

Special Lockdown Supplement: Showcase your Garden

This month, Phytobties challenged you to share pictures of your favourite plants or wildlife from your garden or your walks... And you delivered! Thanks to all participants for their amazing contributions!



Anemone apennina, Anemone nemorosa, Paeonia lutea and Ribes speciosus by [John Parnell](#)



Jane Stout supports biodiversity and pollinators in her garden, too!



Eamon Haughey shared ‘some photos from my garden of planting potatoes on March 17th and how they look in mid-May. We planted 2 varieties, King Edward and Queens, which we were lucky to buy before the lockdown. So far, they are growing well but require watering a couple of times a week as we have had so little rain. Also getting some damage from a family of foxes who visit our garden! If they survive hopefully the potatoes will be ready to harvest some in a couple of months.’

Maude Baudraz has an inspiring story to tell, ‘The best attempt at a garden I have is this sad little lawn between two apartment blocks. BUT amazing things can happen everywhere! Being always in because of the lockdown, I happened to be in and at the kitchen table (aka, my office desk) when the gardener came to cut the grass back to its usual 3cm length. I came down to ask him if we could keep a flower strip! Telling him it was really nice to have flowers when being lockdown, and besides... the all-Ireland pollinators plan... flowers strips are advised... The umbrella role of the magic bee worked out, and a strip was left out! Well hidden behind the two trees you can see on the picture, but left standing! It’s been alive and kicking since then. And look who came and managed to flower and pass as an added surprise between the dandelions, clovers and daisies? A random bluebell! Unexpected treasures in my city lawn!



On the right is the “**For-rest Bookmark**” by **Kamila Kwasniewska**
All pictures were taken during dog walking in Wicklow forests.

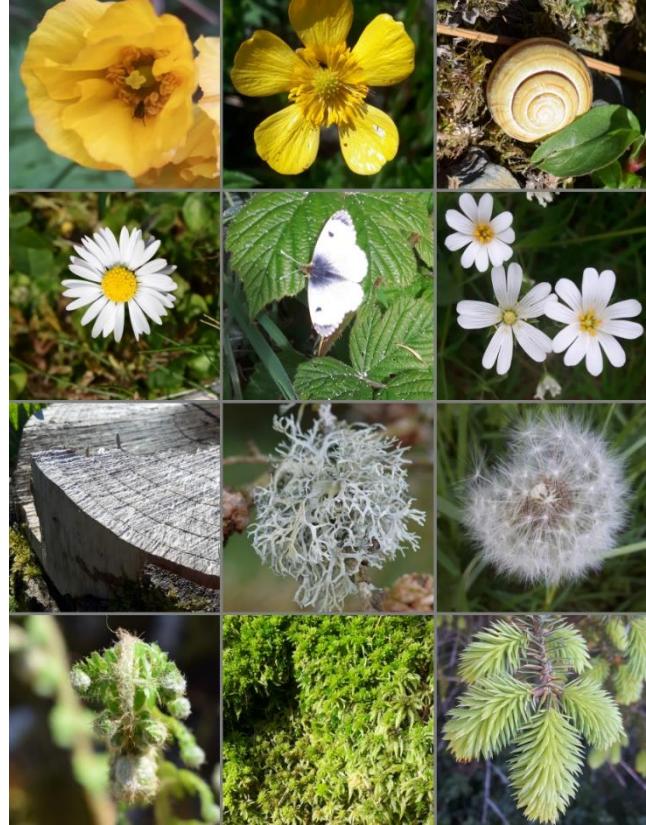


As for **Stephen Waldren**, he spotted these *Equisetum temateia* – sporophytes along a walk with his dog on Southern Cross Road, Bray.

Although living in a small suburban estate, they do get buzzards flying over fairly regularly, but this is the first Red Kite he has seen from his house, photographed from his front drive.



Rebecca Rolfe and **Aoibheann Gaughran** also had visitors in their gardens, a female woodpecker and a sika deer *Cervus Nippon*, respectively (and top of next page).





Paul Downing and Valerie's farm garden.

On the left is their driveway made of coarse crushed limestone on slightly acid sandy brown earth subsoil. He killed the weed chemically for the first 10 years and then stopped and has only mowed it 2/3 times a year since (another 10 years). The result has been a profusion of wild flowers.

The other pictures are a small bit of their vegetable garden. First with lettuce planted out in March for eating in early June and in top right planted out a few days ago for eating after that, flowering rocket sown last August still growing leaves and delicious flowers tasting like the leaves but with a vanilla bouquet, and parsley self-sown last year.

Then you have some onions weeded, and cabbages, sprouts and kales waiting for transplant, to eat between August 2020 and February 2021.

He promised more photos as things grow and ripen!

Daniel Kelly's plant of the month at Whitebeam Road, Clonskeagh is ***Mackaya bella* Harv. (Forest Bell Bush)**, an ornamental shrub in the Acanthaceae (Acanthus family).

"Native to South Africa, this plant is not hardy in Ireland. We have it in a pot in an unheated conservatory. It has not done much, to date, and last year it just sulked. I was considering throwing it out, but gave it one last chance – and a bit of compost and fertiliser. It responded with a remarkable spurt of growth. This has now been followed by a prolific display of flowers.



The corolla is very pale lilac - almost white - with the network of veins picked out in fine lines of purple. These markings act as nectar guides, guiding flower visitors to the nectar at the base of the corolla-tube. In its homeland, the flowers are pollinated by honey-bees and carpenter bees.



The flowers are **protandrous**, with first a 'male phase', when the pollen is released, followed by a 'female phase', when the stigmas become receptive.

Mackaya bella has a double association with Trinity College Dublin. The species was first described in 1859 by William Henry Harvey (1811–1866), a native of Limerick, who was curator of the Trinity College Herbarium and subsequently Professor of Botany. He named the genus in honour of James Townsend Mackay (1775–1862), a native of Kirkcaldy (Fifeshire), who was for many years superintendent of the Dublin University Botanic Garden. And 'bella', of course, means beautiful."



Phase 1: As the flower opens, the anthers appear, close together on the upper side of the corolla-tube – ready to be brushed against by the bee.

Phase 2: The stamens then move apart, leaving the stigma exposed on the upper side of the corolla-tube.

Phase 3: Next, the two lobes of the stigma separate. At this stage, the anthers have shed their pollen and are beginning to wither.

Catherine Farrell calls it “Chicken or Egg?”

“It is a photo series of the ‘Chicken in the Woods’ fungus as I watched it growing on the doorstep of an oak tree ‘fairy door’ in Charleville woods. I really enjoyed watching the fungus fruiting body morph and transform from yellow blob to beautiful brackets and though it might appeal to the curious!”



It started as a yellow blob...



Then it got a bit of orange...



Then it got awesome..!

Patricia Coughlan shared a gardening tip: Get a horse in to trim your lawn! (Photo from early April) and Messi the hen eating her flowers



Sam Ross was working in Japan when the quarantine started:

“I’ve spent years trying to get a good photo that represents well the subtropical shrubs, trees, and grasses in Okinawa’s highlands. Here’s my best attempt from a socially-distant walk.”



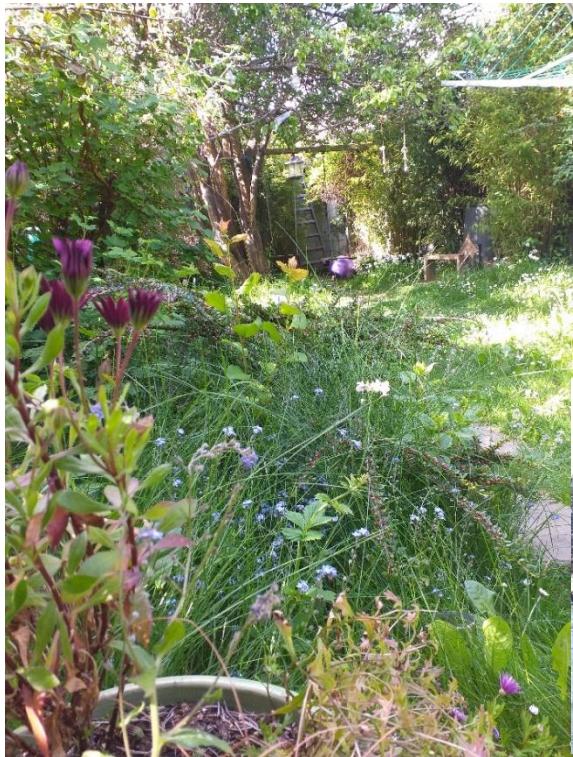
Marcella Campbell's beautiful garden.



On the left, the lovely garden of [Mike Williams](#) and his amazing roses.



On the right, the little broom (*Cytisus*) bought just before the lockdown is doing great in [Trevor Hodkinson's](#) garden



Anthony Williams presents his wild and rooftop gardens:

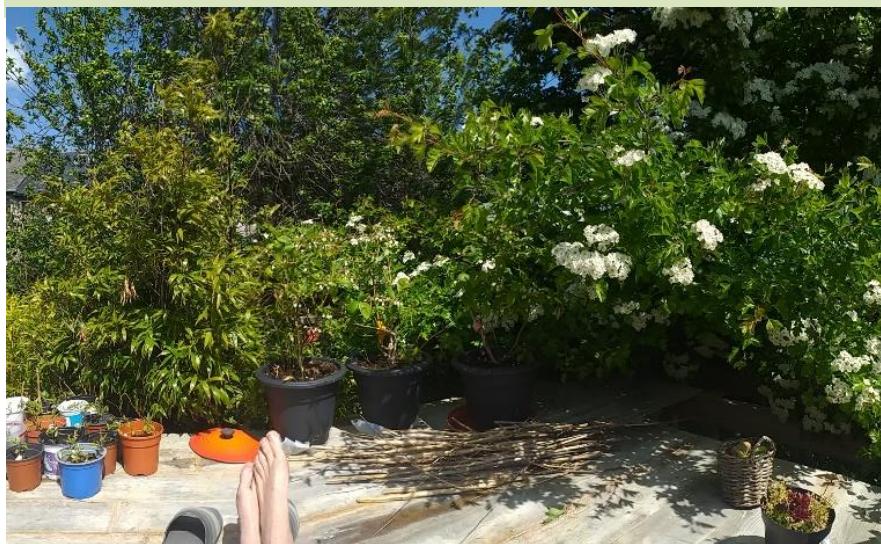
"No footpaths... and grass only cut rarely... A play space for children, adults... and nature!"

The top of the shed... built as a floor... using floorboards...
Now a sunny roof garden.



Growing the peas (*Leguminosae*) with lettuce and salad crops sharing the pot and soil... and benefitting from the nitrogen (right).

Roofgarden on the shed roof /floor... in the canopy of the trees...
Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyacantha*) and Damson (*Prunus spp.*)



Anne Dubéarnès wrote 'I don't think I know a more calming place than the wildflower meadow and the patch of woods at the back of my parent's garden, in South-West France. They are bursting with life and colours, and there is always something interesting to find (pictures on the left).'



In early May, brightly-coloured myxomycetes were blooming everywhere; here (pictures on the right) is an example of *Lycogala epidendrum*, also known as wolf's milk. Another interesting find was the sporophytes of *Osmunda regalis*, a gorgeous fern that grows near springs and brooks. In this species, the spores are not born on the lower surface of the fronds, like in many other species. Instead, some of the pinnae at the top of the fronds lose their leaf-like structure and turn into tassels that bear sporangia. Because of this strange arrangement, some people say that *Osmunda* are "flowering ferns".

Oh, and for the more insect-inclined among us, here is a sample of the myriad of pollinators currently enjoying a sweet-scented *Ligustrum* basking in the sun in the afternoon.'



Martyn Linnie decided to share some wonderful pictures with us.



A garden rescue during lockdown by *Henri Lamb*

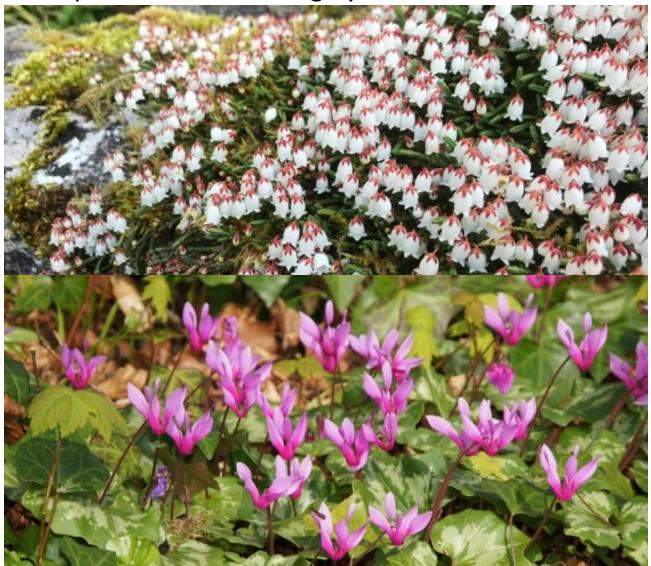
The garden at Woodfield, near Clara, Co Offaly, has been neglected since well before my parents, Keith and Helen, died in 2011. Since then, Emma and I have made only sporadic visits for minimal maintenance, so there is much renovation and rescue work to be done. The lockdown has been an ideal opportunity to start on the task, and to assess what is feasible for us to keep, and what to abandon.



Although Keith researched and rescued numerous Irish heritage apples (Lamb 1951 Econ Proc RDS 4, 1–63), he never planted an orchard at Woodfield. In January 2015, we planted 28 young trees, two each of the Irish varieties that he had found, in geographical order of their county of origin. In deference to our years in Wales, we included two Bardsey apple trees, from Bardsey Island off the tip of the Llyn, north Wales – but they too may have an Irish monastic provenance. Thanks to Seedsavers Ireland, where we obtained the trees, they are thriving, despite one brief, damaging incursion by a neighbour's sheep.



The garden has several distinct 'ecosystems': perhaps most notable is the walled kennel yard, where Keith constructed seven raised beds filled with acid soil, principally for alpines. There is also a rock garden, now very much overgrown with dandelions, grasses and vetch. More than thirty towering beech trees, east and west of the house, cast a deep shade in summer, preceded by a spring flora of Cyclamens, Trilliums and anemones. In the old bawn, called the 'jungle', various Magnolias, Cercis and Sorbus have survived, but brambles threaten to overcome the yellow Erythroniums beneath. In one corner is a large Oregon Maple, a progeny of the now departed ancient maples in Trinity's front square, and transplanted as a seedling by me in about 1975.



Cassiope 'Muirhead' and *Cyclamen repandum*

We recently found Keith's astonishing handwritten catalogue of the plants that he introduced to the garden since his retirement in 1981 from An Foras Taluntais (now Teagasc) at Kinsealy, near Malahide. It gives the names, origins and planting dates of more than 3000 trees, shrubs, bulbs and alpines. He recorded their locations, but in a way that sometimes needs deciphering. Not many remain unfortunately, but it does give us motivation for a search-and-rescue treasure hunt for survivors, and to identify the finds. As they die down after flowering, we have rescued various Erythroniums, Trilliums, species tulips, and Keith's own miniature daffodil hybrid, registered at the RHS as 'Fairy Gold' (picture on the left) – not a name that we would have chosen. The alpine beds, so depleted of their original occupants, are useful as nurseries for the rescued items.



Erythronium californicum and *Erythronium 'Pagoda'*



Trillium grandiflorum and *Trillium chloropetalum*

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Jennifer McElwain, our Head of Department, loved the idea of this challenge and it got her thinking about how we could showcase botany to a broader audience using video! In her own words:

'This 5 minute YouTube film is a trial of how we could possibly do this as a Department. Filmed by my talented husband Peter Lang (Photoic Design). This is an idea for which I am looking for feedback from the Botany Department through Phytabytes! Who would be interested in doing the next 5 in 5 video?

I have learned a lot through doing it... for example a script would be a good idea rather than speaking off the cuff. Last-minute plant ID's – not a good idea. Hope I've got them right! Cheesy train scenes – not sure about those either... see [here](#).



One last picture from John Parnell's garden,
Convallaria majalis

PHYTOBYTES needs your input! Whether you are student or staff, please send any news you have, big or small, to Marine Valmier (valmierm@tcd.ie) with the subject heading 'Phytabytes'. Let's share the latest news and always be aware of what is happening at Botany!