

# Colinton Garden Club

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

Newsletter 106

April 2014



Coming soon...

28<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**AGM  
&  
Display  
of members'  
art and craft  
work**

Details on page 5

**Summer  
Outing to  
Gardens in  
Berwickshire  
and  
Peebleshire**

see page 5  
for details

**Ordering your  
Spring Bulbs**

See page 2  
for details

*From the pen of our Chair...*

Dear Reader

Here we are – it's Spring! – well nearly, anyway – and what a mild winter it's been. When I asked at the January meeting, many members had already been out working in their gardens! We gardeners need to keep a wary eye on the weather though - who knows what's coming next?



Cambo, near St Andrews was the venue for our winter outing: a jolly bus load wound their way round the roads of east Fife, and were divided into two groups for an escorted tour by two of the gardeners. Cambo is the home of the National Snowdrop collection, and we saw many in bloom on that sunny but chilly day. Did you know Cambo has at least 350 varieties of snowdrop? A section of the garden called 'Prairie Garden' caught my eye - mostly tall grasses still looking fine in the winter light. Were we glad to have some really hot soup in the stableroom café!

In January we heard a most insightful talk on 'Caring for your Trees' by arboreal specialist Mike Charkow. Colinton is lucky to have so many beautiful trees, but they do need caring for. Mike fielded many questions, for instance, on recent legislation on neighbouring trees and high hedges (a recurrent cause for concern), what type of trees to plant and where (not) to plant them, and how to detect signs of dangerous infection. In addition we heard how he had participated in an audit of Edinburgh City trees and even in decorating the trees in Princes Street with all those millions of pretty and sympathetically arranged Christmas Lights - no easy task I am sure, especially when it comes to the most outlying twigs.

Our latest talk on 'Victorian Horticulture' by Philip Lusby of the Royal Botanical Garden dealt with garden design pioneers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We were



expertly guided through the development of garden artificiality including the glasshouse, floral bed and rock garden, and the subsequent backlash to this trend.

*Other delights of the  
Snowdrop Tour at Cambo:  
getting the lowdown  
on Hellebores*

*Pen of our Chair... continued*

*Members buying plants raised at Kevock*

Stella Rankin's talk in February was well attended: Stella impressed greatly with her enthusiasm in developing Kevock Garden Plants, and her success at Chelsea. Her plant stall did quite a roaring trade too. She told me afterwards that she and her husband were appreciative of the enthusiastic and well-informed audience they encountered at Colinton.

So what of the remainder of the programme for this session? Our AGM in April has the art and crafts show; so don't be shy – **please bring your creations to display!** The summer open gardens and outing are now finalised - see details on page 5 of this newsletter - great gardens to visit, so I look forward to seeing many of you at these exciting events.

*Penny*

### Eden in the West

Alasdair Ferguson enjoyed visiting the Eden Project while on holiday in Cornwall. He kindly provided this photograph.

'Eden' is very much concerned with environmental issues and community involvement. It has "the largest tropical forest in captivity" with a canopy walkway among the treetops, while the Mediterranean biome house provides "a colourful, sensory journey through citrus, olives, vines and perfumed herbs".

On a culinary note, Alasdair would have missed the World Pasty Championships 2014 held at Eden on 1<sup>st</sup> March. In the open category, traditional meat was ousted by salmon, hake, pollock and monkfish, and even chicken in red Thai curry sauce. Nearer home, the Forfar bridie appears to breed true to type, with only variations in pastry to be found.



### Spring Bulb Orders

I do hope that members who ordered spring flowering bulbs last year are enjoying their colourful display. Those who didn't need not despair as the Parker's Spring Bulb catalogues should arrive in June. Here we are thinking about next year's display when this year's is still here being enjoyed. But forward thinking and planning are essential. Parker's Wholesale catalogue is full of an exceptional variety of bulbs, many of which are not available from local garden centres. So if you have any areas that could do with some spring colour, or perhaps some different spring colours, your chance to change that will soon be here. Once the catalogues have arrived, the Club website will be updated and you can order bulbs, through me, simply by following instructions on the website. Also, I intend to have the catalogues and order forms on the coach at the summer outing on Sat. 19th July.

The majority of the bulbs arrive in September, some a little later, in time for autumn planting. Once they have arrived I will contact you so that they can be collected and paid for. No payment is needed until your entire order has been collected. Billy Wheelan.

### Rebirth of the Botanic Cottage at RBGE

On behalf of the Club, I attended a meeting on 'Community usage of the Botanic Cottage'. The Cottage, which originally stood at the entrance to the old Edinburgh Botanic Garden on Leith Walk, is to be relocated to the northern border of RBGE by next year; currently it exists as stacks of numbered stones in a safe haven.

Local art and history groups and garden clubs were represented at the meeting. We heard that facilities will include meeting spaces (for school use on the lower floor and for community use on the upper floor, 30 – 35 persons), kitchen and toilets, potting shed, and access to an adjacent lawn area. Daytime and evening usage will be possible and there will be no booking fee. For more information see [www.botaniccottage.org](http://www.botaniccottage.org)



It is possible that the Club could run mini-outings involving botanical study / sketching / photography in the Garden followed by discussion / refreshments in the Cottage. **The Committee would like to hear members' ideas on how we might take advantage of this asset in the future.** Editor.

### Refurbishing of garden tools – beyond porridge

A recent article on an initiative to refurbish garden tools organized by the Conservation Foundation ([www.conservationfoundation.co.uk](http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk)) was given to me by Elizabeth Ferro. The *Tool Shed Project*



involves "prisons and prisoners, teaching skills to them and giving them productive work while providing schools and community groups with tools many of them need and can't afford".

The project was initiated in HMP Wandsworth and has spread to prisons in Dartmoor, Wales, Northumberland and Edinburgh. HMP Edinburgh (Saughton) is the only one to have women prisoners refurbishing tools. The drop-off point for old and broken tools is Hopetoun Garden Centre (3 miles west of the Forth Road Bridge on A904), which incidentally offers Club members 10% discount on gardening items (on showing your membership card). The next tools giveaway at HMP Edinburgh is being planned for April.

### Thanks from Garden Solutions

The small family business from whom we order our spring compost and fertiliser requirements, and have them delivered right to our garden, sends thanks to all our members who recently placed an order with them. The total amount for the orders exceeded £1,100, and Garden Solutions look forward to hearing from us later in the year when we order our autumn / winter requirements. This is certainly a service that benefits both sides as they get our business and we have the goods delivered to where we want them. Billy Wheelan.

### Scottish Gardeners' Forum: Spring Newsletter

Available on our website, the newsletter contains:

Thoughts from Christopher Davies on the joys and trials of amateur dramatics, following from his role as *Wicked-Leeks* in the Club's Christmas Pantomime

Informed commentary on Hosta 'Andy Murray'

Articles for the Summer Newsletter are due by 1<sup>st</sup> May

Send to: [editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](mailto:editor@scottishgardenersforum.org.uk)

**Any Club member may contribute**

### Members' recipes Rhubarb and Strawberry Crumble

From Susan Plag

6-8 sticks of rhubarb  
piece of root ginger - grated  
large orange - grated rind and juice  
2 tablespoons of brown sugar  
punnet of strawberries - hulled and quartered

#### crumble topping

150g flour  
75g butter  
75g brown sugar  
50g chopped pecan nuts

Rub together butter and flour (or blitz in food processor), stir in sugar and chopped nuts

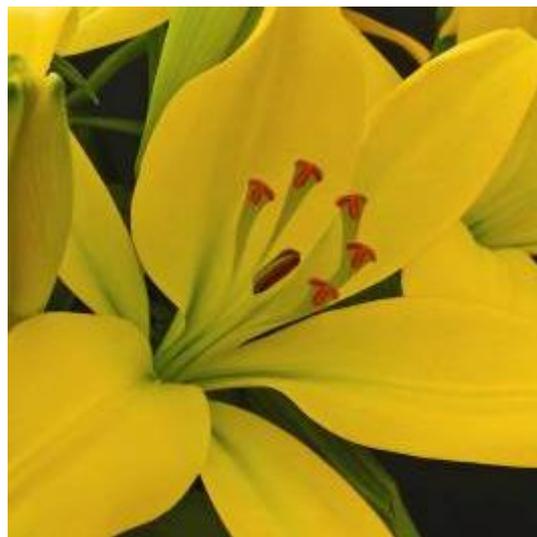
Chop the rhubarb into 3 inch lengths and place in a saucepan with grated ginger, rind and juice of an orange and 2 tablespoons of brown sugar. Poach until softened

Place in ovenproof dish, add strawberries and top with crumble

Bake for 25 - 30 minutes until golden brown

### Enigma of the stigma, or is it amen to the stamen?

Somehow this picture turned up in the *CGC Newsletter April 2014* folder, and appears to have been taken recently in a member's conservatory. No jiggery-pixelry was obvious on enlargement of the image. Could this coming Tuesday be relevant?



### Aquaponics – what goes around, comes around

Friends in Laramie, Wyoming sent Christmas greetings and news that the son-in-law's aquaponics business was progressing well. I was perplexed by the term 'aqua' as opposed to 'hydro' – Google to the rescue, yet again! **Aquatic** animals (e.g. fish or prawns) are raised in tanks and the waste water is fed into other tanks where the by-products are broken down by bacteria to nitrates / nitrites, which are utilized by plants in a **hydroponic** system. Finally, water is circulated back to the first tank. Red worms (*Eisenia foetida*) may also be included to reduce build-up of solids. So in essence we have a 'fish – bacterium / worm – plant circulator'.

Apparently the roots of this system are ancient – the Aztec Indians constructed *chinampas* – floating gardens enclosed by wattle fences that were fertilized by lake and canal sediments. Also, in many Far East countries, rice was grown in paddy fields together with fish such as carp, loach and swamp eel.

The Laramie system uses plant towers for efficient use of space and ease of replacement, and would be suitable for an adventurous Edinburgh gardener with a medium-sized greenhouse: for details and videos on this topic, see [www.brightagrotech.com](http://www.brightagrotech.com)



The fish used in the Laramie system is Tilapia, and to digress, along with sardine and barbel, it was the most commonly caught fish in the Sea of Galilee in Biblical times. Nile (picture) and Mozambique tilapias are widely used in aquaponics. The *Tilapia* genus was named in 1840 by the Scottish zoologist Andrew Smith, who corresponded extensively with Charles Darwin on matters of Evolution. Editor

**Format of Annual General Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April**

- 1. AGM** The minutes of the last AGM will be posted on the Club website and a few copies will be available on the night. The financial statement will be available to all at the meeting.
- 2. Refreshments including wine to accompany viewing of members' arts and crafts exhibits** All types of exhibit on a horticultural theme are invited - variety is the watchword! There will be a prize for the best exhibit. However, this activity is more artistic cum social than competitive, so don't hesitate to bring your work, large or small. Please address queries about display of items on the night to Margo Gilchrist (tel: 0131 441 7339)

**Gardening Scotland 2014**

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June  
 Venue: Royal Highland Centre Edin.

**Pallet Garden Competition**

Last year's medal-winning team is being encouraged to do it again. Any Club member wishing to be involved should contact Billy Wheelan: 0131 538 4965  
**as soon as possible**

**Outdoor Season Schedule 2014**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Tuesday<br/>6<sup>th</sup> May</b></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guided Rhododendron Walk at the Botanics</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A mini-outing starting at 2.30 pm; cost of £6, places are limited<br/>                 Contact: Susan Plag, Tel: 0131 441 7936, e-mail: <a href="mailto:smplag@gmail.com">smplag@gmail.com</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Monday<br/>19<sup>th</sup> May</b></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Evening Open Garden</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">By kind invitation of Anne Duncan at 'Rosculen', 1 Bonaly Road, EH13 0EA<br/>                 6.30 to 8 pm with wine and nibbles. Set your camera to macro for the lovely tulips</p>  |
| <p><b>Saturday<br/>21<sup>st</sup> June</b></p>      | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Open Gardens &amp; Plant Sale</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Three gardens, with short walks between them, are on view in the Bonaly area</p> <p>A. <b>Laverockdale House, 66 Dreghorn Loan</b> – Susan and Steve Plag.<br/>                 Walk up lane at top of Loan. <b>TEA &amp; COFFEE</b></p> <p>B. <b>7 Bonaly Crescent</b> (6 min walk) – Ann and Roger Dean. <b>PLANT SALE</b></p> <p>C. <b>The Cottage, Bonaly Tower</b> (10 min walk) – Anna Bostock. South under City By-Pass. We have also been kindly invited to tour the Tower policies</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please deliver plants for sale to the Deans' house by 9 am if possible<br/>                 - alternatively make a prior arrangement with a committee member<br/> <b>Please label plants with name and particular growing conditions</b></p> |
| <p><b>Saturday<br/>19<sup>th</sup> July</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Places full –<br/>                 reserve list open</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summer Outing</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">An outing by coach to three private gardens in Berwickshire and Peebleshire<br/>                 First stop is Lennel Bank in Coldstream – then a short drive to Anton's Hill (sandwich lunch provided) – on to Portmore, near Eddleston in the afternoon</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cost of £30 includes travel, morning coffee / tea, sandwich lunch, afternoon tea and admissions / tours</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Coach leaves Westgarth Ave at <b>9 am prompt</b>, returning by approx. 5.30 pm</p>  |

**Membership**

**New members are always welcome**  
 Contact the Membership Secretary  
 Colin Whitehead  
 21 Laverockdale Park  
 Edinburgh EH13 0QE  
[membership@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:membership@colintongardens.org.uk)

**Newsletter delivery**

If you do not receive your newsletter, please contact Bob Jones  
 Communications Officer / Editor  
**0131 445 2745**  
[publicity@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:publicity@colintongardens.org.uk)

**Website**

[www.colintongardens.org.uk](http://www.colintongardens.org.uk)  
 for details of Club activities, newsletters and photo gallery past and present  
 Webmaster: Sonia Duffv