

BGC Newsletter: October 2024: Autumn arrives and the garden flourishes

Good morning everyone,

Immediately after the Club Meeting in September (almost literally immediately after) I flew to the Balearics to enjoy the sun. Typically, after successive days and weeks of rain, the sun shone over Milngavie and Bearsden whilst I was revelling in the Mallorcan warmth. My neighbour very kindly mentioned that the good East Dunbartonshire weather deteriorated when I returned. It has been dampish and quite cold since the return to home, but the bonus is the garden appears to be having a final flourish before the late autumn and winter conditions assume control. Some of the trees are turning on their autumn charm and on looking back on previous years' photos, the "turn" is happening no earlier, so plenty more time for the acers, oaks and chestnuts, as well as the cornus, to end the season in glory. Then all the leaves need to be swept up!

The phloxes are looking terrific in spite of the "deer chop" in August, whilst some of the roses, which had been subjected to similar deer pruning, have been splendid. All of the roses seem to have enjoyed a real second flush of budding, with some of them outperforming what had been expected earlier in the summer. (The culpable deer will not be returning, as it unsuccessfully attempted to cross the A809; so far no others have appeared.) The canna lily has even started to flower and that is late. Needless to say, on the first day it flowered, there was a slight frost that night! It has survived so far., but I am thinking I may have to move it into the greenhouse for protection. The plants that have been profuse through all the changes in the weather have been the alstromerias; they have been in perpetual flower since July and they are still going strong. The other reliable bloomers are the begonias. I have some in pots under the eight-stride arch and after planting them, the deer visited and trimmed them. I then protected them from further harvesting with mesh and they have put on a wonderful and consistent display ever since. In the fruit garden, the crops of black and red currants have been okay, but I have really enjoyed my first crop of blueberries; lovely and fat and sweet and not like Tesco's organic ones! I did despair earlier in the summer that my tomatoes were being very reluctant to show any signs of fruiting. Well, I needn't have worried and whilst the plants may not meet Monty's standard of display, the crop has been and continues to be excellent. The apple trees continue to produce prodigiously, though I think quite a bit of pruning of the trees will be necessary over the winter. There is always a sadness when you observe the garden retreating into a dormant state, especially after a summer that never really allowed the plants to dazzle. There is pleasure though in all the wonderful autumn colour and not just of the trees but of the hostas and all the other border plants and their seed heads. Autumn is like the setting sun with the hope of better tomorrow, as it is the time of preparation for the next spring as you plant your bulbs and tidy up bits of the garden, but not too much as the wild life needs sustenance through the winter. This summer was not good. There were very few insects to be seen, but the bonus in that regard was very few midges and no wasps to speak of, but the garden has survived and there is always the anticipation next year will be marvellous.

Our first meeting of the new season in September allowed Colin Walker to enthral us with his knowledge of the history of herbals and, by golly, had he done his homework! He guided us from the Ancient Egyptians through to publications of this year and illustrated how techniques and the quality of the art work had developed. The illustrations in many cases were executed so well and some of the late Middle Ages herbals reminded me, to a small degree, of the splendour of some of the Books of Hours, which were, of course, dealing with religion rather than nature. Colin brought along some of his collection of herbals, which added to the interest of the evening

as many members took a keen interest in the real artefact. Colin did not take a fee for his efforts, but asked the Club to make a donation to the Glasgow Botanics, which we did.

At **19.30 on Wednesday 9th October at Baljaffray Parish Church**, our speaker will be **Mark Dunion** of MGD Outdoor Electrical, who will be explaining how **Garden Lighting** can enhance your garden. MGD works extensively with garden designers and landscapers on gardens of all sizes. Garden lighting can be controversial in that it may disturb the nocturnal animals, but if done sympathetically, it can create something special and provide a new perspective on your garden. This should be an interesting talk and offer something slightly different for us all to ponder upon. On **Wednesday 13th November** our speaker will be **Brian McDonough** talking about **Photographing Plants**. After these two talks, we will all be able to take better photographs of our plants when they will be lit at night!

There is not much else to report for this month, but the committee will be meeting at the end of October and, no doubt, considering what we can tempt you with for the Christmas Party, plus the setting of the quiz questions on the assumption that this is still perceived as fun and games. Whatever, we will endeavour to provide as usual an informal evening of chat and laughter. The committee is, of course, still on the constant search for new volunteers.

I am not quite sure where all the time has gone this month, as it seems to have flown past without seeming to have achieved very much. I have plenty of plans for changes (small) to the garden but whether I actually get round to doing them is another matter entirely. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on 9th October and let us all hope the autumn maintains these cold, crisp and sunny conditions we have as I type, for a bit longer. Look after yourselves and your gardens.

With best wishes

Willie

