

Baldernock Gardening Club: October 2022 Newsletter: Dark mornings, dark evenings but still cutting grass!

Good morning everyone,

I think I have chosen a good morning to stay inside and attempt to compose something coherent. As I type, the rain is falling quite heavily, which the weatherman on the BBC last night said we needed. I am not sure that applies to Milngavie and Bearsden as my soil is pretty damp under the surface, but on the bright side I can sit in front of a computer screen instead.

Since our last meeting in September, when Richard Green of the Scottish Rock Garden Club presented us with the perfect start to our new season of talks with accounts of his trip to the Argentine part of Patagonia, I have been enjoying the sun of Southern Italy. My wife and I went to Puglia to view the trulli houses, which are fascinating when seen en masse, and to wander around beautiful hilltop towns, drink coffee, visit a marvellous organically run vineyard (utterly delicious Primitivo), watch a couple of weddings as tourists do, seek out good gelato and wonder at the volume of prickly pears. The latter we had for breakfast, minus prickles, on a couple of mornings; they turned out to be almost as tasteless as watermelon. Whilst the countryside is very fertile with hectares of vines and olive groves, plus orchards and turnips (grown mainly for animal feed, though they use the tops as a garnish) there is little evidence of gardens as we know them, so they make do with pots around their frontages and on roofs. But it isn't just pots they use; they find a second life for items like old trainers!



Up here in Milngavie, we are a bit more unoriginal. When we returned, I was pleasantly pleased to find there was still plenty of colour in the garden with the rudbeckias, heleniums, tithonia, verbena, the dahlias, the asters all flowering well and the *Campanula lactiflora* is having a second splurge of flowering as are many of the roses. The leaves on some of the trees are already turning towards their autumn colours, so the garden is displaying the crossover colouring of summer merging with autumn. It is also a time for a bit of tidying up and planning for next spring. Part of this exercise involves scrabbling around on my hands and knees, my "go-to gardening position", amongst the growth pulling out weeds, digging up some plants and planting bulbs, and in doing so I am amazed at the number of snails I am uncovering. I have never found so many in all the years I have lived here; obviously I have been very kind to them this summer and left them alone, as the RHS recommended, but I can't say they have repaid my tolerance by not eating the plants! My apple crop has not been so prolific this year, but the apples picked have been much bigger; one weighed well over 1 lb, so what you lose by volume, is equalled by individual weight. There are still a few weeks to go before the nights really draw in and I am sure some of the days will be good and we can bask in the autumn sunshine wearing a fleece and warm gardening gloves.

As mentioned above, Richard Green was our first speaker of the season and as also mentioned he is a member of the SRGC, who are having another show at Baljaffray Church **tomorrow, 1st October**. The doors will be open to the public from 11:30, with MacPlants, Kevock and Ardfearn nurseries all attending. It is always a good event to attend and be prepared to be tempted to buy!

Our next Speaker is **Jim Jermyn, Property Manager and Head Gardener of Branklyn Garden**. Jim will be talking to us on **Wednesday 12th October 2022 in Baljaffray Parish Church Hall at 19:30**. It is many years since Jim last spoke to the Club, but, like me, many of you will have visited and admired the wonderful garden at Branklyn and sampled the marvellous offerings available in the tearoom - especially the freshly baked cheese scones! Jim, who founded, many years ago, Edrom Nursery near Coldingham, has been caring for Branklyn for the past six years and, sadly for us, but I am sure happily for him and his family, he is retiring at the end of this year. He will have left a legacy of which he may truly be proud, but before then he will speak to us about his stewardship of this garden and the multitude of wonderful plants he looks after. He has a love for Alpine plants, classical music, wine, real ale and sport. This promises to be an excellent evening, so maybe you should try to come a bit earlier to get a good seat.

The Speaker for Wednesday 9th November will be Sehar Sardar of the War Graves Commission giving us an insight into the work undertaken to preserve and maintain the gardens in and around the Commission's cemeteries.

Sandra Wilson, Chair of Milngavie in Bloom, has asked me to include the following message in the Newsletter. "*Milngavie-in-Bloom keep the town "clean and green" and some of BGC's members are volunteers, including Diane Black. Diane has kept the railing planters beautifully planted up for many years. We (MiB) are now rationalising and removing some in the shady spots and hope to recruit a few new*

volunteers this autumn. Could any of you take on 3 or 4 in a small area with initial advice and support from Diane? If so, contact her directly by email; her address can be found in the Members' Contact Details on the BGC Website." Both MiB and Bearsden in Bloom do much to improve our locality, so if you have any spare time and energy, they will be delighted to welcome you.

I think that is all for this month. Once this horrendous rain stops, though to be fair we haven't had to endure too many days like this over the past few months, we can again concentrate on preparing our gardens for autumn. I, having survived the totally terrifying nightmare that is driving in Naples in the rush hour trying to get to the airport, am thankful that even my garden is not as chaotic and so out of control as Italian driving. Never have I been so relieved to hand a car back and to find it is still unscratched despite all those beeps and alarms emanating from the Driver's Assist system about being too close to the cars around you. Gardening may be more strenuous, but it is infinitely more enjoyable!

Best wishes to you all and hopefully I will see you at **Jim Jermyn's talk on Wednesday 12th October,**

Willie



