



Scottish Rock Garden Club

EDINBURGH & THE LOTHIANS GROUP

SPRING FLOWER SHOW

Saturday 5th April 2025
10.30 am to 3.30 pm
(SHOW HALL OPENS 11.30 am)



*Come & see a superb display of
Bulbs, alpine & rock garden plants*

LIBERTON KIRK CENTRE

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VENUE**

**NEW
VENUE**

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NURSERY PLANT STALLS
SEEDS, SUNDRIES & TEAS
ADMISSION £2
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www.srgc.net



Scottish Gardeners' Forum Newsletter

PROMOTING SCOTLAND'S GARDEN CLUBS



Fun at the Planters in 2024. See p12

Spring 2025

Vol 23: Issue 1

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Letter from the Chair

As I head out into the garden to escape some of the madness happening in the world, I am aware of my thoughts beginning to clear and my spirits lift. It certainly helps that it's a rare sunny day and although still cold and blustery it is good to be outside.

It feels as if everything is returning to normality again; the Hellebores are in flower and the little *Crocus tommasinianus* is pushing its way into the light. I bought the corms at the Scottish Rock Garden Club meeting in September last year and planted half in the lawn and the rest in a pot. I am surprised at how small the flowers are but there is no mistaking the characteristic shape and delicate silvery lilac colour. Mid-way through February these will provide a welcome source of nectar for the emerging queen bumblebees.

I am always aware of the differences between my garden and those of family or friends. I have Snowdrops but no other Crocus whereas my daughter in Aberdeen has a flush of bright yellow Crocus under her Cherry tree. My sister in Gloucestershire has had Daffodils since early De-



cember and my niece in Bristol is now enjoying early Tulips.

Planning for the year ahead is always reassuring and calming but it is important to pay heed to the conditions in your own locality. Don't feel rushed to keep up with

other people; just because they may be planting seeds it doesn't mean that it's the right time for you.

I was attracted by a project being run by *Garden Organic*; the aim is to build a better vegetable planner. The experiment involves growing a crop of French beans and keeping a record of key stages such as sowing, planting out, flowering and pod set. This will contribute to a regional dataset to give people better advice about growing in their locality. Although the project is now closed, it would be interesting to hear from SGF members with advice of their experiences. One Council member advised that growing climbing beans in their windy Aberdeenshire locality was a lost cause and that more dwarf varieties would be a better choice.

The February issue of *Scotland Grows*

Your Council

Honorary President: Jim Jermyn
Honorary Vice-President: Brian Cunningham

Chair:
Kathryn Pitts (West Linton HS)
chair@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Acting Secretary:
Alison Murison (The Caley)
secretary@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Treasurer:
Andrea McDowall (Kirkintilloch HS)
treasurer@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Membership Secretary:
Mrs Mike Rossi (National Bonsai Collection of Scotland)
98 Main Street, Coaltown of Balgonie,
Glenrothes, Fife KY7 6HZ
Tel: 07954410579
membership@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Council Members:
Fyfe Blair (The Caim at Luthermuir)
Tom Campbell (Brighter Bervie)
Hazel Mulberry (Stewarton Gardeing Club)
Anne Vincent (Nairn and District Horticultural Society)
Catherine Wright (North Berwick in Bloom)

Registers of Speakers and Judges:
Donald M Hepburn (Bridge of Weir Horticultural Society)
registers@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Newsletter and Website Editor:
Alison Murison (The Caley)
editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Facebook and New Media:
Tracey Stone
media@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Regional Co-Ordinators

North	Ann Vincent, Nairn and District HS north@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
North East	Tom Campbell, Brighter Bervie northeast@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
East	Kathryn Pitts, West Linton HS east@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
Fife	Mike Rossi, National Bonsai Collection of Scotland fife@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
West	Donald Hepburn, Bridge of Weir HS west@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
West Central	Andrea McDowall, Kirkintilloch HS westcentral@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk




The Caley
 Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

CALEY SPRING BULB SHOW

5TH & 6TH APRIL 2025



Free Entry



Display of Blooms
Gardening activities
Plant sales

Saughton Park,
Edinburgh, EH11 3HR

The show is open
12pm-5pm on Saturday
10am-4pm on Sunday

magazine has some really good articles which are relevant to those of us growing in our northerly climate. The advice seems to be overwhelmingly to wait. Sowing too early can be worse than starting too late as your seedlings will struggle without adequate levels of light and heat. Leggy drawn seedlings are difficult to transplant and may not thrive.

The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society (the Caley) also has some useful information on its website and is running workshops on seed sowing and potting on. These are aimed at beginners but also a helpful refresher for more experienced growers.

thecaley.org.uk

I am looking forward to visiting a friend in the Lake District for a few days to see the progress in her garden – no doubt we will be admiring the Snow-

drops flourishing in the local area. I wish you the opportunity to enjoy the signs of Spring in your own gardens and those in your neighbourhood.

Kathryn Pitts



The only daffodils I could find in the Lakes was this display at the Wordsworth memorial in Cockermouth

My Favourite Tree

Genus – Metasequoia glyptostroboides, Chinese Redwood

The Chinese Redwood is native to Li-chuan county, Hebei province, China and known locally in China as 'Shui-Shan' or 'water fir'. A specimen tree grows in the centre of the 'Coronation Garden' in Spiers Arboretum* grounds in Beith, Ayrshire. The grounds and woodlands are open to the public and have over 50 mature species trees. It is also a Scottish Wildlife Trust site and well worth a visit.

**Hazel Mulberry
Stewarton Gardening Club**

* www.facebook.com/spiershistory



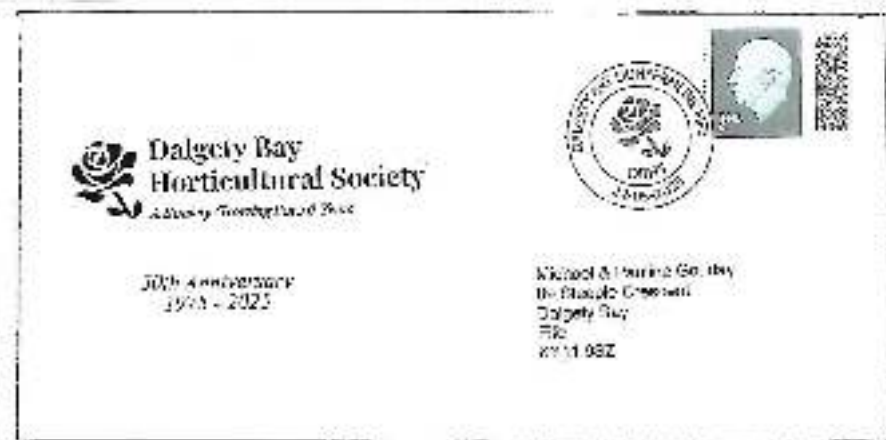
DBHS 50th Anniversary First Day Cover

This year is the 50th Anniversary of Dalgety Bay Horticultural Society (DBHS). There are various 50th Anniversary events throughout the year, especially at the DBHS Annual Show. This notification is to announce the availability of a special First Day Cover (FDC) to mark the event.

Those of you who are interested in stamps will know that a FDC is normally issued when there is a new stamp issued by the post office. There is a specially designed envelope and the new stamps are cancelled with a special first day of issue postmark. Sometimes events have a special envelope, a special first day of issue postmark cancelling an ordinary everyday stamp.



DBHS has designed a special FDC and a special first day of issue postmark, which will cancel an ordinary first-class stamp. These are authorised by the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh. This notification is to tell you about this and to offer it to you at a price of £8.00 per cover. The day of issue of the FDC is 22nd May 2025, which is an interesting date, because 22 25 is an anagram, if you like, of 2025. I do like numbers. A copy of the post mark being used is displayed on the left and an image of the FDC is shown below.



NB the image above has a 2nd class stamp. The actual FDC will have a 1st class stamp.

Orders for the FDC will be taken from 1st February 2025 until 31st March 2025. If you would like one, please email me at michaeljg@btinternet.com and I will send you the details of how to pay DBHS electronically. The FDCs will be issued as soon after 22nd May 2025 as possible.

Michael Gourlay
Chairman
DBHS

michaeljg@btinternet.com
07949505456

Challenge at Scone. Remember – our next crop of gardeners need as much nurturing as our plants. Already this year we've attracted entries from four newcomers and there's plenty of room for more of your wonderfully innovative plant displays, which can feature your locality or whatever is on your minds.

Instructions and entry forms for the P&P Challenge are available on the SGF website:

www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk/pallets-and-planters/

Information about the Garden Fair can be found at:

www.scone-palace.co.uk/event/scone-palace-garden-fair-2025

Detailed enquiries about the Challenge can be emailed to me or phone me.

We'll be looking out for your flood of applications and welcoming you with your entry on the Scone Palace lawn at the end of May.

Tom Campbell

northeast@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

07962 020397



↓Pallet ↑Planter



Scone Palace



Scone Palace Garden Fair 2025 SGF Pallet Garden & Planter Challenge

The early show of familiar Spring flowers now around us and the emerging buds and shoots are a wonderful tonic as we start to leave Winter behind and look forward to sowing, growing, harvesting and generally enjoying gardening and gardens in the year ahead.

One annual treat for us gardeners, which has become a welcome fixture in the calendar, is the **Scone Palace Garden Fair**, taking place this year on **Fri 30th and Sat 31st May**. The Scottish Gardeners' Forum will be there as usual with our popular Pallet Garden and Planter Challenge. We look forward to meeting and greeting many of you in

the beautiful grounds of Scone Palace amidst the bustle of the Fair with its numerous gardening attractions.

If you're not already one of our regular participants in the P&P Challenge, why not think about indulging your creative urges and submitting an entry – it really is an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. The Challenge is well suited for schools and community groups to take part, so please reach out to others in your community and help them to join in and feel the benefits of creative gardening. SGF member clubs can apply for small grants to assist local organisations to take part in the



People are attracted by the display



The Caley's Grow & Learn Award

Sign up now to get growing!

Running since 2006, the Caley Grow and Learn Award has helped hundreds of learners achieve an accredited horticultural award.

This person-centred course is designed to be inclusive and offers learners recognition in their individual accomplishments, alongside teaching them a range of life skills.

The Grow and Learn Award is ideal for groups or individual learners (from age 12 and up) that want to gain hands-on experience, increase their horticulture knowledge and be awarded with a Grow and Learn accreditation for their achievements.



Learn more about the Grow & Learn Award using the QR code or going to our web address below: thecaley.org.uk/grow-learn/



thecaley.org.uk

Seed sowing season

Looking ahead to this new growing season I began to take stock of seed trays and pots for sowing and growing seedlings.



Problems with Black

It can be quite frustrating, if not scunnersome, with the all too often wastage of the light cheap plastic pots and trays that break as soon as you try and get a seedling out. Of course, there are the wider environmental considerations regarding what is sent to landfill and takes a long time to decompose. Part of the problem too is that black plastic is not recyclable because the sensors in waste sorting systems can't recognise the colour. Hence, the introduction of "taupe" (greyish) pots.

The need to eliminate single-use plastic and encourage reduced plastic use is vitally important. There is a growing availability of recycled, recyclable or compostable products. Having what is termed 'a circular-loop' for plastic means reusing them for as long as possible, by collecting, processing and re-

peatedly reusing plant pots, trays and other items. With these things in mind I went on a search and thought I'd share some of my explorations.

DIY Pots

The first area is that of DIY. Using the inner loo roll cardboard which is great to stack in a tray and plant peas or beans. Egg boxes work well too for seeds that grow quickly. Perhaps many of you have got one of those little wooden paper potter tools using strips of newspaper to create little pots. It can make for a great and simple activity with children or a shared task for a wee while at this time of year over a cuppa. Another method is to use newspaper again, but use a glass jar to wrap it around and create the same kind of pot. Of course you can gauge sizes with different jars. I have also come upon using cardboard in a similar fashion, though you need to soak the strips of card first to make them pliable. These will of course be quite robust. These sorts of DIY pots/trays allow you to transplant directly into the soil and they will decompose there.



Tying the Nut

A very special event took place on 31st October in Campbell Park – and it was a sort of wedding celebration! The tree-planting event was rather relevant to Colinton Garden Club, since two pollinating partners were planted for the Jubilee Sweet Chestnut which was planted in 2022. So, this was our Tree Wedding party.

Ken Whitson helped plant the original Jubilee tree and kept it well watered during its first very hot and dry summer. Ken then kindly agreed to take part in the ceremonial planting this October and to say a few words. We managed to get about ten trees planted on 31st October, thanks to CGC Members Diana & Richard Ennos and Ken Whitson. Avril Scott and Jonathan Davey helped wrap the chestnut trees in specially made Campbell tartan bunting

to mark the occasion. As you can see in the photograph below, tree confetti was liberally scattered around the new trees for mulch.

Shona Harrower
Colinton Garden Club
& Friends of Campbell Park



Ayr & District Flower Show

The planning for the 7th Ayr & District Flower Show at Ayr Racecourse is underway. This year it will be held on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th August, open from 10am until 5pm each day.

We will have the usual wide range of classes – Vegetables, Begonias, Cacti, Chrysanthemums, Dahlias, Fuchsias, Pelargoniums, Pot Plants, Roses, Sweet Peas and more for the growers. There are of course Handicrafts, Baking and Preserves too, as well as a range of classes for the children to enter. This year we will introduce a group class for the under fives. Nursery teachers and child-minders please look out for details.

As in previous years there will be no charge to enter exhibits. Children will receive prize money in the Junior Section but for adults, instead of money they will receive an engraved keepsake which will be presented for the best exhibit in each section.

This year we will host the *National Vegetable Society – National Championships 2025*. This show is only in Scotland every five years and will bring competitors from all over Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland. Please take this opportunity to come and see some of the best quality vegetables to be grown in this country.

There will be a wide range of trade stands including plant, garden machinery and craft stalls. Musical entertainment will also be on offer.

The Racecourse is an excellent venue for the show. It is on a main bus route,



www.ayranddistrictflowershow.com f i

handy for Bed & Breakfast and the many hotels in the area. A large part of the show is undercover so even on a typical Ayrshire day the show can still be enjoyed. The site is wheelchair friendly and accessible to everyone.

Unfortunately, no dogs except assistance dogs are allowed in the show ground.

Schedules will be sent to everyone who has exhibited in recent years. A schedule can soon be downloaded from the website:

www.ayranddistrictflowershow.com

Irene Yuill
Secretary
Ayr & District Flower Show

Compostable Pots

There are biodegradable/compostable pots made from plant fibre like coir, cellulose, bamboo or cardboard. Some are experimenting with wheat chaff, straw and coffee husks. Others are made from 'recycled' material; the plastic used to make the pots coming from household recycled waste, some was even made from ocean plastics. One final interesting new type is raw, washed wool pots. Absolutely fascinating benefits, though cost and affordability may be a consideration. Know anyone who spins and knits? Anyway, they state:

The Wonder of Wool

Wool is environmentally friendly, totally sustainable and endlessly versatile but it's also the gardener's friend. A natural Slug and Snail deterrent, biodegradable, strong and sustainable, proven to use 20-30% less water than a plastic pot, breaks down into a delicious plant food. Find out more here:

www.wool-pots.co.uk/



At The Caim, Luthermuir we have had a good number of people generously provide us with their old trays and pots from garden-centre buys. This has been a great help, part of a circular-loop system. However, we also need to have some more durable trays which we bought last year to try out

tinyurl.com/propagation-trays

Specifically, the CD60 and 30 trays. In terms of capacity, ease of releasing seedling and seedling growth were the best. I think we will get more. I am also looking at these 9cm plastic pots:

tinyurl.com/recycled-pots

Of course, much has to do with what you are able or willing to pay. You just have to dig around and see for yourself.

Fyfe Blair
The Caim at Luthermuir

SOCIETY	EVENT	VENUE	DATE
Alness HS	Spring Show,	The Ardross Alness Bowling Club, entries to be staged by 11am	March 22nd 1-3pm
Royal Caledonian HS	Spring Bulb Show	Saughton Park	April 5th & 6th
Scottish Rhododendron Society	Annual Show, The plant sale 10am, entry to show 12noon after judging	Gibson Hall, Garelochhead	April 6th
Helensburgh & Gareloch HS	Annual Plant sale	James Street Gardens, Helensburgh	May 3rd 9am-12.30pm
Pathhead & District HS	Plant Sale & Coffee Morning	Callander Sports Pavilion, Pathhead	May 10th 10am-12noon
Bridge of Weir HS	Plant Sale, selling plants from our own gardens and from Parklea Nursery	Middle of the village	May 10th
Royal Caledonian HS	Auricula and Primula Show	Saughton Park	May 11th
Stonehaven GC	Plant Sale	Plainstones, The Market Square	May 17th, 9am-12noon
Bridge of Weir HS	Bridge of Weir Gala Day, The GC will take a stand	In the village	June 7th
Royal Caledonian HS	Cacti and Succulent	Saughton Park Bring in your plants the day before if that suits	June 8th
Newport & Wormit In Bloom	Summer Plant Sale	Newport Festival, High street	June 21st
Stonehaven GC	Stonehaven Flower Show	Stonehaven Town Hall	9th of August from 10am-3.30pm
Cupar Flower Show	Cupar Flower and Craft Show	Corn Exchange, St Cathrine Street, Cupar KY15 4BT. Staging Fri 15th Aug 12-9.45pm	August 16th
Pitlessie Flower Show	Flower Show	Wilkie Hall, Pitlessie	August 16th, 1.30-4pm
Bridge of Weir HS	Gardening Festival	Freeland Church Halls	August 16th
Pathhead & District HS	77th Annual Flower Show	Pathhead Community Hall, Pathhead	August 24th 2-2pm
Royal Caledonian HS	Autumn Show	Saughton Park	September 6th & 7th
Mauchline Horticultural & Agricultural Soc	Annual Flower Show	Mauchline Church Hall	September 6th 2-4.30pm
Busby and Clarkston HS	Annual Show	Clarkston Halls, G76 8NE	September 6th, 2- 4pm
Polmont HS	Annual Show	Polmont Community Hub	September 6th
Dollar Horticultural and GC	Annual Flower Show	East Burnside Hall, Dollar	September 6th
Dunbar Flower Show	Dunbar Flower Show	Belhaven and Spott church hall Dunbar EH42 1NH	September 13th 1.30-4.30pm
Royal Caledonian HS	Apple Day	Saughton Park	October 5th
Royal Caledonian HS	Orchid Day	Saughton Park	October 26th
Brighter Bervie	Gardens Open Daily to the Public	Montrose Road, Inverbervie, Montrose	Daily
Newport & Wormit In Bloom	Floral Street Planters	Various streets in Newport & Wormit	Daily

HS=Horticultural Society GC=Garden(ing) Club Soc=Society