

Baldernock Gardening Club: January 2024 Newsletter:

A New Year with the same old rain

Happy New Year to one and all,

It is to be hoped that you all had a very pleasant Christmas and New Year celebrations. Over the festive season, nature managed to provide us with a bit of sun, a day of traffic stopping snow which quickly disappeared with the return of the virtually omnipresent rain. On the 27th of December we had a fair amount of precipitation, which nearly caused the road outside of us to flood, but created quite a spectacular water cascade in one of our neighbour's gardens. The ground is more than soggy, which has made any gardening attempts relatively futile as standing or working in an area simply created a mud patch and alerted me to the fact that my wellingtons have a leak. Had I known this fact prior to the "giving" season, I could have had a big parcel to open and expressed my pleasure and surprise at receiving a new pair of wellies; now I am just going to have to spend my own money!

Yes, the gardening duties have been very badly neglected over the past few wet weeks, but on the occasional squelchy visits, it is amazing to see how many plants are beginning to show themselves. It has, in the main, been a relatively mild winter so far, so the snowdrops are shooting up and I was half expecting some of them to flower prior to the New Year; they didn't but are on the cusp. A few of the pulmonaria rubra are flowering, but rather shyly as they almost feel guilty for arriving too early to the party. As ever, I am delighted to note the red peony shoots are breaking through and I always worry that when and if the successors to the Beast from the East arrive, they are damaged. They seem to survive to provide their flamboyant blooms on schedule. Some of the azaleas are starting to bud, which is perhaps not quite so good, but fingers crossed that any forthcoming cold spell is not too severe. Daffodils, leucojums and a myriad of other spring bulbs are surfacing and it does give me a lift to see the garden slowly coming back to life, especially as I have no winter flowering shrubs in the garden, a fact I have been meaning to rectify for several years. It would all be lovely if the rain would just stop and according to the Met Office next week is supposed to be dry, but a little colder. I can live with that.

Our first speakers for 2024 are Jack and Laura Willgoss of the Wildegoose Nursery in Shropshire. They will be speaking to us via Zoom about how they brought the Wildegoose Nursery back to life, restored a neglected walled garden, won many Gold Medals at many prestigious shows, enhanced the nursery's reputation for outstanding Violas and started a family. At the time of writing and unless you hear to the contrary, the Meeting will be held in the Baljaffray Parish Church on **WEDNESDAY 10th JANUARY 2024 at 19.30**. I hope as many as possible will attend in person and watch on the big screen, but if you prefer to stay in the comfort of your own home, then obviously you will be able to log in - once you have received the login details. **Should you opt to stay at home and login from there, please advise me no later than 18:00 on Wednesday 10th January.** If you intend to attend in person, there is no need to let me know. I have to warn you all, though, that currently there are issues with the church's technology, which may mean we either have to use a smaller hall in the church or we revert to the glory days of Covid lockdowns and everybody watches from home. I am hoping to have it all resolved one way or another by this weekend. If there are any changes, I will let you know.

Our speaker on **Wednesday 14th February** is **Shirley Graham** of **Shirley's Kitchen Garden near Biggar**. It's all about vegetables and fruit and should be a fascinating talk.

That is all for this month as I am still recovering from the excitement of the Ridiculously Easy Quiz at the Christmas Party and my brain is still in holiday mode. I look forward to seeing you either on screen or in person next week. Until then, pray for some dry weather, keep warm and stay healthy as Covid is still around.

With best wishes

Willie

