

# SCOTTISH GARDENERS' FORUM

Newsletter

Vol 8: Issue 2



Summer 2010



[www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](http://www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk)

# SUMMER 2010

## EDITORIAL

MAY 2010

Dear Fellow Gardeners,

Suddenly it's summer and our gardens have sprung into life with overwhelming energy and glory. The exhibitors at Chelsea, we hear, have been nursing their plants through the extended cold season, and we can truly admire the results. In a few days' time, we will be enjoying the splendour of our own "Gardening Scotland". At a more humble level, most of us, while welcoming the warmth with the occasional shower, are kept busy keeping Nature's prolific growth under control.

Such is the challenge we amateurs face. Thank goodness we can share our experiences with like-minded people – our fellow members of the SGF! And in this spirit we hope you enjoy the anecdotes in this issue of the Newsletter. Happy Gardening!

*Christopher Davies (Editor)*

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The Scottish Gardeners' Forum exists to provide the communication link between Scotland's many horticulturally-oriented organisations. The Council (see back cover) meets regularly to discuss matters of interest, either to horticulture as a whole, or members in particular. One of our concerns is that individual clubs should flourish in their local context, benefiting from the experience of the SGF as a whole, and in turn responding to the requests for information from other members. We invite you to send your questions to the Secretary (or to any Council Member listed):

Alex Rutherford, Flat 1/1 21 Highburgh Rd, Dowanhill, Glasgow G12 9YG  
0141 334 6523, email [secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](mailto:secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk)

*Our cover picture shows one of the flower baskets at Helensburgh Station (see the article on p. 9). To see the picture in colour, please refer to our website.*

## OUR CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

It may have been a little premature in stating Winter was coming to an end in our last newsletter as we were again blanketed by more snow. I'm a bit nervous as I write this, however, hopefully the weather has turned for the better and I'm certainly keeping my fingers crossed.

By the time you receive this newsletter we will be in the midst of Gardening Scotland. We have another fantastic turnout for the Pallet & Planter Challenges this year supported by our new sponsor Dobbies.

It's very pleasing to see such a diverse group of competitors from all around Scotland again such as Nairn, Isle of Seil, Fife, Glasgow & Edinburgh just to mention a few.

The show is such a wonderful way for our members to showcase what non professionals can achieve and a great opportunity to purchase a few new additions for the garden.

If you are running your own show this year why not share your experiences with us by sending in an article to Chris, our editor. I feel it's so important to hear and exchange information on our members' achievements.

I hope you all have a very enjoyable and productive Summer.

Best wishes.

*Jim*

## **A PLEA FROM ANN BUSBY**

### **KEEPING THE REGISTERS UP-TO-DATE**

I am in the process of updating the Registers of Speakers and Judges which creates an opportunity to include new contributors. If your organization has had a particularly good speaker or a speaker on an unusual topic I would like to hear about it. Similarly, if you have had someone who has judged at your annual flower show but whose name is not on our Register, I would be interested in following this up. If I am given an initial contact phone number or email address I shall take the matter on from there and explain the system and what is involved in being on the Register.

We would also welcome comments, positive and negative, suggestions and constructive criticism on the contents and information in the Registers. Feedback from organizations is the only method we have to monitor standards, content and usefulness. Passing on your comments will help to ensure that the Registers reflect the needs of the many varied clubs and societies which make up SGF, so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

*Ann Busby, Register Secretary.  
01436 671352. Annbusbyscot@aol.com*

### **THE SGF IN ACTION.....**

#### **MEMBERSHIP & BENEFITS**

The SGF membership is uniquely focused on Societies rather than individuals – the latter focus which RCHS (“The Caley”) already manages with excellence. The Forum’s objectives as expressed in its Constitution are:

- to advance education in the knowledge and best practice of all aspects of gardening and horticulture for the public benefit in Scotland.
- to foster co-operation among general and specialist Horticultural and Gardening Societies/ Clubs/ Associations/ Branches for their mutual benefit.
- to encourage the retention and development of existing and new Societies.
- to provide a voice for the non-professional sector of gardening in Scotland

Membership of the Scottish Gardeners' Forum includes: -

- Register of Judges – updated regularly
- Register of Speakers – updated regularly
- Register of Societies
- Access to Public Liability Insurance
- A Quarterly Newsletter
- Access to a nationwide network of like minded enthusiasts

## **SGF GRANT SCHEME**

The SGF is willing to offer support funding from its reserves for projects in line with its objectives, demonstrating the positive impact gardening and horticulture can have on the local community. So if your club is weighing up such projects, and a grant (of £250 or so) would make a material difference, please let us know so that we can consider how we can help. More information from:

**Alex Rutherford**

Flat 1/1 21 Highburgh Road  
Dowanhill, Glasgow G12 9YG

Tel: 0141 334 6523

email: [secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](mailto:secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk)

## SGF WEBSITE

Our website has been redesigned and is being kept regularly up to date, so that it is an efficient source of information, not only for members, but for anyone enquiring about the SGF.

Our intention in redesigning the website was to make it easy to access and navigate and to give you the basic information you are looking for, including details of SGF events, downloadable application forms, who's who and contact addresses, current and back numbers of newsletters and photographs of recent events, for example, the pallet gardens competition. Do make use of this website and let us know how you experience it. If you yourselves do not have a website and are thinking of establishing one, and would like to tap our brains, please get in touch with me: [editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](mailto:editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk)

Please inform your members about the availability of this site and encourage them to visit it.

[www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](http://www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk)

## SGF NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is published four times per year, in March, May, September and December. We are taking care to make it topical, easy to read and entertaining. We would like the circulation to be as wide as possible.

You can help in three ways:

**Firstly:** contact us, give us feedback, reactions and comments so that we can gear the content to your expectations, avoid “dead wood” and encourage fresh growth.

**Secondly:** we want the Newsletter to be a forum for the exchange of information and a bridge between the community of gardening clubs (our members) in Scotland. Please let us have relevant details of your events, topical stories of human or gardening interest, club happenings, articles on aspects of gardening in Scotland: basically, things you would like to share with others. The Newsletter is a resource at your disposal! Use it!

**Thirdly:** help us with distribution, that is by circulating the printed copies, or better still making your members aware that they can read the Newsletters on line.

Finally, we are introducing the facility for you to receive the Newsletter by email (as a pdf file, which the majority of computers will be able to download) and print out if you wish. At this point in time we do not have a full list of members' email addresses, so we have to ask you to notify us.

Please email our secretary, Alex, on:

**secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk**

and we will put you on our mailing list.

For the time being, at least, our Newsletter will continue to be sent to member organisations as a printed version in 'hard copy'.

Items for the Newsletter (quarterly: March/May/September/December) are welcome and should be sent to the Editor: Christopher Davies, 7 West Carnethy Avenue, Edinburgh EH13 0ED: Tel 0131 441 2152,

Email: **editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk**

## GARDENING SCOTLAND – A GARDENERS' UTOPIA!

SUMMER is almost here and one of the best ways to celebrate it is with a visit to Gardening Scotland 2010. This year you'll find everything you could need to make your garden flourish, from beautiful plants to tools and equipment and lots of expert advice.

For gardeners the show is the highlight of the year. It comes at just the right time for adding new plants to the garden and this year, after such a long, hard winter, the chance to replace flowers, trees and shrubs that were lost to the bad weather, is more welcome than ever.

Gardening Scotland is where you'll find **The Dobbies Floral Hall**, the perfect place to purchase the most rare and unusual plants in the country. Top growers and nurseries from across the UK travel to Edinburgh to sell some of the best flowers and plants to be found anywhere in the UK. Here you can find tender orchids, glorious fox tail lilies and alpines that have been bred in Scotland, along with thousands of other beautiful plants.

Outside there are 20 inspirational Show Gardens and more than 400 exhibitors selling supplies for serious gardeners. Amongst the regular exhibitors is **Dave MacIntyre of Var Scotica** who specialises in growing Scottish wildflowers. **Kevock Plants of Lasswade** are one of Scotland's leading alpine nurseries. There will be a strong Scottish



Dave MacIntyre and his wild flower display

theme running through **Amber Goudy's show garden**. Her garden has just won a silver medal at The Chelsea Flower Show.

And make sure you do not miss the exciting entries in the **Pallet Garden and Planter**

Challenges, organized by the SGF and sponsored by Dobbies.

Whether you are an experienced gardener or an enthusiastic beginner, you can get ideas, advice and stimulus from the experts at Gardening Scotland. You can consult a group of Scottish Garden Designers will be running a stand. The **BBC Scotland Beechgrove Theatre** will be hosting talks and workshops with Scotland's top TV gardening team, and radio presenter Mark Stephen will be inviting Gardening Scotland visitors to pose questions to the panel during recordings of Radio Scotland's **Beechgrove Potting Shed**.

The **Garden Roadshow** will be pitching its caravan in The Dobbies Floral Hall, and in **The Earthy Green Garden**, STV gardener Pete Jackson will be creating brilliant grow-your-own plots.

The big sell-off, when exhibitors dispose of excess stock, and even entire show gardens at bargain prices, begins at 4pm on Sunday.

**Gardening Scotland 2010**  
**at The Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh:**  
**Friday, 4 June (10am – 7pm), Saturday, 5 June (10 am – 6pm), Sunday, 6**  
**June (10am - 5pm)**

Tickets cost from £13. Children under 16 go free.

Visit [www.gardeningscotland.com](http://www.gardeningscotland.com) or call for more information on 0131 333 0965.

Lothian Buses will operate a shuttle from St Andrew Square and Haymarket, as well as 31 Stops along the way. The service is free to Senior and concession travel card holders.

## **HELENSBURGH CENTRAL STATION AND THE 'HORTI'**

**H**elensburgh Central Station has been given a facelift in the last few years by the twenty two tubs which line the Station's central platform and entrance area. The tubs are filled throughout the year with colourful, seasonal displays of bulbs, small shrubs, bedding plants and perennials . This entire venture has been made

possible by Scotrail's initiative 'Gardening on Stations' but the care and maintenance of the display depends entirely on the input and cooperation of the members of Helensburgh and Gareloch Horticultural Society (HGHS) A small plaque in the station



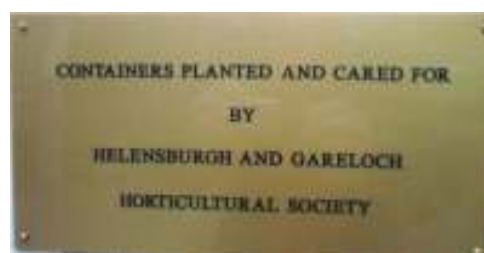
carries this information and clearly identifies the role of the Society in the venture. A visit to Scotrail's website ([www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)) will reveal the number of Scottish stations which are taking part in similar initiatives which help to bring to life and colour to station buildings which would otherwise be empty. The planting schemes are planned in detail and the materials purchased by Kathleen Murray, a past Chair of HGHS. Scotrail foots the bill for these

costs but Society members are then responsible for all aspects of planting, care, maintenance and watering of the displays A team of volunteers empty, refill and replant the tubs twice a year. In most cases a small shrub – laurel has been especially useful and durable - forms the centerpiece of the tub and provides some height This is surrounded with crocuses, tulips and daffodils merging into polyanthus, pansies , geraniums fuchsias, lobelias and bacopa throughout the season. There have even been some distinctly *un*-horticultural small, sparkly silver Christmas trees used as centerpieces during the Christmas season. Last year some beautiful standard Fuchsias formed the centrepiece of the summer planting. These plants drew many admiring comments and have been overwintered in a member's green house so will hopefully make their appearance again this summer. Watering is a major requirement throughout the year. The station platforms can be draughty and cold depending on wind direction and under the glass roof can also become very hot. In high summer this may mean watering all the

tubs twice daily. Twenty two members working in pairs form the watering brigade and duties are allocated on a monthly basis. Station staff are very co-operative. A tap has been installed beside the newspaper kiosk which means that we do not have to disturb station staff for access to water. The large watering cans and the little buggy used to trundle them the length of the platform are kept for us in a locked cupboard. Members on duty must sign in at the Station Master's office (health and safety requirements) and don high visibility orange waistcoats! We are frequently mistaken by the travelling public for Scotrail employees and asked about train schedules and also the location of the toilet key! However, these encounters usually lead on to a conversation about the planting in the tubs and the Society's involvement. There has been a great deal of positive comment about the contribution that the tubs make to the station's appearance. There also seems to be a widespread childhood memory about how 'stations used to look when the Stationmaster grew geraniums and decorated the waiting rooms with the blooms'. Another aspect worth noting is that, to date, there has been no evidence of vandalism. Hopefully our very positive experience in Helensburgh may encourage other societies to consider a similar kind of community involvement.

The Station tubs have been a highly successful venture on the part of the Society. The membership remains enthusiastic and there appear to be no problem in recruiting volunteers to help with all the aspects of the planting and caring for the tubs. All those participating are delighted that their efforts are so much appreciated. On a final note: Helensburgh Station dates from 1858 and the Helensburgh and Gareloch Horticultural Society from 1850. Perhaps, 160 years on, we should all be grateful that both the Station and the 'Horti' have survived.

*Ann Busby*



## PERTH GARDENERS' & COUNTRYSIDE MARKET

An existing event took on a new slant on 15 May 2010 when gardeners teamed up with organisations and businesses from Perthshire's countryside to form the Perth Gardeners' and Countryside Market.

Green-fingered visitors to the market, which took place on King Edward Street in Perth, were able to purchase plants and accessories to ensure their gardens are in tip-top condition this summer. A fantastic array of bedding plants was available from



Perth's Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Society. Other stalls sold herbaceous perennials, shrubs, climbers, alpines and grasses and accessories for that extra special touch to customers' gardens.

Fruit wines from Cairn O' Mohr, woodcrafts and organic soaps were also available to buy. Perth

& Kinross Council's Waste Awareness team were present to inform visitors to the market about recycling. Perth College also informed visitors to the market about horticulture courses available.

Countryside organisations present included The Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group, Raptor World who brought a magnificent Eurasian Eagle Owl which was a great spectacle, Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust and John Muir Trust.

The Orchard 800 project was also represented. This project aims to promote the Fair City's fruit growing heritage by raising funds to empower local communities to plant 800 fruit trees on publicly accessible sites. Each tree symbolises a year of Perth's rich history and 800 trees will create community orchards across the City.

Perth Gardeners' & Countryside Market is organised by Perth City Centre Management Tel: 01738 475728, [www.perthcity.co.uk](http://www.perthcity.co.uk)

*Gillian Coyne*

## SNIPPETS &



## CUTTINGS.....

**A BAN ON BANNERS.....?** *Gladys Hardwick, Secretary, Dalkeith Horticultural Society writes:*

“Here in Midlothian, the Council have decided that banners and posters should be banned (pardon the pun!) and only certain organisations will be allowed to advertise, and then only on designated sites. As this is the greatest source of advertisement for our Annual Flower Show - a two day event - it would be disastrous if these were not allowed. We at Dalkeith Horticultural Society have properly manufactured banners which are not cheap to produce and have recently been awarded a grant to have some more made. Have other Societies come across this problem, and how do they overcome it?”



**CLACKMANNANSHIRE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** would like you to know about their Annual Flower Show to be held in Devonvale Hall, Tillicoultry on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September - open to the public from 1.00p.m. For further details contact Shirley McCouat (Secretary) on 01259 751122 or [shirleymccouat@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:shirleymccouat@hotmail.co.uk)



**DOLLAR HORTICULTURAL AND GARDEN CLUB** - *Margaret Stephenson writes:*

Following on from an article in a previous SGF newsletter we decided to hold a Spring Bulb competition with Strathdevon Primary, our local school. Every child in the school planted tete a

tete bulbs and took them home to care for them. On March 1<sup>st</sup> they were brought back to school and judged.

Involving our local primary school appears to be the way forward for us to continue to flourish as a club. Over the past few years the numbers of entries in the children's classes at the annual Show have continued to increase steadily. Parents coming along to the show to view their children's entries are then realising that there is an opportunity for them to enter some classes next year, all good news for the future of Dollar Horticultural and Garden Club.

More information on our club and our annual show can be found at [www.dollargardens.info](http://www.dollargardens.info)



**THE EAST KILBRIDE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** is holding its Annual Flower Show on Saturday the 11th September 2010 at the Old Parish Church Hall in the Village, East Kilbride. All are welcome to compete, schedules can be obtained from Andy Mann, The Show Convenor, 164 Sandpiper Drive, East Kilbride G75. Tel: 01355 522917.



**HELENSBURGH AND GARELOCH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** will hold their 160th Flower and Vegetable Show on Saturday 21st August in Helensburgh's Victoria Hall. This is a traditional show with over 100 classes including handicrafts, baking, honey, photography and a section for young people. please ring Ann Busby 01436 671352 or Janette Caldwell 01436 82184 for any further information.



## **KILLEARN COTTAGERS' HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S Annual Show**

is on 28 August from 2.00 – 4.30. in the village hall and church hall.

Glenda Asquith writes:

“The main entry in the Show is in the produce section, flowers, vegetables and pot plants which make a spectacular display but the number of entries in other sections grows every year. We have more and more baking and flower arranging now includes innovative arrangements of perhaps only two or three flowers in our “busy lifestyle” class. Children enjoy floating flowers in a bowl.

We have all kinds of crafts for adults and children including patchwork quilts, tapestries and one of the newer classes is for items made from recycled materials. Paintings and the ever expanding photographic section show that there is plenty of artistic talent around as well. Almost 200 primary paintings from every child in the primary school produce a fantastic display and encourage the children to enter other items.

Very importantly we also have a lovely tea room with delicious home baking.

We like to think we have moved with the times including new classes of exhibits every year, trying to ensure that there is a category for everyone to enter. Last year we had almost 700 entries.

Our Show is bright, cheerful, interesting and friendly and so is popular with exhibitors and visitors from outwith the village as well as locals. We hope to see you there.”

Entry 50p adult or £2.00 including the schedule and entry for all the family. Teas £2.00. Killearn is 16 miles north of Glasgow. For Further information call Glenda Asquith 01360 550142



**FRIENDS OF SUNTRAP, EDINBURGH** would like to draw attention to their exciting monthly programme of visits and talks, details of which can be obtained through the link on Suntrap's website [www.suntrap-garden.org.uk](http://www.suntrap-garden.org.uk), email: [suntrap@btopenworld.com](mailto:suntrap@btopenworld.com), tel/fax: 0131 339 2891



## **ANN'S DIARY**

### **June in the Garden – how to avoid the ‘nasties’ without chemicals**

At last the weather has warmed up a bit and our garden plants have started to grow in earnest. With all that lush foliage about this is the time of year to start making regular inspections for those garden gremlins that can damage our plants namely animal pests, diseases and weeds.

**Avoidance** is always the best line of attack;

- Mulches regularly applied to the soil will keep down annual weeds. A thick mulch of organic matter laid down around the roses in late winter also helps reduce the reoccurrence of mildew, rust and black spot by sealing in the previous year's fungal spores.
- When purchasing plants buy newer varieties that are resistant to particular problems; potatoes less susceptible to blight include 'White Lady' and 'Arran Victory', gooseberries less susceptible to mildew include 'Hinnomaki Red'.
- Aphids can be kept down by introducing pollen heavy plants into the garden that will attract predatory insects such as

hoverflies – try planting *Phacelia tanacetifolia*, a beautiful purple annual or *Calendula* to do the trick.

The second line of defence should always be **vigilance** – this means a daily wander through the garden with coffee mug in hand and your eyes wide open.

- First green fly on the roses can be removed by hand if you catch them early enough – miss them for a couple of weeks and you'll have an infestation.
- Nocturnal adult vine weevils can be found on plants at dusk, dispose of these and you will have fewer weevil grubs pestering your primulas.
- At the first signs of black spot or mildew remove the leaves and put them in the bin thereby stopping the spread of the fungus.
- Pull every weed you can before it has the chance to set seed and spread around the garden.

If all else has failed and the pests have got a hold in the garden there are many ways to **wage war** without necessarily using lots of chemicals, most garden centres now stock a number of natural and organic products which are less likely to cause damage to the environment, friendly insects or you. Biological controls are now readily available over the internet to keep down the white fly in the glasshouse or slugs in the cabbage patch.

Your garden should be for enjoyment and relaxation so if a particular plant causes you heartache and work every year because it continually attracts a particular problem consider **acceptance** – let the saw fly have the 'Solomon's Seal'. Alternatively dig the offending plant out, chuck it and buy something new after all you now have space in the garden!

*Ann Burns*

Ann Burns is Team Leader, Horticulture and Landscape Construction, at Oatridge College

## GROWING YOUR OWN.

**W**e have been growing fruit and vegetables, with varying degrees of success, virtually all our married life in our four successive homes, the difference between one house or another being dependent on the type of soil and the amount of ground available. The range of vegetables we grow now usually includes second early and maincrop potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, sprouts, carrots, parsnips, French beans, runner beans, peas, beetroot, leeks, courgettes and occasionally onions/shallots. Of fruit we grow gooseberries, blackcurrants, white currants, red currants, strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb and, recently, blueberries.

In the greenhouse we grow tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and last year, aubergines.

The outcome varies from year to year, depending on the weather and the amount of time available to tend the vegetable plot and fruit cage. We have not generally been well enough organized to manage successive sowings of things like lettuce, carrots and brassicas, but with more time now available that might (?) change.

What have we learned? That you can choose to grow varieties which you will not find in shops and supermarkets; that you must protect all fruit (except rhubarb) and young brassica plants with netting; that in Edinburgh it is advisable to start your beans in pots under glass before planting out in late May/June; that unless you have infinite patience and a lot of time available you will need to use at least some insecticides etc. to have a hope of an edible crop (carrot root fly and slugs being only two of the pests you will encounter); that you will likely have a glut of some things and little of others; that you will never have a freezer big enough; and that growing your own is both a frustrating – for instance we know now that we will not be able to plant brassicas for at least a couple of years because club root has infected our garden) - and highly rewarding experience – e.g. we will find different crops to replace the brassicas. Perhaps more importantly, based upon the very poor crops resulting from the miserable weather of 2008, we can understand how precarious life must be when you are dependent for survival on the food you grow.

*Alex and Wendy Stewart, Colinton GC*

# YOUR COUNCIL

## Honorary President: Professor Fred Last

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(Suntrap Gardening Club)

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## **Council Members:**

**Ann Burns** (Oatridge College)  
**Ann Cross** (Kirkintilloch HS)  
**Christopher Davies** (Colinton GC)  
**Bill Grimmond** (Bothwell HS)  
**Hazel Main** (RHS Aberdeen)  
**Alison Murison** (Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society)  
**Mike Rossi** (Scottish Bonsai Association)  
**Alistair Simpson** (Gardening Scotland)  
**John Smith** (Oatridge College, Suntrap)  
**Helen Wands** (Helensburgh HS)

*Consultants: Tom Mabbott and David Sinclair*

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