

## **BGC Newsletter: September 2024:**

### **It is officially autumn, unlike the past few weeks!**

Good morning everyone,

Yes, it is the first day of autumn and some of the trees are already changing into the autumn colours and the pink footed geese have already started their loud, honking mass fly pasts in the morning and evening. It was a little sad, but very pleasurable, that on the last day of summer the sun shone all day and you could sit out for lunch (with no wasps) and even have a glass of wine as the evening sun sank below the tree line. There weren't many days over the summer months when that was possible. If we hadn't purchased another small garden table and chairs, placed where the evening sun lasts longest, then we might have had a better summer, because as soon as it arrived, the weather worsened. Yesterday was lovely and most of it was spent cutting damp grass on boggy ground, which was a little tiring and probably has not done the lawnmower much good either. The part of the garden up at the back where it is always damp and the primulas thrive, is a bog; not even the deer walk on it. The rest of the garden is well drained, but the plants have taken such a battering with all those heavy downpours and the seemingly incessant wind, that I can't say the beds are looking glorious. The small hot bed with the rudbeckia, heleniums, echinacea and dahlias is colourful, but somehow the vibrancy is dulled by the damp. The dahlias have certainly not enjoyed the rain, but the slugs have loved the dahlias. The mop-head and lace-cap hydrangeas at the front of the house have been a huge success, producing enormous heads, some nearly a foot in diameter. They have been weighed down by the rain, but still wonderful. The lack of sustained heat has affected the plants in the greenhouse, especially the tomatoes, which are taking an age to ripen. The potato crop is not as good this year; still slug free thanks to the nematodes. The nematodes did not do quite such a good protective job on the hostas. Snails and slugs have had a ball this summer, but on the bright side, not many wasps and even the midges gave up. One of the few wasps I encountered stung me. Gardeners don't dwell too long on the present and at this time are planning for the spring. The spring bulbs have been ordered, plans are set in motion for clearing overgrown areas and decisions made about new plants to fill gaps or create a new point of interest and colour. Gardening, I think, is always a journey of expectation and hope.

The wildlife in the garden has been very mixed. The deer have been an absolute pest destroying sedum and phlox, when not deterred by flashing lights and Radio 1. A dog fox has passed through the garden every evening and morning since early July. The birds have not been as evident on the feeder, but that could be because of an overabundance of magpies or because there have not been as many insects. Butterflies have been a rarity and I haven't seen one dragonfly this summer. A pair of woodpigeons took up residence in a climbing rose at the front of the house in early August. I decided not to remove the nest when I discovered two eggs in it. The squabs seemed to be about the same size when they hatched as their parents and the sight of the two of them plus, I presume, the female parent all squashed into this tiny nest, was a serious case of overcrowding. The sparrow hawk flew into the back garden, caught a feral pigeon and proceeded to demolish it. It didn't even stop its somewhat grisly disembowelment of the pigeon when I walked within ten feet of it. Apart from a few feathers, nothing was left, no bones, nothing, when it flew off. Nature in the raw can be violent.

On to Club matters. It is the start of a new year of talks and meetings. There is a varied calendar to look forward to with plenty of gardening advice and tips due in all the talks after Christmas. Before Christmas, you have a selection of gardening themed talks beginning with our own **Colin Walker** giving us a truly fascinating talk (I guarantee it is fascinating as I have seen the slides)

on the **History of Herbals**. It is amazing how plants have been used throughout the centuries as medicines and food and how those have been illustrated in books and manuscripts. Colin will be bringing along a selection of his own collection of these wonderful books. So, come along on **Wednesday 11th September for 19:30 at Baljaffray Parish Church** to listen to Colin and to meet up with other members to catch up on chat and gardening tips.

Our speakers on **Wednesday 9th October at 19:30 in Baljaffray Parish Church** will be **Mark Dunion** and his business partner in MGD Outdoor Electrical. They will be discussing the use of lighting in your garden as part of the garden design. They have "pioneered installation techniques to ensure our installation works in all four seasons - often experienced in Scotland in one single day". This may provide you with new ideas to plan for the year ahead.

The committee, on your behalf, has made a donation to the National Trust for Scotland for the renewal and restoration of the daffodil collection at Greenbank Gardens on the southside of Glasgow. The committee thought, as this was a local NTS garden and knew that many members are also members of the NTS, this was worth supporting. We are hoping, too, to plan a club visit to the garden when the daffodils are blooming in the coming spring.

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their membership and done so, so promptly. It makes a huge difference to the operation of the club and I suppose all these mobile banking apps make payment less of a hassle, though not necessarily less painful in these doom and gloom days. Whatever, it is wonderful to have so many of you returning and to have new members joining. It is sad that others have left, some after many years contributing to the well-being of the Club and even more sadly, for those who have passed away. We will miss them all.

Thanks are also due to all of you who have put your names forward for the Tea Rota. This has made life a lot easier for Jayne Sellers who has donned the mantle borne previously by Marie Lees. The latter is looking forward to enjoying life amidst the throng and having her tea served to her. Jayne did not have the easiest start to her role, as the computer email lists went crazy. Over the summer, I discovered that Gmail had decided to erase all our email lists. The reason for this has, as yet, not been found, but there is no evidence that the lists have been hacked or misused. The lists have all been recompiled, but I forgot to properly connect Jayne, who on her first attempt at Club email had a bit of a disaster. Anyway, it is all sorted, you got the message and responded at speed. I am sorry for the confusion, if you noticed it and please blame, if you have to, your ageing chairman.

Whilst on the subject of an ageing chairman, the committee is still seeking volunteers to fill current and imminent vacancies. Some committee members have served for 9 and 5 years, so I reckon they have done a good stint. I and the rest of the committee will be actively looking for new volunteers to help run the club. So if you see me or another committee member approach you at tea, don't flee!

Well that's enough waffling for one month. We have a new season of talks to enjoy and there is always the anticipation of the joys that a garden will bring in the future. Yes, the rain is depressing, but surely, it can't go on forever? It has seemed like it can over this summer, but on the positive side the waterproof clothing has been well used and worked. I look forward to seeing you all for Colin's talk on **11th September**, but until then look after yourselves and continue to fight the slugs.

With best wishes

Willie

