

# **Baldernock Gardening Club Newsletter, October 2025:**

## **Perfect weather for the autumn gardening care**

Good morning everyone,

With heavy rain imminent this afternoon, the beautiful early autumn weather draws to an end. There is a hint that the sunshine will return, but there is the start of a definite "nip" in the air and the need for the heating in the house to be turned on. The daily hours of daylight are reducing, fast reminding me of the days gone by when I used to leave the house in the dark and return in the dark and see the garden only at the weekend, unless I was working then as well! Changed days when the garden appears to be, and is, a full-time occupation, though I tend to believe that as the years pass, tasks take considerably longer to complete. This may be down to the need to view, every now and again, one's handiwork in general from a bench with a cup of tea (too dark and cold now to observe in the evening with a glass of something stronger). The garden still has a good variety of colour from the asters, rudbeckia, which flowers for ages, and the dahlias, which this year have not been as good for me. The leaves on the trees are very obviously turning to their autumn hues with the cornus and deciduous azaleas joining in the fun, so all in all it is a good canvas upon which to gaze. The ground being damp, but not soggy, has meant that the splitting and moving of plants has been made simpler. In the long bed I have attacked a berberis, which had become unruly and had invaded, along with an out of control azalea, too much of their surroundings. They have been pruned (the stems bearing berries on the berberis have been left and will be chopped later on) and will hopefully flourish next year, whilst allowing other neighbouring plants to survive and even revive. Some old fencing that was erected 40 years ago has been taken down. That was a fun task, especially folding up the old wire and transporting it to the coup. There is still plenty to do over the rest of autumn, so let's hope the weather remains kind to us.

As for the wildlife, the pink footed geese are flying overhead in the early morning and later at night in their hundreds and, by golly, they make a racket. They are roosting in the deep ponds created by the Douglasmuir Quarry just up the road from us, but I just wish they would start their morning flight a bit later than 5 a.m. In the compost heaps, the toads have taken up residence and appear to be very grumpy when the cover is removed. The robin is constant company by my side ready to dive in for the dug up worms. The sparrowhawk, I presume, has disposed of at least two feral pigeons, leaving only a mass of feathers and small bits of gore. At least it has had the decency not to have its breakfast when I am watching.

What a good attendance we had for the club's outing to the Salvesen Garden at Whitburgh House and to the smaller garden, Braidwoodside, near Gifford. All those on the trip were rewarded by visiting two outstanding gardens. The former garden had a real "wow" factor. It was a garden that seemed to flow as the grasses swayed in the wind. It was the variety of colours, all toning in beautifully, plus the use of kale and lettuces in the beds that made it all just so inspiring. I loved, too, the use of sculptures throughout which made for a touch of humour. Elizabeth Salvesen, the owner and designer, was a gracious and down-to-earth host who obviously loved her prairie-style walled garden, as did many of us on the visit. Braidwoodside was smaller, more intimate and traditional, but the courtyard effect was very calming. Several

members then visited Horatio's Garden at the Spinal Unit, Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Govan. This is a small but inspiring garden. The visitors enjoyed the tour and the fabulous cakes, apparently! Our thanks go to Caroline Preacher, Jayne Sellers, Susan Brimelow and Hilary MacNaughton for organising these excellent visits and for keeping us on time for buses and teas.

Ken Cox's excellent opening to our season of talks on Rhododendrons and Azaleas earlier this month was an incredible tour of the varieties of these plants, plus descriptions of some of his plant hunting trips to the Himalayas, which made you realise that the hunting for new species requires a terrific degree of fitness and endurance. Our speaker on **Wednesday 8th October at 19:30 in Baljaffray Parish Church is Colin Wren of the NTS**. Because the author of these newsletters failed to read an email correctly, he has been found guilty of mis-titling Colin's talk. His talk is not what it states in the printed Club Calendar, but is far more interesting than that quoted. He will be talking about **Scotland's Native Plants plus a Few Invaders**. In the gardens that Colin is responsible for, like The Harmony Garden and the Pinewood Garden in Melrose he focuses on native plants, with a few invaders thrown in. It promises to be yet another excellent evening of information and gardening excellence. In November, **Alan Benell**, late of the RBGE, will be telling us all about Scottish and West Coast Gardens.

It is very encouraging to note how many new members have joined the club this year and I do hope they enjoy being a member, get to know the "old hands", participate in events and be prepared for the chairman forgetting your name! As I get older, the need for the membership to have larger name badges grows! For the "old hands", thank you for staying with us and being so loyal. The club is in a very healthy condition and it is always good news when new gardeners join us as they bring new ideas.

The rain has started and according to the Met Office it will continue until about midnight, so retail therapy is in the offing this afternoon. The plants will like the refreshment and we should be grateful that after such a dry summer (down south it was very dry) we do get some water to fill our butts and to feed our gardens. There will be plenty to do over the next few weeks, especially when the darn leaves start to fall, as well as toning your mental abilities in preparation for the annual Christmas Quiz, which is only 11 weeks away. Keep on enjoying your gardens and I look forward to seeing many of you on **8th October**.

With best wishes

Willie

P. S. The photos this month are all of the walled garden at Whitburgh House.







