

February 2013

Winter

Issue 39

**A** word from our new chairperson Elizabeth Temple:

Welcome to another gardening year with the Donegal Garden Society. We hope all the members will find the various speakers, garden visits, and meetings both interesting and fun! Gardens can mean so many things to us all; thoughtful, practical, repetitive mucky and dirty, and certainly in this part of Ireland, plenty of 'weather' challenges. Last December and for the first two months of this year the weather has been quite frost free, not too windy, the usual quite heavy rainfall in December and January, and now for the last few days and forecast for yet another few, bright blue sky, dry and the welcome warmth of an early Spring. For me it is always so exciting to see new growth, whether it is flower or shrub, and as the daylight hours lengthen we are all continually being rewarded with fresh leaves and flowers. My garden started off the year with the most delicious fragrance of *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill'. The first blossoms actually opened in late December and are only now losing their fragrant vigour. Another delicate performer is the Cornelian Cherry. This large shrub is currently covered with small yellow flowers on its naked stems and I may be rewarded with small bright cherry fruits in the late summer. Close on its heels is the *Stachyurus praecox* (*praecox* meaning early). The arching pale purple stems shall soon be covered with tiny bell-shaped pale yellow flowers.

Our vegetable garden has been quite successful, though due to the poor temperatures of last year the leaks and curly kale are on the small side, the onions have not over-wintered well, probably due to the dampness and a touch of mould!

So the cycle continues and we shall be busy cleaning, preparing, weeding and sowing seeds. Let's hope the shy thrush will make their presence felt and eat up the slugs and snails, that would help us all.

## Monthly Meetings

**VENUE:** Salthill House, Mountcharles

**TIME:** 7:30 p.m. Plant sale and chit chat.  
8:00 (PROMPT) Program begins,

March 4 Deborah Begley, "Gardening with Sensational Plants" A Glimpse into the weird and Wonderful World of a Plantaholic!

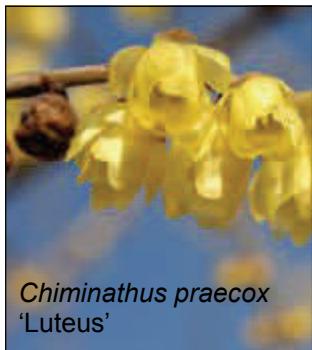
April 8 'Up-To-Date: An overview of products available for the Modern Gardener  
Ashtree Garden Centre

May 13 John Dickie, "The Art of Bonsai"

June 10 To be announced

Please note! We are always looking for ideas regarding interesting speakers and topics so if any member has suggestions with regard to speaker and/or topic, please let one of the committee know. Thnx.

Having come from Michigan (way back) and settling in Ireland, I have always felt that we were very lucky by comparison, botanically speaking, in the fact that we have something for our vases the whole year around. Even in winter, when things are drab we have greenery in abundant variety. BUT having come back from being in Switzerland for the month of January I see that there is a decided 'lack' in my garden. (Actually in many gardens as I look around). While there I



*Chimonanthus praecox  
'Luteus'*

noticed so many blooming shrubs in JANUARY!!.. So if in Switzerland I ask, why not in Donegal where we have a more benign climate. So here are some of my choices which you will see in our garden next winter : *Chimonanthus praecox*, *Hamamelis*, *Mahonia*, there are many varieties ('Winter Sun' and 'Underway' are two where the flowers seem to dominate the foliage), *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill', *Cornus mas* 'Golden Glory', *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn', *Prunus x subhirtella* 'Autumnalis', the winter jasmine *Jasminum nudiflorum*. There are more, but that should do for a start.



*Viburnum bodnantense  
'Dawn'*

..... following on with a 'swiss' flavour..... One cannot pick up a magazine there without coming across homeopathic information. I was leafing through a magazine (and webpage called hormone power.ch—now there is an intriguing title) I didn't even realize that plants had hormones. So certain plants (and there are many) will boost your hormone system (for men and women)! Achillea, Alchemilla mollis, and honey clover for progesterone; hops, linseed and vine tendrils for estrogen to name a few. Others for your hair, skin, well being, sleep, happiness and it even included a happiness exercise (which I am doing at this moment). The idea is when you lift the corners of your mouth it means you are smiling—smiling equals happy and your brain puts out happiness hormones (endorphins). So here's the little exercise: Take a pencil (you can also do this with a rose—though you will look silly either way). Put horizontally between teeth; this lifts the corners of your mouth (check mirror if you don't believe me) and hold for 2 minutes. I am soooooo happy now and will start singing as soon as I take the pencil out of my mouth!



#### SEASONAL PLANT NAMES AND THEIR MEANING.

GALANTHUS; Snowdrop from the Greek 'gala' meaning milk, and 'anthos' meaning a flower and when you see the word 'nivalis' it only means snow white.

TULIP; Tulip from the Turkish/Arabic word *thoulgban* meaning a turban. Tulips are native to central Asia.

CROCUS; The Greek word, kroke, saffron, probably from 'kroke', a thread, the filaments of the styles being the source of the yellow dye. The crocus is native to Eastern Europe.

Hyacinth—from the Greek legend concerning Hyakinthos a handsome lad who was accidentally killed when two Greek gods fought over him. This plant was brought to Europe in the 16th century from Anatolia.

NARCISSUS; a bulbous perennial in the Amaryllis family, native to meadows North Africa, West Asia and Europe. From Greek mythology and named by the Gods is the story of Narcissus a beautiful young man who was so in love with his own reflection that he looked at himself all day long and forgot to eat and so died. (vanity—thy name is MAN!!!!)



Please note that the annual membership subscription is now due. It remains at same price as in years past at:

Single: €25 Joint: €40

The deadline for payment for inclusion in the 2013 directory will be April 30. There is always membership list at our meetings, so it's easy to check if you have paid (in case you have forgotten..... like one does!) You will be getting your new 2013 directory as well as the 2013 membership card with your newsletter in May. This is a good time to check to see if all your details are correct in the last directory and let me know if anything has to be changed.

## NEWS IN BRIEF.....

- Our AGM on February 4 resulted in some changes in our committee line-up chief among them is that in Elizabeth Temple we have a new and able chairperson.. I am sure the membership will give Elizabeth our full support and look forward to this new year gardening together. The other changes are in the position of plant sales which will be shared among Anna Baskin, Maureen Cannon and Marjan Bangert. Please note that it would be helpful that anyone bringing in plants to sell should have them labelled in order to help our Plant Ladies.
- Welcome to our new members: Belinda Mahaffy, Lifford, Susan Rowntree, Dungloe, Una Anderson, Ballintra, Barbara and John Dickie, Donegal , Mary Gillen, Mountcharles and Susan Underwood, Inver. Can you please add these names to your DGS directory.
- A sign-up sheet for our usual visit to members' gardens in May and June has already started circulation at our meetings and will be available at our March meeting. This has always been an informative and fun evening out (even when pouring with rain) and we hope this will continue. I would like to make two points: a) the refreshments SHOULD be sharply curtailed. We start out with good intentions and before you know it we have a smorgasbord of goodies. So REIGN IT IN why dontcha, we don't want to scare off potential new gardens to view and that leads me to point b) we should try to encourage those shy members whose gardens we have never seen to sign up. The idea is to include as many members as we can—I know it's sometimes difficult to convince some that a garden does not have to be on the Garden Trail, be big, or have extensive and unusual plants. Every garden has its own charm and character—so please be brave and SIGN UP. It's always fun.... I promise! Notice schedule below!
- Regarding helpers for Hospitality for the next three months: March 4: Marjan Bangert and Belinda Mahaffy. April 8: Pauline Weir. May 13: Carmel Brennan and Mary Gillen
- The **Donegal Garden Trail** has become a fixture in the garden year calendar and is growing with new gardens joining. Members of the Trail who are also members of DGS are: Joan Donleavy, Dorothy Jervis, Elizabeth Temple, Michael and Joyce Classon, Marjan and Ton Bangert, Belinda Mahaffy, Joan Evans and Martin and Carmel McLaughlin. Please give them your support. The brochure with relevant dates and list of gardens on view is being printed at this time and will be available at our April meeting and throughout venues in Donegal.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

It was agreed in committee meetings that we might organize potential two day trips (one overnight) this year instead of the longer, more far-reaching trips of years past.

- A) Glenarm in No. Ireland followed by another garden. Prov. Dates: June 25/26
- B) Strokestown House, Co. Roscommon and a garden (s) on the Secret Gardens of Sligo Trail. Prov. Dates: Wed. July 3.

We will keep you informed on these proposed trips in the next newsletter which will come out in May along with your new directory.

Once more; a reminder of our very own DGS webpage [www.donegalgardensociety.net](http://www.donegalgardensociety.net) which is kept up-to-date by Charlie Garrat. Pass along any relevant info or interesting garden pictures for him to post on webpage.

## SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS GARDENS VISIT

Monday, May 20: Ton and Marjan Bangert  
Monday, May 27: *available*  
Monday, June 3: (Bank Holiday) Joan Donleavy  
Monday, June 10: Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, June 17: *available*  
Monday, June 24: Martin and Carmel McLaughlin

You see there are two Mondays still looking for a garden to visit - so be brave and sign up.

,,.,,, and since you ask! It has come to my attention that some of you actually do not know how many newsletters you get per annum. Hrrumph!  
They follow the season!! ..so (approximately) how many season per annum do we have???????

