

COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

NEWSLETTER

www.colingtongardens.org.uk



No 122
April 2018

Coming soon...

Monday 23rd
April at 8 pm

Annual General
Meeting
&
Members'
Arts and Crafts
Evening

Evening
Garden Event

Open Gardens
and Plant Sale

Summer
Outing

See page 4
for details of
all events

Dear Club Members

The photo shows a common South Edinburgh scene during the massive snowfall that engulfed us at the end of February. Digging out a pathway four times on one day was perhaps a bit much but nonetheless achievable, but getting the car out was a non-starter. Neighbours with 4WDs offered to get any shopping required and the rest of us just stayed at home for a few days as most events were cancelled anyway – no opera, no Book Club, no golf, no Colinton Lit even, and no buses after 3pm. It was actually very pleasant to have the excuse to sit peacefully at home and read a book and endlessly watch the clip of the heroic Lothian bus driver Charmaine neatly swerving her double-decker round a skidding car on television.



The snow then departed, and all the snowdrops and crocuses which had been completely covered by a thick layer miraculously popped up again, seemingly none the worse for wear. It is quite amazing to see how these very delicate little flowers manage to survive as if nothing had happened. Despite a second visitation of bad weather and more snow, things seem to be improving and, most importantly, it is getting lighter and Spring seems finally to be on the way.



I was in London recently and went to the British Museum to see the exhibition 'Living with Gods', which showed objects of veneration and belief from across the world and throughout history. The explanatory labels were very interesting and the one describing a 14th century mosque lamp from Aleppo in Syria read: *Most accounts in over 4,000 faiths surviving or recorded worldwide acknowledge the importance of light and water to life. Darkness allows human fears and sorrows full rein whereas the certainty that the sun will always rise in the morning offers hope.*



'Natural religion' is practised by traditional societies in many parts of the world. In south-west China, the Miao people dress up for outdoor festivals to reinforce spiritual links with nature. This 'Hundred Bird Coat' celebrates the existence of birds and is embroidered all over with birds, insects and geometric patterns. "The birds are often seen as avatars linking the spiritual realms of the cosmos as they walk on land and fly into the sky".

Since the clocks have changed we have begun to enjoy more evening light and the birds have started singing again after such a hard winter. Once the sun appears, we all become inspired to get out into our gardens and start digging and planting again.

Happy gardening!

Elsbeth

What do we do with the leftovers?

This is not a culinary plea heard at one of our Autumn Fairs, but an enquiry about any remaining sad or very large plants. Last year a 'Christmas cactus' was pressed on me. It was wrinkled and dusty, but I nurtured it and lo and behold it turned out to be an attractive False Christmas Cactus, *Schlumbergera truncata* (the ends of the leafless green stems are squarish rather than pointed). In the past it has flitted around the taxonomy world (at least ten synonyms are known) before being assigned to *Schlumbergera* in 1953. Its flowers show bilateral symmetry (zygomorphism), having a single (vertical) mirror plane.

The reproductive structures are directed downwards - hence the reason why recently my wife found me lying on my back on the living room floor snapping away at the plant, which was precariously balanced on a makeshift diving board (hidden by the inset photo).

Typical of the *Schlumbergera* genus, the stamens are arranged in two series, the inner stamens forming a ring around the style and the outer ones arising from the floral tube.

Bob Jones



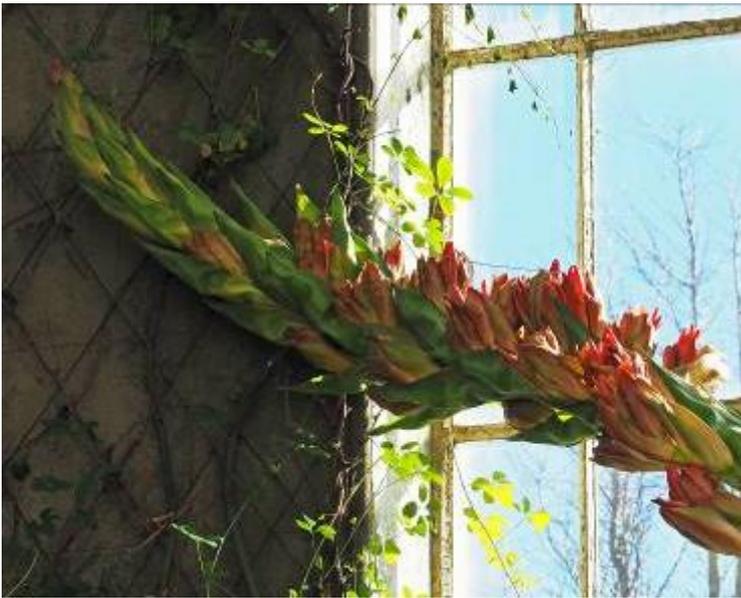
Your help is needed again at Gardening Scotland: 1st - 3rd June 2018

Volunteers are required to assist with stewarding and liaison duties. You will be offered **free entry**, travel expenses, special parking and refreshments...

...and snack meals while on duty. An obligatory pre-event briefing will be held at the show-ground. Anyone interested in being a volunteer should let Billy Wheelan know by Monday 23rd April (date of Club AGM). Tel: 538 4965 or bandfwheelan@yahoo.co.uk

Spear Lilies of Australia

Doryanthes, the sole genus in the Doryanthaceae family, contains just two species. A specimen of the first, *D. palmeri* (giant spear lily) recently received a strong press around Edinburgh when it flowered in the Botanics for the first time since it was planted some 60 years ago. The huge and colourful flower spike has taken up a recumbent position against a window in the Main Palm House with sunlight streaming in from behind. But why flower now? Well, it is rumoured that it received an unusually prolonged watering recently. It is endemic to Eastern Australia.



Upper section of flower spike of Doryanthes palmeri at RBGE



*Inflorescence of Doryanthes excelsa
(from Wikipedia Commons)*

The second species, *D. excelsa* (gymnea lily) is endemic to coastal areas of New South Wales near Sydney. Also with sword-like leaves its flower spike can grow to 6 metres, so high that the reddish-brown flower bracts often obscure its full beauty when viewed from the ground. Aboriginal tribes have used the roots and young stems as food and the fibrous leaves for brushes and matting.

The Cautioner's Tale

Club member Anona is frustrated by her experience of the photo-website *Pinterest*. She had limited her chosen topics to 4 areas of 'outdoor gardening' and this worked well for about three weeks. Then other *Pins* started to arrive, relevant at first, then more and more esoteric: 19 houseplants that clean indoor air; 10 questions to ask your beef farmer; 4-AGES model labyrinth and the Photon Knights Templar World... Her patience exhausted, she requested a shutdown of the account, only to be informed that this could take up to three weeks. More requests and months later, regular posts still litter her inbox usually under the header 'We found some *Pins* that we think might be right up your street': use of Listerine on orchids; kids indoor rock climbing walls; forearm tattoos for men... Chaucerian epithets failed to rectify the situation. Regressing, Anona has trimmed the edges of some primordial Basildon Bond and recharged her trusty Parker: *My Dear Monty, I write about my newly planted Pinus colada that is showing signs of...*



Upper left: A band of intrepid Knights enter the Gunnera forest in the Botanics

Members' Arts and Crafts Evening to accompany our AGM on 23rd April

You are invited to bring along items
of embroidery, quilting and tapestry,
paintings, photographs, bowls of bulbs, flower
arrangements, and the like

Any type / number of items is allowed, each with
a gardening / horticultural emphasis of course.
There are neither specific themes nor wooden
spoons - **so every reason to participate**

For further details and advice on displaying large
or unusual items, please contact Margo Gilchrist:
0131 441 7339 library@colintongardens.org.uk

New Club Officers required

The Club requires a member to take over the
post of **Publicity Officer** / Committee member.
Main duties include: preparation of copy (*Word*),
printing, and organization of delivery for 4
newsletters per year; preparation of posters for
meetings; attendance at Committee meetings.
The current officer also oversees AV matters at
meetings and takes relevant photos, but these
tasks could be assigned to other members.

More urgently, we require a **Webmaster** (not
necessarily a Committee member) to succeed
Sonia Duffy; see website for scope of the work
involved. Contact the Chair or a committee
member should you feel that you could help.

Outdoor Summer Schedule 2018

Contact Susan Plag: 0131 441 7936; events@colintongardens.org.uk

Tuesday 8 May	Evening Garden Event A visit to Kevock Garden, 16 Kevock Road, Lasswade EH18 1HT at the invitation of Stella Rankin. Plant stall & on-line catalogue. Refreshments served. £5 per head. Own transport - lifts can be arranged. Park alongside the wall at no 14 6.30 pm start. Contact Bryan Dale to book - treasurer@colintongardens.org.uk
Saturday 2 June	Open Gardens & Plant Sale We have been kindly invited to visit the following gardens: 10 am to 12 noon 1. Robin and Gail Aston, 1 Spylaw Park . Plant sale here 2. Morag and Lawrence Marshall, 14 Spylaw Park . Teas served here 3. David and Maggie Robinson, 16 Gillespie Road . Park on Pentland Ave Please deposit plants at the Astons' house from 9 to 9.30 am on the day
Saturday 7 July	Summer Outing A whole day outing to two gardens in East Fife. Firstly Cambo, where we will have coffee and scones on arrival (new visitor centre / café) followed by a garden tour. You may buy lunch in the café or bring a picnic lunch. Then we will visit Teasses Estate (SE of Ceres) where the Head Gardener will conduct a tour. It is an hour's drive back to Colinton (toilet on coach). We depart Westgarth Avenue at 9.00 am PROMPT , returning around 5 pm

Newsletter Delivery

Not received your newsletter?
Contact Bob Jones, Publicity Officer
0131 445 2745
publicity@colintongardens.org.uk

Club Website

For details of all Club activities
and contact addresses
Webmaster : Sonia Duffy
publicity@colintongardens.org.uk

Membership enquiries – contact Jo Todd, Membership Secretary
membership@colintongardens.org.uk