

## BGC NL March 2023: Gardens coming back to life

Good morning everyone,

Apparently, when I was away last week enjoying pleasant temperatures of around 23C and all of 10 seconds of rain, the Baldernock gardening area experienced persistent, but not heavy, precipitation. I am told the persistence was such that it deterred or rather lessened the desire to continue the annual preparations for the imminent spring. Oh dear, I thought, I avoided all that, but will doubtless not escape the next damp period. Arriving back in Scotland with the temperature around 6C in Edinburgh, was quite a shock to the system and when I did venture out into my patch, the fingers soon became numb as I continued my clearing of the long flowerbed. In the week away, the snowdrops have flourished and spread well since last year. The winter aconites have also begun, at long last, to show signs of multiplying, whilst the crocuses and iris reticulata have joined in the fun. The last mentioned have performed peculiarly this year. For once, those in the ground have done better than they have ever done in the past, whilst those in pots and, which have been profuse every year up until this year, have been a disaster, caused I think by the mildness of the winter. The leaves have grown tall, but no flower buds; another lesson learned! The hellebores are just beginning to show off, bringing splashes of colour all around the garden. All in all, the feeling is that life in the garden is stirring with the first glimpses of the paeonies' red tips, the daffodils shooting up with the tulips close behind. It is an exciting time, but let's all hope we don't have the Arctic weather some are forecasting!

At our last meeting at the beginning of February, I showed to the assembled throng, a "Thank You" card from "All at Baldernock Childcare". They were thanking us for donating them our Christmas tree entry from the Christmas Tree Festival; we also give them an annual donation to help maintain their garden area. I forgot to put the card on display at the meeting, so I will endeavour to do it in March. Also, at our last meeting we had yet another fascinating talk, this time from Greg Kenicer of the Royal Botanics in Edinburgh on the Magic of Plants. Plants have played a big part in folklore and medicine and it was interesting to learn that snowdrops, poisonous themselves if consumed, are the perfect antidote to Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*) poisoning; the problem is that snowdrops flower now, you can see, but Deadly Nightshade flowers from June to September, when the snowdrops are all under the ground and the two may not necessarily be planted together. There were many other interesting observations to illustrate that whilst we all admire the beauty and charm of our plants, these self-same plants provide much of the food and the foundation for the cure of ailments for all of us.

Our next speaker is **Douglas Cameron**, who will be appearing on the stage of **Baljaffray Parish Church** on **Wednesday 8th March at 19:30**. Douglas, as quite a number of the members know, as they are volunteers with Milngavie-in-Bloom, was associated with MiB for many years and who, in 2019, led Milngavie to be awarded a Gold Medal Certificate and the VisitScotland Award for Tourism in the annual Beautiful Scotland campaign. MiB and its companion group, Bearsden-in-Bloom, do so much to improve our local environment, not just with wonderfully planted planters, but in clearing litter (an awful lot of that!) and maintaining areas around Mugdock waterworks, the start of the West Highland Way and many others. MiB started in 2008 and has achieved a great deal in that time, and all those who are volunteers deserve much thanks. I don't know how they find time to look after their own gardens, but they do. Douglas has been preparing this talk for over a year now, as he was on our list last year, but then got Covid. He is isolating perfectly this year to ensure he appears on the 8th; it would be marvellous to have a huge turnout to show our appreciation.

**Richard Baines, Head Gardener at Logan Botanic Gardens** will be our speaker on **Wednesday 12th April 2023**, another excellent evening in prospect. Continuing on the subject of speakers, it is worth informing you that your committee has worked day and night over the past three weeks to contact and confirm speakers for the September 2023 to May 2024 season. Seven out of the eight spots have been allocated and confirmed, I think in record time; the eighth spot is on the cusp of confirmation. Next year is shaping up to provide another excellent season, so my thanks, and I am sure yours, to the Committee.

This club year still has a bit to go, with two exciting events on the horizon in May. First we have the AGM, which is always full of intrigue and the cut and thrust of debate, then our major event on **Saturday 13th May at Baljaffray Parish Church is THE ANNUAL PLANT SALE**. Now is the time for members to start picking out your choice, exotic and unusual plants to offer in perfect condition and at remarkably tempting prices to the general public. Last year's Plant Sale was very successful, but I know we can do even better this year, so start the selection process very soon.

That's it for this month, you will be relieved to read. This afternoon I have to make a choice; it is either garden or rugby. I think I know which will prevail. I look forward to seeing many of you on Wednesday 8th March, but whatever, keep well and look after those gardens.

With best wishes

Willie



A bit blurry, but the darn things wouldn't warn me they were about to surface!

