

Good afternoon one and all,

As we eagerly await this week's announcement as to whether we face further gadding about restrictions, or whether we carry on with what we have, I thought it timely that I am able to show you all that my wife and I are staying in our bubble. You have to look very closely.



In the spirit of all things nonsensical like the headline proclaiming "South Ayrshire Golf Club owner loses 2020 presidential election", which must rank amongst the best ever penned by the Ayrshire Daily News, I thought it pertinent to share with you a picture of my new plant in the garden.



It was removed fairly quickly as I didn't think it was going to work and it didn't!

After that burst of frivolity, I think, as we anticipate 40 hours of rain, it is time to move on to more conventional matters. The garden is looking very soggy indeed, doubtless even more so by Wednesday afternoon. The relentless sweeping up of leaves has continued, but an end is in sight. My canna has continued to flower, but I reckon the cold weather at the end of this week will finish it off. The roses, too, are stubbornly blooming, even though it is an effort for them. The dahlias have all been lifted, cleaned and stored; tulips have been planted, with a few still to be done; my nerines have decided to flower at long last. I don't quite understand why they flower so much later than those in my neighbour's garden, as they are in a similar position beside a south facing wall. The answer will lie in the soil! The autumn crocuses suffered from the wet and only managed to look pathetically bedraggled. The apple trees are dropping fruit on a continuous basis making it quite dangerous to walk under them and unfortunately we have nowhere left to store them all. Hopefully the hedgehogs, field mice and blackbirds will enjoy them. The autumn colours of the trees have been particularly virulent this year, as, I think, have all the autumn colours. I have decided not to cut back very much again this autumn after the birds enjoyed the cover and the seeds last year. The only plants I will be cutting back hard are the hydrangeas in the courtyard. They have grown so big that three and half windows have been declared redundant and we need the light!

On to Club matters, which is what this Newsletter is supposed to relay, our Membership has soared. We are for the moment, unrestricted by room size and we can't even start looking for regular premises until "normality" is resumed. We can cater for more on Zoom

and the Committee and I are delighted that so many of you are registering for our Zoom talks. We have all our Speakers up until April 2021 confirmed as Zoomers, so hopefully we can maintain the momentum. Certainly, all of the talks so far conducted on Zoom, have been of a very high standard and we have some future gems to which we can look forward. Our last speaker, Brian Young of Holm Farm, was truly exuberant. His energy flooded across the ether and even though he couldn't see his audience, his sheer enthusiasm and love for what he does was transmitted through our screens and we had over 50 screens! So for old and new members plus all our subscribers, there is plenty to enjoy over the coming months. For **Members Only**, you have **the Christmas Party on 8th December** as "A Must Attend" in your diaries. Full details of what will be happening, will be issued within the next two weeks and your Committee has been working hard to uncover gardening facts and lore to titillate your brain cells. We are hopeful there will be something for everyone by way of entertainment and that you will all be able to join in somehow on Zoom.

Our next Speaker, though, is our very own **Colin Walker**, who on **Tuesday 5th January 2021** will be giving us a talk on "**Cacti and Succulents**". Colin is currently the President of the British Cactus and Succulent Society and a Visiting Informal Academic with the Open University. I doubt there is very little that Colin doesn't know about Cacti and Succulents and, certainly, he has enough varieties in his large greenhouses and in his house to be able to study them first hand. This will be, I know, a marvellous talk to start off 2021, but again full details will be sent closer to the time. After Colin's talk, your Committee will be sitting down around our screens in January to begin the task of arranging speakers for the 2021/2022 season. Club life doesn't stop because of a virus and who knows, a vaccine may allow us to have a Plant Sale in May!

That's the end of another Newsletter, so I will leave you in peace and hope no further restrictions are placed upon us. Members will receive a further dose of my ramblings within the next two weeks, but in the meantime, there are still jobs to be done in the garden and a chance to garner what little Vitamin D is available at this time of year. Gardening is now the "IN" way to stay healthy and more space for allotments is once again being considered. Keep safe and keep well.

With best wishes  
Willie



