



Scottish Gardeners Forum Winter Gathering and AGM

Saturday 7th November 2026

10am to 4pm

The McHattie Room
Saughton Park Edinburgh
EH11 3HP



Speakers:

Pam Whittle CBE SHM

Honorary Vice President, RCHS

"History of Saughton Park and Renovation Project"

Simon Jones

Gardens and Designed Landscape Manager, National Trust for Scotland

"Pioneering Women in Horticulture"

George Anderson MBE SHM

Former President and Honorary President RCHS

"A Life in Horticulture"



Tea, Coffee and Lunch provided by **Four Square Café**

There will be an opportunity to see some of the features of the Park,
weather permitting.

Cost £20 per person

Numbers limited, so book early at www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk/



Scottish Gardeners' Forum Newsletter

PROMOTING SCOTLAND'S GARDEN CLUBS



Pallets and Planters at Scone Palace Garden Fair

Summer 2026

Vol 24: Issue 2

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Letter from the Chair

This will be my last ever "Letter from the Chair" for the Scottish Gardeners' Forum Newsletter. There are two reasons for this, the first being that I will be standing down from the role of Chair at the Winter Gathering in November.



The second is that at last year's Annual General Meeting the membership approved the proposal to move from a printed newsletter to a more frequent email newsletter.

The costs of printing and posting a print copy have soared over recent years and there are the disadvantages of relying on clubs to circulate it around the membership. This often means that news and announcements are out of date before everyone has seen them.

The email newsletter can be forwarded to anyone who requests a copy (sign up via the website or send your details to the editor). You will receive a copy each month with up-to-date information and news from clubs

around the country.

There are big changes ahead for the Forum generally: many of the office holders have been in place for far longer than the mandated three years. Many of them have had changes in personal health, family responsibilities or have simply run out of steam. **Offers**

are invited for individuals willing to take on the vacant roles.

The Forum will require a Chair, a Treasurer, a Membership Secretary, a Secretary, an Editor and general Council members. The current role holders are prepared to help with a period of transition, but it is difficult to envision a future for the forum without an injection of new blood.

On a more positive note, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with Scottish Gardeners' Forum and have experienced several different roles. It has been a pleasure to meet with enthusiastic members and fellow gardeners at a variety of events throughout the gardening year.

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 (Hardy Plant Soc) *
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 Gardening Club)
M.T. O'Donnell (Carmunnock HS)
Anne Vincent (Nairn and District Horticultural Society)
Catherine Wright (North Berwick in Bloom)

Registers of Speakers and Judges:

registers@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk *

Newsletter and Website Editor:

Alison Murison (Hardy Plant Soc) *
editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

* replacement needed

Regional Co-Ordinators

Region	Coordinator	SGF email
Highlands & Islands	Anna Vincent	Highlands_Islands@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
North East		northeast@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
Fife & nearby	Mike Rossi	fife@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
South East	Cathie Wright	SouthEast@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
Lothian & Borders	Kathryn Pitts	LothianBorders@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
West - Central	Andrea McDowall	westcentral@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk
West & South West	Hazel Mulberry	WestSouthWest@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Ayr & District Flower Show

This year the 8th Ayr & District Flower Show at Ayr Racecourse will be held on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th August, open from 10am until 5pm each day.

We will have the usual wide range of classes so there is something for everyone, whatever your interest. That could be flowers, vegetables, baking, preserves or handicrafts. There is also a range of classes for children, this year including the new introductions for 13- to 16-year-olds. Don't forget the pre-schools as well.

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

This year we will be joined by Ayr & District Beekeepers Association who will be holding their Honey Show in the upstairs area of the racecourse. They will have classes for various types of honey as well as baked goods, beeswax products and a photograph.

There will be a wide range of trade stands including plant, garden machinery and craft stalls.

Musical entertainment will also be provided.

The Racecourse is an excellent venue for the show. It is on a main bus route, 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 can be downloaded from the website:

www.ayranddistrictflowershow.com

Anyone who wishes a paper copy of the schedule or more information about the show can email

ayranddistrictflowershow@gmail.com

Check out the website and Facebook page for updates and photos of previous shows.

Irene Yuill



I am looking forward to taking on new and different challenges in the future, more opportunities for travel, developing a new garden, helping to renovate an established one and generally spending more time with my growing family.

I hope the summer is an exciting time for you, whether spent in your own garden or discovering new and far-flung ones and I look forward to seeing some of you at our Winter Gathering later in the year.

Kathryn Pitts

The Advantage of Touch

Plants that grow on mountainsides are subject to strong winds and tend to grow short and close to the ground. This is particularly obvious for the few trees that survive which are short, thick trunked and lean away from the wind. You may be surprised to learn that this effect can be used to your advantage when raising seedlings.

Given the short summer in Scotland, most of us start off plants on our windowsills as even the greenhouse can be too cold. However, this often produces leggy plants that are too tall and thin rather than the sturdy short plants we were hoping for. There is a simple solution which is cheap and needs no special lights or equipment. It has the very long name of "thigmomorphogenesis." Thigmo means touch and morpho means shape. In other words, it is the response of plants to being touched. Experiments have found that regularly stroking your seedlings gently using a feather or your hand for just 10s can result in sturdier plants. The effect wears off after a week so little



Badenoch GC

and often is most effective. You can see a similar effect if young plants are exposed to wind or rain so you may be doing them a disservice by coddling them.

That tip is maybe a bit late in the season to help you just now. But here is another way of touching your plants that

results in a better tomato crop. All you need is something that vibrates such as an old electric toothbrush, or a tuning fork. Set the toothbrush vibrating and hold it against the flowering stem so the whole collection of flowers vibrates. The vibration releases pollen which fertilises the flower. If you watch carefully, a flower at the right stage will release pollen which you can see as a yellow powdery stream. This mimics what happens when a bee visits the flower to pollinate it. It's especially useful on those dull days when the greenhouse might be closed and the bees can't get access. This also works with aubergines which have a similar pollination mechanism.

Sue Thomas

Badenochgardeningclub@gmail.com

Gardeners' Question Time

with Kathy Clugston, Tuesday 7th July 2026
at Busby and Clarkston Horticultural Society

Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time recorded a programme at Clarkston Halls in East Renfrewshire.

The celebrated panel of gardening experts, including Kirsty Wilson, Bethan Collerton and James Wong with Kathy Clugston in the chair, tackled the questions put to them by local gardening enthusiasts.

Gardeners' Question Time is a Radio 4 institution, attracting 2 million listeners weekly. Recorded in a different location each week, this long-standing radio programme has answered well over 30,000 questions since its inception in 1947.

The panel members have been guests of a diverse range of gardening clubs and other organisations; including recording at the top of Mount Snowdon, broadcasting from Buckingham Palace and answering questions from inside Number 10 Downing Street.

The panel NEVER see the questions before the recording. Their encyclopaedic, seemingly effortless answers are completely spontaneous and reveal their huge experience and depth of gardening knowledge. Being on the GQT panel is not for the faint hearted!



Fergus Ewing at the Busby and Clarkston Summer Show

We were also grateful to David Pullar who so kindly gave his time to talk to exhibitors and pass on his experience of completing a Show Garden at Scone the previous year. David was awarded a Silver medal and won the People's Choice Award. His garden is still on display in the Scone Palace Walled Garden and has flourished over the year since its construction.

Alison Murison



The crowds were entertained by several performance artists

At the Pallets and Planters

The Pallets and Planters Challenge 2026 was a huge success. Placed just inside the entry gates, the visitors were greeted with the SGF at its best.

The students from Dundee and Angus College were an enormous help in setting up, taking down, and at the show they were welcoming visitors and handing out the voting slips for the People's Choice of Planter and Pallet.

It was an opportunity to meet with old friends in the SGF and talk to visitors to explain its role in encouraging gardening groups around Scotland.

The individual entrant groups were there to explain their themes and tell about their organisations.



People's Choice were North Berwick in Bloom, and Lairhillock Primary School.



Scone Palace Garden Fair 2027

After the success of this year's Scone Palace Garden Fair, next year's event is set to be even bigger with the addition of an extra day to shop the plant nurseries, be inspired by the show gardens, listen to the expert guests, and meet up with the Scottish gardening community.

Put the dates in your diaries – **28th, 29th and 30th May 2027** for three days of Scone Palace Garden Fair next year.

If your club is planning an outing to the event, there is coach parking available and a group discount rate for groups of 10 or more.

Contact
heather@scone-palace.co.uk

for current pricing.

M.T. O'Donnell, who sits on the Strategic Planning Group for the event, is also available to come to your club at no charge to give a talk and presentation on Scone Palace Garden Fair and answer questions to help with orientation, so your group can make the most from your trip to Scotland's premier garden show.

Contact at
mail@scotlandgrowsmagazine.com.



A Celebration of Gardening, Creativity and Community

This one-day event is the highlight of the horticultural year for Banchory Gardening Club. Fruit and vegetable, plants and flowers are showcased alongside beautiful crafts, culinary delights and floral designs. There are monetary prizes, trophies to be won and raffles to enter.



So why not relax, soak up the atmosphere and treat yourself to Afternoon Tea.

The show is held in Banchory Town Hall on the High Street on 22nd of August 2026, 1-6pm.

Entry is by donation at the door.
banchorygardeningclub@btinternet.com

Stewarton Gardening Club

Stewarton Gardening Club had an excellent visit to the NTS Greenbank Gardens on 1st June. Head Gardener Andrew Hinson gave the group a very interesting talk on the history of the house and a tour of the gardens highlighting plants and trees of special interest. The weather held fair and everyone enjoyed the peace and tranquillity of the walled garden and refreshments in the Coffee shop before returning home.



Hazel Mulberry
Secretary
Stewarton Gardening Club

Mauchline Show

Mauchline Horticultural & Agricultural Society will hold our Annual Flower Show in the Church Halls Mauchline on Saturday 5th September.

Schedules are available by calling 01290 550623 and leaving a message including your address.

We have classes for Chrysanthemums, Dahlias, Cut Flowers, Begonias, Pot Plants, Fruit & Vegetables, Baking, Handicrafts, Preserves and Flower Arranging. There is also a children's section with classes for Vegetables, Flowers & Flower Arranging, Handicrafts

and Baking and don't forget the miniature garden on a dinner plate.

Entries can be staged from 7pm until 11pm on Friday 4th or from 7am until 9am on the day of the show.

There are trophies and prize money to be won.

Doors open to the public from 2pm to 4.30pm. Admission is free for members and children and £2 for non-members. Everyone is welcome to exhibit and visit.

Irene Yuill
Facebook:

www.facebook.com/MauchlineHorticulture

Dollar Horticultural Gardening Club with Dollar in Bloom

As our gardens come back to life and the initial flush of spring bulbs is over Dollar "Horti Club" is well into its annual cycle of events. The plant sale was held in early May, always a popular event with over 500 plants for sale. We appreciate the help of many local gardeners who have provided plants over the years. Other plants are produced by club members. Proceeds from the sale are divided between club funds and Strathcarron Hospice.

At the time of writing our Bridge Street tubs have had the colourful tulip display replaced with bedding plants and the hanging baskets are in place.

We continue to maintain several sites around the town with the rejuvenated Memorial Garden being the jewel in

the crown. The planting has matured nicely, and the spaces have been grown into and look lush and abundant.

The annual Flower Show and Craft Exhibition will be held on Saturday 5th September in the Burnside Hall. Show schedules will be available in local shops and on our Facebook page. This year there will be a Great Dollar Bake Off and a Great Dollar Knitting Bee. Classes will include cut flowers, pot plants, fruit and vegetables, photography, floral art, craft, baking, preserves and children's crafts.

Signage recognising our success in the Keep Scotland Beautiful awards of 2024 and 2025 is now on display at several locations around the town. Once again, we acknowledge the help of all those groups and individuals who contributed to these awards.



Flower Show and Craft Exhibition

Saturday 5th September 2024
Burnside Hall, Dollar
Doors Open 1:30pm – 4:00pm
Official Opening and Presentation of Cups and Trophies 2:00pm
Entrance ticket - £1.00
Family ticket - £3.00
Afternoon Tea - £4.00
Tickets sold at the Door

Classes include flowers, fruit, vegetables, pot plants, floral art, craft work, baking, preserves, photography and children's classes.

There is no charge to exhibit at the show.
All exhibits must be staged between 7:30am - 10:00am



We have placed an article in our local newsletter encouraging residents to look after their own "patch" to maintain the standard achieved during the last two years' *Keep Scotland Beautiful* campaign.

Fiona Roe
Facebook: [dollarhorticultural](https://www.facebook.com/dollarhorticultural)

The excitement in Largs is mounting as the Society prepares for the celebrations for their 185th Anniversary of Largs Flower Show on 22nd August at Dunn Memorial Hall, Largs. We are delighted that George Anderson will be presenting the prizes. For information on the show, schedules or to contact us:

We attended Scone Palace Garden Fair and were delighted to see Largs Primary School's pallet and planter entry winning silver and bronze. Photos below.

We thank Scottish Gardeners' Forum for their support for our school. We enjoyed helping at their stall – meeting the general public; horticultural students; David Pullar for some feedback on entries and even Lord Stormont.



The Society's display at Largs Museum on Main Street, has been very popular with staff and visitors alike. Open Thursday to Sunday 1.30 to 4.30pm or other days by pre-arrangement.

The display includes photographs, old certificates, cups and medals dating back to the 30's and the President's Chain, photographs of shows; prizewinners and notable people who contributed to the success of the show. Whilst there, look at The George next door, which was the venue for the very first show in 1841.

A large, colorful display titled "Landmarks of Lanes" is set up outdoors. The display features a wooden lattice structure with various photos and information pinned to it. Below the lattice is a planter box filled with greenery and small figurines. A sign on the left side of the planter box reads "Lanes County Historical Society" and "Lanes County Historical Society". The display is set up on a grassy area with trees in the background.



Annual Show - Saturday 29th August, Killearn Village Hall and Kirk. 2-4.30pm, vegetable and flower show, art and crafts, baking and teas.



**BUSBY & CLARKSTON
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

79TH ANNUAL SHOW 2026

SPONSORED BY  **ROUKEN GLEN
GARDEN CENTRE**

SATURDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2026

CLARKSTON HALLS | 676 8NE

DOORS OPEN AT **2.00PM**
PRIZES WILL BE PRESENTED AT **3.30PM**

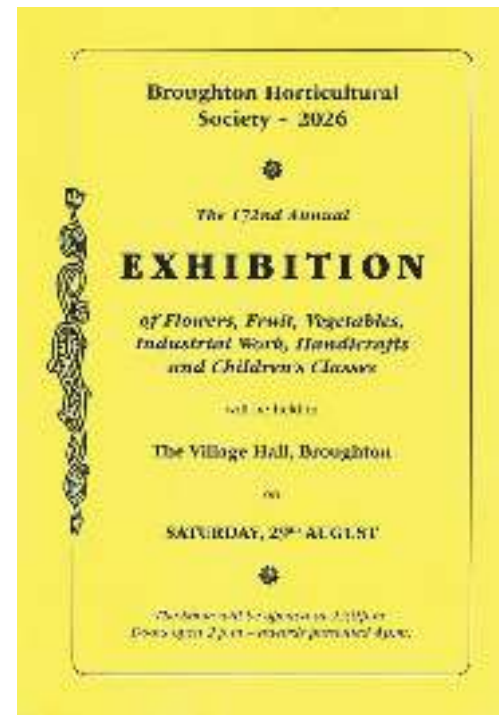
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A DAY OUT FOR ALL THE FAMILY & FRIENDS
TEAROOM - TOMBOLA - RAFFLE - PLANT SALE
ADMISSION £2.00



Society	Event	Venue	Date
St Machar's Cathedral	Flower Festival	St Machar's Cathedral Aberdeen	August 7th - 9th
Stonehaven & District H Soc	Annual Summer Show	Stonehaven Town Hall, Stonehaven	August 8th 10.30am-3pm
Ayr & District Flower Show	Flower Show	Ayr Race Course	August 14th, 15th 10am-5pm
Pitlessie Flower Show	Pitlessie Flower Show	Wilkie Hall, Pitlessie	August 15th 1.30-4.30pm
Ormiston H Soc	Flower Show	Ormiston Community Centre	August 15th 1.30pm
Badenoch Gardening Club	Annual Show	St Bride's Church Hall, Newtonmore	August 22nd 2pm
Alness Horticultural Society	Summer Show	Alness Bowling Club, Alness	August 22nd 1.30pm
Stonehaven & District H Soc	Flower Show	Stonehaven Town Hall, Stonehaven	August 22nd 10am-3pm
Largs & District H Soc	Largs Flower Show 1841- 2026 185th Anniversary	Dunn Memorial Hall, Bath Street, Largs.	August 22nd 10am-4.30pm
Peebles H Soc	Flower Show	Community Centre (Drill Hall), Walkershaugh, Peebles	August 29th 2-4.30pm
Currie H Soc	146th Annual Flower Show	Balerno Community High School	August 29th 1.30-4pm
Killlearn H5	Annual Show	Killlearn Village Hall and Kirk	August 29th 2-4pm
Pathhead and District Horticultural Society	Annual Flower Show	Community Hall Main Street, Pathhead	August 31st 2-4pm
Dollar H and GC	Annual Show	East Burnside Hall, Dollar	September 5th
Paisley Florists Soc Gardening Club	Annual Show	St Mirrin's Cathedral Halls, Paisley	September 5th 1-4pm
Royal Caledonian H Soc	Late Summer/Early Autumn Show	Saughton Park	September 5th & 6th
Mauchline H & Agricultural Soc	Annual Flower Show	Mauchline Church Halls	September 5th
Thornhill Gardening Soc	Annual Show	Thornhill Community Hall	September 5th 2pm
Dunbar Flower Show	Annual Show	Belhaven and Spott Church Hall	September 12th 1.30-4pm
Scottish Bonsai Association	Bonsai Tree Display	Japanese Garden, Cowden Gardens, Dollar, FK14 7PL	September 12th
Dunkeld & Birnam Community Orchard Gp	Big Apple Day	Community Orchard	September 25th
Scottish Bonsai Association	Member Bonsai Display	Scottish Rock Garden Club Autumn Show & Sale	September 26th
Royal Caledonian H Soc	Apple Day	Saughton Park	October TBC
Polmont H Soc	Annual Show	Polmont Community Hub	September 5th
Royal Caledonian H Soc	Late Chrysanthemum Show	Saughton Park	November 8th 12.30-3.30pm
Brighter Bervie	Gardens Open Daily to the Public	Montrose Road, Inverbervie, Montrose	Daily
Friends of Cruickshank Botanic Garden	Monthly talks open to non members	info at www.fcbgaberdeen.org.uk	Monthly

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

Please send further news or news of events to Alison at
editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk

Pull Out Form

Pull Out Form

Registration Form

Scottish Gardeners' Forum

Winter Gathering

Saturday 7th November 2026 10am to 4pm

The McHattie Room, Saughton Park, Fords Road, Edinburgh EH11 3HP

Name of Club or Society:

Booking

Please enter the names of members attending:

..... members attending at £20 per head: £.....
(includes tea, coffee, lunch and all conference costs)

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

The SGF will only retain your information for the organisation of this event.

If you would like to join our mailing list, please tick ☐

Please this form complete and return to:

Andrea McDowall, 29 Second Avenue, Auchinloch, G66 5DZ
by Saturday 3rd October 2026 to allow SGF to finalise the catering arrangements.

Either enclose a cheque made out to **Scottish Gardeners' Forum**

(note, the bank does not recognise "SGF")

Or pay by direct transfer to:

Scottish Gardeners' Forum
Sort code: 80 02 19
Account: 00106759

Full details for digital registration and payment are at:

www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk/winter_gathering/