



www.donegalgardensociety.net

Snail Mail

April 2010

Spring

Issue 30

Spring is finally here and just as everyone still talks about the hot summer of 2006 (hottest day of the century recorded in Kilkenny), so people will long talk about the winter of 2010. We gardeners will count our losses. In my case first and foremost is my trio of beautiful (the bark especially) myrtle trees given to me by Rosemary and Charles Tindal which I have nurtured from baby-hood. (This as replacement after my other half 'trimmed' a very healthy myrtle tree and turned it into a bush) . Gone also the arbutus given to me many years ago, also as a very young plant by Maurice and Caroline Timony. The pittosporum, most of the hebes, lavatera, watsonia, phormiums, nerine bowdenii (Jersey lily), and dierama - all casualties of our harsh winter. There were also a few surprises! I was transplanting many clumps of candelabra primulas just before the deep freeze and had them 'temporarily' left on plastic intending to get to them in a few days. There they stayed till March without ill effect—in some cases even with semi-exposed roots. Another surprise, not so nice, was that two of my huge fuchsia bushes, one might even call them trees, are still lifeless. I refuse to give up on them yet.



Another thing to comment on is that many, many of my daffodils did not bloom this year. I have heard other members commenting on this also so I hope it was an anomaly though I have decided to heed the advice of our November speaker from Heritage Bulbs and feed all the bulbs as soon as they begin to die down.

There are many activities coming up in the next two months, so please read over this newsletter carefully and take note of upcoming events. For those with internet access, you can always get up-to-date information on everything having to do with our Garden Society. (see logo above)

The Wexford Garden trip from June 25 to 28 is organized and promises to be a treat for the 26 members going.

The Donegal Garden Trail is starting this month. See details on next page with regard to opening times of those of our members who are involved.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

VENUE; Salthill House, Mountcharles

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

May 10, Mary Waldron, R.H.S.I. Speaker giving a talk on perennials.

June 14 Stroll through Salthill Garden; bring boots. Also, a Plant Exchange—bring one take one. Pot up an excess favourite plant now to have it looking its best by June.

Sept. 6 Meike Siebel will be giving a talk on mushrooms. **NOTE: In Inniskeel Hall, Portnoo**

Oct. 4 Joint meeting with other Garden Societies in Letterkenny. Venue to be advised.

The Donegal Trail 2010 gardens are opening next month. There are three gardens, Glenveagh Castle Gardens, St. Columb's and Celtic Garden & Iosas Centre which are open all year around. There are ten members of our DGS who also participate in the Donegal Garden Trail and kicking off the 2010 Garden Trail are Rosemary and Charles Tindal this Saturday May 1. Their garden will be open from the 1st until the 8th of May from 12 to 6 p.m.

The other members from our DGS who are participating are:

Elizabeth Temple, Carmel and Martin McLaughlin,, Dorothy Jervis, Joan Donleavy, Joan Evans Michael and Joyce Classon, and Una Brown.

Please note their opening times by consulting the Donegal Garden Trail 2010 booklet available at our May meeting and let's support our members by visiting their gardens.

Congratulations



At our April meeting (with record attendance) we had an interesting and 'hand-and-nose-on' talk on composting by Suzanne Tinney from the Donegal County Council. Two helpful tips I brought away from this talk were (1) the idea of throwing egg cartons and the cardboard roll from loo paper and paper towels torn up into the compost, and (2) that one should not put too much in the way of citrus fruit peeling into the compost as it has adverse effect on the worms therein. So please take note. While listening it brought to mind that back in Autumn I wrote about our esteemed treasurer's home-made roll-a-side-way-mounted-blue-barrel composter and our ex-chairperson Joan D's. luxury-super-deluxe-Christmas-present-roll-around-composter. I did promise an update. So, Mrs. D. happily reported after months of feeding and giving the beast a spin she came away with four large buckets full of the finest –non-smelling tilth while our Mr. G. reported that (a) he had complaints from the neighbour regarding unsightly 'thing'. Mr. G. pointed out that this blue 'thing' was actually very GREEN. He dismantled it to soothe ruffled feathers but reports that it too was doing its job after sorting out some design flaws. I like the idea of it but, while my better half is still trying to make up for 'trimming' my myrtle tree and being cooperative with heaving the compost from one bin to the next, I will stick to this tried and trusted throw-everything-in-a-heap in the bins method, minus the citrus elements, and wait a year for the good stuff.



FREE OFFER

As you know, Stephen's Green has lovely bulb plantings in the Spring. If you happen to be passing when they are digging up the bulbs to make way for the summer plants, be sure to bring along a plastic bag as they happily give away tulips and daffodils and hyacinths to anyone who asks for them. (they are thrown out). The tulips on the front page are a transplant from Stephen's Green.

Please remember that DGS membership subscriptions are now due. We will have a table set up at our next meeting for anybody wishing to pay Wexford trip or dues — Charlie is happy to take either. Remember that we are working on our 2010 directory and want to include as many people as possible. This year I will also be sending out membership cards to everybody along with the directory. As you know, we enjoy a 10% discount on all plants we buy at Ashtree Garden Centre. In the meantime I will leave a membership list (just your names) with Robbie so you can avail yourself of the discount immediately.

Robbie has always been very generous with donations of plants, so pay Ashtree Garden Centre a visit. He has a fabulous assortment of new plants and containers as well as garden furniture for that hot summer which we are sure to have.

....., and another thing on composting. It's official. The National Trust has suggested that men should urinate on their compost heaps to help fertilize their gardens and save on water (4 to 9 litres) by not having to flush lavatories as often. Peeing on a compost heap activates the composting process making it a better fertilizer. It seems that male urine is better than female because it is slightly less acid??

This may be more than you ever wanted to know on that subject but in the interest of having the best compost, we have to put up with a bit of toilet talk!

MEMBERS' MONDAY GARDEN WALKS

A few good people have signed up and invited the membership into their gardens. This is a very popular outing for those otherwise 'empty' Monday evenings. We all learn much, get ideas, and if lucky even get the promise of a slip or routed plant the host has spare. For the hosts it's also (believe it or not) of benefit. They clean up their gardens at hectic pace to have it perfect—thus being able to relax for the weeks following.

Time: 7:30

May 3 - John and Ethna Sneddon (note the date!!)

May 17 - Michael and Joyce Classon

May 24 still available

May 31 - Martin and Carmel McLaughlin

June 7 - Joan Donleavy

June 21 - Dorothy Jervis

To the 'guests' - might be good idea to ring so hosts have idea of numbers.

To the 'hosts' - we are going to try to be more sensible in 2010 and reign in the sometimes lavish smorgasbord on offer!!!! Right?!

Today I lost a dahlia; I am serious. Why am I mentioning it? What's a dahlia after all; I have lost trowels, garden gloves, rose cutters, those little wooden pokers for bulb planting (good riddance I said when I realized it was lost, it was totally useless anyway), and even a shovel once. All these are somewhere in my garden - though I did find one of my last year's lost trowels this week. But a dahlia bulb which I had in my hand one minute, newly bought, unusual colour and above all, very healthy with little budding shoots and then as I prepared the ground to plant it—GONE! I realized after frantic fruitless hunting, mostly because I thought I was losing my mind, (HOW could this happen) that I had better come inside and do something, anything, which had nothing to do with gardening.

I wish we women were still allowed to have 'vapours', I could have made use of one just then. As it was I crept into the house, not a word to my other half, he might have offered to 'help' me find it by digging up all I had planted!

I am just reading a very lovely book by Hermann Hesse, who was not only a great writer but enthusiastic gardener. In it he wrote a whole chapter on how lost his favourite knife in the garden. I know JUST how he felt!

News In Brief

- All Wexford trippers. If anybody has not paid amount due on this trip, please see Charlie Garratt at the May meeting or mail cheque to him made out to The Donegal Garden Society.
- The Donegal Garden Trail is compiling data on exactly what plants were hit hardest during the extreme conditions this past winter right across the county. For those who would like to participate, Elizabeth Temple will hand out a form at the next meeting for you to fill in. It would be interesting to see if there one particular plant which everybody lost.
- Robert Kee & Sons having a Grow Your Own (vegetables and fruits) competition. Entry forms, should anyone be interested, will be available at the next meeting.
- Robbie Ellis of Ashtree Garden Centre is conducting various courses and workshops this summer. Leaflets available at the May meeting. He will also be organizing a bus and entry tickets for Bloom in June. Call him at 972-2303 if you are interested.
- On May 29 and 30 is The Northwest Garden Show in Castlennish, Co Donegal. It is a trade exhibition for the garden and outdoor living industry. Look up their website at www.northwestgardenshow.ie It looks interesting. Some brochures will be available at the May meeting.

It is a bit on the late side for you to update your 2009 directories but it seems I did not mention names of some members who joined DGS during the latter part of the year. Apologies!

- AnneMarie McCullagh, 'Cluny', Quay Road Dungloe
- John and Viv Northridge, Loughfad, Portnoo
- Fionnguala Ashworth, 'Mo Chara', Meenachallow, Glenties
- Bridie Doherty, Loughanure, Annagry
- Anna Glackin, Farrigans, Lettermacaward
- Brenda and Malachy Mahon, Outown, Rosbeg

There are also some new members who joined in 2010 and these will be listed in your new 2010 directory.

Welcome