for the Board and other interested members. Board meetings are typically held at various points along the way, so that by the time participants reach the end of the tour, they can take part in all activities at the host region's annual meeting. This year (2009), the region was GB&I and the tour was held in Ireland.

I was asked by Western Region 1st Vice President Jim Connor to present a short report on the International Board meeting and tour in Ireland at the Western Region annual meeting. Upon considering this task, I thought it might be useful to explain the role of the International Board as it relates to individual members of IPPS, while showing a few pictures I took on the tour.

- The International Board is composed of Directors and Alternate Directors from all eight regions, a President and Vice President, as well as the International Editor and International Secretary-Treasurer. Only the Directors, President and Vice President have voting rights.
- The international tour gives Board members and other interested members an opportunity to meet with IPPS members from around the world, to tour the countryside (see the sites) and see nursery production and nursery products of the host region.
- We have an International Board to provide oversight for the International Office (e.g., regarding membership, financial affairs, and the production of the Proceedings), to provide a forum for reporting the activities of members in other regions, and through the various committees, to set policy and programs for the benefit of IPPS members.
- Nursery visits are an important part of the international tour. There are as many ways to produce nursery stock as there are companies that produce them. Every region and nursery is motivated or constrained in a different way to develop and use the resources and innovation available to it.
- New Zealand provides a considerable number of nursery cultivars for the GB&I market.
- Potato cork topping is a uniquely Irish solution to weeds in container production.
- Air layering, Mt. Congreve style. This versatile apparatus provides a durable, effective container for encouraging roots in the cool, wet Irish climate.

- The history of Ireland is rich and compelling.
- Both the natural and working landscapes in Ireland are picturesque.
- Ireland was as hospitable as it was beautiful, and after an arduous day of nursery touring, I could think of few places in which I'd rather find myself relaxing.

The International Tour began in Dublin, where we were treated to a variety of sights and gardens, including the National Irish Botanical Garden (Glasnevin) before traveling west towards the Atlantic coast. Galway, on the west coast, is a picturesque town on a breathtakingly beautiful bay and gateway to the wilds of Connemara to the north and the Burren to the south. The Burren is a botanical wonderland, where alpine plants grow at sea level in the cracks and crannies of a vast karst limestone pavement. In the south, we visited subtropical gardens on exotic islands and more picturesque towns and villages. Throughout the tour we were treated to ancient castles, stunning gardens, outstanding nurseries, and an amazingly beautiful countryside. The Directors all agreed that Ireland is a pretty nice place to hold a Board meeting. The International tour ended in historic Kilkenny, where GB&I's annual meeting took place. Here, we experienced more great hospitality, fine food and drink, skilled presentations, and great local tours. An excellent time was had by all.