

BGC Newsletter: August/September 2025: A gardening summer to remember

Good morning one and all,

This has been one super summer of excellent weather to remember for years to come. After the driest spring since 1964, we have indulged ourselves in the sunniest and hottest summer since 1973 and 1976 and how our plants have flourished in it all. Those living and gardening south of Birmingham may not have appreciated the sunshine quite so much as they have had no rain, or any that they have had has been akin to a single drip from a tap, so the gardens and the grass are looking very dry. Fortunately for us in the west of Scotland, we have the occasional burst of heavy rain giving the plants a welcome boost (as well as those plants you don't wish to grow!). In August we ventured south of the Border to visit some gardens, one of which was the Wildegooose Nursery near Ludlow. This is a very impressive 5 acre walled garden where they have a no irrigation policy, as they believe the plants are stronger by having to push their roots deeper into the ground in the search for water. The garden was looking a tad dry when we visited and they had had no rain of any kind since April, though there were, literally, a few drops when we were there. At the end of garden visiting in the arid south, we headed back home to Milngavie where it was raining heavily and when we opened the car door the petrichor was a refreshing burst after the heat and the dust.

Anyway that was down south, up here at Crossburn it has been a summer when the flowers have thoroughly enjoyed themselves standing tall and the scent from the sweet peas, the phloxes and goodness knows what else have been a joy to be amongst, especially in the evening (no midges either, but a few wasps) with a glass of wine at hand. It has been a summer when Scottish Water finally were forced to replace the mains pipe that goes through our property, so we have had big diggers, small diggers and digging men; various workers in orange jump-suits, more senior ones in yellow and even more superior types dressed in jeans but with a yellow hard hat. They haven't quite finished yet, but the end is nigh and we now have a blue plastic slip line fitted into our 1910 Mains Pipe, with the added bonus of Loch Katrine water. It has been a summer where a part of the garden is being reshaped with the invaluable help of our neighbours who "hopped" over the fence to mark out the new design for me. Various quotes were received from those who were asked to cost out the de-turfing and the digging over of the new plot, but such was the eye-watering amount, I ended up doing it all myself. Actually not quite true, my younger daughter helped dig a substantial section one morning, "enthusiastically assisted" by her son, my grandson. Phase one of the redesign has been completed, except it has now to be filled with plants; phase two will be done before the end of autumn and the final part in the spring once the snowdrops have flowered. I think it will make a more interesting shape to the garden now that the lawn is no longer required for hockey practice, though the grand-dog may be peeved as yet more ball chasing areas are banned. It has been great to enjoy the garden, especially after last year's dismal summer and now a bumper crop of cooking apples is imminent! It has been a summer of foxes, a small cub exploring the courtyard; a summer of 34 ducklings, but an unknown number of survivors; a bumper summer for bees, goldfinches, green finches, siskins, woodpeckers and virtually resident herons. What will next summer be like? What will the coming winter bring us? We have the autumn colours to enjoy first.

It is time for our new Club Season to begin. It is encouraging to note how many of you have renewed your membership and I look forward to seeing you all shortly and to greeting new members. If you haven't renewed yet and are planning to do so, please try to do it before 11th September as this does assist in the administration of the renewals. We are starting our new season with **Ken Cox of Glendoick**. Ken is pretty well known to the Club as he has visited us at least twice and the Club organised an outing to his garden to view his wonderful rhododendrons and azaleas, for which Glendoick is famous. Ken won a Gold Medal at this year's Chelsea Flower Show for his display of rhododendrons and azaleas and this is what he will be talking about on **Wednesday 10th September in Baljaffray Parish Church at 19:30**. Ken is an entertaining speaker, plus he will be bringing a selection of plants for you to buy just in time for autumn planting. **Colin Wren of the NTS** is our guest speaker on **Wednesday 8th October** and that will be another most interesting and informative talk. The full calendar of Speakers for the 2025/26 is on the website plus Marjorie Thorburn is busily organising the printing of the usual hard copy for keeping in your wallets, hand bags or on peg boards and fridges.

Two outings are upcoming in September. The first as many of you know is to the Salvesen Garden in Whitburgh and to Braidwoodside in Gifford. Caroline Preacher has emailed those of you about this and has asked for payment in advance (£37.50 pp), plus a menu for you to choose your lunch at the Juniper Lea. If you have signed up to join this visit, please advise Caroline what you would like for your lunch (from the menu) as well as any dietary requirements. Details will be issued shortly regarding a visit to Horatio's Garden at the Spinal Unit, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Glasgow on **20th September 2025**. The cost for that is £20 pp and we will be asking you to bring the £20 cash with you to give to the Head Gardener. More outings are being planned for 2026.

The season 2024/25 ended brilliantly with our Summer Social held in Nancy Stevens terraced garden in early June. It was a lovely warm early summer evening and, I think, it is one of the very few occasions when no one went inside, so all Nancy's furniture moving was not required. Members had a memorable evening perched on walls, steps, chairs and anything else they could find, sipping wine and tucking into a feast. No midges, no wind, a balmy evening under clear blue skies, it was magical and hugely enjoyable. We are very grateful to Nancy for allowing us to loll about in her beloved garden.

During the summer break, we had a blip with the website which entailed upgrading the "hosting" of the site and also the domain name. The first part was relatively simple, the second part not, as we had no record of who owned the domain name, as it wasn't us! After Holmesian investigations we discovered who did own the domain name, which has now been transferred to the Club, details minuted in the Committee Minutes and the site is up and running again. It is to be hoped under the new licences and the arrangements made, that we will not encounter these issues again for at least five years! Communicating with tech companies is not the easiest process in the world, because their explanations make sense to them but are gobbledygook or worse to the rest of us, or at least to me!

Before I sign off, let me share with you a picture sent by Jane Logan from the North Carolina Botanical Gardens. You may recognise the specimen.



Whilst typing away furiously and one-fingered to produce the above, it has rained. Tomasz Schafernaker, the stylishly dressed BBC weatherman, warned us last night that the forecast for September is to be changeable, which is a euphemism for wet. So, enjoy your last few days of summer and the last few weeks of evening sunshine in your gardens. Soon the leaves will be cascading down and the seemingly endless task of sweeping them up will begin again. You have an excellent programme of talks and events to look forward to over the autumn, winter and spring months with the Club so do come and chat to old and new friends. If you are not a member, you can still come to our meetings (£4 at the door) and we would love to see you. This my 9th season and I think the programme of speakers is amongst the best we have had over those years. I hope you will agree and remember the **Annual Plant Sale** is on **Saturday 9th May 2026**. See you on the 10th.

With best wishes

Willie



