



WEST OF SCOTLAND ROCK GARDEN CLUB

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NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2021

Dear friends,

Predictably, all 2021 Spring shows in Scotland (and the joint ones in England) are cancelled. Therefore the 'Shows and Events' booklet will not be printed this year but more detail regarding this will be available in 'Dryas' enclosed with the January journal. The SRGC AGM is being held via Zoom on Saturday 20 February at 10am (see 'Dryas') and our President requests that as many members as possible attend. A decision about Autumn events is being deferred until later in the year and, if they are to go ahead, schedules would be included in the July edition of 'Dryas'. Meantime, the West of Scotland Rock Garden Club has three more Zoom meetings arranged:

Monday 11 February - Jeanie Jones - "365 Days in my Garden"

Monday 8 March - Sandy Leven - "A Walk in the Cape"

Monday 12 April - Peggy Anderson - "The Himalayas: Plants, Places and People"

Winter in a West Kilbride garden

A friend who has a splendid one acre garden makes a note each Christmas Day of what is in flower. The definition of being in flower is that stamens have to be visible. This year he reached 104 over the Christmas week! I strolled round my very modest West Kilbride garden on Christmas Day to look for plants in bloom and got to 11 species with 17 different flowering plants. The flowers fell into two groups: tattered remains of summer flowering plants and those you might hope to see in Winter. The summer remnant included a climbing rose (Ginger Syllabub) which had had a severe pruning earlier in the year and had got its time clock in a fankle, a Dianthus, a Campanula, Schizostylis and a Tulbaghia.

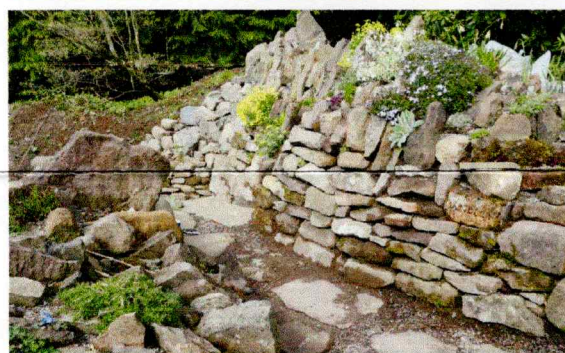
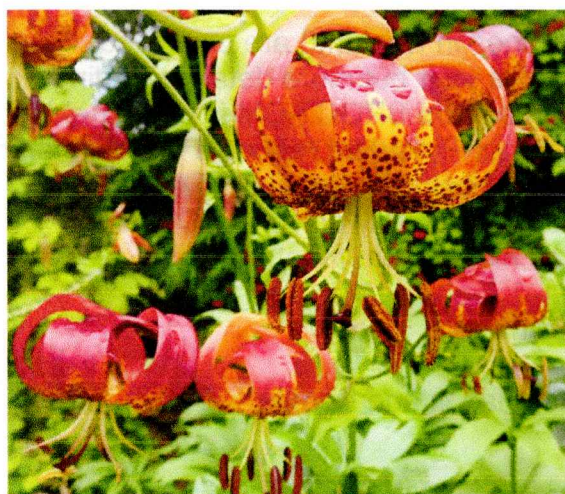
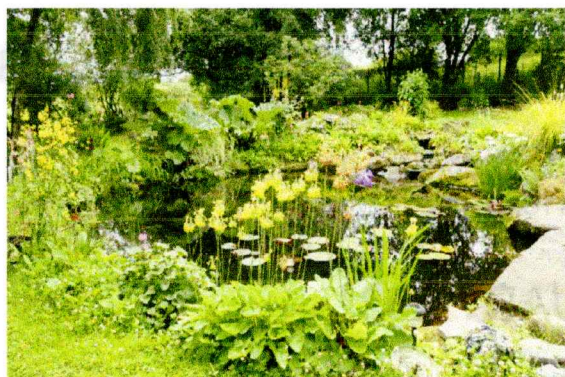


One lone crocus was in flower as well as the first flowers on the Chaenomeles. Clematis cirrhosa Freckles grows against a west facing wall and has had more flowers this year than ever before. You do have to contort yourself a bit to get the full benefit of the intensely speckled flowers which hang down modestly - unlike the leafy growth which pops up in unexpected places. The first of my Hellebores to flower is a very dusky plum coloured one which normally starts to open in February: it was well flowered on Christmas Day, perhaps as a result of the long hours of sunshine in the first lockdown? The advice is that the old foliage should be removed to reveal the new flowers but the foliage also provides some protection for the buds. As I suspect that Winter has not yet done its worst, I have left the foliage for just now. Cyclamen coum is a delight at this dark time of year with its glowing colours - I counted five different varieties but the birds have long tossed the labels aside.



And as a footnote, in the sunshine of a January afternoon, I noticed the first flower on Olsynium douglasii!

Alison Ward (Convenor)



As the Covid storm clouds loomed in March, Jan and I were returning from a family visit to England and we stopped off at Kendal to attend the last pre-lockdown AGS/SRGC Show. I bought more plants to add to the vast array sitting waiting for permanent homes. The next few months at home were then spent finding spots around the garden, and planting up the new rock garden (see pic) - at least until Jan moved me on to repainting the roughcasting on the house! I haven't been visiting Rock Garden Club events, so enforced time in the garden has allowed me to attack the horrible annual Willow Herb and perennial creeping buttercup which usually take over. If I don't weed out the buttercup by Easter, it grows legs and spreads like an octopus everywhere. By June, the pond was looking good with plenty of primulas out (see pic), and this went some small way to compensate for the abrupt cancellation of my eagerly-anticipated June return trip to China. One of the other highlights was seeing many flowers on a nice *Lilium speciosum rubrum* which I bought on impulse in Dobbies in autumn 2019 (see pic). I have learned that zooming is not just something for children.

Our Group has led the way in proving that online talks are possible and increasing attendance is proof of that. If you haven't attended an online meeting, then ask one of the committee for guidance. It is a breath of fresh air and sanity to help us through a dark and difficult time.

Richard Green (Committee member)

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley".

I think the above quotation from Robert Burns sums up my gardening this summer. When the first lockdown started I made great plans for what I would do with all the time I would be able to spend in the garden. However, I blame the weather for not achieving my ambitious early goals! It was just too good. I spent more time than I budgeted for just relaxing and enjoying the garden rather than buckling down to some of the hard work. But I did have some achievements. I converted about 8 fish boxes into troughs of varying sizes and planted them up only to have lumps pecked out of them by the pair of Oystercatchers that nest every year on our carport roof! I also completed the excavation of an old alpine raised bed which had become very compacted and drained poorly. This involved digging down about 2 feet, disposing of the old gritty soil, replacing it with new washed pea gravel and planting it up and since this was the first thing I tackled we were able to enjoy the results as you can see in the photo. Some of the plants that did well in the raised beds and troughs included *Linums*, *Edrianthuses*, *Armerias*, *Aethionemas*, *Helianthemums*, *Globularias* and *Saxifrages*. I am glad to say that when the weather changed I managed to get most of the other planned tasks completed so all was not lost.

Kathleen Cartwright (committee member)

