



# COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

**Newsletter  
No 132  
October 2020**

*Publicity Officer Anne Siller has been photographing the flowers in her garden recently – here are some of the results...*



*Dear Members,*

This is an extra Newsletter just to keep us all in touch. I hope you are well and thriving. It seems to be Autumn already – where did Summer go? After a perfectly wonderful Spring we have had a washout August with heavy downpours and flooding in many areas caused by storms Ellen and Frances. So much for summer and, as it now also officially over, we can start looking ahead to the pre-winter clearing back of our plants and tidying up our gardens and the never ending sweeping up of leaves which occupies so much time.



As you know, our planned autumn programme has been cancelled due to Covid-19, because we are unable to access the Loan Hall for our meetings. It is with great regret that we have now also taken the decision to cancel our Plant Sale which was scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Anne Siller's driveway. We checked the Scottish government rules for public gatherings and at this stage those such as the Plant Sale are prohibited and there has been a tightening of the rules for all public gatherings. However, the good news is that we will still be selling the bulbs, which we have ordered from Parker's as usual. This will now be done online, and we have enclosed a separate page with the list of bulbs available, and instructions for purchases.

I had a mail from Sarah Raven's garden centre recently, and she is always ready with good ideas. She suggests creating a display of spring bulbs by layering bulbs one on top of another in what the Dutch call a 'Bulb Lasagne'. The largest and latest flowering bulbs go in deepest, moving up to the smallest and earliest flowering bulbs on the top layer. Done like this, she says you need to plant the bulbs slightly further apart than you would in a pot with a single layer so one to one and a half inches apart is the right sort of spacing. The first layer can go as deep as 11-12 inches down at the bottom of the pot. Then cover them over with a couple of inches of potting compost, before you place the next layer of bulbs. She suggests tall tulips for the bottom layer, then perhaps medium sized tulips or hyacinths in the middle, and then miniature iris or narcissus or crocus bulbs as the top layer covered with a layer of compost (see photo on page 2). If anyone tries this, do take a photo and we can put it on the website to be admired.

Otherwise, can I remind you that you all remain Members of the Club and your membership will roll over until we are in a position to start our activities again. No subscriptions will be taken for the Club year 2020/2021.

Also, very importantly, we still are looking for a Club Secretary to replace Susan

*/PTO*

**CGC 2020 – a COVID Compliant Bulb Sale**  
**Full details of how to order your Spring bulbs safely for next year are provided with this newsletter. Please note that your order must be received by the Bulb Officer by Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 so please act now!**

*/continued from first page*

McMaster. This involves taking the minutes of Committee Meetings, making Hall Bookings for Meetings and working with the Chairperson to draw up the Agenda for Committee Meetings. The Committee will be delighted to welcome you!

We would also like to bring a couple of so called 'floaters' on board to join the Committee and do odd jobs and help out at events, and subsequently take over one of the Committee roles as and when an officer stands down. We hold Committee Meetings five times a year.

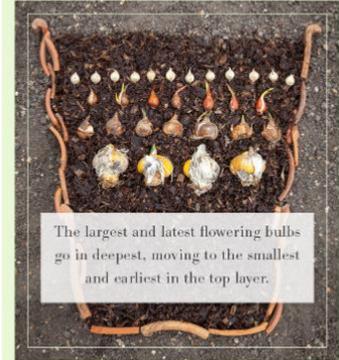
I know that I keep on and on asking you all about these matters, but that is my job and we must think of the future of the Club. Please think about helping out, especially our newer members, and join us on the Committee.

With best wishes for an enjoyable autumn, with plenty of sunshine and above all, stay safe.

**Elspeth**

### What is a bulb lasagne?

The concept of layering up your bulbs one on top of another, to give you a succession of blooms.



The largest and latest flowering bulbs go in deepest, moving to the smallest and earliest in the top layer.

[Learn more >](#)

### **How compostable is so called "Compostable plastic"?**

There's been a bit of a trend for plastics to be labelled as "compostable", or "garden compostable", to make them sound rather more eco-friendly; and to distinguish them from the wicked plastics that take hundreds or thousands of years to 'decompose'. Such labels can be seen on eg plastic wrappers around magazines, crisp packets, and, sometimes on such things as disposable coffee cups etc. Is this just a touchy-feely catch-phrase, or are they really 'garden compostable'? This was the theme of a talk at the Cheltenham Science Festival held virtually a few months ago. Mark Miodownik, Materials Science Professor at UCL (and Director of the UCL Plastic Waste Innovation Hub), and project officer Danielle Purkiss gave an online presentation about The Big Composting Experiment, a citizens' composting research project, which they are co-ordinating.

The highlight of the talk was 'a big reveal', where citizen composter Lesley Greene, opened her dalek compost bin live on air, to see what results she has had with potato starch wrappers, compostable crisp wrappers etc. The presentation is on: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoRBjeV9\\_d8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoRBjeV9_d8) It starts some way in, so skip to 1 hour 58 minutes. The presentation lasts until 2:37 (about 40 minutes).

It seems that Lesley was only brewing the compost for 3 months, which isn't very long. Maybe rather longer is required. But what does it break down into? Ever smaller and smaller micro plastics? I found it potentially interesting; but am by no means convinced by the claims on the tin, as it were. I wonder if any Colinton Garden Club members have tried composting such plastics, and with what results?

**Murdo McEwan**

***Some of your committee participating in a socially distanced committee meeting on a sunny evening in July 2020...they are from left to right – Jon Gibson (Treasurer elect), Ian Ford (Hall Officer elect), Brian Dale (Outgoing Treasurer) and Susan Plag (Outgoing Programme Convener).***



**Green Tomato Chutney Recipe.**

A useful way to use up all those tomatoes that refuse to ripen! The main ingredients are green tomatoes, onions, apples and sultanas, sugar and vinegar. All other ingredients can be mixed and matched according to taste and whatever's in your stock cupboard! Quantities are variable, but 2 kg of tomatoes, 1kg fruit, and 4 or 5 large onions will fill about 6 jars.

- 2 kgs green tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 4 large - 6 small chopped apples. If using cooking apples (best) peel them first.
- 4 large - 8 small chopped onions. Shallots are okay if you can be bothered peeling them!
- 1/2 kg sultanas or raisins. (chopped dates are a really tasty addition too)
- 500 gms soft brown sugar (dark muscovado gives a richer flavour)
- 750ml vinegar (I prefer cider vinegar, but pickling or white wine vinegar is fine too)
- several garlic cloves - peeled and crushed
- small piece of ginger root - fresh, peeled and grated (a wee teaspoon of ground dried ginger would do, but there's nothing like fresh ginger to give you a lift!)
- A heaped tablespoon of other mixed spices - eg chilli flakes, nutmeg, allspice, mustard seeds, pickling spice, coriander seeds, peppercorns, cayenne etc.
- 1 tsp salt.
- A squeeze of lemon or orange juice if you think the mixture is too dry
- (Optional) finely chopped green or red pepper - or even celery - if you have some to use up.

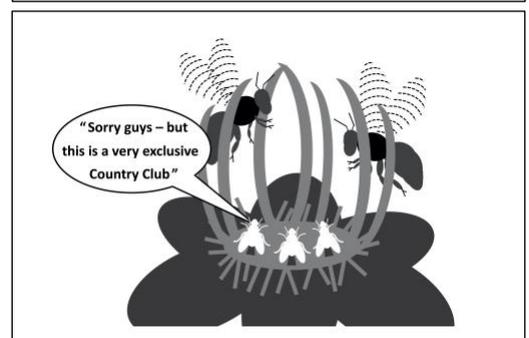
**Method**

Heat half the vinegar in a wide, heavy bottomed saucepan. Add the spices, tomatoes, apples, pepper, onions and garlic. Stir and simmer for 20 minutes until softened. Add the remaining ingredients and stir well. Cook the mixture (gently bubbling) for an hour or so, stirring now and again, until the chutney has thickened. (it should be thick enough to spoon, soft but not dry, juicy but not runny). Transfer the hot chutney into hot, sterilised jars. Ensure the lids are also sterilised and airtight. The longer the chutney is left to mature (it should be good by Christmas) the better the flavour will be.

**'All that glitters is not gold'**

**Bob Jones writes (June 2020)...**For several weeks (now the orange-yellow flowers of a Chinese Globeflower (*Trollius chinensis*) have been lighting up our front garden (pic right above). It is a 'Golden Queen' or 'Goldkonigin' cultivar, which thrives in the cool shelter of the garden wall and two large shrubs. The *Trollius* genus belongs to the Buttercup Family, which includes buttercup, clematis, columbine, and delphinium. There are around 30 species, which are native to cool temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. They prefer wet heavy soils.

The outer petals are clearly designed to attract to pollinating insects - is this also the main function of the ring of slim inner petals? It is thought not - indeed they play a key role in the plant's complex pollination system (see right below). Many *Trollius* species are exclusively pollinated by seed-eating flies of the *Chiastocheta* genus. The adult fly carries out the pollination and at the same time lays eggs in the centre of the flower. The juvenile larvae develop by consuming a considerable portion of the growing seeds. The petal cage allows the passage of the tiny flies, while preventing entry of larger pollinators, such as bumblebees. Plant and pollinator derive exclusive and mutual benefit from this arrangement.



**Contacting CGC committee members via e-mail – 2020/21**

- General enquiries - [info@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:info@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Committee Chair: Elspeth MacGregor - [chair@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:chair@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Secretary: *position vacant*
- Treasurer: Jon Gibson - [treasurer@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Membership Secretary: Jo Todd - [membership@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:membership@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Programme Convenor: Susan McMaster - [events@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:events@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Library & Liaison Officer: Murdo McEwan - [library@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:library@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Fertiliser/Bulb Orders: Liz Windle - [bulbs@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:bulbs@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Implement Loans: Anne Siller - [implements@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:implements@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Publicity: Anne Siller - [publicity@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:publicity@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Hall Officer: Ian Forder - [hall@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:hall@colintongardens.org.uk)
- IT & Equipment Officer: Ken Whitson - [it-officer@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:it-officer@colintongardens.org.uk)
- Other committee members: Elizabeth Emblem, Barbara Murray
- Webmaster/ Newsletter Editor: Alasdair Ferguson – [webmaster@colintongardens.org.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@colintongardens.org.co.uk)

More of Anne's photos (see also page 1 & website)



The CGC website has featured many photos taken over the summer by our members – here are two of them:

**Colinton Garden Club Loan Equipment is still available!**

The following items can be borrowed by e-mailing [\*\*implements@colintongardens.org.uk\*\*](mailto:implements@colintongardens.org.uk)

Electrical Items (Each item *must* be used with a circuit breaker)

- Large Lawn Scarifier with moss collector & extension lead (Wolf-Garten)
- Small Lawn Scarifier (Qualcast)
- Leaf Blower / Vac / Mulcher (Ryobi)
- Leaf Blower/ Vac (Flymo)
- Extension Cable
- RCD adapter socket (Earth Leakage Trip)

Other Items

- Large (manual push) rotary Lawn Leaf Sweeper
- Tree Pruning Saw with long extension handle
- Tree Pruning Saw / Lopper with telescopic handle
- Tree Pruning Lopper with stiff telescopic handle
- Turfing Iron
- Lawn Aerator – hollow tine
- Lawn Aerator – rotary spike
- Small (hand held) seed / fertiliser spreader
- Soil pH Measuring Kit
- 3 Folding Tables (suitable for garden parties)

**Colinton Garden Club website: [www.colintongardens.org.uk](http://www.colintongardens.org.uk)**

*The CGC website is regularly updated to reflect what is happening in the club. Although we are not able to meet at present, we have many photos of meetings, parties and outings on the website which will remind us all of the many happy activities we enjoyed over the years. Just look for 'Photo Gallery' at the top of the website homepage. Over the summer of 2020 we have received many photos of members' gardens during lockdown – well worth a look - and of course you will always find the latest up-to-date news about the Club on the website.*