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Scottish Gardeners' Forum Newsletter

PROMOTING SCOTLAND'S GARDEN CLUBS

Wreath Making Workshop at Dollar, page 4

Spring 2024 Vol 22: Issue 1

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Letter from the Chair

Well, here we are at the start of another gardening year and what a stormy start it has been! I have luckily survived unscathed and my greenhouse is still intact but I know many who have not been so fortunate. My friend in Keswick sent a sad WhatsApp photo of her greenhouse which has been flattened by the wind.

Although it is still cold, I have been planning ahead for the Spring, I found a clove of garlic in the cupboard which was sprouting and decided to try planting the cloves in pots. They are doing well and will go out in the garden soon. I have potatoes chitting on the kitchen windowsill and my seeds are ready for sowing in the greenhouse when the bulbs go outside. The Tulips purchased at the Malvern show last September are starting to show their green spikes, as are the ones given as a birthday gift by my daughter. They will still need a little protection from the worst of the weather but should make a lovely display in the coming weeks. I am particularly interested in seeing the variety named Peppermint Stick – I hope they live up to expectations.

As the weather improves, hopefully, our thoughts will turn to the year ahead and our plans for our local and national gardening shows. As in previous years we would encourage our member clubs to try to attract and support younger gardeners in their community to take part in growing or showing. This can happen in a variety of ways e.g. by supporting local schools or groups to grow flowers or vegetables for exhibit at your show. Or it can be helping with improving the local environment, by reviving a neglected area of ground by weeding and sowing flowers. You could also try assisting with entries to the Pallet and Planter Challenge to be held once again at Scone Palace Garden Fair. If you know of any interested groups, please pass on their details to us and we will make contact with them. We are keen to support these efforts by providing small grants for member clubs to help with the cost. Details and an application form are available on the website or by contacting us directly.

We would also like to hear from any club members who would be willing to join the Council, particularly someone

bulbs leaving the leaves intact.

- Deciduous grasses such as Miscanthus and Calamagrostis: cut back to within a couple of inches of ground level, use an old bread knife to split the clump then replant.
- Hostas have a solid fleshy crown between the buds and the roots which is best cut with a sharp spade or knife.
- Many mat–forming perennials with overground stolons such as Persicaria affinis or Stachys byzantina will simply pull apart once the overground stems are cut with secateurs.
- Water Lilies: lift the whole plant from the pond. Using a sharp knife cut through the rhizomes, retaining 10 to 15cm long sections with outward facing buds and trim the roots to around 15cm length. Replant the sections, one per 20cm pond basket, using aquatic compost.

When you have done all the work above you are likely to have many small bits of plants left over – perfect for potting into multi-purpose compost, labelled and grown on for a few weeks in a bit of shelter. These will make a great addition to the sale table at your next Garden Club meeting.

Remember too that we should support our Scottish Plant Growers and make sure you visit your local nurseries for one or two new herbaceous beauties each year. We have some fantastic growers and breeders on our doorstep and you can always be assured that a Scottish grown plant is going to thrive in your garden.

Ann Burns

Here Ann is being presented with the Dr Andrew Duncan Medal for her contribution to Horticultural Education, with George Anderson then President of the Caley

Time to get some Spring in your step

Herbaceous Division

The warmer weather encourages the spring flowering bulbs out, the tree buds start to fatten up and the winter-lazy amongst are once again champing at the bit to get out and get on in the garden.

During last summer we realised just how overgrown and scruffy the main herbaceous planting in the garden was looking – sorting it out is a job that we have earmarked for this spring. The end of March / beginning of April is the time when herbaceous perennials start into their most vigorous growth and is therefore the best time for lifting and splitting those plants as they are quite literally desperate to grow. So why and how do we divide these plants?

Herbaceous plants may need divided when their growth becomes congested; the centre of the plant may even die out (the 'polo mint' effect) as the plant gets older. Aster and Helenium, for example, should be split every three years to keep them healthy. Alternatively we may choose to divide clumps simply because we want more plants. Many herbaceous plants will thrive for years with no division at all, for example, Hosta and Geranium.

So identify the plants that you want to work with, and:

- Cut back any dead foliage or flower left over from last year close to the ground, taking care not to damage any new shoots and buds. Scissors make short work of slimy dead foliage, easier than secateurs for this job.
- Using a spade, lift the whole plant from the ground and lay it onto a firm surface. Use an old sheet if you're working on the patio and you'll have much less tidying up to do at the end.
- Decide how many new plants you want to produce and what size these should be. If you only need a few plants the sections can be quite large; smaller pieces when split must have at least one bud and some root attached.
- Divide plants using a sharp spade, carefully placed between the buds, or use an old bread knife to cut through the plant on smaller more delicate specimens. Be very careful if you choose to use the back to back two fork method ,as this can easily damage buds (not to mention the gardener). Discard the oldest central part of the plant.
- Replant new divisions in the garden to the same depth as that from which you lifted them, or put them aside for potting up later. Avoid replanting any plant in the same space it was lifted from. Plant elsewhere in the bed and you will produce a much healthier plant.
- Always reinvigorate the soil where you are replanting with home-made compost or some well-rotted manure or leaf mould. Add a small handful of general slow release fertiliser, such as bone meal, around the newly divided plant. It might sound mad but even in damp weather you should water in your newly replanted clumps well, as the water will help to settle the soil in close to the roots.

Some examples:

- Snowdrops: Lift the whole plant, gently pull the bulbs apart with your hands, replant clumps of around five

with an interest in taking over the role of Treasurer from Andrea McDowall. Andrea gave notice of her intention to resign from the position as Treasurer in November 2023 and we are anxious to have a replacement in position as soon as possible. We have also been without a Secretary since Caroline Mathias took up a new Head Gardener job which involved relocation. We would be delighted to hear of anyone willing to help and can provide further details to prospective candidates.

Scottish Gardeners Forum, in association with The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society (The Caley) will be looking after the plant crèche at Scone Palace this year. If you are attending the show and would like to offer help with the crèche or the SGF stand for an hour or so on one of the days, please let us know. This is a great opportunity to meet other enthusiastic gardeners and spread the word about both organisations. We would be very

Tulipa Peppermint Stick

pleased to hear from you on any of the matters above.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you well with your gardening plans and club activities and look forward to meeting you during the summer.

Kathryn Pitts
chair@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

SGF Winter Gathering Saturday 9th November

Scottish Gardeners' Forum would like to invite you to our Winter Gathering.

This is an exciting new event, which will replace our usual Annual General Meeting and this year will be held at the invitation of Busby and Clarkston Horticultural Society, in the Clarkston Halls near Glasgow. The venue has been recently renovated and is fully accessible with parking and good links to public transport.

We have invited some interesting local speakers and will be joined by Andrew Hinson, Head Gardener at Greenbank Garden; Chelsea Lowe, Head Gardener at Horatio's Garden, and M.T. O'Donnell editor of the ***Scotland Grows Magazine***. The programme for the day will include Lunch and refreshments, a Raffle and a Pot Plant competition as well as the usual update of SGF activities and business.

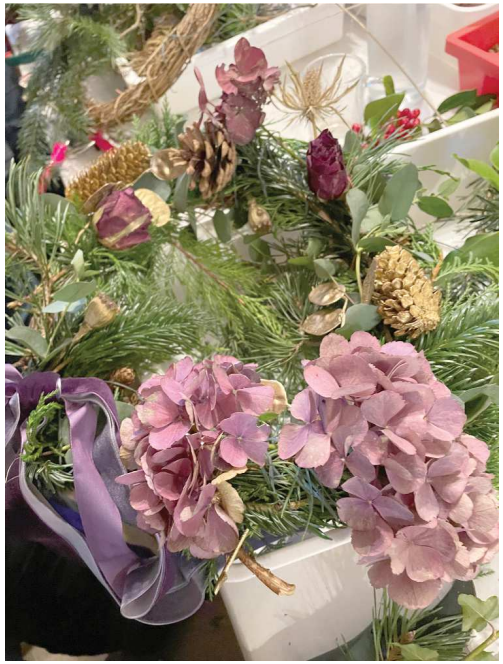
The date of the Gathering is **Saturday 9th November.**

Full details of cost and a booking form will be available in the Summer Newsletter and on the website. We hope that you will be able to join us for what promises to be a most enjoyable day.

Kathryn Pitts

Dollar Horticultural and Gardening Club with Dollar in Bloom

We ran a Christmas wreath making class in December, with foliage coming from members' gardens and ribbons and decorations searched out from craft stocks. The event was very popular so we will hope to repeat this on a larger scale at the end of the year.



Small pots of iris reticulata were once again potted and sold, although development of the bulbs was less successful than last year, the vagaries of gardening!

Our recent AGM saw some discussion of the annual Flower Show which will be held in September. We plan to divide the duties of the show manager between several committee members in order to lessen what can be a considerable load on one individual. We will shortly be planning this year's show schedule, looking at previous year's entries and their popularity and successes.

A recent community event in Dollar allowed all the town's clubs and organisations to showcase their activities; it provided a great opportunity to recruit new volunteers to our group.

We are all looking forward to spending more time in our gardens as the weather and day length improves.

Fiona Roe

Some examples of wreaths and useful materials

Stewarton Gardening Club

All the birds are beginning to proclaim their territories and the Rooks and Jackdaws to noisily advertise their presence in the garden conifer trees.

The Spring season is slow to start but a fantastic show of snowdrops, crocus and daffodils lift the spirits. The lengthening days give us hope of a good year to come as we sow seeds in propagators and trays on the windowsills with great anticipation. As February passed into March we had bright sunshine one moment and the next we were sheltering from hail and snow showers.

Sugar Flowers

While many in warmer and milder areas have been prepared the vegetable plots and flower beds, it is too early in some areas of Scotland to plant out any tender plants. The frost has already damaged the new tender shoots of herbaceous shrubs.

At Stewarton Gardening Club members are all busy sowing annuals and transplanting in preparation for the annual Plant Sale and Coffee Morning in May.

Hazel Mulberry
Club Secretary

Scotland Grows is Calling all Clubs

Would you like to publicise the history and achievements of your club or society? ***Scotland Grows***, the online magazine for Scottish Gardeners, would be interested in hearing from you. Speaking to M.T. O'Donnell, Editor of the magazine, I learned that she would like to include a regular feature about some of the horticultural groups in Scotland.

Recently, Busby and Clarkston commemorated their 75th Anniversary there. It would be fascinating to find out if there are any clubs with longer histories or unusual stories to tell. You could include details of when and where you meet, dates of shows and how to join in.

Check out back copies of the magazine at the ***Scotland Grows*** website where there are also details of their Podcasts and the Readers' Facebook page – a space where likeminded gardeners from far and wide share their growing tips.

scotlandgrowsmagazine.com

Get in touch with M.T. O'Donnell at

mail@scotlandgrowsmagazine.com

she will be delighted to hear from you.

Kathryn Pitts

Scotland's Gardens Scheme 2024 Season

2024 guidebook launch

Scotland's Gardens Scheme is delighted to launch their 2024 guidebook, your essential guide to exploring secret gardens and hidden gems open for charity across Scotland this year. With over 50 new gardens opening their garden gates with Scotland's Gardens Scheme for the first time in 2024, discover a unique garden to visit this season. The 2024 guidebook is available to order via scotlandsgardens.org with all sales supporting Scotland's Gardens Scheme and their core charity partners;

Maggie's, Perennial and **QNIS.**

Plan your garden visit online

With over 450 garden openings to explore, the Scotland's Gardens Scheme website is the perfect place to discover a garden opening near you in 2024. Looking to visit a garden on a specific date or over a weekend? Select the dates from the advanced search icon menu, to create a tailored list of gardens open to visit, for you or your group at a desired time. The Scotland's Gardens Scheme website homepage has a number of useful features, including Gardens open today – perfect for planning a last-minute visit on the go!

scotlandsgardens.org/

Gardens open by arrangement

Scotland's Gardens Scheme has hundreds of beautiful gardens where you can get in touch with the garden owners directly to book a special visit. Booking a visit is easy: you can browse the SGS website or their 2024 guidebook and look for 'by arrangement' gardens in the opening details for each garden listing.

Contact details or booking links are also available in the garden listings. Why not get in touch to book a private visit today?

Cattanach Funds for Training

Scotland's Gardens Cattanach Fund is a small grant scheme, for people working or training in horticulture in Scotland. The fund should be used for personal and professional development training relating to horticulture, with a maximum award level of £1,500 (average award anticipated £750). This bursary was made possible by the generous bequest of Mr Albert Cattanach, a regular visitor of SGS' open gardens.

scotlandsgardens.org/bursaries/

Eligibility

- * Open to horticulturists of all ages over 16, living and working in Scotland
- * Examples of eligible projects include courses, study tours, training and, exceptionally, overseas study tours
- * Funds will not cover tools and equipment unless directly related to the delivery of a specific course.

Sign Up to Keep in Touch!

Scottish Gardeners' Forum would like to improve the quality of its communication with the gardening community it serves. An e-Newsletter is starting, which will go out monthly to keep you up-to-date with everything that is happening.

Your name and address will be held securely, only for this purpose. No-one else will see that you are getting the e-Newsletter. You will be able to Unsubscribe at any time.

If you would like to subscribe, then please fill up the form at:

http://eepurl.com/iKhMbo

The sign-up can also be found at:

www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk/membership/members-only/

Please send me news items and photos for inclusion in it.

Alison Murison
Print and Digital Editor
editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Website and Event Updates

Please keep our **Events List** up-to-date.

Send to Mike Rossi at

membership@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

AND to Alison Murison at

editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

so that the list at

www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk/events/

includes all of your Events

If you find any lost links or errors on the website, do let me know so that I can correct it.

Alison Murison
Website Editor
editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

SGF Pallet Garden and Planter Challenge 2024

Scone Palace Garden Fair, Friday 31st May & Saturday 1st June

How nice to be getting into another growing season after the stormy winter that we've had in all parts of Scotland.

Some readers will have enjoyed attending last year's Garden Fair at Scone Palace, ably organised by head gardener Brian Cunningham and his colleagues. Brian is also our honorary Vice President.

The time has come around to prepare for this year's Pallet Garden and Planter Challenge which the SGF will be running at the Fair in the magnificent Palace grounds.

The Pallet Garden and Planter Challenge encourages schools, clubs and community groups to create and display attractive living plant exhibits with a theme of their own choice. It is a very popular feature at the Garden Fair and receives a lot of well-deserved attention.

We'd love to see all our member clubs taking part in the Challenge and encouraging other groups and schools in their locality to do likewise. Detailed requirements for entries and application forms are published on the SGF website. Member organisations can apply to the SGF for small grants to assist their nearby schools and youth groups to put together entries and transport them to Scone Palace for display.

A visit to the Garden Fair is highly recommended. Please check out the Scone Palace website for more information.

www.scone-palace.co.uk

Make your way to the SGF gazebo where we'd love you to drop in for a chat as you go round the many attractive stalls, and tempting displays of plants for sale. Better still, why not volunteer to spend a short while in attendance at our gazebo representing the SGF, meeting fellow members and encouraging newcomers to join our organisation? If you'd like to do this, please contact:

Tom Campbell 07962 020397
brighterbervie@hotmail.com

to make arrangements.

We'll be looking out for you at Scone Palace on 31st May and 1st June, meanwhile happy gardening!

Tom Campbell

Pallets display at the Garden Fair 2023

My Favourite Plant

There are several plants that I love to have in my garden, each for a different reason across the seasons. However, my favourite would have to be Hardy Geraniums or Cranesbills. You can pretty much find a Cranesbill to suit most areas and types of garden, be it in shade, sun and soil type. They are pretty robust, offering colour from spring through to early winter. They just keep on giving year upon year and are good for pollinators. Their foliage offers an endless variety of colours from brown to gray-green to variegated, as well as the architectural interest of their shapes. Then, rising above the foliage come the flowers in a variety shades from blues, purples, pinks to white. Unlike more showy blossoms in the garden, these are more the vital supporting cast, but they are so interesting in their own right.

In my own garden I have a few varieties and colours. However, it would be Geranium phaeum 'Album' (pictured) which is a favourite. The delicate thumb-sized, slightly reflexed flowers appear in the Spring and it repeat-flowers. I simply love the way it so delicately comes up through the other plantings and offers a vibrant white that lifts everything. In some ways they can be overlooked, as it takes you to slow down and look closer to notice the beauty and detail of the flowers and leaves and appreciate how it adds to the whole border.

Fyfe Blair
The Caim at Luthermuir

Dalkeith HS

Dalkeith Horticultural Society have reluctantly had to move their Show venue from Dalkeith School Campus due to 100% increase in the hourly rate. The school now also requires a £28 per hour fee for someone to supervise us using the kitchen to make tea and put cakes and biscuits on plates.

We will now be in **St John's & King's Park Church, Eskbank Road** (a continuation of the High Street), Dalkeith, central to the town. Parking is in Morrison's Supermarket.

I have been Secretary to the Society for over 30 years and now feel it is time to retire, so after May this year, we will hopefully find another Secretary to keep the Society going.

Our earliest record of the Society was in the 1870's when talk of starting up a Horticultural Society was advertised.

Our Show Schedule is at:

https://tinyurl.com/3mn7hjzs

Gladys Hardwick
Secretary

Musselburgh Horticultural Society

In 2022 post-Covid, Musselburgh Flower Show again opened its doors but to a very different type of Show – no longer the massive major Flower Show that drew exhibitors from all over. In an effort to keep our Flower Show viable it was changed to a local family event where inexperienced amateurs could showcase what they have managed to grow, make & bake. No longer can Flower Shows rely on a large pool of volunteers prepared to support the serious hobbyists.

In 2023 MHS were delighted to see so many local gardeners presenting the fruits (and flowers) of their gardening adventures. Our show is accessible and fun, a Community Show that offers an afternoon of entertainment for all the family. We have an extensive range of Children's classes for all ages, to encourage an interest in growing and crafts.

The MHS Annual Flower Show actively discourages experienced growers from showing their flowers, vegetables & fruit to give novice gardeners the best chance of a prize. We do not look for the WOW! factor of perfect huge blooms, king size cabbages etc. Our show is about community and fun, a chance to show off something that you are proud of growing or making in the last year.

Please come along and support our local community. Musselburgh Community Flower Show, **Saturday 17th August 2024 1–4pm**. St Michaels Church hall. Dalrymple Loan, Musselburgh. EH21 7DH

Show Schedules will be provided to MHS members in late April and will be available from the following venues in Musselburgh:

- * Strawberry Corner Garden Centre
- * The Brunton Hall
- * Blueberry Gifts
- * Musselburgh Library
- * The Fisherrow Centre on South Street

or by emailing

musselburghhorticulturalsociety@hotmail.com

Eve Dickinson
President
Musselburgh Horticultural Society

Society	Event	Venue	Date
Mearns HS	77th Annual Spring Show	The Fairweather Hall	March 12th 2024, 7.30-9.30pm
Alness HS	Spring Show, Exhibits to be placed between	Ardross Alness Bowling Club	March 23rd, 1-3pm
Royal Caledonoan HS	Spring Bulb Show	McHattie Room at Saughton Park.	April 6th,12-5pm, 7th 1am0-4pm
Sky Gardening Society	Spring Flower Show	Broadford Village Hall	April 6th, 1.30pm
Royal HS of Perthshire	Second Spring Flower Festival more info at rhsofperthshire@gmail.com	Bridge of Earn Institute Station Road, Bridge of Earn PH2 9EA.	April 20th
Musselburgh HS	Annual Plant Sale	St Michael's Church Hall, 21 Dalrymple Loan, Musselburgh EH21 7DH	May 4th, 10.30am–12.00noon
Royal Caledonian HS	Auricula & Primula Show	Saughton Park in Edinburgh	May 5th, 12.05pm–3.45pm
Pathhead & District HS	Plant Sale & Coffeee Morning	Callander Sports Pavilion, Pathhead	May 11th, 10am till 12noon
Stewarton GC	Plant Sale & Coffeee Morning	Knox Church Hall Stewarton	May 11th
Cupar Flower Show	Coffee Morning & Plant Sale	Corn Exchange Cupar	May 11th 9.30–11.30am
Baldernock GC	Plant/ Gardening Bric-a-brac sale along with afternoon tea and coffee	Baljaffray Church Hall, Bearsden, Glasgow	May 11th from 1pm
Mauchline H & GS	Coffee Morning and hopefully include a plant sale	The Church Hall, Mauchline	May 18th
Royal Caledonian HS	Meconopsis Day (in conjunction with the Meconopsis Group)	Saughton Park, Edinburgh	May 18th, 11am–4pm
Royal Caledonian HS	Cacti and Succulent Show	Saughton Park, Edinburgh	June 9th
Bridge of Weir Gardening Club	Bridge of Weir Gala Day	Park on Houston Road	June 8th
Nairn and District GC	Annual Show	Nairn Community and Arts Centre	August 10th, 1–4pm
Stonehaven GC	Summer Show 2024 with Stonehaven and District Floral Art Club	Stonehaven Town Hall	August 10th
Ayr and District Flower Show	Flower Show	Ayr Racecourse, Ayr	August 16th & 17th
Cupar Flower Show	Annual Flower & Craft Show	Corn Exchange Cupar	August 17th 10am–4.30pm
Musselburgh HS	Musselburgh Community Flower Show	St Michael's Church Hall, 21 Dalrymple Loan, Musselburgh EH21 7DH	August 17th, 1–4pm
Pathhead & District HS	77th Annual Flower ShowShow	Pathhead Community Hall, Pathhead	August 24th 12–2pm
Royal Caledonian HS	Late Summer Show	Saughton Park, Edinburgh	August 31st–Sept 1st
Currie Parish Horticultural	Currie and District Flower Show	Balerno High School, 5 Bridge Road, Balerno, EH14 7AQ	August 31st, 1.30–4pm
Sky Gardening Society	Flower and Produce Show	The Venue, Portree High School	August 31st, 1.30pm
Bridge of Weir Gardening Club	Gardening Festival	Freeland Church Halls	August 31st
Leuchars & District Gardening & Crafts Club	Annual Flower show	Burnside Hall, Balmullo, Fife	September 7th
Mauchline H & GS	Annual Flower Show	Church Halls Mauchline	September 7th, 2–4.30pm.
Dalkeith HS	Flower Show	St. John's & King's Park Church, Eskbank Road, (a continuation of the High Street) Dalkeith. Parking is available at Morrison's Car Park.	September 7th, 12.30–4.30pm
Paisley Florist Society and GC	Annual Show	St Mirin's Cathedral Halls, Paisley	September 7th 1pm–4pm
Dollar Horticulture and GC	Annual Show	West Burnside Hall, Dollar	September 7th
Stewarton GC	Flower Show	Knox Church Hall Stewarton	September 7th
Brighter Bervie	Gardens Open Daily to the Public	Montrose Road, Inverbervie, Montrose	Daily

GC/S= Gardening Club/Society

HS=Horticultural Society

This table can be found at www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk/events/ and will be updated as information comes in.