

Baldernock Gardening Club: March Newsletter 2024:

Spring has officially arrived, so let's hope it is a lot drier than the winter!

Good evening everyone,

Meteorologically (a word I find easier to write than to say!) today has been the last day of winter and what a ghastly, wet winter it has been. February 2024 has been the 8th wettest February since records began in 1908, but, also, it has been one of the warmest, which explains why so much of the garden is appearing ahead of schedule. We have had a few nights when the temperature has dropped below zero this winter, but nothing extreme. To end winter, the contrary weather gods gave us a lovely day to enjoy being out in the garden to continue the oft interrupted clear-up prior to spring and as we have had a few dryish days over the past week, the ground was not too sodden and the plants had rid themselves of their drookit look. I had the pleasure of working out in the garden this afternoon accompanied by the grand-dog, who was visiting for the day. Quigley should be past the age of youthful exuberance, but no one has told him. He followed me around, but not in a Monty Don style of dog; no, he had his squeaky tennis ball, which had to be thrown constantly and all afternoon. I tried to ignore him, but that just meant he squeaked the darn ball even more loudly and right behind me and usually when lying on a growing plant. As far as Quigley is concerned, gardens are places where balls are thrown for him to chase and for no other purpose. He has returned to his city home and he will doubtless collapse exhausted in his bed and give his resident family a peaceful evening for once. I will be having a whisky to recover!

Apart from the ball throwing (lobbing actually) it has been a lovely day to be in the garden. There were times at the beginning of the month when I was getting a wee bit "stir" crazy at not being able to get out. Obviously I could have, but the rain or that fine, soaking drizzle plus the sodden ground really did not appeal. The garden is coming back to life. The snowdrops are still there, but their blooms are looking a little tired. The winter aconites have done their thing, but the first daffodils are flowering to maintain the colour hue, as are the first signs of the forsythia blossom. The hellebores are doing well and I am seeing the first shoots of trilliums and erythroniums, which are always such a joy. Everything is beginning to awaken. The peonies are thrusting up their red stem buds, the lupins are cautiously appearing, whilst the papavers are leafing healthily with the promise of many blooms. The alliums are still in position despite the attempts of the squirrel to get at them. There is a definite feeling that a lot of activity is going on underground and that soon all the bare patches of earth will soon be hidden. In the morning, too, the dawn chorus is consisting of more than a few magpies (tree chopped down, magpies gone) with a song thrush having taken up residence close to the bedroom and he/she is joined by fellow choristers from the goldfinches, all the tits, robins, chaffinches and, in the background, the dippers. Yes spring is here, so let's hope we don't experience a late spell of really cold weather, but maybe have a dry, warm spring that we can all enjoy.

Onto club matters, upon which the newsletter is supposed to concentrate. At the recent February meeting, which, unfortunately, I missed, you were superbly educated and entertained by Shirley Graham, who convinced you all to grow vegetables and adopt the "No Dig" policy. With all our Amazon deliveries there is no shortage of cardboard to help you in starting your no digging. I am sure, too, that Marjorie did a wonderful job of compering the evening. Unfortunately for our next speaker on **Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 19:30 in Baljaffray Parish Church Hall** you are back to having my dulcet tones mumbling through

the microphone. Our speaker for the evening is **Alan Watson Featherstone**. Alan founded Trees for Life in 1986 with a strong commitment to save the Caledonian Forest. Alan will be travelling all the way down from Findhorn to share his enthusiasm, commitment and drive in his work of restoring this forest. Alan, I am sure, will inspire us all and another excellent talk is on the cards, so will be well worth attending.

In April, on **Wednesday 10th**, our speaker will be **Gavin MacNaughton of MacPlants**, which is one of the best plant nurseries in Scotland. I am sure Gavin will bring some plants, which you will be able to purchase.

As winter turns to spring and you are all working hard in your gardens, just remember that in just over two months time on **on Saturday 11th May** it is our **Annual Plant Sale** so start selecting your plants for inclusion in the sale. Last year, we had our usual successful event with some really good quality plants, but not a huge quantity. Please continue with the quality, but increase the quantity a bit more for this year. Work is already underway to promote the sale.

Your committee is busy tempting speakers for next year and we are halfway through filling the schedule, as well as arranging outings to gardens across Scotland. Fuller details on all these should be available in the near future.

Having waxed lyrically (?) about what a lovely day it has been today, it is only fitting that hailstones are now bouncing off the Velux window above me. The weather is so marvellously predictable, but at least it held off until I, and you, were safely inside. I look forward to seeing many of you on Wednesday 13th March for another interesting talk. Until then, enjoy your gardens, select your cuttings and off shoots for the sale and let us all hope we can enjoy a spell of good weather, so that I don't notice that my wellingtons are still leaking.

With best wishes

Willie



