

Baldernock Gardening Club; April 2023 Newsletter:

The garden is full of promise

Good morning one and all,

The clocks have been switched to British Summer Time, except in my car and on the internal weather station. The first two days of BST were beautiful after a very wet early and mid-March. Unfortunately, the rain has decided to sweep back in and late March is now going to be as wet as the rest of the month has been. The weather has not exactly encouraged me to get out into the garden and do all the tasks necessary at this time of year. I have donned, though, my full waterproof regalia, despite a few fabric tears lessening the protection, and have spent most of last week spreading my compost across the beds. The compost bin is now empty, so will require filling from the other bins holding the beginnings of next year's mixture. I think that transfer manoeuvre will wait until the rains have stopped.

This is the time of year when I wander, purposefully and as a cover for a "rest period", around the garden seeing what might appear in the next few days or weeks. Bulbs planted in the autumn are actually coming up where they are meant to, including quite a few planted in previous years making their first appearance. About three years ago I followed all the instructions to plant quite a number of ipheion and chionodoxa bulbs under a fence beside the azaleas. The idea was that these would bloom as the snowdrops faded. These bulbs didn't appear, so last autumn I tried again with another batch and, lo and behold, they have all decided, including those I thought had been "squirrelled", to perform this year, except in not quite the way I had originally planned. I couldn't quite remember with absolute accuracy where the first lot were planted. The outcome, though, is quite effective and offers promise for the future, unless the damn squirrel digs them up. But yes, I love seeing the red peony stems emerging from the ground and the other perennials, like the hostas, are showing they have survived the wet winter. The first blossom is on the cherry plum creating a white haze against the occasional blue sky. One of the *Fritillaria imperialis* actually flowered for the first time last year after many years of frustration and this year it is being joined by others who have taken its lead, so I may actually have two, three or even five parading their impressive blooms in a few weeks' time after being in the ground for about five years; I just have to maintain a lookout for the lily beetles. All in all, many perennial delights are re-appearing and after the browns of winter, the many fresh hues of green do give me a spirit uplift.

Also, the birds are coming back and are busy building or redecorating their nests. Blackbirds are gathering huge beakfulls of old stems, as well as trying to chase every other bird away from the bird feeder. A pair of dippers have come back; a pair of nuthatches have been very busy on the bird feeder stocking up for the weeks ahead and this morning the reed bunting re-introduced himself. One of the many robins has begun to re-use last year's nest in an old pallet; the mallards are down demanding their individual breakfast and lunch, so it is a busy time of year even if you are just standing and watching!

Douglas Cameron gave us a marvellous talk on 8th March about the work of Milngavie in Bloom. I think it was a revelation to all of us, who are not involved in their work, how much has been achieved since 2008 when it all started. The volunteers, all who do the work for Milngavie in Bloom are volunteers, do so much to brighten up Milngavie and also to keep it relatively free of litter. I suspect Douglas may have gained some more volunteers, which is good news for those of us who live in Milngavie. Our next speaker on **Wednesday 12th April at 19:30 in Baljaffray Parish Church** is **Richard Baines, Curator of Logan Botanic Garden** near Stranraer. Logan Botanic Garden was voted "Best Garden in the UK" by Which? in 2021 and is often described as Scotland's most exotic garden, plus it was used as a backdrop for the cult film the Wicker Man, way back in 1973. Richard has been Curator at Logan since 2007 and not only has he enhanced the whole garden, but he has also developed it further in terms of visitor attraction. 30,000 people visit the garden annually. We are delighted that Richard is visiting us as he spent 7 years with Glasgow Parks Department and has a vast experience and knowledge of horticulture, plant hunting and how to manage huge gardens. It will be another evening for members and visitors to savour.

Our May meeting on **Wednesday 10th May** will continue the Coronation Festivities with our **AGM**, a pageant of similar majesty to what will have occurred on the 6th! The evening will start at 19:00 for **Members Only** and then by 19:30 the doors will be open to everyone for our talk by **Dougie Boatman of Scotplants** on "Well Behaved Plants". Then on **Saturday 13th May it is the Annual Plant Sale**. Full details regarding this will be issued fairly soon, but we will have lists prepared for volunteers to sign at the forthcoming April meeting. Last year at the plant sale we had loads of volunteers, which was terrific. This year we are wanting to organise you more efficiently by asking you to volunteer for specific periods of the day. Some will be needed all day, but we require help at specific times of the day as well. More details on this will be emailed to you before the April meeting. There is nothing stopping you from getting your plants selected ready for the plant sale and to stock up on flour for the baking and the tea.

May is going to be a busy month, for not only have we all the above excitement, but Caroline Preacher has also organised an **OUTING for Wednesday 3rd May 2023 to Glendoick Gardens near Dundee and to Branklyn Garden in Perth**. Full details of this will be sent out shortly and there will be a list for those wishing to join the outing available for signing at the April Meeting. The cost to members for the outing will be £20 per person. So quite a lot is happening in the months ahead. Reminders and fuller details will appear in your inboxes before too long. On 14th June we will have our **Summer Social (Members ONLY)**, and, again, details will be announced shortly.

I hope you are not all mind-boggled by the plethora of imminent events and dates, but if you all attend the talk by Richard Baines on **Wednesday 12th April** I will further confuse you by going through them again. I look forward to seeing another good gathering at the talk, but in the meantime, forget about the rain and enjoy the forthcoming pleasures of your gardens. It is a lovely time of year with all the tree blossom and the daffodils and all the other spring bulbs, providing us with

opportunities to deflect thoughts away from all the crises of the wider world for a wee while. Garden well and hope for a drier April.

With best wishes to you all,

Willie

