

# HUNTLY GARDENS PROPRIETORS ASSOCIATION

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## **GARDENS REPORT 2020/2021**

The pruning of the Rhododendrons is now complete, and they are already starting to grow back, but in a much healthier state. They will continue to be managed so that they flower annually. The cut-back has also meant there is now space for other, more seasonally spread out, shrubs and plants to come through, and to be planted in the gaps.

The vision is still to have a naturalised hedge effect round the perimeter with 'windows', so that there is a level of privacy, but so residents can also see into the gardens and enjoy them from their homes.

We're planning two *Elaeagnus*, one 'ebbingei' and one 'submacrophylla', at the bottom fence where the cover is a bit bare. They're both evergreen (one has green/yellow leaves and the other silver) and are big bushy shrubs. A couple of *Mahonia*, which are also evergreen with good winter colour, will join them elsewhere in the gardens.

The central Sycamore has been moved to one of the lawns and replaced by an *Acer Palmatum* 'inabashidare' which has pulled the garden together and given it more form.

Compostable bark has been spread round some of the trees whose roots were above ground level and therefore vulnerable. More of the same is planned.

The wild area at the bottom lawn didn't work out in its original state. Wild areas actually take a lot of management, and can't just be left to their own devices. Ragwort and rough grass were taking over and it was quite ugly. So, we're having another go but this time it will be looked after by Dorothy Gillespie (no 23) who is planning to sow wildflowers including foxglove and

poppy. Brian has also planted spring bulbs there which should be coming through soon.

The large border perennials in the rose beds have been re-planted around the perimeter, which was always the long term plan.

Dorothy, who joined me last summer in tending the gardens, is also looking after three new bird feeders designed to attract small garden birds. We've already seen Goldfinches, Bullfinches, Robins, Blackbirds and a variety of Tits. And our population of Song Thrush is increasing, with eight seen near one of the feeders in early February. Kersti Berge (no 5) continues to look after several other bird feeders, including the Nyger Seed feeder which attracts the Goldfinches.

A major piece of work was the creation of a 'tradesman's entrance' at the south west corner of the gardens, which is for GardenWise's use only. The gap previously created in the north side fence for this purpose is being closed up and the border will be planted out.

There is now an extra bench in the gardens, kindly donated by a proprietor in memory of his late brother.

### **Future Planning**

Additional red chips will be added to the paths to cover up bare/thin patches. Some of the existing stones, which have gravitated towards the bottom, will be re-distributed.

GardenWise is organising a mini-skip so we can get the area at the back of the shed cleared up. It's fairly obvious what needs to go but, if anyone is storing a BBQ there, it would be helpful to know which one, or perhaps remove it to safety while the skip is there.

Several trees on the south side, mainly Laburnums, have outgrown the fence. After an inspection with Brian (a qualified arborealist) Dorothy and I decided to keep a watching brief on the situation for this year anyway.

## **GardenWise**

GardenWise continues to do a sterling job and, as well as gardening, they also: purchased the new bird feeders and food on our behalf; bought in bulbs, plants and shrubs as required; are organising the mini skip; had the new gate made and put in position. Brian is now semi-retired so it's Ryan (no relation) who's carrying out the day to day work on the garden. Both myself and Dorothy liaise with Brian regularly.

Hilary Barclay (Gardens Co-ordinator)