

## Welcome to your East Sutherland Garden Group April Newsletter.

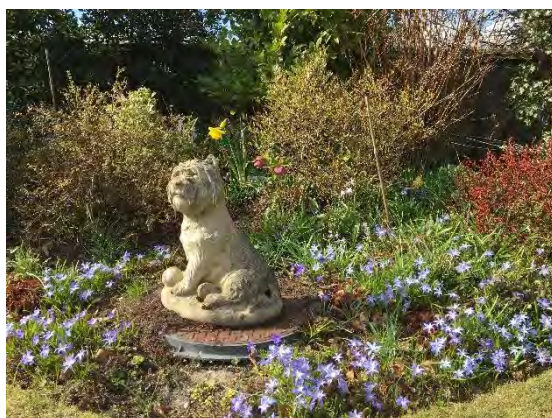
Since we cannot go on our planned visits this spring – and probably summer – we shall be making virtual visits to each other's gardens. Last month we should have visited Alison's to see her display of daffodils. Here are some pictures she sent and some primulas.



Moira sent these of her daffs and a tree in full blossom – hope the windy days this week haven't blown it all away.



With all of us spending more time than usual in our gardens we are likely to see more in the way of wildlife. (I bet Trish's kittens are in that picture in the middle somewhere)





Sheila's spring flowers are well out – about 2 weeks ahead of my garden where the trillium leaves have just broken through the earth. Its amazing the difference a few miles makes.



Sally & Peter sent these – *Helleborus argutifolius* and *Anemone blanda* white splendour (they sent the names too!)



Denise has a lovely display of spring bulbs – I hope she looks at those irises everytime she opens the door.





Denise's gardening is very limited just now as she has a bad back – so commiserations and best wishes to her. A few more pictures from Denise:



Now that *Cardamine pratensis* in the middle was also in Sheila's garden – so we have a choice of 2 people to scrounge a bit off!



I also have a cracker of a hellebore which I think I rescued from a friend's garden when she had to move into a care home. Its always nice to have plants that remind us of people.

Lastly, Jill says there is not much colour in her garden yet so she is busy doing battle with creeping buttercup and other weeds the front and back garden.



Please send your pictures of what's looking good in your garden, and of projects you are doing with all this spare time. Include some words, otherwise I shall be making up the commentary, and may make up the names of plants! Send photos, best at full size so may need more than one e-mail, to [fay@ecosse.net](mailto:fay@ecosse.net) by 20 May for May's newsletter.

It would be nice to send this through the post to members who are not on e-mail – if you know who they are please let me have their name and address.

Stay safe and happy gardening.

Fay



**Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, extra, April newsletter.** It was too long to wait for May! Some new flower seems to be opening every day which may be due to all this lovely weather we have had. Hope you have been sitting enjoying it as well as working on your gardens. Thanks for all the lovely photos you have sent.

Many of us have been cheered by pots of tulips by the door or garden bench



Lovely intense purple on left in Sheila's garden, pots from Trish above, Alison below left and a colourful trough at Sheila's.



Many of you say the daffs are a bit past now but mine are at their best, I think, and have benefitted from not being battered to death by rain this year. Too dry for slugs to eat them too.





A lot of us have fritillaries. Natives of damp meadows, instead they love seeding all over my gravel paths.



Denise



Fay



Denise



This beauty on the left is *Fritillaria pallidiflora*. Sara has found them tricky to get going but she loves these little ones which look good in a rockery and are growing with muscari which she hopes will surround them in a couple of years.

Alison has, at last, managed to prevent the pheasants from eating her fritillaries. They'll not be so tasty by the time she needs the hanging basket.



My trilliums are still nowhere near flowering but some of you are luckier. Jill on the left and Sara with *Trillium cuneatum* on the right.





Sara says "I have about 6 different ones but this is always the first one out. Many years ago I got a special deal and brought about 20 to give as Christmas presents. I potted them all up in lovely humus and waited and waited and waited. Eventually after about 3 years the first one appeared and in all probably about 12 finally grew. It took 7 years for the last one to appear! Once they took hold they have done well but they are quite slow to multiply so it has been a long wait but well worth it!"

Also from Sara:

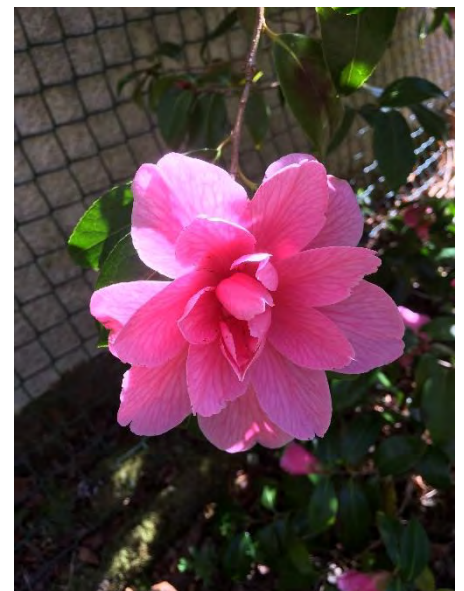


"**Hellebore and pulmonaria**, just love the mix and will plant more hellebores now that the pulmonaria have expanded.

**Erythronium Revolutum white beauty** Just brilliant bulbs which multiply well

**Anemone Nemorosa Vestal** perfect spring bulb for edging in borders

**Camellia** This shrub has been here longer than me and I love it as the first shrub to come out in the spring. Sadly these glorious days have also meant frosty nights so there are hardly any that haven't got brown edges. This was one of only three flowers that have escaped out of the whole bush!"



Other spring flowering shrubs are also looking good just now. This **Osmanthus Delavayi** in Sally and Peter's garden came from Peter's Mother, Jean Wild, about 35 years ago. She was a keen gardener all her life and is now in her 99th year.





Also from Sally & Peter –  
 “*Sanguinaria canadensis* Flora ‘Plena’ in the foreground. The blue flower on the background came from Sally’s Mother, Elizabeth Woolcombe and many will remember her wonderful garden in Golspie. We are unsure of its name. Any suggestions out there?”

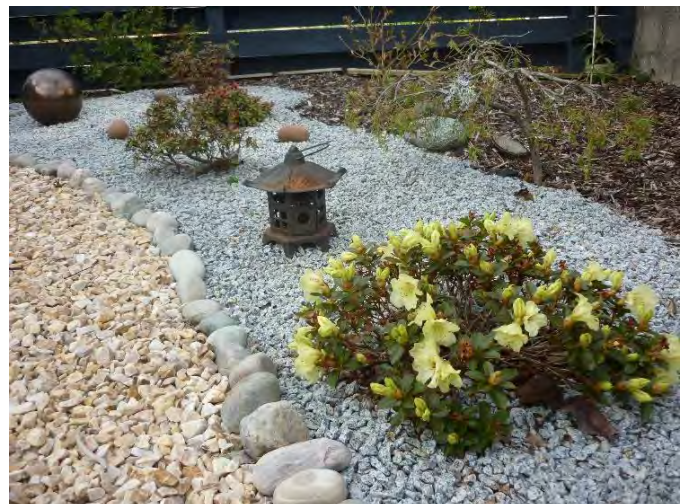
(I had the advantage of being able to zoom in on this picture so think its *Lithodora blue star* - Fay)

Both Linda and Alison sent pictures of *Spirea Bridal Wreath*. Alison confessed that seed from one fell into her pocket (as they do!) when we visited Inverness Botanic gardens last year and she now has a wee seedling. Spot the dog.



Alison says she had to wait several years for this erythronium on the left to flower but now its magnificent.

Jill’s Japanese garden has this lovely rhododendron coming into flower.







The glory of spring blossom from Sheila and Moira

Denise was waxing lyrical when she sent in her photos. Examples of her made-up collective nouns include:



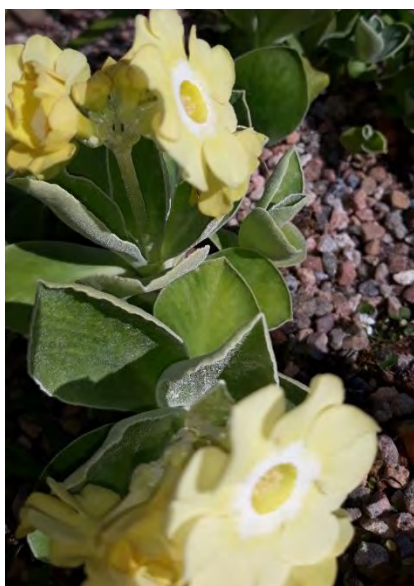
An avalanche of arabis



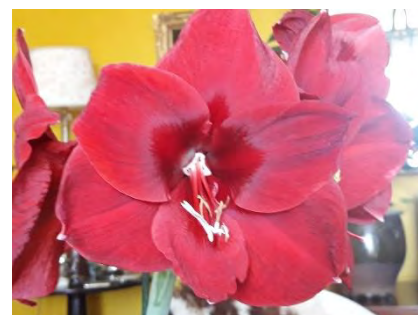
a truth of honesty



a curry of cardamine



Auriculas from Sheila and Linda



and an amaryllis flowering at last (inside) for Sheila





You should be seeing plenty of butterflies now in your gardens. On the left is a really poor photo of my first green hairstreak of the year. Its not getting anything from the tulip but as a newly hatched male it wants to sit at a tall vantage point to show off to any passing females.

Comma butterflies are becoming more widespread and we might see some here soon. I would be interested in any records, with photo, to pass on to Butterfly Conservation Scotland.

Another thing to look out for in May is a Bee Fly. They only fly in sunshine and resemble a bee. No other Highland insect has the combination of long proboscis and black striped wings. They have been seen in Rossshire but no records for Sutherland – yet!



Photo by Denise Stretton

I'll end with some of my photos – not of flowers!



The inspiration for my topiary cat on the left and the reality on the right – a work in progress!



No chance of me starving during this crisis – the early tatties are well up in their bags and loads of veg have been sown in the greenhouse and outside. Hope you all managed to buy veg seeds in time. I did a good swap this week with a friend – veg seed for yeast – which I hadn't been able to buy!

Hope this finds you all fit and well. Look forward to getting your next photos by 20 May. Apologies for all the photos I left out!  
Fay



**Welcome to East Sutherland Garden Group newsletter number 3.** Hopefully by number 4 we will be able to visit friends' gardens individually, getting up close and personal to the plants, if not to the gardener!

This month's photos were full of tulips in every shade, blossom on fruit trees and shrubs coming into flower. This weekend may well blow all the blossom away so enjoy it while you can.

Denise, like many of us no doubt, has been busy potting up seedlings and wondering where they are all going to go. Her photos include some lovely tulips, rhododendron, camassias, phlox in the rockery and a white excordia.

She didn't name the lovely rose on the right, but I'm sure she knows it!





Jill has been enjoying the first pickings of mange tout – a good reward for spending all her time trying to weed out that dreadful mare’s tail. Her photos show *Veronica gentianoides* Robusta with tulips, the lovely fresh green of the *Acer* in the Japanese garden, and the beautiful spring sight of emerging fronds on a fern.



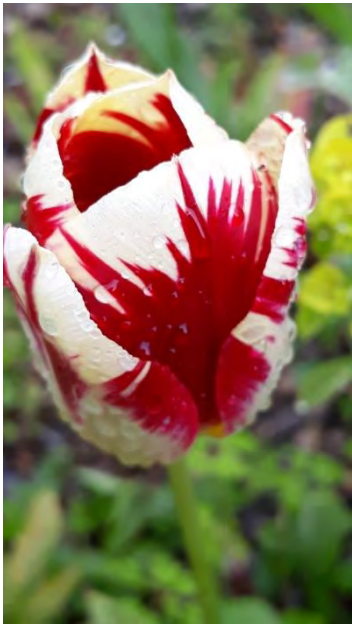
Maira sent pictures of Bachelor’s buttons (*Ranunculus*), tulips, tree peony, and gorgeous deep pink blossom



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Sheila has had a busy month but still has lots to do – I feel exactly the same! She sent lots of photos which I loved looking at. A selection is below. She says, “The early pink peony is Woodwardii bronze which came from my garden guru, the late Elizabeth Woollcombe , so many plants in my garden came from her and have thrived here.”

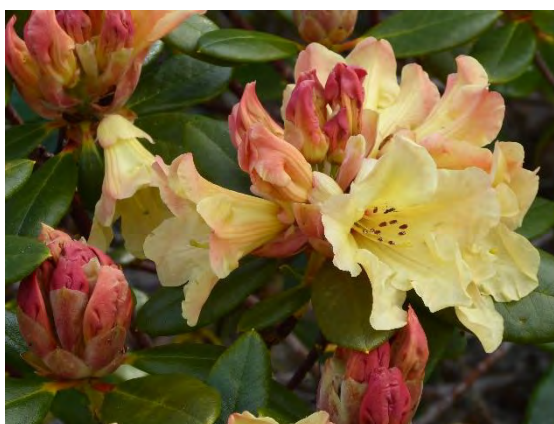




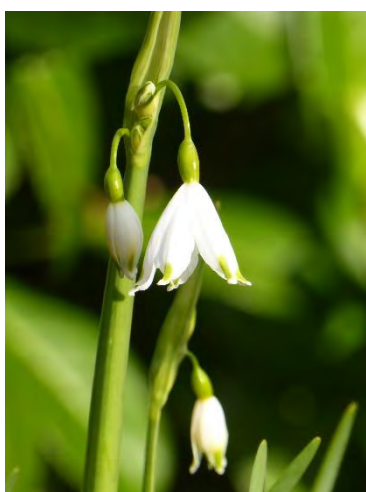


Pat sent in a photo of her bay tree in flower which she had never seen before. Mine certainly has never flowered – but it may well be dead. Anyone else get flowers on theirs?

And finally this month (because some regulars forgot to send any pictures) in my garden the baby hedgehog I rescued last autumn and fed all winter is doing a grand job keeping the slugs down – or maybe the dry spring is keeping numbers down. So, no hostas!

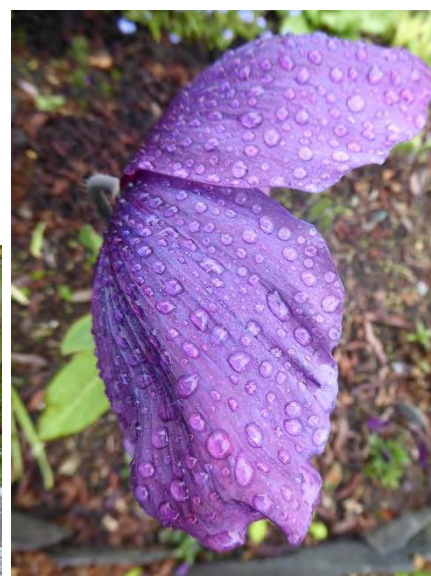


At last I have a trillium in flower – *Trillium erectum*, with tiny flowers that you have to bend double to see. The rhody, one of my favourites, opens in mid May and gets turned to brown mush in a late frost every year. It should be a lesson to me not to buy on impulse, but I doubt I will ever learn.



One mecanopsis out so far, so being arty with raindrops

On Tuesday I would have been at the Chelsea flower show – so, cheers from me and my strawberries and Pimm’s.



Those of you who forgot to send me any photos – put it in your diary – your diary will thank you as it has nothing else to do. Please send photos to me at [fay@ecosse.net](mailto:fay@ecosse.net) by 20 June for the next newsletter.

Enjoy your gardens, and continue to stay safe as we begin to get more freedom.