

Baldernock Gardening Club Newsletter: January 2026: A mild winter so far, but the garlic bulbs could do with some real frost!

Good morning one and all,

In the belief that you have all enjoyed a jolly and merry Christmas period with family and new implements and plants for your gardens, it is time now to celebrate the coming of another New Year, 2026. I wish you all a very prosperous, floriferous and productive New Year. It would be lovely to anticipate another wonderfully warm and lengthy summer as we experienced in 2025, but, as we know, the only predictability of Baldernock weather is its unpredictability, thereby creating an increased sense of wonder about what is going to grow this year and what is not! I have managed out into the garden a few times in December, but can't say I have achieved very much apart from using some of the cardboard from oversized presents to grandchildren to cover my dormant vegetable beds and to sow my sweet peas. I have also tackled the pruning of my apple trees with a telescopic, wooden shafted branch lopper. The shaft is inclined to bend when extended to its full length, some 15ft, and the bend becomes more extreme when the branch is at the limit of the cutting capacity of the blade. On Sunday the lopper took exception to my choice of branch and attacked me by 'bend recoil', leaving me with a pretty good black eye, the best I have had since my rugby playing days of some 50 years ago. The looks from my nearest and dearest family members are ones of pitying exasperation. Pruning has ceased for a period, which has pleased the birds as I was interfering with their fallen apple feast. The other day I counted 14 blackbirds and two fieldfares all delving into the apple pile coterminously, whilst the chaffinches, tits, goldfinches, woodpeckers and nuthatches made do with sunflower seeds - nothing but the best for them.

Anyway, I realise I am a bit late in getting this newsletter to you, so I will cut out the waffle (a bit). The Christmas Party was as usual a highly competitive event with the expected complaints about the marking and questions as to how exact the right answer is meant to be. The buffet and the chat afterwards was as lively as ever. My colleagues on the Committee all put in a great effort to make the evening a success and special thanks are given to Jayne Sellers for organising all the food. My thanks, also, to all those members who helped to tidy up at the end. Now that that is over it is back to the normal monthly routine of speaker events. Our first for 2026 is, as you know, being given on **Wednesday 7th January 2026** by **Michael Brown on Medieval Gardens**. Michael will be giving his talk via Zoom and this will be beamed into Baljaffray Church Hall from 19.30, or you can stay at home and log into the talk from the comfort of your sofa. If you intend to come to the Baljaffray, I don't need to know in advance. **If you would like to stay at home and watch from there, please let me know by no later than 18:45 on Wednesday 7th January so that I can send you the login details on the night.** I will send by email the login details just after 19:00 on 7th January and you should be able to connect to the Zoom session by just clicking on the link. The Zoom connection has all been tested at the church and the sound is very good, so fingers crossed it all works. My saviour in this department is Ian Loney of Baljaffray Church who has been a great help with their audio system. It will be an interesting talk from Michael Brown.

In February, our 'talk' will be on **Wednesday 11th February at Baljaffray Church** at 19:30. Our speaker is Matt Williamson who is a physiotherapist and his talk is entitled "Is gardening the next Olympic Sport?" I am in training already.

I am delighted to announce that Morag McGilp has agreed, after due diligence on her part, to join your committee. She checked us out at our committee meeting in November and realised that we needed help. Morag will be shadowing Marjorie Thorburn, our esteemed Secretary, over the next few months thereby allowing Marjorie the opportunity of retiring from the committee and

to enjoy a future of lolling around on the back benches. We are all on the committee really pleased to welcome Morag's forthcoming involvement.

Well, that's it for 2025. I wish you all a memorable 2026 and with the hope that the world is a more peaceful place in the months ahead and that all our plants flourish. See you all soon and keep warm, because it is getting colder.

With best wishes

Willie

