

SCOTTISH GARDENERS' FORUM

Newsletter Vol 9: Issue 3

Autumn 2011



www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

AUTUMN 2011

EDITORIAL

SEPTEMBER 2011

Dear Fellow Gardeners,

In looking back over the summer – trying not to talk yet again about the rain – we look forward to a golden Autumn with ripening fruits and a glorious display of foliage, rewards for our work in the garden.

Judging from the fertile array of articles appearing in this issue, there has been a lot of activity in the realm of horticulture: signs of health and enterprise, good reading for now with the promise of a harvest in the future. Thank you and 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

Our cover picture: falling leaves presage Winter. They also protect the ground from the hard frost and enrich the earth in preparation for Spring.

OUR CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

It's been a good productive summer with lots still to do in the garden especially with all this rain keeping the gardens looking so lush.

We had a good turnout at Gardening Scotland for our Pallet / Planter challenges; 52 Pallets and 19 Planters. The numbers were down on last year; however, we had a lot of new competitors from all over Scotland. The winners picked up a total of £500 in gardening vouchers from Dobbies.

The winners in the Pallet Challenge were

Schools

1st Law Primary, 2nd Kinlochleven Primary School & 3rd Westercraigs Nursery School.

Groups

1st North Berwick in Bloom, 2nd Nether Loirston Growers & 3rd Royal Horticultural Society of Aberdeen.

The winners in the Planter Challenge were

Schools

1st Ratho Primary School, 2nd Ladywell Nursery School & 3rd Nether Currie Primary School.

Groups

1st & 3rd Royal Horticultural Society of Aberdeen & 2nd Nairn & District Garden Club.

Well done to all the competitors in both challenges but also well done to all our other members who took part in Gardening Scotland.

Pictures of all the winning entries can be seen on our website.

Dobbies continue to be our main sponsor not only for providing the prize vouchers but also helping with some of the costs of staging the event.

Poppy Scotland was also a great help this year by lending us some camouflage netting used as a backdrop for our entries. Our thanks go out to both organisations.

Our AGM will be back at Oatridge College in October with guest speakers and a gardener's question time so please come along to test our team with all your garden problems. Further details will be sent out to you all shortly about the AGM.

I hope you enjoy reading our latest newsletter and I look forward to welcoming your representatives at our AGM in October.

Best wishes.

Jim



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 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

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

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 membership secretary, Mike Rossi, on:

membership@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

SGF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Tenth Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Gardeners' Forum will be held on Saturday 29th October 2011 at Oatridge College, Ecclesmachan, Broxburn, EH52 6NH at 10.00am

Alexandra Rutherford
Secretary

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

10.00 am: Registration and coffee

10.30 am Annual General Meeting

11.45 am David Mitchell – talk title to be confirmed

12.45 pm Lunch

14.00 pm George Anderson: "How did I get here?"

15.00 pm Horticultural Question Time

16.00 pm Close

Scottish Gardeners' Forum

Secretary: Alexandra Rutherford

Email secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Delegate Fee £10 (includes tea/coffee and lunch)

GARDENING SCOTLAND 2011

GARDENING Scotland 2011 had one of its most successful Shows yet, welcoming 40,000 visitors over the three days of the Event.



Many exhibitors reported record trading, with several selling out long before the Sunday sell-off of surplus stock.

A total of 18 nurseries that had just received medals at The Chelsea Flower Show joined dozens of other top growers in the Dobbies Floral Hall where the huge exhibit created by Keith Jackson and Stonebarn Landscapes for PoppyScotland won not just 'Best Floral Exhibit', and 'Best New Floral Exhibitor' but also 'The Sunday Post People's Choice Award,' the first time that any exhibitor has won all three accolades.

Outside the 'Best Show Garden' award went to Great Gardens Ltd, a social enterprise company from Glasgow, whose garden included a giant gorilla made from sedums, while many specialist societies, including the Scottish Bonsai Association, the Meconopsis Group and SAFAS contributed stunning displays to the Show.

The SGF Pallet Gardens were once again amongst the highlights of the event, attracting dozens of entries and delighting visitors with the skills and creativity involved in squeezing so many small gardens into such tiny spaces.

Gardening Scotland organiser, Martin Dare, has praised not just the exhibitors but also the many volunteers involved as well.

"It takes a huge team effort to put on a Show like Gardening Scotland and I think everyone who took part, in any capacity, should be very proud of what was achieved at this year's event."

Agnes Stevenson

Agnes Stevenson is the garden writer for the Sunday Post.

PALLET GARDENS – AN ORGANISER’S PERSPECTIVE

Pactical Pallets

Pallet gardens allow local gardening clubs and schools to mount a competitive entry in a major flower show. Apparently the original idea was that groups would construct their entry on a wooden pallet which would then be brought intact to the showground; however that would need a fork lift truck which few garden clubs own!

Anyone who has seen the entries to the SGF pallet challenge will have been impressed by the ingenuity and variety of ideas behind the pallets, especially from the schools. However in some cases the horticulture lags behind. Winning pallets take a good idea and translate it into reality using plants.

As with most things in gardening, plan ahead. Do you have the plants and other materials to make your idea work? Remember that a one metre square is so small that some things do not work. For example, you might want to put the name of your group into the exhibit. You will find that to make the letters from plants takes up much of the square so at best use initials rather than

whole words You can buy in plants but that will increase your costs and some plants such as native wild flowers or vegetables are hard to obtain in a form ready for show. Making up your own metre square frame can be useful as there is no substitute for trying out your display well before you arrive at Ingliston. You will find that some things don't work but other ideas emerge. The winning 'plants take over the potting shed' pallet at the 2011 show started by taking a small wheelbarrow used in a spring display then seeing how many things we could add to it with



flowers growing from them . New ideas can still emerge as you assemble at the show ground. When helping the local primary school with their 'Skools Out' pallet in June I commented that I couldn't see how we could possibly plant a school tie. Someone picked up a small fuchsia, tied the tie round the pot and hung it up on the 'classroom' clothes rail.

Consider the effects of weather both for setting up and over the three days of Gardening Scotland. Will your exhibit stand up to wind; will any labels or information sheets stand up to rain? Especially if coming from a distance can you transport everything in one load? Experienced exhibitors always pack their plants so they cannot fall over en route; breakages can ruin your display.

Although it means more work, planting into compost over an underlay usually leads to a better exhibit than a collection of pots. Try to cover the area with plants avoiding bare soil, and note that artificial flowers are banned and any non-plant material such as logs or rockwork needs to be in proportion to the plants . Do not go for ambitious designs that need things like electricity or water unless you are sure you can provide them in a self-contained form. The rules allow a back board of up to two metres high. This can enhance your exhibit but you do need to make sure it is stable. Although digging into the ground is not permitted the organisers – who are a helpful bunch – accept that you might need to insert some pegs or stakes.

Your pallet is a mini show garden so use it to advertise your group and its activities. Above all, enjoy the experience. You will be in the showground with the professionals and you can take time out to see the big boys – and girls – setting up the show gardens and the floral hall.

Stan da Prato

Stan da Prato has co-ordinated North Berwick in Bloom's pallet at Gardening Scotland every year since they were introduced. To date the group has won five gold medals and one silver-gilt. They have already planned their 2012 pallet but decline to say what its theme will be!

PENICUIK 'S JOURNEY TO GARDENING SCOTLAND

It is January and members belonging to Penicuik Horticultural have started talking about entering Garden Scotland in the sections run by the Gardeners Forum. What will we put together this year?

The pallet garden is a must, Elizabeth and Ann usually take this on. It is a number of years since they took part with the first gardeners as a trial run and have taken part every year since. A garden suitable for a small space. Rain, cold or maybe sunshine they are out planting up their small garden. The society has always retained the idea of a small garden which would be suitable for an older person to maintain, or an area for a flat. We have changed our ways over the years from originally planting every flower on the day to now growing flowers in small boxes to form a section. We have been fortunate in receiving over the past years silvers and silver gilt. This year we again we were awarded a silver.

This year our groups extra challenge was a container planted up. This was beautifully put together by Eilidh. Transporting sometimes goes wrong . When you take part, do not lose heart, when it falls over, causing complete catastrophe as this happened to Eilidh. The day was saved by a calm younger member helping to save the day by assisting with the replanting and cleaning up the mess in the car.

At this moment I can reveal that Penicuik only have 18 regular members.

Our next challenge is taking a stand inside, where we have taken part for a number of years. It is a large area, so questions are asked as to how we going to fill this section and find the money to pay for extras we will need. Two plant sales are organised. At one of the sales we had a coffee morning. Now we were functioning, where do we go from here? It was a dance theme and our entry named "Tea Dance" was our challenge. We used tartan for the front and plain backing material which was acquired many years ago and faithfully appears every year. Covering organised, now to dress the stand. Tea Dance needs shoes, dancers, an instrument and plants. The plants

came from our own houses, some begged, some borrow and some bought locally. These had to be conditioned so some helpers sat and stripped every dead leaf of the plants. Some plants looked well until we put our glasses on, then we notice so many defects. Snip, snip sorry hardly any plant left. While this was happening others were trying to put the main frame work to the stage. The way we think this out in Penicuik over a cuppa does not work at Ingliston so you have to allow for changes. The original table to hold the cup cases with flowers for icing, the cake stand, along with the tea pot containing a mint plant, was very dominate so this was changed to a small occasional table. Every plant had to have its own space, not to crowded. Stand looks good, but we still put forward our suggestions to make the stand look better—change once more. The chair was very dominant, so it was soften with a plant. The screen at back needed a stole draped over to match a pot at front of stand. We were fortunate this year to win not only silver gilt but the overall Innovation Award. There were five entries in this section.

From your Gardening Friends in Penicuik

FURTHER SUCCESS FOR POLMONT SOCIETY

Polmont Horticultural Society extended its run of medal-winning gardens for a ninth consecutive year at *Gardening Scotland 2011*, when the Society’s garden was awarded a Bronze Medal.



Entitled “Rest and Relaxation,” the Society’s garden at the Highland Showground at Ingliston illustrated how the average gardener might lay out an

attractive yet simple garden which would be undemanding to maintain.

Designed by Johnston Mitchell, the Society's External Events Manager, the garden featured a variety of widely-available and inexpensive bedding plants, with several attractive hanging baskets and a couple of planters in which some vegetables were being grown for the kitchen.

The Society's purpose is achieved when the team which has built the garden hears members of the public saying, "We could do that," as they admire the members' handiwork; and it is doubly satisfying to win the judge's approbation as well, a skilled assessment which confirms the sponsors' faith in the Polmont Society's abilities.

Sandy Simpson, the Polmont President, acknowledged the Society's gratitude to their sponsors - Build Center in Grangemouth and Klondyke Garden Centres in Polmont.

"There is no way in which we could come to *Gardening Scotland* to build a garden without our sponsors' unstinting support and co-operation," Sandy said.

"We think of Build Center, Klondyke and our members as a single team, all playing a vital part in our achievements; and I would like to thank everyone for their help and offer them my congratulations on their success."



The garden builders from Polmont HS Society are (left to right): Andrew Cathcart, Janet Anderson, Rena Moore, David Hunter, Jim Wilson, Johnston Mitchell and Tom Sneddon.

BONSAI HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Just over a year ago, The National Bonsai Collection of Scotland's new Pavilion and Garden was opened at Suntrap Gardens to the tune of pipes and with the formalities being carried out by Consul General Tarahara. Little were we to know then that



owners, Oatridge College and the National Trust for Scotland were, within a month, to wipe the smiles off our faces by threatening closure of the Gardens. The Trustees of the Collection however were unanimous in their acceptance of a generous offer by Binny Plants, to become the Collection's new home. The complicated move began in early Spring of this year and was just completed in time for an Opening Day scheduled for 15th August with all the



considerable costs being borne by the Collection's funds and the work carried out by its trustees and voluntary carers.

Again the pipes of Trust Secretary, Roy Smith, again the ceremonial cutting of the tartan ribbon.

And once more, the bonsai of the National Collection were on view to the public. Sincere thanks to all who made their contributions, however small to this successful new establishment.

Now we have great plans for developing Bonsai interest in Scotland at the new base. Small scale sales, workshops, and demonstrations we hope, will attract more trade for our Binny colleagues as well as increased interest and appreciation of our horticultural Art.

Alistair C. Simpson O.R.S., Hon. Life President

GIFFORD HS FLOWER SHOW 20 – 21 AUGUST

The sun shone on Gifford as the Horticultural Society held its 163 show on the village green 20 and 21 August 2011. The entries were down a little this year due to the inclement weather, but there were a surprising number of good vegetable and flower entries and the usual number of entries in the Industrial Section. The Floral Art was beautiful and inventive with many lovely displays.



The prize giving was opened by Lady Penelope Ogilvy who in her speech gave particular attention to the children's section and this year there were two new trophies. The David Grindlay Memorial Trophy awarded for the Blue Ribbon class



of a collection of vegetables which went to Jim Williams of Pathhead and the George Hood Memorial Trophy to be awarded to the winner of the novice section in the East Lothian Beekeepers Association Annual Honey Show hosted by the Gifford Horticultural Flower Show which went to Michael Hill of Dirleton. Another notable winner was a past president Henry Wallace (see photograph) who after a number of years of entering was awarded The John Tait Memorial Trophy for the

most points in the novice section for vegetables and fruit.

There were a wonderful selection of plants for sale by Mac Plants and tasty cream teas in the village hall hosted by the Society on Saturday with the Village Hall Committee on Sunday.

Mary Wallace

WOMEN'S FARM & GARDEN ASSOCIATION & THE WOMEN RETURNERS TO AMENITY GARDENING SCHEME

The Women's Farm and Garden Association (WFGA) is a national charity based in Cirencester that was founded in 1899 and has been pioneering agricultural & horticultural opportunities for women in Britain for over a hundred years. During the First World War, it launched the very successful Women's National Land



Service Corps, which was taken over by the government to become the well-known Women's Land Army. Over the years since then the WFGA has continued to work to similar objectives and in 1993 launched the 'Women Returners to Amenity Gardening Scheme' (WRAGS), having identified the lack of practical horticultural training available for more mature students who wanted to transform their passion for gardening into a profession.

WRAGS has over 125 gardens in the UK on its training register. These range from public gardens, gardens that open under the National Gardens Scheme, gardens under restoration to even royal gardens, or just a private homely plot. Trainees come from a wide variety of previous careers including parenting – and now some men as well as women. The students are in their mid-thirties onwards and very enthusiastic, with some existing gardening knowledge and keen to gain more.

The Scheme is designed to provide them with part-time training in practical horticultural skills in their placement garden over a period of one working year under the capable instruction of a garden owner or head gardener. The Association has appointed a network of Co-ordinators to source and inspect potential gardens and set up

interviews between the owners and trainees. A weekly training allowance of £70.00 is paid to the trainee and a registration fee of £100 for the garden owner and £300 for the trainee is payable. The Co-ordinator monitors the progress of each trainee and visits them in the garden, usually twice during the year. Most go on to work in some aspect of gardening and never look back.

The training is a commitment of time and resources for the owners and their gardeners but they say they enjoy the challenge of nurturing and providing the skills necessary for their trainee to have the confidence to tackle the wider world of horticulture. In return, the garden benefits from a hard-working, committed trainee who tackles all gardening tasks. As some gardens are not in a position to offer certain areas of specialist gardening skills the Association offers an annual programme of workshops around the country. Topics usually include setting up and running a self-employed gardening business and a wide range of horticultural skills. It also includes visits to gardens in UK and abroad. In the last few years a new opportunity, The Christine Ladley Fund, has been set up. It offers financial support to WFGA members for projects they would otherwise be unable to undertake in pursuit of a career in agriculture or horticulture.

I became the first WRAGS trainee in Scotland when I moved to Nairn in 2006. Having retired from a career with the British Council, I decided I wanted to pursue my passion for gardening. With no WFGA infrastructure to help it took me over a year to find a suitable placement in the area but eventually a local garden offered to take part in the Scheme and I spent a wonderful year working there with the gardening staff. Since then I have been doing freelance work in Nairn and helping to raise awareness of WFGA and WRAGS in Scotland. Last year I became the Co-ordinator for Scotland and this spring the first new trainee started work in a garden just outside Edinburgh. I now have another two gardens, one in Edinburgh and one in Lesmahagow, waiting for a trainee and a trainee in St. Andrews waiting for a suitable garden.

Anyone who would like to more information on this unique training scheme can either contact me directly or request an information pack from the Cirencester office on 01285 658339, email on admin@wfga.org.uk , or visit the website www.wfga.org.uk.

Annie Stewart
Nairn & District Gardening Club
an1stewart@care2.com

ARDOCH GARDENING CLUB HELP TO REFURBISH GARDEN BEDS AT BRACO CASTLE GATES.



Ardoch Gardening Club based in Braco, Perthshire has been running for 4 years and has 17 members. They write:

We held a fundraising Plant Sale and garden tool swap in April 2011 raising approximately £200 to help towards the plants for the Braco Castle Gate project in the middle of the village.

Ardoch Development Trust also funded the project and after careful design, consultation, local help and expertise shifting soil and logs and building dry stone walls we were ready to “plant-up”

With perfect weather conditions and a warm sunny day a good number of the members planted up the large bed by the Castle gates, the small walled area nearby and climbers to go up the wall on the right of the entrance.

A very large quantity of Council compost was delivered to the site and was used for both planting and as top mulch. There was plenty left over for many locals to help themselves to the remaining pile, which was an added community bonus.



With the weather not being so kind since April we now have to keep on top of the weeds!

We made a special effort with this at the end of July when the village hosted the Braco Show.

We think the end result is very pleasing and we do hope that everyone else in the village and all our visitors, find it the same. In time it will mature, fill out and look even better.

The committee and members are now considering a new project for 2012.

Marilyn Henderson, club secretary.

THE CALEY GOES TO CORNWALL!

I am no stranger to Cornwall, but visiting with gardens in mind was a first for me. Some 50 Caley members flew South at the beginning of July and indulged their passion for plants and gardening with visits to gardens of differing passions, styles and sizes – very large, large and small.

No sooner were we off the plane than we stopped to visit our first garden.

Trelissick is a National Trust garden – a 25



acre garden with 376 acres of adjoining parkland. The garden and estate have truly panoramic views down the Fal estuary towards Falmouth and the sea. The garden has large collections of rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias, but at the time of our visit the plants that made the most impact were the strikingly blue hydrangeas.

On our first full day we had three gardens to visit Tremough (the gardens at the University campus where we were staying), Trevarno Estate, near Helston, and Bosvigo House, Truro.

Tremough House with its 75 acre site had been an 18th Century manor house then convent school before becoming part of a university campus. The restoration and preservation of the old, alongside the demands of the ongoing university development, make for some challenging work for the team of gardeners. Trevarno on the other hand is a 750 estate, although the garden area was more compact at 70 acres with formal, informal, and

woodland gardens and large and diverse collections of plants. Again some stunning blue hydrangeas. How I would have loved to be there in spring to see the extensive display of daffodils. I think members of the Caley allotment team were counting their blessings that they do not have to net the Caley allotment to keep out peacocks as well as rabbits! A delightful visit with something of interest for everyone – including a remarkable national museum of gardening – which would have been worth a visit without seeing the garden.

Enthused and energised we set off for Truro and Bosvigo. A garden that was much easier to relate to on a personal level because it is a garden enthusiast's own garden. The owners have effectively created a series of gardens within a garden and although the overall size is around 2 acres you always had the sense of being in a small garden. Each of the small gardens is unique and complete in its own right and could easily stand alone. Again there was a mix of formal and informal with different gardens for different colour combinations, I could almost envisage the owner having painted the garden before she had even planted it.

The following day we headed off to explore (find) the Lost Gardens of Heligan and then on to Pinetum Park. Heligan is a very large estate at some 1,000 acres. These gardens are no longer lost but are definitely worth a visit. We had the benefit of an excellent guide who talked us through in such an engaging manner we hung on every word. There was so much to see, different garden areas with different characters and styles – I particularly liked the productive area (flowers and vegetables) in the extensive walled gardens. I will go again.

Pinetum Park, 30 acres of parkland and gardens. Perhaps best described as a horticulturalists' garden. You could see how the garden had developed, around what was not a grand house but a modest bungalow, and how the previous owners passion for plants had led the development of the garden. I particularly liked the woodland walk. This visit, as with many others during the week, was

a visit when we benefited from the energy and enthusiasm of the local gardeners.

The next day was taken up with the Eden project – a much more interesting visit, even from a gardening perspective, than I had expected. But the following day was our last, with visits to gardens on the Roseland Peninsula. Lamorran House is a four-acre hillside garden. Water, palms and other sub-tropical plants alongside rhododendrons and azaleas dominate this garden with a meandering path down through the garden.

Our final garden was pure delight, Poppy Cottage Garden. This was the smallest garden we visited. It was created, loved and cared for by two ‘plantsmen’. They clearly love plants and their garden was a sheer joy to visit. The original garden was long and thin at 12’ x 200’ but in 2003 they bought part of the field next door and have been able to expand the garden. They have turned both the original derelict site and the field area into a garden that is truly inspirational. Tina was so energetic, informative and enthusiastic and Dave, the other half of this gardening duo, also makes a great cakes!

We left Cornwall determined to come again.

Pam Whittle – President RCHS – ‘The Caley’

HELENSBURGH & GARELOCH HS sent us some pictures from their Horticultural Show held in Victoria Hall, Helensburgh on 27th August 2011. It was, from all reports a very successful occasion, though inevitably the weather affected some of the 500 entries. They actually had an entry from two sisters aged three and two. Nothing like starting young.



SUNTRAP - AFTER BLACK CLOUDS, A RAY OF HOPE

The Save Our Suntrap (SOS) Group is working tirelessly to secure and continue the garden as a public resource. We passionately believe that Suntrap is a very special place which can offer opportunities to many people in different ways; where therapeutic gardening, horticultural education and tranquil green space can be supported by finance generated by other projects.

Although we were very disappointed when, at the end of June, the Oatridge Board turned down our request to lease the garden and persisted in their plan to sell the part of the property which is owned by the College, SOS is continuing negotiations with the NTS and Oatridge College. The NTS has stated that it is prepared to consider an offer and robust business plan which demonstrates sustainability. Both owner organisations have decided to market their properties on the basis of one house within a garden rather than seeking planning permission for more. This may be the result of the local, political and press campaign generated by SOS but may also reflect the downturn in the market. SOS is actively seeking sponsorship to buy the property for a charitable Trust of which Friends of Suntrap would be part.

We need more time to present our proposals to various charitable foundations and are in a critical period for negotiation. SOS has been lucky in recruiting help from others who have experience in charity finances, governance and sustainable projects. Consultants are helping to write proposals and draft plans of the garden. NTS has given SOS a copy of the original valuation for the whole site, with consent, which was given to NTS in December 2010. In order to obtain a more accurate view of the valuation and the repairs necessary to the buildings on the property, the services of a firm of surveyors have been engaged and they are devising a vision for the future which includes the desires of SOS and the Friends of Suntrap, backed up by costing and income generating schemes. As a voluntary group, it has taken time to reach this point, and we are

under huge pressure from the owners to produce this within a short time scale (September) but we are approaching this positively.

SOS has proposed the property to Historic Scotland for Listing. We deem Millbuies to be a unique property with so many original and unusual features which were ecological long before “green thinking” was popular. Miles Glendinning, an eminent architect who has written about Millbuies, “the house that laughs at the weather” in his book on twentieth century architecture has written in support of this plan. The HS Inspector has visited with the support of NTS and Oatridge and we are awaiting her assessment. We have seen photographs of George Boyd Anderson in his family home with furnishings and suggest that, with some effort and finance, Millbuies could be restored as a living museum to attract visitors to the garden.

We are not short of ideas but we do need support and help if we are to achieve the vision. We have plans to increase the therapeutic role of the garden to offer help not only to those with learning difficulties but to those recovering from various health problems such as cancer and post trauma stress disorder. Another aim is to develop its use by arts and photography groups while retaining the eco functions in classes in grow your own and healthy eating. Imagine a busy Hub restaurant and information centre at the top of the garden.

Practical help in keeping the garden vibrant and open to the public is invaluable. We have an energetic number of volunteers but we would like to recruit more.

Our events have served both to raise awareness and cash to support the campaign. Open Day was attended by a record number of people and a Midsummer evening with music, poetry and garden tours was very successful. On two occasions, SOS has run a stall at the Farmers’ Market at Juniper Green. A group of 70 pupils from Merchiston Castle came to help in July. It was lovely to hear the garden ring with laughter and they want to return! Ortak jewellery company chose Suntrap as the setting for their catalogue and have

promised help with publicity. Our last information evening on 21 August engendered considerable interest from the local community who are fiercely opposed to closure of the garden. Many visitors and members of the community have signed a petition.

We are continuing to canvass politicians many of whom have visited and are very supportive of our plans. We intend to seek more press coverage. A relative of George Boyd Anderson has visited the garden and pledged her support. She has written to the owners and politicians and is very anxious that the garden is not lost.

Although we were unhappy about the decision to sell, we believe we can move to a very positive future. This could be a wonderful opportunity for Suntrap to develop and continue as a very special place, a community garden for the people of Scotland in accordance with the wishes of George Boyd Anderson. There could be a rosy dawn rather than a sunset at Suntrap.

Isobel Lodge Chair of SOS and Secretary of Friends of Suntrap

SGF NEWSLETTER

NEXT ISSUE – NOVEMBER DEADLINE

Our newsletter is gaining in readership and popularity. Thank you for your articles, and for reading it. Let's keep up the good work.

Just to remind you That the next issue "Winter" will be published at the beginning of December, so please send me your news, ideas, observations by the middle of November.

I will send round the usual reminder by email, which functions very well, except that one third of our members has not given an email contact address. Please review the email contact you have given us and if you need to update it, let our Membership Secretary, Mike Rossi, know. Any queries please to

membership@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Christopher Davies

ANN'S DIARY

September in the garden - Choosing bulbs for Early Spring interest

Autumn tints are slowly creeping into our gardens and many of our late summer flowering plants are in their final flush of flower – so what's next? Winter and early Spring can be long dreary months in the garden if we don't plan for flower and a bit of colour. 'Plant Bulbs Now for Spring' the garden centres tell us and with a bit of careful planning we can use bulbs to give very early interest. Choose more unusual varieties of crocus, daffodils and tulips to really extend the season;

- *Crocus ancyriensis*, *C. biflorus*, *C. chrysanthus*, *C. sieberi*. All of these species type crocus flower as early as February.
- *Narcissus cyclamineus* 'Kaydee', 'Little Witch', 'February Gold' and 'February Silver' and *Narcissus* 'Rip Van Winkle'. These daffodils all flower in late February and early March.
- Many species type tulips tend to flower much earlier than their taller counterparts and a number of these have the added bonus of producing multi stemmed flowers, March flowering types include; *Tulipa bakeri* 'Lilac Wonder', *T. polychroma*, *T. sylvestris*, *T. turkestanica*, *T. wilsoniana*.

Other more unusual bulbs all flowering in March include;

- *Anemone blanda* 'White Splendour' or 'Pink Star'.
- *Chionodoxa forbesii*, *luciliae* and *sardensis*.
- *Muscari azureum*, *Puschkinia libanotica*, *Scilla* 'Spring Beauty'.

Of course Winter Aconites and Snowdrops are the real heralds of the Spring bulb world but both of these are best bought and planted in the Spring when they are in the 'Green', in other words when they are in leaf and growing.

Whichever bulbs you choose to buy and plant make sure that you follow planting instructions carefully, if you don't you may find that your bulbs do not perform well after the first year. Some bulbs have very particular planting requirements;

- Daffodils should always be planted at three times the depth of the bulb – if you plant them too shallow they will refuse to flower in subsequent years.
- Tulips should be planted 2-3 times their depth and always in a part of the garden where they will get lots of baking in summer sun. The heat will encourage future flowering.
- Crocus corms should be planted 2-5cm deep, any deeper and the flowers will refuse to reappear.

Garden Centres and DIY outlets have a great range of bulbs (and coffee and cakes!) available at the moment but for the really unusual types try one of the specialist mail order companies on the internet such as www.jparkers.co.uk or www.dejager.co.uk .

October in the garden – Things to do now.

I've been avoiding my own garden for the last couple of weeks because of the weather and am now starting to feel pretty guilty about it, especially when the Garlic bulbs look at me every time I venture into the shed. Even at this 'coming to an end' time of the gardening year some things really need to be done now otherwise plants will suffer and next year's results won't be up to scratch. So on with the woollies, lay down the telly remote, pour a brandy for later and get out there;

- Garlic bulbs – last chance to plant them really is October. Make sure you buy them for planting, not for eating as these are usually Mediterranean varieties. Split into single cloves and plant them 6" apart, 1" deep. They really need the cold weather of winter to bulk up the new bulbs, harvest next autumn.

- Plant up your winter containers. Try planting fewer pots with more in them for real effect, for example plant 3 different types of bulbs; daffy's at 6" deep, tulips at 4" and crocus at 2" with your normal pansies etc. on top – you will get a tremendous display that last for the whole spring in this way. If you have a problem with squirrels pinching your bulbs try finishing the pot off with a 2" deep mulch of gravel, that should stop them digging!
- In the veggie plot; tidy up asparagus by cutting the fronds down to ground level now, then cover with a good 2-3" deep mulch of compost.
- When getting rid of your old pea and bean plants just cut them down to ground level and leave the roots to rot down over winter, they contain a good amount of nitrogen that will come in handy for next year's plantings.
- Shrubs that put a lot of top growth on each year such as Lavatera should be cut down by about a 1/3 soon.... Leave them a while if they are still in flower. This pruning simply stops them getting wind rock over the winter, especially if they are in an exposed place, their main prune should not take place until springtime.
- Start collecting leaves as they fall, simply stick them into black bags that have been punctured with a garden fork, tie the top of the bag when full and hide them behind the shed. Forget about them for at least a year and when you do go back and open them you should find excellent leaf mould to use as great organic mulch around the garden.

Once you have completed all of the above you should feel fairly virtuous and may now return indoors for that brandy!

Ann Burns

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

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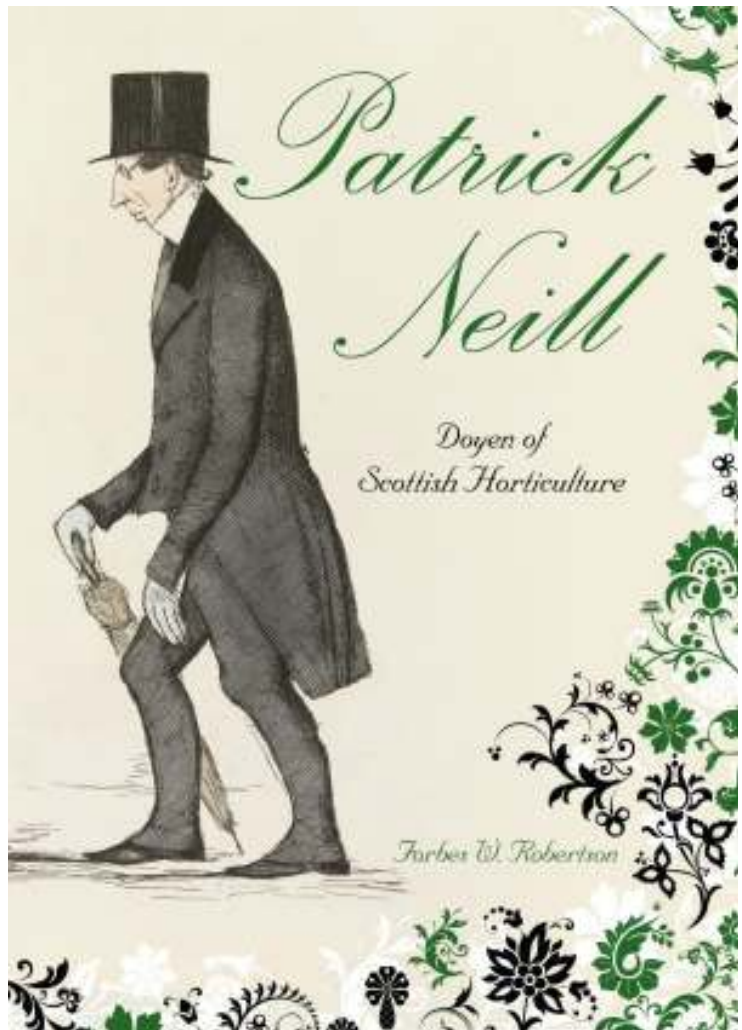
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“WHAT’S ON:” This feature is provided for the interest and convenience of members. The information is given in good faith, depending on the accuracy of those who supplied it. In the event of your acting on it, we suggest you double-check. The events are arranged in datal order.

SOCIETY	EVENT	VENUE	DATE
Biggar Horticultural Society	Annual Show of Flowers, Veg & Industrial	Municipal Hall, Biggar	3rd Sept 1.39 - 4pm
Dollar	Flower Show & Craft Exhibition	Burnside Hall Dollar	3rd Sept
Kilmalcolm Horticultural Society	Annual Flower Show	New Community Centre	3rd Sept
Paisley Florist Society and Garden Club	Annual Show	St Mirin's Cathedral Halls	3rd Sept
Polmont Horticultural Society	Annual Show	Polmont Sports Centre	03-Sep
Barrhead & District Horticultural Society	autumn Show & Coffee Morning	South & Levern Church Hall. Barrhead	3rd Sept (to be confirmed)
Livingston and District Horticultural Society	Annual Flower Show	Howden Park Centre, Livingston	3rd Sept
Penicuik Horticultural Society	Autumn Show	Ladywood Leisure Centre, Penicuik	3rd Sept 1-4.30pm
East Lothian Horticultural Society	Annual Show	Corn Exchange, Haddington	3rd Sept
Dalgety Bay Horticultural Society	Annual Show	Community Centre Dalgety Bay	3rd Sept
Kirkintilloch Horticultural Society	Annual Flower Show	St Mary's Parish Church Hall	3rd Sept
Pathhead & District Horticultural Society	Annual Show	Pathhead Community Hall	Sat 3rd Sept
Polmont Horticultural Society	Annual Show	Sports Centre, Polmont, Schedules from W. Anderson , Forest View, Polmont, FK2 0UL	3rd Sept
Buckie & District Flower Show	Flower Show	Fishermens Hall, Buckie	3rd Sept
Central Scotland Fuchsia Society	B.F.S. Show	Linlithgow P.S.	4th Sept
Scottish Bonsai Association	National Exhibition	Kibble Palace, Glasgow	4th September
Cowdenbeath & District Horticultural Society	Annual Flower Show	Trinity Church, Sinclair Ave	10th & 11th Sept
East Kilbride Horticultural Society	Annual Flower show		10th Sept
Fenwick Church Garde Club	Annual Produce & Flower Show	Fenwick Church Hall	18th Aug, 7.30pm
Central Scotland Fuchsia Society	C.S.F.S. Show	Greenpark Centre Polmont	11th Sept

Helensburgh & Gareloch Horticultural Society	Bulb Sale	United Reform Church Hall	17th Sept 10am
Caledonian Bonsai Society	Fife Flower Show	Dobbies Garden Centre, Dunfermline	17th & 18th Sept
Dalkeith Horticultural Society	Annual Flower Show	Dalkeith Campus	17th 1pm-4.30pm & 18th Sept 12noon -4.30pm
South East Scotland Fuchsia Society	Annual Show	Dalkeith High School	17th & 18th Sept
Grangemouth Horticultural Society	Annual Open Show	Grangemouth Town Hall	24-Sep
St Andrews' Gardeners' Club	Annual Show & Coffee Morning	Town Hall, St Andrews	24th Sept 10am - 4pm
Monklands Dahlia Society	Late Show	Drumpellier Country Park, Coatbridge	1st Oct
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	SRGC Travelling Speaker, New Zealand		8th Oct
Clackmannanshire Horticultural Society	Clackmannanshire County Show	Devondale Hall, Tillicoultry	10th Oct
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	An Evening with Willie Duncan	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	13th Oct
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	Davie Sharp, Rock Garden Construction		14th Oct
Grangemouth Horticultural Society	Late Chrysanthemum Show	Grangemouth Community Unit	23-Oct
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Autumn Show	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	29th Oct
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Let's Cook (Sarah Mellersh)	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	10th Nov
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	Liz Mills & Anne Chambers, Arizaemas		11th Nov
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Floral Art (Alyson Christie)	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	8th Dec
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	Malcolm McGregor, Saxifrages		9th Dec

South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	AGM and Photo Competition		13th Jan 2012
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Cairn O'Mor Winery	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	9th Feb 2012
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	Tony Rymer, North America-Rockies & Pacific NW		10th Feb 2012
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Crafts Evening	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	8th March 2012
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	Peter Foley, Alpines to Grow, some plants for sale		10th march 2012
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Annual Plants	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	12th April 2012
South West Scotland Rock Garden Group	Ken Redshaw, Pleiones & Their Cultivation		14th April 2012
Leuchars & District Horticultural Society	Herbs	Burnside Hall Ballmullo	10th May 2012
Hurlford Garden Club	Annual Flower Show	Hurlford Community Centre	19th Aug 2012
Kilmalcolm Horticultural Society	Replanting of Garden at the Cross		spring 2012

YOUR COUNCIL

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