

Baldernock Gardening Club: Newsletter April 2026: Sun, rain, wind and snow - it must be Spring

Good evening all,

About twelve or fourteen years ago, just after I retired from the day-to-day grind of making a living, I realised that my garden required a great deal more attention and effort, so my elder daughter bought me a camellia. It was flowering very profusely, so it was put in a sheltered spot, in a large pot, close to the garden door. For the next six years not another bloom was ever produced and so I removed it six years ago from the very large pot and plonked it in the ground in another sheltered area close to the beech hedge and there it has resided ever since looking very healthy and growing ever bigger, but bloomless. The other day as I was digging out some leaf mould from the bin close to the camellia, I was astounded to discover that there were FIVE flower buds, real buds, on the bush. The buds have now burst open to be lovely, deepish pink blooms and not even the frost of the past couple of nights has affected them. It just proves that gardening is often a challenge of patience and that nature does what it does when it is ready. Needless to say, the so far much smaller camellia, Nicky Crisp, that I bought from Glendoick last year, has ten blooms on it! Yes, there is loads of colour in the garden now to replace the snowdrops. I am particularly pleased with my new plantings of various miniature narcissi that I had noted down after visiting Greenbank last year; they really are beautiful and dainty. Many of the other spring bulbs are showing their colours with, especially, the chionodoxas having spread even more, the dens canis erythroniums are spreading their fairy wings and the scillas and grape hyacinths are becoming more profuse, and the hellebores are luxuriant with blooms. My fritillaria imperialis has spread this year, but whether they produce more than one flower head between them is another matter. Like the pink camellia, they are taking their time to do their thing! The buds are appearing on the shrubs and the trees and most of the perennials are showing they have survived the damp winter; there are some that are giving me cause for concern, but not all will be lost. Digging out the compost and leaf mould from my heaps has often necessitated diplomatic negotiations with still sleepy toads and frogs, who have not appreciated being disturbed. The robins have accompanied me every step of the way and continue to demonstrate their ability to "spaghetti sook" the worms. On the feeders, the usual collection of finches, nuthatches and tits are rushing about feeding themselves up before the youngsters arrive. The bird boxes are being inhabited, so spring is definitely occurring. The never seen owl continues to hoot away merrily just as I go to bed; one day I may actually see it.

Brian Young was our speaker in March and he gave us a most interesting talk on the work he had done in creating the Lockerbie Memorial Garden at Threave. Not only did he have to design the concept when recovering from major surgery, but also he had to utilise all his international diplomatic skills as he negotiated the differing wishes of the NTS and its American equivalent. In doing all this, he was never told what the budget was or how much he was allowed to spend. The design was fitting and he should have been allowed to have his obelisk, which was stunning. Brian sold most of the plants he brought with him, so it was an excellent evening all round.

Our speaker on **Wednesday 8th April at 19:30 in Baljaffray Parish Church** will be **Sandra Bannister of the Tealeaf Cafe and Garden, Culross**. Sandra is a one-time Palliative Care Specialist nurse, a Director of Undergraduate Nursing Programmes at Stirling University, a farmer and a resident of Culross, who decided to open her garden to the public at weekends. She also introduced a horse box, from which coffee, tea, fantastic scones and delicious cakes emanate. (Gardening with scones and cakes, pure heaven!) This will be her story of **Nature with Nurture**. She is making a floral display to bring along in the evening and this will be raffled off at the end of the night. Raffle tickets (£1.00 each) will be available at the door on the night with proceeds being donated to Mary's Meals. Another most interesting evening awaits us all.

In May we have the **AGM on Wednesday 13th**, followed by **John Hancox** telling us everything about **Scottish Heritage Fruit Trees**. On the Saturday prior to the exciting AGM, we have our **Annual Plant Sale at Baljaffray**. Full details about this and what is required of members will appear in your inboxes sometime in the early part of April. In the meantime, you can start potting up plants, growing plants on, sorting out old rusty implements that you wish rid of or even old pots (not plastic) which you no longer require; all can be sold at the sale, which is our one and only club fund-raising event of the year. Funds collected help us to afford the speakers we want for the club and to provide subsidies for outings and club social occasions. It is a busy time of year. Some brawn has been recruited from a son-in-law and a granddaughter's boyfriend (they have still to be informed!)

Our **Summer Social (Members Only) on Wednesday 10th June** will be hosted by **Sandra Wilson at Robinsfield**. Full details for this joyous and sunny event will be issued in time, but Sandra has asked that numbers are limited to no more than 50, plus members will have to think about car-sharing as parking availability is not extensive, unless you wish to park in Dobbies and walk the half mile with your plate of profiteroles.

All of you will have noted the three outings that have been organised and full details of these will be available shortly, when you will be able to sign expression of interest forms for Carolside and Cambo at either the April or May meetings.

That is it for another month and I pray that the month ahead will have more settled weather, because it has been lovely being out in the garden on the few days when the sun has shone and we could all do with more of it. Plus, you need the sun for your Plant Sale offerings! It is a busy time for us all in the garden, so let's enjoy it because the end results provide so much pleasure, as well as sore hips! Remember, too, that the clocks go forward in the early hours of Sunday morning giving you less sleep time, but an extra hour in the garden!

With best wishes

Willie



