

Newsletter

Friends
of
Botanic
Gardens
Forum
UK



Dear all,

I am writing this contribution to our second newsletter looking out over my garden. Definitely an autumnal view – light drizzle (it is dreich!) but lit up by the burnished red hues on the *Acer griseum* and the blue gentians which have been stalwardly flowering for the last six weeks. The presence of the *Acer griseum* brings to mind the role of BGs in conservation – and indeed this species is endangered in its native habitat in China. My tree is young compared with those in the RBGE where there are several stunning examples of the species and all looking very healthy.



So while we all continue to experience various levels of restrictions (tiers), hopefully all the Botanic Gardens which have opened are able to continue to be available for the public to enjoy. At our meeting in September, there were a number of the university botanic gardens which had not yet opened and I think most of these have now reopened. At the RBGE in Edinburgh, the garden reopened in June – visiting involves booking a slot and capacity was increased as confidence in the system grew. It works well. Most of the glasshouses opened in September – again a booked slot is required and payment if not a Friend. And last month, the Art Gallery in Inverleith House opened with the exhibition which had been planned to celebrate our 350th anniversary. Booking required again. I have not yet managed to view the exhibition but it has received excellent reviews. The first volunteers have been allowed back into the garden to support the Inverleith exhibition. Other volunteers will not be allowed back into the garden until next year. The RBGE shop has been open since June, and staff are hoping it will be well used in the lead up to Christmas when RBGE will once again be putting on Christmas at the Botanic – a perfect entertainment for the time of Covid – outdoors, booked and socially distanced! As for Friends activities – Edinburgh Friends are in the process of planning a series of on-line talks. The scope of having speakers from all over the world is very attractive – and indeed not only speakers, but also attendees. A recent free talk, as part of the 350th anniversary, attracted 300 viewers from all over the world. For those of you who are embarking on this internet adventure, it does work and just think how many attendees will follow up in the fullness of time with visits to your gardens.

Since our last meeting, representatives from a number of the gardens have joined Zoom groups to consider the development of a LOGO and a website. I am very grateful to Lindsey, Kevin and Adrian for participating in these discussions. I am looking forward to having your feedback, if you have not already been in touch with me.

As for 2021 - difficult to make any plans but no doubt, you are all considering ideas of how to work around the various restrictions to pre-Covid normal events. It would be useful to share your ideas and expertise. Avoiding large gatherings precludes crowded plant sales, and full buses for day trips and tours – are there alternatives of enabling these core activities to take place? We also considered setting up a speaker register – so do share your ideas and experience of those who are able to talk in the vacuum of no audience! I hope that you are all keeping well – we just need to focus our attention on spring 2021. We all have, no doubt, indoor projects that have been left on the shelf for decades – so here is an opportunity to complete them! Ask me in February about the embroidered table cloth and the mounds of paper awaiting sifting and jettisoning!!

Very best wishes Shiona

Friends of Belfast Botanic Garden

Flowering of *Victoria* 'Longwood Hybrid'

FoBBG Committee members were privileged to have been invited to be some of the first people to see the first flower on the giant waterlily *Victoria* 'Longwood Hybrid', which had opened in the night of 22nd June /early morning of 23rd June. This socially distanced visit to the Tropical Ravine took place in the morning of 23rd June. The flower which is around 10 inches / 25cm in diameter, opens white but quickly begins to turn a blush pink as it matures on the first day (see photo below). It then opens pink on the second day.



Photo taken in the Tropical Ravine shortly after 9.00 am on the morning of 23rd June 2020

In her book *The Palm House and Botanic Garden, Belfast* ⁽¹⁾ Eileen McCracken notes that although *Victoria amazonica* had been known in Europe for many years, it was not until 1849 that Kew Gardens succeeded in producing flowers.

Daniel Ferguson (curator at Belfast Botanic Gardens 1836 – 1864) visited London in the autumn of 1851 and returned with some seeds from Syon House and from Regent's Park Botanic Garden. He erected a special house costing £75 at his own expense, although he was eventually reimbursed, and the following August a plant was growing with leaves 5 feet in diameter. In July 1853, most likely having secured more seeds as the plant is grown as an annual here, he succeeded in producing flowers.

Adrienne Armstrong, Belfast Botanic Gardener, has sourced a newspaper report from the Thursday 30th September 1852 copy of the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* that mentions the plant blooming in 1852 :

"The Victoria Regia Lily has recently bloomed for the first time in Ireland, in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Belfast. The possession of such an ornament there is due to Mr Ferguson, the curator, at whose expense the plant and the house for it have been provided : they will become the property of the Gardens if the amount is paid to him. To show the buoyancy and strength of the magnificent leaves of the lily, it is mentioned that one bore a child of six years without sinking below the water."

Glasnevin did not succeed in getting the plant to flower until 1855, one year after they had constructed a Victoria Waterlily House in 1854.

It has been approximately 30 years since a giant waterlily last flowered in the Tropical Ravine. The ideal temperature for the water needs to be around 24c to 26c and cessation of flowering since then was mainly due to the state of the old roof which was leaking and affecting the water temperature.

Since the opening of the newly restored Tropical Ravine, it has been a focus of the Belfast Botanic Gardeners to re-establish the giant waterlily in the lily pond.

Victoria 'Longwood Hybrid' derives from a cross between two species of the *Victoria* genus – *V. amazonica* and *V. cruziana* and was bred in Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania, USA. Seed was sent from Longwood Gardens to Belfast Botanic Gardens and was sown in January 2020 by Belfast Botanic Gardener Derek Lockwood. With Derek's skill and knowledge the seed germinated and the young plant was transferred to the lily pond in April and quickly became established. One school of thought is that the closure of the Tropical Ravine to visitors during lockdown may have helped flowering as the inside temperature was more constant due to doors not constantly opening and closing within the Ravine building. More flowers have since been produced and hand pollination has been carried out in the hope that seed will develop to sow for next year.

Many thanks to Ricky Rice, Belfast City Council (BCC), for inviting FoBBG Committee members to this unique event.

Shown below are proud Belfast Botanic Gardener Adrienne Armstrong and 'Bot Crew' staff member Lewis Patton in front of the first flower. Missing from the photograph is Belfast Botanic Gardener Derek Lockwood who successfully propagated the lily.



Bibliography

The Palm House and Botanic Garden, Belfast by Eileen McCracken, published by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1971.

By Adrian Walsh (with text review and newspaper article provided by Adrienne Armstrong)

Friends of Cruickshank Botanic Gardens, Aberdeen



Keep Growing Aberdeen

As lockdown took hold in Aberdeen, we, The Friends of Cruickshank Botanic Garden, decided to cancel many of our spring and summer events programme. With more time on our hands, our community looked for novel ways of supporting the disadvantaged families in our neighbourhoods. We came to recognise the growing negative impacts faced by not being able to access our local parks and our botanic garden, as well as the loneliness and isolation of shielding from neighbours and friends, with the added insecurity around food, we quickly saw that need to address these problems. We were alerted to the budding Keep Growing Aberdeen Initiative, a seedling sharing project formed by Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE). This project provided free home growing packs, including vegetable and herb seeds, plant pots, compost, and detailed instructions on how to get growing, to disadvantaged families in our regeneration areas. The Friends of Cruickshank Botanic Garden played a key role in donating many seeds and materials to this project, along with helping to deliver the kits directly to families. The seedling packages came in different varieties with packs for growing on windowsills, to planting in your own garden to planting in a community garden.

The packs were prepared at the CFINE premises and were delivered by electric cargo bikes or car, following strict health and safety procedures. We understood that contact with nature improves mental health and the act of sharing surplus produce and seeds with neighbours fostered community engagement, cooperation, and development.

Friends of Dundee Botanic Gardens

Anthology celebrates almost fifty years of the Dundee Botanic Garden

A collection of picture and word reflections celebrates decades of the Dundee Botanic Garden through the eyes and thoughts of its regular visitors.

The new book, entitled *Our Botanic Garden, A Place to Bloom*, comprises work by professional and amateur artists, photographers and writers of all prose. Its launch opens the 50th anniversary year of the Dundee Botanic Garden.

The project was first initiated in 2017 by the Friends of the University Botanic Garden in a bid to raise awareness of the attraction and raise funds to support its continuing role in conservation and education. Through the anthology, they aim to advertise the delights and merits of the Garden to a wider group and appeal to a more diverse geographic community.

From stories and poetry to sketches and paintings, contributors colourfully express their emotional response to the Garden in all its seasons, exploring and emphasising the importance of the space, which many consider a hidden jewel of the City of Dundee.

Dr Mark McGilchrist, Chair, Friends of the University Botanic Garden, said, “We are delighted to launch our anthology. It is a beautifully presented book and a wonderful gift of time and personal contribution to the University of Dundee Botanic Garden.

“The individual and community efforts shared within its pages highlight the special place of the Garden in the hearts of those who know and are touched by its work, who enjoy its spirit of place, benefit from its wellbeing gift of space and support its critical conservation and educational work.

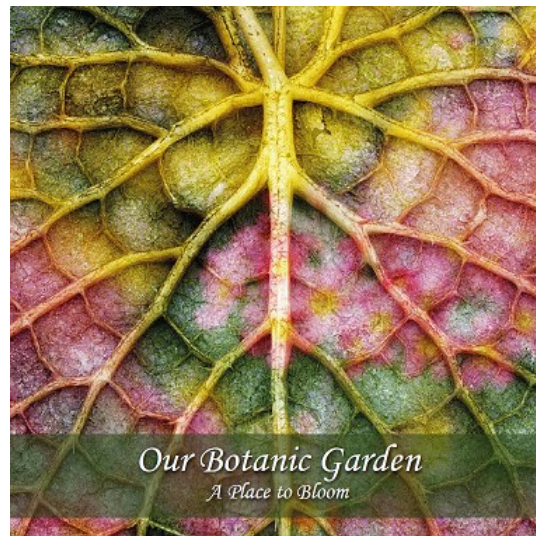
“I can’t think of a better way to raise awareness of the role plants and green spaces play in people’s lives today. It is an excellent way to open this anniversary year.”

Professor David Maguire, Interim Principal of the University of Dundee, added, “It is with great pleasure in my leadership capacity that I can introduce this anthology on the eve of the Garden’s 50th year.

“It is a significant body of work, representing the local community’s connection to a space that promotes their health, feeds their happiness, and as the pages of the book reveal, facilitates their creativity and well-being.”

The anthology was underwritten and produced by the Friends of the University Botanic Garden and is available for purchase at the Garden on Riverside Drive. The Dundee Botanic Garden was opened in 1971 and usually attracts more than 80,000 visitors each year. It is hoped celebratory events for the attractions 50th anniversary will go ahead in 2021.

The Garden boasts a wide range of plants, with fine collections of conifers and broad-leaved trees and shrubs, tropical and temperate glasshouses, as well as water and herb gardens. Located in 9.5 hectares of south facing, gently sloping land near the banks of the River Tay, the Garden features many species of indigenous British plants as well as representative collections of important plants



Durham University Botanic Garden

At last our sorely-missed Botanic Garden is open once again.....but only on weekdays, and only for the Friends. I've already had some lovely walks around it, often with only the gardeners for company, and the autumn colours are now stunning. Below are some of the comments of other Friends who have sneaked in there midweek to enjoy a tranquil hour or two.....

My wife and I really enjoyed our first visit back to the Garden on Friday, having it all to ourselves for a tranquil hour.



Gratitude is one of the hardest emotions to express; may we simply say 'Thank you'.

To help us through this unique time Mike, our Head Gardener, has continued with his daily task of photographing something in the garden every day whilst it remains largely closed. He has now passed day 200. I couldn't let over 200 days of his diary pass unremarked. His daily blog has been so uplifting at a time when the world has been in such depressing lockdown, and we have enjoyed his revelations about the evolving history of the Garden and minutiae of so many of the plants and specimens.

You can find his Blog at friendsofdurhambotanicgarden.org.uk Here is a taster.....

One day all this will be behind us, so I thought perhaps it's worth reflecting on what this year has meant for the garden.

This year was going to be a special year, 50 years since the Botany department decided to re-locate its plant collection from the science site and create a Botanic Garden. I had pushed the boat out a bit last October and ordered more bulbs and bedding than even, and chose some really nice, more expensive varieties, a treat for the Spring of our 50th year.

Those bulbs where planted by the Friends a year or so ago now, words like social distancing, bubble and face masks will not have conjured up the same images they do now.

Day 1, Tuesday March 17th, the coffeeshop folks told us they had been told to close, and the 100 or so school kids due to come later in that week were all calling to see what was happening, they never came.

We continued potting all the bedding plugs, not really thinking much would happen and that the coffeeshop would be open again in a few weeks, certainly in time for the Friends Easter Chick hunt and the spring display.

Day 7, Monday March 23rd, "lockdown" was announced, it still probably felt like a fairly short term

and water each day then go home. We had literally finished potting up the last of the bedding that day.

April and Easter came with fantastic weather, the ground became and cracked and dusty. Roads were quiet, skies clear blue and no aeroplane trails.

The bedding was growing well in the bright lengthening days, I potted it, "we'll need it for the summer".

The daffs came out then the tulips, the garden was a tranquil paradise but in isolation.

May begins, Peter the last person to be put onto furlough, so I'm on my own.

I wheel the tubs of daffs and tulips round to the greenhouse and empty them and start filling them with the bedding which desperately needs space, much easier to water too, watering was taking 2 hours everyday.

Day 67 Friday May 22nd – strong winds decimate the garden, what little moisture there was is gone, conifers blow down and debris is everywhere. The grass is getting long now, for the first time the garden is looking neglected and abandoned.

Day 76, Monday 1st June, Craig and Claire start back, just in time, the sheep are desperate to be sheared, the grass is long, the garden is a mess, we are overwhelmed with where to begin.

Day 100, Thursday 25th June, All but 9 sheep sheared and the garden is looking good, people are starting to ask when will we open.

Day 129, Friday 24th July, Signs have been put up all around the garden about social distancing, no entry points to create one way systems on steps. We are still closed but this is a good sign we might open soon.

Day 173, Sunday 6th September, it would have been the orchid show, but we have had no events this year, tho we had planned a special open evening to celebrate the gardens 50th, the Easter chick hunt, Friends plant sale, and storytelling. It feels very much like summer is over but there is still time to enjoy the garden. We still have posters on the notice board but all the events never happened.

Day 181, Monday 14th September, The Friends of the Garden are given permission to visit the garden, Monday to Friday only, between 10am and 3pm.

Monday September 21st, our first school ! – with my mobile phone I link up with a local school by "teams" (a bit like "zoom" or "facetime") and take a class round the greenhouse, looking at how the different plants we have are adapted to different conditions, they are very excited and really want to see the venus fly trap. It was great to do but I look forward to "proper" trips as it's one of the best things about the job

Day 200, today, Saturday 3rd October. We are still closed to all, staff and students Included, but the Friends have been visiting which has been a huge moral boost for us. Things are naturally going over in the garden now, but autumn is certainly here. It's turned a lot cooler, but we have had some excellent weather lately. We hope to finish hedge cutting in the next few weeks . Funds have been available to order bulbs for next spring,

The map illustrates the layout of the University of Toronto Botanical Garden, featuring a central path system and various garden areas. Key locations labeled include:

- Visitor Centre
- Prince Bishop's Terrace
- Crawford Hall
- Viewing Platform
- Garden
- Woodland Garden
- Gazebo
- Vessels of Life
- Oriental Gazebo
- Sakura Garden
- Faunage
- Hall of the Side Lane
- Cactus and Tropical House
- Ferns and Houseplants
- Alpine Garden
- Mediterranean Bag
- Faunage

Seasonal illustrations are provided for Summer, Autumn, and Winter, showing different plant life and garden features. The Summer illustration shows a variety of flowers and mushrooms. The Autumn illustration shows trees with yellow and orange leaves. The Winter illustration shows a snow-covered garden with a small gazebo and a path.

FRIENDS OF THE GARDEN
Celebrating 50 years of Durham University Botanic Garden
1970 - 2020

The 'Friends of the Garden' was established in 1970 to support the work and encourage the wider appreciation of Durham University Botanic Garden. The membership gives free entry to the Garden, monthly guided tours and evening talks. Members also volunteer within the Garden and arrange visits to other interesting gardens.

www.friendsofdurhambotanicgarden.org.uk

Supporting the
Botanic Garden
Durham University



FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS HELP WITH THE HOP HARVEST AT VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDEN on the Isle of Wight

Rabbits had thwarted the establishment of a wild flower meadow on the sloping ground near the cliff edge so another project was needed. The present Curator, Chris Kidd, was head gardener at the time. He says, "I was awakened in the middle of the night with visions of hop yards and beer!" So the former Curator, Simon Goodenough, sent him to Herefordshire to learn hop growing skills at the feet of the expert, Peter Davies, whose family had been growing hops for generations. They also waded through the legislation and discovered you need a licence to grow hops

We know that hops (*Humulus lupulus*) were used to bitter and stabilise beer by monks in the 7th century and over the years their use has been subject to legislation and strictly controlled. By the 19th century cultivation was taking place in 53 counties of Britain and the Isle of Wight was the 5th largest producing county. Chris thinks that there was a ready market in the nearby naval port of Portsmouth and the neutral soils down the middle of the Island were ideal for growing. Sadly, disease, taxation and modern techniques have now led to the rooting out of most of the vines in the country.

The Friends' Society subsidised and supported this project from the start. The staff learned how to place the poles and 'string the hops' and know exactly when the flowers are ready, so it was a proud day for Chris in September 2010 when the first crop was harvested by enthusiastic volunteers, spurred on by the thought of a pint at the top of the field at the end of the morning!

It is a surprisingly slow job - there is a strong bitter aroma and your fingers get really sticky but we are always excited to see the bags of hops piling up. Chris loads them on the van and sets off for the ferry for the long drive to Herefordshire where they are waiting to get them into the oast house that evening.



At the end of that September we celebrated with a Hop Fest on the top lawn. With cash from a grant the Friends were able to have a fund raising weekend with barbecue, Morris Dancers, musicians, a marquee showing off local countryside crafts and of course, a beer tent decorated with hops and selling Botanic Ale. Every year since, VBG has modestly celebrated the harvest with music and refreshment, until this year when it proved too difficult with the Covid regulations and minimal staff. In 2015, the Friends were lucky to get a £10,000 grant from the Tesco Bags of Help scheme to revamp the site, renew the poles and string and set up an information board for visitors and the walkers using the coastal path above. So, 10 years on, the only few rows of hops on the Island are still producing. There have been problems and some varieties have been more suitable but, although not as prolific as in the early days, there are enough good hops for our local brewers to produce some interesting bottles.



The Pale Ale and Botanic Ale have been joined by a tasty Botanic Lager 'With a touch of Eucalyptus' brewed with Boadicea hops and a syrup made from the leaves of *Eucalyptus globulus* grown at VBG. They are all available at the Garden or from the online shop.

<https://www.botanic.co.uk/product-category/botanic-own-products/botanic->



The Friends work together with the management of the CIC which now runs VBG but we have our own website <https://ventnorbotanicfriends.org.uk> We fund the payments of a part-time gardener, Trish Brenchley, who helps to train up the two apprentices who stay for two years. (They then find further training at Kew, Wisley and the Harold Hillier Garden or private employment.) While the other paid gardeners have been on furlough through Lockdown our three stalwarts have kept the Garden's 22 acres looking so amazing for the visitors. The RHS were offering to award their Banksian Medal to anyone who had 'gone the extra mile' so we were delighted to be able to present Trish with a prestigious acknowledgement of her extra commitment through these difficult



Friends of Thwaite Gardens

The Trees of Thwaite Gardens

Thwaite Hall was built in the early 1800s on a 12.5 ha (31 acre) estate in Cottingham, East Yorkshire. The name originates in Old Norse and means 'clearing in a wooded area' (<https://www.behindthename.com/>). The gardens were listed as a Grade 2 Garden of Special Historic Interest by [Historic England](#) in 1992. The property has been owned by the University of Hull since 1928, with the hall being used as a student hall of residence until three years ago. The Botanic Gardens were established in 1948. The hall and part of the grounds are now moving back into private ownership but the University has retained c.1 ha (2.5 acres) of the gardens, which includes the area looked after by the Friends of Thwaite Gardens and experimental glasshouses used by the Faculty of Science.

In August 2018, one of our members John Killingbeck (a retired lecturer in horticulture, specialising in trees and hardy ornamentals) together with Alan Hunton from the Woodland Trust, undertook a tree survey of Thwaite gardens. This was for the benefit of [TROBI](#) (Tree Register of Britain and Ireland). TROBI is a national organisation that holds a huge database on trees all around the country. It has probably recorded not only virtually every species grown here but also has detailed records of the largest specimens known of each type, known as "Champions". There are national, and also regional, champions – our own region being Yorkshire.

TROBI already had some data on Thwaite, gathered in 2004 by Owen Johnson, their chief recorder. Owen is one of the most knowledgeable tree authorities in the UK and has written several books including the popular Collins Tree Guide. It was the job of Alan and John to update this data and add any others that were appropriate. At the end of the survey they had recorded some 80 trees – none of which included even moderately common species – only those regarded as unusual or special in some way. This figure of 80 is perhaps remarkable and surprising in its own right for what is a relatively small garden.

The data were submitted to TROBI for analysis and they came up with the following results:

- Of the total submitted no fewer than 37 were considered "remarkable" in some way.

- 31 of these are "Yorkshire Champions" in terms of either girth or height or both.

- 6 of these are also "National Champions" (English) in terms of girth or height or both.

While many of the champion trees are within the University grounds 28 of these "remarkable" trees are in the wider gardens now in private ownership. This part of the estate also includes some favourites such as the foxglove tree, the redwoods, tulip trees and swamp cypresses which are not even on the TROBI 'remarkable' list.

Owen Johnson said of the Thwaite results: "After Thorpe Perrow, it's perhaps the best collection of mature rare trees in N.E England". High praise indeed!

Friends of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh organise three types of tours to fundraise for the Gardens. Due to Covid, all our 2020 tours were cancelled or postponed to 2021.

Firstly, we offer day coach tours to private estates and gardens. These gardens are beautifully maintained with unusual plants and trees and often owners generously give us a personal tour ending with tempting home-made cakes which goes down very well!

Secondly we offer a 5-day domestic tour. In 2019 we went to Northern Ireland and timed it just right to see some of their fabulous gardens and houses. The Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, which is more than 128 acres, has a spectacular rose garden in which they trial hundreds of roses for growers. The scent was heady!



Thirdly, we offer a one week tour abroad. In 2019 our trip was to see the fabulous gardens and architecture of Andalucia in Spain. The Al Hambra was a sight that none of us will forget. Not only was the architecture fantastic, the water features and gardens were too.



Source: Al Hambragranada.org

We are currently planning our 2021 programme, with Covid in mind. We hope our postponed 2020 trip to see Spring Flowers of Corsica can go ahead. If not, it will be 2022!

Our summer domestic and day tours will be run if we can manage any restrictions that are in place. In 2021 we are planning 3 day trips by coach and a 5 day domestic trip by train. As most of our Friends do not drive, we will run our tours only if social distancing and costs make them tenable. We keep our hopes high that Covid is temporary and will not impact our future tour programme. Please do come and join us if any of our tours are of interest!

Friends of Glasgow Botanic Gardens



I write this contribution to our newsletter with the benefit of having seen all the other articles produced by the dedicated Friends of Botanic Gardens throughout the UK – and what a commitment each and everyone is making to ensure that our Gardens continue to inspire, especially during these difficult times.

It has also made me appreciate how fortunate we are in Glasgow with the full funding of the Gardens provided by Glasgow City Council. Whilst we often complain that the funding of the Gardens here should be increased I am increasingly aware that we do not have to toil under the demands for increased visitor income - we are free to all, 365 days a year including entry to the glasshouses nor the competing commercial demands now placed on many Botanic Gardens. It does mean however that with free entry to all, we cannot offer the bonus of free entry to members of the Friends, which does restrict the opportunities for increased membership.

That does not mean that the Friends can rest on our laurels as I suspect that pressure on local authority budgets will force changes in the future.

For those unfamiliar with our Gardens, here are a few general photographs to whet your appetite for a future visit.



The Kibble Palace



Main Range Glasshouses

photographs courtesy of Google Earth

As the Friends are fortunate in not having the burden of fundraising to maintain the Gardens, we focus on our main Constitution objective of Education and general fundraising to undertake improvements to the Gardens including the plant collections.

Our most important education work is the provision of the Certificate in Practical Horticulture (CPH) which is an outreach project from Edinburgh although we provide the tutors and run the two courses each year. Each course lasts 10 days with an assessment at the end and if the students are successful they are awarded a Certificate by RBGE. Below are the students during their assessment day in Glasgow Botanic Gardens and it just had to begin wet then the sun came out !



The main practical area, on the right has recently been refurbished as a result of an award of almost £20,000 from the Waitrose “bag scheme”

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the CPH is the mix of students, with ages ranging from the early 20's to those who are retired, with some simply wanting to improve their knowledge to those considering a career change, even some being funded by back to work training agencies. The best part is seeing the interaction of the students - all wanting to be there, learning, and this is especially so at the presentation of awards - it gives me a great kick to see horticultural skills being learned and enjoyed.

We are now branching out into “Teaching the Teachers”/classroom assistants with a grant from the City Council, although this has been put on hold until 2021 as a result of Corvid 19

We also support other organisations to provide courses in the Gardens to increase awareness of what the Gardens are about - screen-printing for refugees based on plants in the Garden from their original homes. However the most fun is seeing the pre school groups organised by Glasgow Outdoor Woodland Learning Group - in many cases it is the first time the children have really experienced the outdoors!

We do of course have our disappointments, especially the vandalism to the donation box in the Kibble Palace. Our concerns were increasing in case it encouraged damage to the plant collections and so we have invested in a Tap and Donate system. The photograph shows it in the Gardens office just waiting for the final touches including the graphics explaining the Friends role and how we will use the donations



We also support the development of the plant collections, both indoors and outside throughout the Gardens, be it an expansion of the Orchid Collection or the development of new plantings such as the Chilean yew hedge, below



Chilean Yew - *Prumnopitys andina* closely planted as a hedge and used as a gene pool in partnership with RBGE Conifer Conservation Project planted on the boundary of the Friends new education area



Dracula fuligifera from Ecuador - part of the Orchid collection in Glasgow Botanic Gardens managed by Christine Nicholson

And to end

My apologies for the delay in collating the articles from the various Botanic Gardens throughout the UK as some were sent quite a while ago and others more recently arriving.

However, I do appreciate that the preparation of interesting articles is never easy, particularly at this difficult time when it is often a challenge just keeping our heads above water to ensure that our Gardens and our Friends groups survive.

Having the advantage of seeing all the articles arrive I have had the benefit of having a collective understanding of the exceptional work that is being undertaken throughout the UK by Botanic Gardens and the Friends groups that do so much voluntary work to support them.

Being involved in Horticulture all my life I get quite a kick out of seeing how much is done by volunteers to support the professional botanists and horticulturists and to see the interest shown by new generations of folk wanting to engage in our work.

I should finish by saying that it is sometimes quite a challenge ensuring that the articles appear in the Newsletter just as the contributors wish them to be seen, especially when transferring from PDF files and I have taken the liberty of rationalising the font style where I felt appropriate. I therefore take full and total responsibility for any adjustments that differ from the original copy and trust that this does not diminish the value of the articles sent to me - my replanting skills perhaps need a bit of refreshment!!

Brian Atkinson,

Chair, Friends of Glasgow Botanic Gardens