

## Baldernock Gardening Club: June 2024 Newsletter: A fleeting and sleeting summer (!) so far

Good afternoon everyone,

My goodness, weren't we fortunate with the weather on the day of our Annual Plant Sale? The gods of gardening and retail really produced the correct conditions for our day, but since then they have not been quite so attentive to our needs. There is certainly no shortage of water in the garden and after a few days of warmth and sunshine, everything has shot up. The lushness of the vegetation is great to behold and my beds, which I should have cleared a bit more earlier in the year, are so full that the plants are actually standing straight despite the rain. My garden is a spring and early summer garden and at the moment I think I have quite a bit of colour to brighten up the drab days and to enjoy when the sun does make an appearance. The candelabra primulas are profuse in the boggy area, with ragged robin and *Iris sibirica* beginning to mix in well. The alliums are tall and straight, especially the white 'Mount Everest', which has lovely big heads, providing a pleasing contrast with the pure white spikes of the lupins and the chic dishevelment of the white poppies. In amongst all that white are more blue *Iris sibirica*! *Astrantia* is blooming and not always in the places where I had originally planted it, whilst the *Cirsium* has really enjoyed the rain. The peonies are just about to burst open, though in my elder daughter's garden in Scotstoun they are in full bloom, which is kind of annoying, but lovely for her. Amongst all this lush verdant growth the lilies have been preparing to flower, so there is a three times daily hunt for the red lily beetle. My capture skills have been pretty successful. On the subject of lily beetles, when clearing the soil around the lilies in the early spring, I discovered a coven of them under the soil next to the plants. The coven was eradicated. Annika, our neighbour, had the same experience. All in all, despite the ghastly weather the garden appears to be flourishing and the grass is growing faster than ever. The wildlife has been a bit disappointing apart from a passing hare. The deer have been around without causing any damage (hope I haven't spoken too soon), but many of the birds have been driven off the feeders by a mass of starlings consisting of sleek adults and very large and "tubby" looking fledglings. The noise of the flock was certainly not a murmur, so having taken the feeders down for a few days, the starlings have flown off to raid other feeders. The bachelor ducks are still in residence accompanied by an occasional female, who never seems to stay. The heron continues to decimate any frog spawn available.

The next big event in our calendar is the **Summer Social (MEMBERS ONLY)** on **Wednesday 12th June** from **18:30** until the midges at Isabel Ewing's home. Full details on how to get to Isabel's will be issued to members shortly. There is no limit this year on numbers, so if you haven't signed up to state that you are coming, along with your savoury or sweet dish (as in food), **then please do so to Marjorie Thorburn either right away or by Friday 7th June at the latest**. Fingers and toes are well and truly crossed that the weather will be wonderful on the night, or, at the very least, dry. There is plenty of room; it is a lovely location with panoramic views over Baldernock and the company you will have for the evening will make it the

social highlight of the year. There is a good amount of parking space available at the venue or in the church car park at the foot of the drive, but chauffeur driven is best. The house and garden are easily accessible for all. So do come along and have a great chat, gossip, garden discussion (no election talk!!) and laugh, plus, perhaps, a wee toast to the success of the Annual Plant Sale. It is helpful, especially to the Chair, if you remember to wear your name badge!

In the last month, we have had, just to repeat, a very successful Plant Sale. We had a tremendous array of plants ranging from vines, a fig tree, trilliums, to humble geraniums. The baking table was groaning under the weight of light, home produce, whilst the Bric a Brac stall managed to sell 4 lawnmowers, one shredder, one painting, rusty spades, masses of pots and goodness knows what else. So many members contributed with plants, baking, old utensils and time to make the day successful. Thank you.

Immediately after the sale, well okay, four days later, a bus load of members took off from Baljaffray car park to visit Luckie Hargs down near Gatehouse-of-Fleet. They thoroughly enjoyed their visit and we all look forward to Carol and Ian Bainbridge visiting us in April 2025 to tell us more of the history of their garden. On the subject of outings, we still have a vacancy on the committee for someone to take over from Caroline Preacher who has enough on her plate being Treasurer. Without someone to organise the outings, we may have to reconsider our policy and options about arranging them.

In **August**, you will receive notification that it is time for you to renew your club membership. **Susan Brimelow**, Membership Secretary, will be in contact with full details around that time seeking your £20.00. I encourage as many of you as possible to pay by BACS as this makes the administration of the whole exercise so much simpler and quicker.

You will be delighted to learn that after this newsletter I am going to take a sabbatical until mid-August or thereabouts, when the next issue will ping into your inboxes. The club's next monthly meeting is on **Wednesday 11th September at 19:30 in Baljaffray Parish Church** where our very own Colin Walker will be displaying some of his marvellous collection of books on Herbals and telling us about their history. The Speakers' Calendar for the year ahead is complete and we do have a range of interesting and new subjects and speakers for you to enjoy. The calendar will be published on the website shortly.

So that is that for another club year. I look forward to seeing loads of you at the Summer Social, with badges. Whether you are attending the social or not, I wish you all a very good, productive and enjoyable summer in your gardens. I hope the sun shines, no water shortages are announced, your plants flourish and we all see each other at the first meeting in September.

Best wishes

Willie

