

COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

www.colintongardens.org.uk

NEWSLETTER



No 120
November 2017

Coming soon...

Monday 27th
November 8 pm

Dreghorn Loan Hall

Growing Fruit
and Vegetables
at the Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Ben Dell

Edinburgh Botanics

Monday
11th December
7.45 for 8 pm

Christmas
Party

Entertainment and
refreshments

See p4 for further
details

Dear Members

Well, the summer really was a washout and now it's already time to put our gardens to sleep for the winter. Hedges are being clipped all over Edinburgh, piles of undergrowth removed to the tip as we can't possibly get it all into our brown bins and the general winding down after, in my case anyway, a rather disappointing summer season.



In the Garden Club, however, we had a very enjoyable Summer Outing at the end of July when our 57-seater charabanc went off to the Borders. We visited Newhall at Carlops with its huge walled garden, which was built about 1790. It has magnificent old trees and very attractive large pond and having been piped off the policies by the son of the house practicing for an afternoon wedding, we continued to Abbotsford. Another lovely walled garden and large lawn area where little groups of CGC members could be seen happily picnicking in the sunshine in all the nooks and crannies. We ended up at Merton, at St Boswell's, in a huge garden with a forest containing many unusual trees, a large rose garden, a very well preserved circular doocot dating back to 1567 and the River Tweed coasting placidly alongside. It was a most enjoyable day.



We had a successful Plant Sale on 7th October in St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church Hall. Many thanks to all members who brought their cuttings and plants along, and especially to Anne Dean and Elizabeth Ferro, who always come along to price and identify everything. We would be lost without their expertise. Alyson Kemp and Diana Ennos came with delicious cakes and jams for us to buy and take home

and the rest of us sold bulbs, served coffees, chatted to all and had a very pleasant morning.

After our miserable summer, I nipped off to Slovenia for five days hoping for a bit of sunshine. Slovenia is a delightful small state in western Former Yugoslavia. The capital, Ljubljana, is a smaller version of Prague and Salzburg with a fortress on a rock – and a funicular to get up to it. It is very laid back with very good restaurants and no stag or hen parties or hordes of 'youth' on segways bent on running you over and no loud music at every street corner. There was a huge farmers' market with a lot of very interesting produce and wonderful flowers, including the most enormous round hydrangea heads I have ever seen. Driving back to Salzburg on our way home, we went through some...

...wonderful alpine landscape. What struck me was the deciduous trees growing with the usual conifers right up to the treeline, making for glorious splashes of autumn golds and reds that look wonderful against the bright blue sky. There were not so many gardens to see, but of course a profusion of brightly coloured flowers mostly red geraniums, cascading from window boxes in all the lovely old wooden houses.



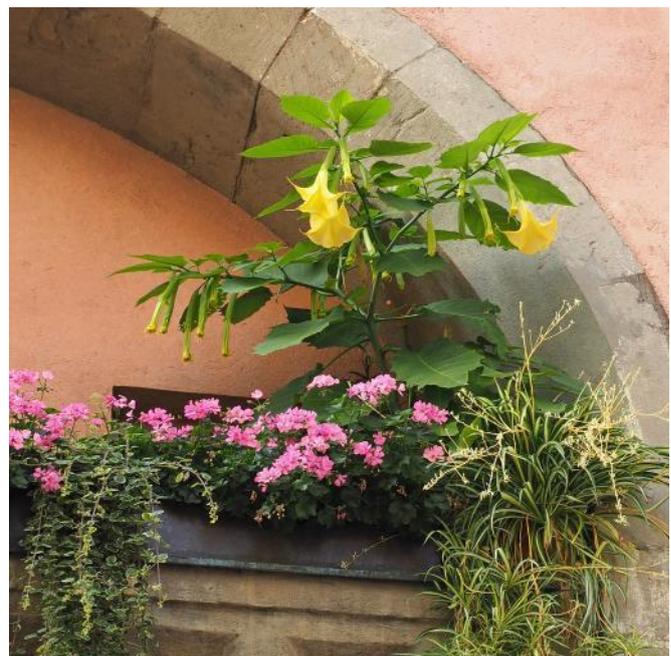
I recently visited the newly restored Japanese Garden at Cowden Castle near Dollar. It was termed 'The most Important Japanese Garden in the Western World' by Professor Jijo Suzuki in 1925. It was set up by Isabella Christie (1861-1949), a formidable lady whose achievements include travel to Samarkand and Khiva, India, Kashmir, Tibet, Malaya and Borneo and meeting the Dalai Lama. The garden has a very chequered history. It was open to the public and much

admired from 1920 up to the early sixties, when teenagers scaled the walls and trashed it, burning the pavilions and smashing up the stone lanterns and shrines. Now Isabella's great-niece Sarah Stewart has started restoring the once renowned garden. The lake has been dredged and the artifacts restored where possible and new planting is well underway with the help and advice of another Japanese Professor from Osaka University. This month the Japanese government announced a scheme to send Japanese gardening experts all over the globe to help to restore and maintain existing gardens that have fallen into disrepair, so it is to be hoped that our own Scottish garden will also benefit. We will organise an expedition to see it once restoration is more complete.

Elsbeth

In September, your Editor booked a last minute cruise on the Danube from Budapest to Nuremberg. The passengers mainly comprised US citizens with apparently not a single Trump supporter among them. Regensburg in SE Germany was very pleasant to walk around and in one side street we came upon a beautiful Brugmansia on a first floor balcony. It appeared to be *Brugmansia aurea* or Golden Angel's Trumpet. Native to tropical South America, the Brugmansia genus comprises seven species, each containing solanaceous alkaloids such as atropine and scopolamine. Shamans have been wont to self-medicate with a tea (Tonga) for its hallucinogenic effect, and to recommend to tribe members for its curative actions. However the alkaloid content varies considerably in all plant parts and with the seasons, thereby presenting risk of serious poisoning (see [wikipedia.org/wiki/Brugmansia](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brugmansia)). Do members grow any of the many cultivars now available? Contact the Editor to place photos on our website.

Continuing our east-European theme





Epiphyllum 'Honey Bear'
Disocactus phyllanthoides

Epiphyllum hybrids: lost and found

I took this photo of an orchid cactus in one of the research glasshouses in the Edinburgh Botanic, only to find that it was not listed in the Catalogue of the Living Collections database. After a little investigation, it became clear that many thousands of Epiphyllum hybrids are produced each year and that cactus enthusiasts are involved in recovering many that have been lost: see: sdepis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Forgotten-Epiphyllum-Hybrids.pdf. Epiphyllum hybrids (or *epis*) derive from the 7 genera in the cactus tribe Hylocereeae, particularly Disocactus, Pseudorhipsalis and Selenicereus. These plants are native to South American tropical rainforests and are epiphytic, growing in pockets of humus in trees. The flowers are borne on the stems, which are the main chlorophyll-based powerhouse. Experts assure us that Epiphyllums are extremely hardy and easy to grow. Editor

The sight and sound of Autumn Leaves

The ever-popular *Autumn Leaves* arose from a 1945 French song *Les feuilles mortes*. Over the years the composition has been recorded by many well-known artists: Edith Piaf, Doris Day, Andy Williams, Frank Sinatra, The Everly Brothers (and apparently 620 others). Why not hum a few bars as you gaze on these images of Autumn 2017.



Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset'



Cut-leaved Stag's Horn Sumach



...rustle, rustle...whisper, whisper...

Programme of events for 2017-18

Monday 27 November	Growing Fruit and Vegetables at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh by Ben Dell, RBGE
Monday 11 December	Christmas Party 7.45 for 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall
Monday 22 January	The Botanics Cottage – History in the remaking by Gerry Gallagher RBGE
Monday 26 February	Propagation by Clare Reaney, Dundee Botanic Garden
Monday 26 March	Members' Evening 3 short presentations - details later
Monday 23 April	Annual General Meeting and Display of Members' Work
A Monday evening in May	Evening Open Garden Details later
A Saturday in May / June	Local Open Gardens Details later
A Saturday in June / July	Summer Outing Details later

Monday meetings take place at 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall. Disabled access is available.

Magic, Mystery, Music,
Flora MacDonald, and a
Modicum of iMprovisation



Contact Chris Tongue to book places
(£10): christonge@yahoo.co.uk

Volunteers for Tree Planting

Would you be willing to help plant trees at Scotland's First World War Centenary Wood at Dreghorn in the Pentland Hills (EH13 9QR)?

Saturday 2nd December, 10.30 am–2 pm

While another 5000 trees is the **Woodland Trust's** goal in December, the work itself would be light to moderate and children are welcome. Booking is required so that adequate equipment may be provided; go to:

<https://woodlandtrusttickets.cloudvenue.co.uk/dreghorndecember>

Complete the form, specifying the number of FREE tickets you require. You will be sent a confirmatory e-mail – simply print off and bring with you on the day.

Newsletter Delivery

Not received your newsletter?
Contact Bob Jones
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0131 445 2745

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Club Website

For details of all Club activities
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www.colintongardens.org.uk

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