

ACTOR PATRICK BERGIN

I love geraniums. They are much underestimated and I just love them. I have grown them occasionally when I am in a spot for a while and I like to have one in a pot if necessary. I just love the scent, geranium oil has a lovely smell.

I have a garden down at the castle that needs a bit of work on it at the moment. My castle is on the borders of Offaly and Tipperary, near Cloughjordan. There are herb gardens, and a forest with oak, ash and pine and lots of perennials and deciduous trees. The oaks are fantastic trees.

My father said there were three things a person needs in life: a roof over their head, food on the table and a flower in a vase. The flower in the vase represented the spiritual, artistic life. It's beautiful. He was a great man. I am very conscious of flowers. Who doesn't love the lily and the rose?

Do I get to garden? Not as often as I'd like to. As I am getting a little bit older, it's a hobby that is growing on me. I love walking in the woods. I have good neighbours and they have their dogs. Because I travel so much, I can't keep a dog. I do have a bit of land down at the back and an orchard, I have the most beautiful apples, they're called 'Beauty of Bath'. I have two trees and they give lovely apples that when you juice them come out like pink champagne.

I have two pet sheep: Riley and Friend. My daughter christened them. They keep the grass nicely neat. They are probably the oldest sheep in Christendom, they must be about seven years old, they're not mutton, they're not lamb. I love the trees and the herbs. The herb garden has been let go a little wild, and I would like to get that focused again. Thyme is probably my favourite herb, it's just such a lovely fresh smell.

For filming, I've been really rather lucky with weather in everything I've done — and I have been in the extremes. I have been in the Arctic filming and I have been in the desert in Africa filming. I have never been stuck by weather and I do like a good storm. The desert was quite extraordinary. That was in Kenya. It was obviously very hot there but that was part of the nature of the film. I played Sir Richard Burton who went to discover the source of the Nile. The film was *Mountains of the Moon*. The only tree you'd see out there was an old acacia tree.

When I was out there, a very old Turkana tribesman called me over and he said: 'Where are you from?' I said Ireland, and he looked around into the vast emptiness,



as if anybody might be listening and he called me in closer and said: 'Are you still having problems with the Catholics and Protestants over there?'

It's difficult to beat Kew Gardens in London and I love Regent's Park. It's a wonderful civilizing element to the human condition. We're all blessed to be above ground, and smelling the daisies, instead of pushing them up!

• in conversation with Yvonne Gordon

Actor Patrick Bergin was born in Dublin and has appeared in more than 80 films including *Sleeping With The Enemy* (1991), *Robin Hood* (1991), *Patriot Games* (1992) and *When The Sky Falls* (2000), as well as many TV series. He joins the TV3 drama, *Red Rock*, from April 17.