

## **Baldernock Gardening Club: May 2026 Newsletter:** **What a glorious week of sunshine and what a difference it makes to the garden!**



Good afternoon everyone,

Last month I recounted my trials of my camellia which had grown healthily for a decade and a half, but had never flowered in all that time. This prompted innumerable tales and photographs from members of their healthy, annual flowering and bloom laden specimens gracing their gardens. My camellia may well be a late starter, but my Elizabeth rhododendron, one of the first plants to be introduced to our then barren patch, has always shown its true colours and this year it has excelled itself. Amongst the red blooms it is hard to find the foliage and with all that sun we are currently enjoying, it is quite an impressive sight. What a difference a week of sunshine and warmth has made to the garden and to people's spirits. Suddenly the trees have leafed, the tulip buds have opened, trilliums, erythroniums, later daffodils, rhoddies and climbing ceanothus, which is bud- and flower-laden, and all the cherry trees have burst into colour. The magnolias are beginning their magnificent flowering, though my stellata is still pretty small, whilst another one with supposed yellow flowers has been behaving like the camellia since 2019; I may attempt to move it in the autumn. The peonies are budding and the dahlias, which have been enjoying the shelter of the cold frame, are showing the first signs that I have not killed them over the winter. If this warm weather continues the azaleas will bloom soon, as will the peonies and the alliums. The hostas are really sprouting and every protection against slugs is being used. The thoroughly neglected lavender plant that has been in the same pot forever, has now taken on the appearance of having been "cloud pruned"; some plants just survive no matter what one does to them! The seedlings, which are tended with care, are thriving in the greenhouse, so all in all, it is creating an extremely busy time in the garden with the promise of so much more to come.

The bird life has been pretty good, too. Such has been the numbers of siskins and the noise they have been making up in an old beech tree that I decided to check on what is the collective noun for them. Boringly it is a "flock" or, slightly more interesting, a "squabble", but somehow that did not seem to encapsulate the volume of their chatter; so I have decided to call it a "shouting" as even the Merlin app almost couldn't cope. We have had siskins galore, chaffinches everywhere, greenfinches, goldfinches and a spectacularly handsome pair of bullfinches; the male was immaculately equipped with an almost iridescent red chest and black, black head, while his partner made the most of her duller plumage. The nuthatches have been busy and the tree creeper has made the odd visit to the moss covered cherry tree in the courtyard. The bird food has been disappearing at an alarming and imminent bankruptcy rate, so it is a relief that the RSPB has recommended that we do not fill our feeders, apart from a few mealworms, from the 1st of May until the end of October. This is not designed to help our cost of living crisis, but actually to protect the birds from the threat of disease; a bit like our lockdown during covid. I will follow their advice.

Our speaker in April got her date wrong for her appearance before a good-sized audience, so did not turn up. This is a first in my time of chair, but Sandra Bannister did kick herself mightily as all the emails to her from the Club had the right date. The poor lady was very upset, and very apologetic and, as punishment, we have booked her for April 2027; she will not forget! The evening without the speaker turned into an unofficial social with members thoroughly enjoying a good chinwag and by the time everyone left the hall, it was not much earlier than normal. At the start of the evening we held a raffle, as the speaker was bringing a floral display to be won. The collection for Mary's Meals amounted to a very generous £100, but as there was no prize present, the Club has arranged for the collection to be forwarded to Mary's Meals. When Sandra Bannister comes next year, she will bring another floral display and we will hand out raffle tickets to those who contributed this year, by checking the list of attendees for the non-event. I hope that makes sense!

Our Speaker on **Wednesday 13th May** will be (👏👏) **John Hancox of Scottish Heritage Fruit Trees**, who runs this company that supplies many of the fruit trees that we have in our gardens. He also advises on orchards on how to maintain old ones and plan for new ones. He has spent many years talking in schools to create a fruitful future and the benefits of growing fruit trees. This could be the perfect ending to this season's talks, especially after the drama of our AGM, held just before John speaks. As mentioned, our **AGM** is being held on **Wednesday 13th May** too, but that will start at **19:00** prompt and is for **Members Only**. At the AGM, Marjorie Thorburn will be retiring from the committee and this will be an opportunity for members to thank her for all the hard work and support that she has given to the club over the past six years. Her contribution has been outstanding and, speaking for the rest of the committee, we will miss her input, drive and commitment. It will also be the last appearance as club door keeper, signer-in and seating arranger of Marjorie's husband Colin Walker, who has also been a tremendous and invaluable help over the years. They will both enjoy being members on the back benches. **If coming for the talk only, please arrive between 19:15 and 19:30, when non-members should also arrive.**

Many members at the AGM will still be recovering from the exertions of the previous Saturday, **Saturday 9th May**, when, as you all know, we have our **Annual Plant Sale**. Full details have already been sent out but just a quick reminder that all plants, baking and ancient gardening equipment is to be delivered between 10.00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Plant labels should be white, black or wooden; pots should be clean and presentable. Strong people will be there to help bring your plants and stuff into the hall. If you haven't put your name down to help, then please do so ASAP to Marjorie Thorburn. Hopefully the weather will hold for the day and the sale will generate sufficient funds for the club to help for the year ahead. It is a hard working day, but great fun and a super occasion to get to know fellow members.

On **Monday 18th May** the club has an outing to Alastair Wallace's garden in Strathblane; full details about this outing have been previously circulated. After all the thrills and spills of May, we have the club's **Summer Social (Members Only)** on **Wednesday 10th June from 18:30 until the midges arrive**. Sandra Wilson is hosting this splendid event in her garden at Robinsfield, Bardowie, G62 6ER. I will be sending out full details for this event shortly, but as usual you bring food that we can all taste (sweet or savoury), whilst the Club provides the refreshments. Parking is limited, as are the numbers of attendees (50 max), so please arrange car shares, but again all that will be detailed in the full instructions. In the meantime, continue to exhort the weather gods to provide us with glorious sunshine and warmth for the evening. Last year we baked in the sun-soaked slopes of Nancy Stevens's garden; it would be wonderful to bake again.

I think I have covered everything that needs to be related to you, plus a good deal of waffle which may not be quite so necessary. A busy period is coming up, so get the gardening gloves

on and get potting up for the sale. May your gardens bloom profusely in the days, weeks and months ahead.

With best wishes

Willie

