



COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 155 - SEPTEMBER 2026



**Chairman
Jon Gibson**

Remember...
check the Club website
for detailed information
on events, photographs,
and previous editions
of the Newsletter



If you have stories or any images that you would like to share, **Editor Kath** will be delighted to hear from you. Please send within an email or as an attached Word document and not as a PDF.

Deadline for the
next issue is
Friday 5th February 2027

Dear Members

Scorchio!!

About five years ago, a group of us at the New Melville Bridge Club were chatting to a newly joined member who had moved up from Cambridge. He was explaining that he and his wife had decided to move near Edinburgh because of the weather down south. As it was a particularly damp and cold Edinburgh autumn day at the time, we all fell about laughing, wondering if he had lost his marbles and asking why anyone would move up here for the weather. And yet, after this summer, I can see that he was right!

Any doubters about climate change occurring in our lifetime will surely have been convinced of its reality by the weather in 2026 - particularly if you reside in the South of England. Our conservatory thermometer even managed to record a reading greater than 50 degrees, before switching itself off.

However, here in Colinton, we escaped most of the extremes of this summer and, as I write this in the first week of September, a glimpse of sunshine and blue skies would be most welcome. Our lawn is slowly greening up and losing the unfamiliar light brown colour, and our new pond, plus our resident frog, seems to have survived. We therefore are looking forward to what the weather gods have in store for us next!

The Club remained busy during the summer months and we were blessed with great weather for all our planned events. The **Evening Reception** was held on Monday 25th May at Campbell Park, courtesy of Friends of Campbell Park and Shona Harrower, our indefatigable Membership Officer who organised our visit. CGC Members were able

to see the orchard, including our apple tree which is developing nicely, and has also survived the ingress of uninvited 'travellers'. Jonathan Davey gave us a tour of recent developments, including the installation of various nesting boxes and pointed out the Yellow Rattle seedlings which some of us had nurtured during winter and early spring.



The Open Gardens and Plant Sale was held on Saturday 20th June. Thanks go to Avril Scott and Helen Moyes for opening their gardens for our Members to visit, particularly as Helen had only recently moved house – a great effort. Avril hosted the refreshments in her garden, and the plant sale was held on the drive 'chez nous' (above). There are more photos on p3.

Thanks also go to all the volunteers who helped with these events, which support our Club and bring income into our funds.

More than forty Club Members went on the summer coach trip and visit to **Abbotsford House**, the home of Sir Walter Scott, which included a guided tour of the lovely gardens by their Gardener, and a self-guided tour of the House. Once again we had wonderful

Continued...

weather and successfully managed to bring back everyone who had gone on the trip, which is always a good thing! A special mention goes to the staff at Abbotsford and driver Lorna of William Hunter Coaches, for making it such a memorable day.

The **AGM** was held at Dreghorn Loan Hall on Monday 27th April 2026, where I reviewed the past year's activities. Highlights included the introduction of **CGC Gardeners' Question Time**, the **New Members' Evening** and the **Christmas Party** at the Bowling Club - all of which will take place once again as upcoming events.

Let us hope that our next year is as successful as 2025-26 has been, and that we continue to survive, whatever meteorological challenges are thrown at us!

Jon Gibson, Chairman

TIME TO GET YOUR GARDENS READY

The compost orders have been sent to Garden Solutions and you should receive your orders before the end of September - this is a good time for you to get your garden ready for the Winter months.

We have been fortunate not to have experienced the extreme heat that affected other parts of the country. The saying "you reap what you sow" comes to mind for me. I scarified the back grass but decided the front grass would be okay for another year. That was a bad decision, as the difference was like night and day. The back was nice and green, regardless of the weather, and the front was a disaster. The scarifier will definitely be used in the Spring.

I have already ordered bulbs from Parker Bulbs for our **Plant & Bulb Sale** in October to guarantee delivery, as timing is important. The plant sale is always a popular event with our Members and great fun. Any queries about compost, or your order, just let me know.

Email: purchasing@colintongardens.org.uk

Margo Gilchrist, Purchasing Officer



FOR THE LOVE OF LOVAGE

or to give it its Latin name...*Levisticum officinale*

There are probably some plants out there that don't enjoy universal popularity and sometimes it can be difficult to understand why. Very possibly Number 1 on that list might be **Lovage**. Have you heard of it? Have you seen it? Have you tasted it? Do you grow it?

My personal feelings about this plant are...what's not to love about Lovage? It is thought to have some very powerful medicinal qualities as well. Maybe that is why the Romans thought Lovage was important enough to bring roots of the plant with them on their - partial - conquest of Britain.

In Italy it is referred to as *sedano di monte*, or mountain celery. Packed with Vitamin C, it contains quercetin, a plant pigment with both anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties. The entire plant is edible, from root to tip, and has a bright, fresh flavour that tastes a bit like citrusy celery. It can be eaten raw in salads or added to fish and chicken dishes.

It's also hardy, fuss-free and re-seeds readily, but does not become invasive. The plant will die back in autumn, so the wood-like stalks should be gathered up and put in the brown bin, then soil raked over the roots.



Lovage seed heads

But come Spring, you would be amazed at how fast it grows! Once its little shoots start to re-emerge, it will finish up at a height of more than two metres after about nine weeks. Just take a look at these photos...from my garden of course! If anyone would like some of the root to plant your own garden, just get in touch.

Editor Kath

17th April



23rd May



10th June



22nd June



OPEN GARDENS DAY & PLANT SALE

On a beautiful June day, three of our Members opened their gardens for us to explore - and they were all so very interesting and beautiful.



COLINTON GARDEN CLUB EVENTS

2026 / 2027

- **Sep 28th / Talk: Sandra Goodswen: Weeds? Garden plants that spread too well.** Sandra is from Haddington and her interests are wide-ranging, from horticulture and architecture, to rural trades of Britain
- **Oct 10th / Bulb & Plant Sale / 10am - 12noon** St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton
- **Oct 26th / Talk: Keith Brand: Rise of the Phoenix - Restoration of a disused allotment.** Keith is from Burntisland and, as a qualified Agronomist, has spent more than 30 years advising farmers on growing a range of crops
- **Nov 23rd / CGC Gardeners' Question Time**
- **Dec 17th / CGC Christmas Party**
- **Jan 25th / Talk: Dr Penny Watson: Plants that Heal, Help or Harm.** Our very own former Lady Chairman is a keen gardener and also an expert on horticulture
- **Feb 22nd / CGC Members' Evening.** The Guest Speakers will be announced in due course
- **Mar 22nd / Talk: Benedict Bate from The Woodland Trust.** The Woodland Trust is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity. Their vision is a world where woods and trees thrive for people and nature
- **Apr 26th / AGM Colinton Garden Club**

CGC meetings take place at 8pm in Dregghorn Loan Hall, Colinton, EH13 0DE, unless otherwise stated.

Members will receive further information about events or future outings by email.



Did you know the names of these plants?

1. Euphorbia Crown-of-thorns
2. Tecoma Yellow Bells
3. Agave Americana
4. Prickly Pear
5. Papaya
6. Dragon Fruit

Many thanks to Penny Watson for her photos



FROM THE LIBRARIAN...Murdo McEwan

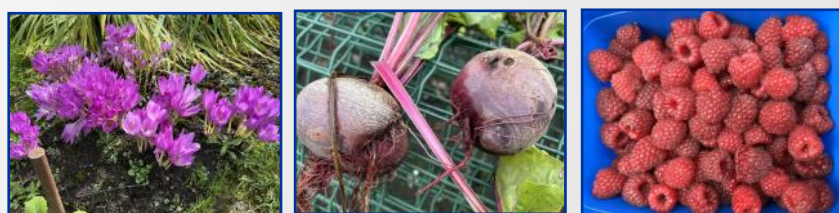
As CGC's Librarian in Residence, I provide a selection of gardening books at the evening talks which you are welcome to borrow.

Also, there is an assortment of recent-ish gardening magazines which have been kindly donated by Members ~ do help yourself. This initiative depends on those kind donations, so if you can help too, that will be very much appreciated. I usually have a similar arrangement with swapping unwanted, but in-date, packets of seeds, though I may not have this at the Members' meeting in September.

I would also remind you of our Club membership of **Tendershoots** through which you can view a selection of online talks/discussions, and get discounts on purchases of seeds, membership of Historic Houses, and other assorted money-off offers. Just visit...

Tender Shoots Garden Club Network – Zoom gardening club open to anyone, especially novices for further details. (CGC Committee Members have the password to access the Members' tab on the website).

Meanwhile, as for my own gardening efforts, this year's sweetcorn is all slowly ripening, but it looks likely to be the Year of the Autumn Crocus (Autumn already?!) along with magnificent beetroot and raspberries, both harvested very recently.



SOLSTICE STREET PARTY IN SUPPORT OF REDHALL GARDEN

SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

A Summer Solstice Street Party has taken place in Redford Loan for the last seven years, and this year £1,046 was successfully raised from generous neighbourly donations. There was also superb food and drink provided by the organising team. Each year a charity is selected to receive the Solstice Party donation and Redhall Garden, just off the Lanark Road, was this year's choice. It is a gem of a place, almost hidden away, yet providing a beautiful, nurturing and therapeutic space where people can take part in gardening work, chat with friends, or simply sit back and enjoy.

Editor Kath



Redhall Garden



RETURNING TO CULZEAN

I was born in Ayrshire, but left the West of Scotland to live in Edinburgh when I was 22.

As a family, in the 1950s and 1960s we visited many places in the West of Scotland at the weekend in our two-tone blue Wolseley - they included Ayr, Troon, Largs and even the odd trip by ferry to Arran and Rothesay. But my favourite trip was, without doubt, to Culzean Castle just south of Ayr. Its stunning position on the cliffs looks out over to Arran, the Mull of Kintyre and, on a really clear day, County Antrim in Northern Ireland.

I hadn't been there for more than 20 years, so I visited Culzean once again in early August this year. It brought back lots of memories and I was particularly taken with the wonderful walled garden. Being wafted by the Gulf Stream meant that relatively exotic plants can be grown there, but I am afraid they would not survive in the foothills of the Pentlands.

Now owned by the National Trust for Scotland, the 240 acre Culzean Country Park contains a walled garden, several estate buildings, a playground, a large pond, woodland and cliff-top walks and, of course, the historic Castle. Built between 1777 and 1792, Culzean Castle is also reputed to be the home of at least seven ghosts. Such a fascinating visit.

Alasdair Ferguson



A lovely, happy occasion was celebrated in June, with cake, drinks, poetry, the raising of prayer flags, and a rendition of the Gaelic Blessing, sung by a small choir. The sun shone and everyone enjoyed a blether in the beautiful garden and orchard area. Scott Arthur MP is seen below, under the prayer-flag arch, with Shona Harrower and Ally Price.



PLANT AND BULB SALE

The annual Plant and Bulb Sale will take place on the morning of **10th October, from 10am to 12noon** at St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue.

Not only will there be the very popular bulb stall, but also on sale will be house and garden plants, garden accessories, jams, chutneys and marmalade, as well as tea and coffee.

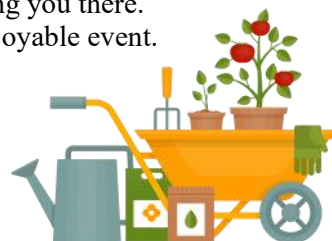
Donations please!

We need plants, plant pots, seed trays, cloches and any other 'useful gardening stuff' to make it a success.

Please bring them to St Cuthbert's Hall on **Friday 9th October, 6pm - 7pm** or on Saturday morning after 9am.

Look forward to seeing you there. It is always a very enjoyable event.

Mary Davey



THE YELLOW RATTLE GROWING CHALLENGE



My sincere thanks go to the Garden Club Members who took part, last Winter and this Spring, in growing Yellow Rattle plugs. It was no small undertaking. Yellow Rattle (*Rhianthus minor*) is always a challenge to raise in modules, and is generally best established by direct sowing on the site where you want this semi-parasitic plant to grow.



As mentioned in the May issue of the CGC Newsletter, last Autumn, volunteers carried out some direct sowings of park-saved Yellow Rattle seed in Campbell Park, with help from pupils at Kaimes School. Because seeds were collected late in the season, we were uncertain about its viability, so decided to supplement those sowings by planting plug-plants this Spring. Ten CGC Members kindly rose to the challenge and grew module-raised plants for us in time for planting.

Yellow Rattle needs a prolonged period of cold during winter before it will germinate and, once it does, the young roots must feed off grass roots in order for them to become properly established. It is a demanding process. Some CGC Members had success, others less so, but what mattered most was that everyone gave it a go. Collectively, around 80 plugs were large enough to plant out in mid-May. These were sown, with the help of a Duke of Edinburgh student, in a small (now colourful) patch at the east end of the wild-flower meadow, near the children's play area.

Despite the unusually high temperatures and low rainfall in June and July this year, a moderate number of plugs were established and went on to flower and set seed. The real test of all your efforts will come next Spring, when we hope to see a stronger emergence of Yellow Rattle across the patch.

Jonathan Davey



Hovering around...



In between bouts of wet and windy weather, the hoverflies are working overtime on our Hybrid Asters. Above left is a Common Banded Hoverfly, *Syrphus ribesii*, and on the right, an Eristalis Drone-fly, possibly *E. pertinax*.

Bob Jones



Allot-of success!

Ian McKee showing off just a couple of triumphs from his allotment! On the right, wife Penny is pictured hard at work there.

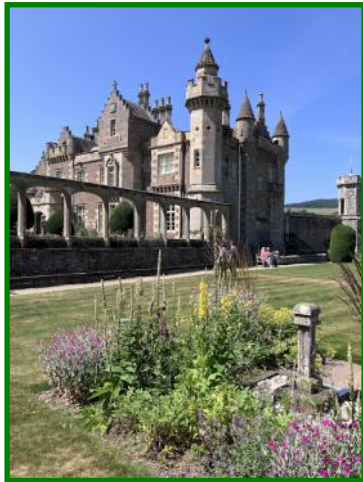


I was surprised to learn that there are the best part of 2,000 allotments spread across Edinburgh. Most are within Edinburgh City Council's remit, but some are privately owned. Recently, I also discovered the wonderful and extensive Lauriston Farm, pictured right, a huge 100 acres site, stretching from Lauriston Castle all the way to the banks of the River Forth. If you've not been there, it's certainly worth a visit.

On the left are a couple of photos, provided by Penny, from the 5th and 6th September meeting of the (FEDEGA) Saughton Park & Garden Annual Show and, once again, some of their Members clearly know how to show off!

Editor Kath





CGC Summer Outing to Abbotsford House & Gardens

