

Good morning everyone,

It is just under two weeks until the opening of our 2020/21 season of Club talks. This season looks like being completely different from anything we have experienced before with many of the sessions, especially the first two, being conducted remotely via Zoom, a communication App most of us had never heard of six months ago! Our first speaker on **Tuesday 1st September at 7:30 p.m.** is **Matthew McGowan, Sales and Marketing Assistant at McLarens Nursery**, which, as many know, is situated near Uplawmoor. It is a vast nursery with an eye watering and mind boggling display of plants, shrubs and trees. If you want to buy in bulk or to seek out that special plant, McLarens is certainly a very good place to start. As Matthew will explain in his talk, **The Environmental Challenge in Horticulture**, the world of horticulture is having to adapt to meet the new demands of us gardeners. The issues over plastic, peat free compost, organic growing, pesticides and plant passports are just some of the challenges that have to be met in our new ecologically aware society. On top of all that, McLarens have had to overcome the strictures of the Covid Lockdown. Their sixty acre site is normally staffed by around 60-70 people; during lockdown 5 staff, including Matthew, had to look after all these plants, plus all the other everyday tasks of maintaining a nursery. Having met and talked to Matthew, I am certain he will give us an entertaining and informative evening, even though, like me, he will be using Zoom, after training from his wife, for the first time. It could be an exciting evening.

Club Members, who have signed up for the **Virtual AGM on Tuesday 25th August**, will have a glimpse of my first "Hosting"; hopefully they will still be Members by **1st September**! As we are no longer able to convene in the Fraser Centre, it is necessary for all of you who wish to join the Zoom Meeting on 1st September that you ask to be invited by me. The necessary steps are as follows:

1. If you wish to join the talk by **Matthew McGowan** please advise me via email to the Club ([baldernockgarden@gmail.com](mailto:baldernockgarden@gmail.com)) by Monday 31st August.
2. I will then send you an "invite" giving you all the log-in details to the Zoom Meeting. You do not have to download Zoom onto your laptop/desktop to connect; you just have to click on the given link in the "invite". You may be asked to do a temporary download for the meeting, but this takes no time at all.
3. The Meeting will start at **7:30 p.m.**, but to avoid last minute rushes and panic to the host, please start logging in from 7.15 p.m.. There is a "Waiting Room" should I not have logged on in time, unlikely I know, but....!
4. As I am the "Host", a doorbell sound on my computer lets me know you wish to enter the Meeting. I press my "Acceptance" button and you are admitted to the "Room".
5. Once accepted, you then have the choice of viewing by Gallery View or Full Screen View. The latter is obviously the best one for viewing the Speaker and the slide presentation, but the Gallery view will give you a view of everyone, albeit in small thumbnails of up to, I think, 20 people per page.
6. Once the Meeting starts, I can exert my power by "Muting" everyone except the Speaker. This avoids extraneous noises off stage like an inadvertent cough, the clinking of tea cups or beverage glass interrupting the talk.
7. There are buttons allowing you to ask questions, debate a point or to clap enthusiastically, but I think those facilities are best explained at the meeting.

8. It is worth pointing out that Matthew is refusing to accept a fee for this talk as he will be sitting at home on his sofa and not travelling to distant Milngavie. He promises he will not be in his pyjamas, but wearing everyday clothes, I presume. I hope as many of you as possible will take the plunge and join me and Matthew on the **1st at 7:30 p.m.**

9. Should any of the above be unclear, please do not hesitate to contact me for clarification. I am absolutely sure many of you know your way around Zoom far better than I, so your expertise may be called upon should panic overtake the host.

It is all quite exciting, but not the real thing. This annoying virus is still around so we have to remain careful. As to finding premises to hold non virtual, but REAL meetings, this is proving difficult, mainly because nowhere is open and so far no indications have been given by the Government as to when restrictions will be relaxed. Thankfully we still have our gardens, in which the plants are undergoing a Joe Wicks exercise regime. One day they are standing tall and proud in the sun; the next day or even on the same day, they are bent over with the weight of rainwater, then when the sun reappears, up they pop again. It is like doing trunk curls in a fitness regime. Anyway, I am very pleased that my experiment with *Tigridia pavona* has worked well. They are a startling plant, though will have to be dug up and kept away from the frost when it undoubtedly arrives. One of my cannas is now flowering; the others are not obliging. All the plants associated with a hot bed are doing what they should, so all in all there is quite a bit of late summer colour around. But the nights are drawing in and there is no doubt that some of the trees are showing the first signs of autumn, which is rather depressing for August. My courgette plants, unlike the tomatoes, don't know how to stop producing and my potatoes, benefitting from nematode treatment, are slug free - so far! I always think the garden starts to look slightly overgrown and out of control at this time of year, so I go round making notes of what has to be moved and what is beyond repair. If I have remembered where I have put my notes about what is to be moved, the problem is to where, but if there is plant sale next year, that could be the solution. Let us believe that will happen. I don't know if everyone else is fighting a never ending battle with Sticky Willow, which seems to be very prevalent this year. It is always around, but this year it is really enjoying itself.

Finally, Members have been renewing their membership with great speed this year, so if you haven't recommitted yourself yet, please do so as soon as possible.

That's it for this time. Please do sign up for the Meeting on 1st September and if you are a **Member** and wish to "attend" the AGM, you still have time to register. Zooming is not the same as real meetings, but it is much better than nothing. Look after yourselves, continue to take care and enjoy your gardens.

With best wishes

Willie



