

May 2021 Newsletter: Fragile steps to “normality”

Good afternoon everyone,

This Newsletter is being issued a bit later than I had intended. Life has just been so exciting since those of us in East Dunbartonshire have been allowed to visit other districts, have lunch out and socialise, that the process of sitting down in front of a computer, quite frankly, did not appeal! Today's weather, though, has not induced me to go out and garden, so what better way to occupy my time than to write the last Newsletter of this season. May has not been a good month for weather. One day it is roasting hot and lovely, then the next couple are miserable and coldish. Looking back on photographs from this time last year, we were all enjoying marvellous weather, but unable to go anywhere. This year the Jet Stream is in the wrong place making us less keen to go wandering when we are permitted to.

The garden itself is well behind where it was this time last year with some plants being very slow. Last year my tulips did reasonably well in all their allocated pots. This year has been a mixture of the good, the bad and the plain awful. How is it that tulips of the same variety, from the same bag, planted in the same soil mixture and placed in pots beside each other perform completely differently? One pot does what I had planned; the one beside it has plants that are stunted, fail to open and look a mess. It is very frustrating. On the other hand, my epimediums, which visiting deer demolished for their breakfast feed a few weeks back, have made a wonderful recovery and are looking better than they have ever done (maybe deer have a use after all!). Everything that I had expected to be out now is still just on the cusp. My blue meconopsis, planted in the wrong place very many years ago, have started to flower and they always give so much pleasure, whilst the ones planted in the correct sites still have some way to go before they flower. Last year the alliums were on show; not this year. I am afraid, too, that the April frost has killed the bay tree and the rosemary plants. The ceanothus is making a valiant attempt at frosting recovery and what a noise, on a warm day, the bees make on the flower heads that have appeared.



The wild-life has been interesting over the past month. The semi-resident "wild" ducks built a nest and produced eggs, but the fox, caught on camera, came along at night and took all of them. The ducks are trying again. The pheasant is more or less knocking on the garden door if the feed is not on the ground awaiting his pompously strutting arrival. There is a plethora of siskins feeding on the feeder, accompanied by a pair of green finches, two pairs of bull finches, chaffinches by the score as well as tits of all varieties. My main excitement has been the two pairs of Common Redpoll, who have stayed and are nesting somewhere in the garden. The fields behind the garden are being visited by a good number of swallows and a growing number of starlings, who have yet to perform a murmuration for the Crossburn community. No frogs that I can see, but plenty of butterflies on the good days.

Sadly the relaxation in the Covid restrictions has not been great enough to allow us to have our Summer Social. It would have been wonderful to have had it and to be able to meet up again, but it is in the Diary for next year. East Dunbartonshire Council are opening their booking process for Halls and Meeting Rooms on Monday 24th May, but with the caveat that all bookings will depend upon the progress of the pandemic. The Club will be looking to book Milngavie Town Hall for our Annual Plant Sale in May 2022, on the current presumption the hall will still be available and the reconstruction work has not started. The Club will be seeking, from Monday, a hall for us all to meet from September onwards and I suspect there will be quite a rush of clubs doing something similar. You will be kept informed of any progress.

The Club's AGM was such an exciting event and I think we managed to negotiate it all fairly successfully. We then had an interesting and different talk and demonstration from Rosie Oglesby of Page and Bloom. Her talk was different as she explained how her company was set up to provide work experience and confidence restoral for women who have suffered domestic abuse. The making of amazing floral displays from old books, old papers and other paper items is the means by which the women are aided.

Rosie has forwarded instructions on how to make the flowers, so if anyone wishes them then just let me know.

I am going to take a break until late July/August and thereby spare you from further musings on my horticultural exploits. Over the summer, Members will be asked to resubscribe to the Club and I do hope that by September we will be assembled again; no guarantees though, so it may be Zoom! I just wish to thank you all for your support over the past year and for your tremendous attendance at the Zoom meetings. Having "attended" a wedding last night in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, via Zoom, I realise how inflexible Zoom is for the attendee. I wish you all a happy, healthy gardening summer with hours of sunshine, rain at night, and plenty of opportunities to sit enjoying the view of your labours with a cup of tea or perhaps something a little stronger.

With best wishes

Willie



