



Snail Mail

I overheard two people in the supermarket recently. The topic was our 'summer' and one fellow said to the other: "If anybody asks you what type of seasons we have in Ireland, just tell them that the months of May and June are our summer, and July and August our monsoon season". There is certainly some truth to that. If I get too grumpy with it all I remind myself how glorious May and June were—it helps—sometimes! Our Cork Garden Trippers had by all accounts a very enjoyable time. Of the first garden **Carraig Abhainn River Rock Gardens** in Durras, *Ethna Sneddon* writes: "On first entering I felt slightly jarred by a bright blue mural set into a walkway by the pond surrounded by hostas. This, I feel, was not in keeping with the spirit and essence of the rest of the garden. Otherwise it is a haven to please the senses; a harmonious blend of nature enhanced by the vision, creativity and hard work of Eugene Wiseman. To me, however, the distinctive character of this garden is drawn from the babbling river winding around the perimeter which maintains a constant flow over rocks and boulders. This, with creative and abundant planting affords many and varied views and vistas." Of all the gardens visited, *Maureen Cannon's* favourite was **Kilvarock Garden** overlooking Dunmanus Bay; a two acre terraced garden with an amazing range of plants. "Colourful and nicely laid out with paths; the kind of garden in which one can feel at home." *John Sneddon* writes of the same garden "... A very individual garden which included a formal oriental garden with many foreign and unusual plants". Another garden visited was **Cois Cuian** in Bantry of which *Joan Donleavy* writes "....."This two acre garden is set entirely within 30 metres of the sea and contains many rare plants from the Southern Hemisphere as well as salt and wind resisting plants."

Looking ahead to next year, the committee has already been discussing the possibility of doing the Wexford Garden trail, or parts thereof.

Now that the rain has stopped (briefly) it's time to do some work in the garden—rooting tender cuttings, moving evergreen shrubs, cutting back messy perennials, pruning back wispy shoots of wisteria which are not needed for extension growth, collecting seeds, planting bulbsthe list is endlesscomme toujours!

MONTHLY MEETINGS

- VENUE:** Salthill House, Mountcharles Please note that our October meeting is in Portnoo
- TIME:** 8 p.m. Plant sale and chit chat.
8:30 (PROMPT) Program begins,
- Oct. 5 Rosaria McCloskey, on "Seaweed for Gardens, Humans and Animals" (in PORTNOO).
- Nov. 2 "Wild About Bulbs" our speaker is Octavia Tulloch from Heritage Bulbs. There will be an opportunity to buy some heritage bulbs at the meeting.
- Dec. 7 Christmas Social - fun, quiz, maybe mulled wine!!!
- Jan. 11 To be advised
- Feb. 1 AGM

Every once in a while it is good to take a look backwards!!! Usually if it's a picture of oneself one is amazed how 'great' one looked just a few short years ago and how we seem never to take a good picture now. With a garden, it's the other way around—one can not imagine anymore how bare and sparse our now verdant garden looked just a little while ago. No-one who has ever been to Jack and Carmel Maguire's garden in recent years can believe that this was their view from the back door! From 1999 to 2002 Jack and Carmel not only put in the garden from scratch but renovated the whole house itself to make it the cosy place it is. The back patio area as you can see, used



to be a car-parking zone. Today it is such an inviting place to read the Sunday paper with a cup of coffee in the morning or pass around a cool glass of wine when the Garden Society members come for a garden walk (June 2009), Some of us stumble into our (more or less)



finished gardens bit by bit; some of us have it planned out in our heads before the first shovel of dirt is turned; but all of us have put in a lot of work, thought, commitment and determination. It's worthwhile to look back sometimes and give ourselves a pat on the back. Well done Jack and Carmel!



Roberta Ludlow is leaving us for greener pastures — well, maybe not greener but it will be closer to home and family. She has left us with a poem called

Allotment Love-Letter

I am so **Melon-Cauli** dear
 Since you have **Bean** away
 The **Thyme** has seemed so very long
 I **Pine** for you every day
 No **Sugar Beets** your sweetness -
 don't **Turnip** your nose at me
 But take this 18 **Carrot** ring
 And **Lettuce** married be

P.S. **A-Lot-Ment** but not very **mush-room**.



Good luck Roberta and we hope you will come and visit from Thyme to Thyme!

This from our esteemed treasurer and garden enthusiast!
 “Having tried using one of the large plastic compost bins without much success I was interested to read recently about the effectiveness of rotary composters. Must have one of those, I thought—until I saw the price! (€150 upwards). So I developed a cunning plan. Scrounging a large, blue plastic barrel, (with lid) from a local factory I fitted it with a ‘hub’ on each side (made from a round tree stake), drilled a hole in two fence posts, which I then hammered into the ground with the barrel suspended between them so that it could be easily rotated. Not pretty but the materials were about a tenth of the cost of the cheapest on the market. It can be hidden in a corner of the garden and anyway, composts aren't all that pretty at the best of times. I'm still waiting on results but it is fun giving the barrel a spin occasionally when I'm near.”

Well, Charlie –we are waiting with bated breath to hear about the abundance of fine compost in a future newsletter. I can also say the our esteemed ex chairperson, Mrs. D. has a barrel-deluxe given to her by Santa Claus which she has been spinning merrily. So we are waiting with twice-bated breath.

Newsflash!!

Thirty-nine members attended our September meeting after the summer break. Our speaker was Derek McLaughlin, an environmentalist/ecologist from Co. Mayo. His topic was Wildlife Birds and Butterflies in the garden. It was such an informative and interesting evening and we all learned SOME thing we didn't know before. His slides of butterflies were breathtaking. We all know we have butterflies in the garden and take it for granted



but actually 'seeing' them means I will pay more attention in future.

He then went on to talk about our very own bird the Twite (*carduelis flavirostris*). Sixty years ago the Twite was common in all coastal counties in Ireland. They have survived in Co. Donegal probably because of the continuation of traditional farming methods.

During a recent study he counted between 50 and 100 breeding pairs which puts it in the endangered species category. You won't find it in your garden but rather on the coast of West Donegal. Let's see if anybody can spot one.

I have probably written before about the very informative website of The Irish Garden magazine. It is: Garden.ie and it's well worth a look. Some of the interesting headings are:

- Easy Care Gardening - a good starting point
- What to do now - the week-by-week advice
- Find a supplier - county by county, the place to find gardening products and service
- Garden to See - plan days out with the guide to gardens open to the public
- The Garden.ie Club - a place to browse pictures of members' gardens, chat and make new friends.

It is easy to become a 'member' should anyone wish to do so but I promise you, looking over the website can be very addictive. Best just to 'give' yourself 15 minutes—the time it takes to drink your morning cup of coffee, for a quick look-see. It will surely remind you of what you need to do in your own garden!, speaking of which, I did want to take some Penstemon cuttings AND the sun is out.....

Our genius treasurer, and cunning compost drum builder has really done it this time! WE HAVE OUR VERY OWN WEBSITE Charlie spent hours upon unpaid hours to put together a very inexpensive (to us members), totally user friendly, informative, good-looking, amazing webpage. I am toasting you Charlie even as I type this. The webpage address is:

www.donegalgardensociety.net

Check it out — you will be amazed!

Let Charlie know if:

1. you have any problems viewing any of the pages. (Different browsers interpret the code differently).
2. Can make suggestions for additional info that might be useful to include .
3. You have suggestions for the 'Links' pages, e.g. gardens to visit, specialist suppliers, gardening sites, etc.

This from *Rosemary Tindal* who had vowed to give up growing tomatoes a few years ago but it still at it. "This year we had/have a good crop of small delicious Gardener's Delight and to my amazement, considering the summer we have had, they are ripening. I have been putting banana skins around the plants as the ethanol given off is supposed to help ripening. Has anybody any experience of this working??"

Please add the following overseas member to your directory.

Alan and Maddy Tongue

!!!!!! PLEASE NOTE !!!!!!!

Our AGM is fast approaching and as always we will be looking for places to fill as some in the committee have indicated they would not be standing again. If anyone is interested... please put your name forward. Pretty please!