

## **BGC NL January 2025: Christmas has passed and, now, the wait for spring**

Good evening everyone,

My apologies for interrupting your festive holidays, or perhaps, like ourselves, intruding on your recovery time after the family hordes have retreated. I trust that you have all had as pleasant a Christmas as possible, though the weather didn't exactly entice one out on a reinvigorating Boxing Day walk. Yes, it has been very mild, but it has been wet and it is likely to be even wetter over the New Year. I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that rain is to be our weather condition for some time to come and that all the seasons are merging into one. The garden is looking unloved, but a new plant addition is about to be joining the community, brought about by another masterpiece of subterfuge over the past few weeks by my head gardener and her advisors next door. An *Acer shirasawanum* 'Jordan' was presented to me just after I had finished rummaging around the base of the Christmas tree for the last of the myriad gifts for the grand-children. We have a lovely *Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Garnet' already flourishing in a pot (large) and I have been whining on about how good it would be to have, in contrast, a yellow acer nearby; so now I have it, but the pot (large) still needs to be bought. In case you don't know, the shirasawanum "Jordan" has in the spring open pale orange leaves, which turn lime green in summer then into a vivid orange red in the autumn, a colour sequence a bit like misconstructured traffic lights. Apart from that, I have hardly been in the garden during the month, except to pick up debris from the trees caused by Colin, Darragh or whatever the last storm was called.

The Christmas Party appeared to have been enjoyed by everyone present, though there were the usual complaints about the "difficulty" of the Quiz questions. I have to admit that there were two questions, even with the answers in front of me, I had trouble answering. No table got full marks despite recounts on points given for answers, but in the end the winners deservedly and modestly accepted the acclaim and applause from the other teams. I have no idea what the winning score was!

I think serendipity has played a part in the arrangements for our **next Club Meeting on Wednesday 8th January**. As you will all be aware, there is a flu epidemic afflicting the nation at present and once again the NHS is being overwhelmed. Even though you may have had a flu/covid jab, being in a roomful of people may not be the best idea under the circumstances. As I announced at the Christmas Party, Baljaffray Church is overhauling the whole of its audiovisual system during the first two weeks in January, thereby making it impossible for us to have our meeting in the hall as the floor, apparently, will be covered in wires, plugs and general electrical equipment, and thereby, presenting a Health & Safety nightmare. Fortunately, our speaker was booked to appear on Zoom, so everyone will now, as we did during the pandemic, be able to stay warm and dry in your own homes and enjoy **Timothy Walker's talk on "The Shrunken Garden" on Zoom**. So, **PLEASE DO NOT TURN UP AT BALJAFFRAY ON THE EVENING OF 8th JANUARY. Stay at home and log on to Zoom**. If you wish to hear Timothy's talk on Zoom, please let me know **no later than 18:30 on Wednesday 8th January**. I will send all those who have registered the login details just after 19:00 on 8th January 2025 and then you can sit back and enjoy what will be a thoroughly entertaining as well as informative talk from an excellent speaker. There will be no need to wear a mask on Zoom.

On **12th February 2025** we will be able to test the new systems at Baljaffray, when our speaker will be **Professor David Rankin on "Renewing Historic Rock Gardens"**. David, as many of you will know, had long been associated with Kevock Garden Plants, near Edinburgh, a nursery that concentrated upon alpine, bog woodland plants and which also won two Gold Medals at the Chelsea Flower Show. Under new ownership, Kevock still enjoys David's advice and expertise.

Starting on Monday 6th January 2025 and lasting until Friday 17th January 2025, the Scottish Rock Garden Club will be having its **Annual Seed Exchange** at Westerton Church Hall. This sociable event involves drinking tea or coffee, accompanied by the odd home baked scone or cake (just what you need for the post-Christmas diet) and picking little packets of seed against orders and putting these in jiffy bags, labelling them and giving them to the Postie. You can help out on any of the days and you can do

whole days, half days or even bits of half days, **PLUS helpers get first choice of seeds!!!!** If you have any questions or, more importantly, wish to help, then please contact Kathleen Cartwright at [arcturus@btinternet.com](mailto:arcturus@btinternet.com)

I will leave you in peace now and let you continue your recoveries from the Christmas indulgences. I wish you all a Very Happy New Year and the wish that 2025 is a lot more peaceful, and drier, than the year we are about to leave. I look forward to seeing many of you on screen on Wednesday 8th January (do not go to Baljaffray!!).

With best wishes

Willie

