



April 2026

NEXT MEMBERS' MEETING

Growing Legumes

Speaker: Ian Simpson

Friday 1st May

Dalgety Bay Community Centre

7.15pm for 7.30pm start

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Last month we had an interesting and more technical chat from Jennifer Brodie at Veolia. I'd also be interested to hear how the lucky ones who got a sample get on with the rock dust. After the meeting a few members approached me regarding the products availability, and I hope to be able to tell you of a more local supply soon but Freuchie Garden Centre did have some the last time I looked. Let them know you're from DBHS and I'll get a bit of sponsorship from them for next year's show.

This month's talk is a look at Allotment Life and some of the less well considered benefits of having a plot. Jenny Mollinson has been a plot holder in her own right for many years now and was the former gardening correspondent in the Scotsman

in her "Allotment Life" column as well as co-authoring a book on Allotments and their health benefits.

FUTURE EVENTS

16th May

DBHS Annual Plant Sale

including bedding plants, garden plants and Tea/coffees.

Donations of plants on the day will be very welcome.

5th June

Streptocarpus Workshop

4th - 5th September

DBHS Annual Show

Set up takes place on the 4th
September 11am until late.

Judging takes place on the 5th from
10am, halls open to public at
12.30pm and prize giving at 4pm.

Craft Fair will be held in the Main
Church Hall on 5th September.

Also please give a thought to our Plant Sale on 16th May and what plants you'd like to buy, we can then tailor our orders to your requirements. I'll also put out a plea, that if you have any spare plants you'd like to donate, we'd be delighted to receive them on the morning of the sale.

The clocks have changed and the days are getting longer. Let's hope for some fine weather to enjoy our gardens and allotments. Happy gardening!

2026 SYLLABUS

The full syllabus of speakers is now available and was emailed out with the March Grapevine. To reduce expenditure members will no longer receive a printed Syllabus card. Anyone who receives a printed copy of the Grapevine will also receive a printed Syllabus.

COLLECTION OF DBHS FEES

Please can any member who has not paid their membership fee or allotment fee to date make payment as soon as possible. Allotment holders may pay in two instalments: the full £52 being due now or over two instalments of £26; the 1st instalment being due now and the 2nd instalment by 30 June.

Our preference is for payment by bank transfer and our bank details are below.

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland
Address: 52/54 East Port, Dunfermline,
Fife, KY12 7HB
Sort Code: 83 29 01
Account Name: DBHS
A/C No: 00676049
Ref: Your first initial(s) and your last
name

Please note some banks expect the Account Name to be the full name (Dalgety Bay Horticultural Society).

If you decide to pay membership or allotment fees by cash, please, email the membership secretary at dalgetybayhs1975@gmail.com who will liaise with your distributor for collection at a mutually convenient time.

THE ROOTS OF GARDENING IN DALGETY

By Robin Arnott

First published November 2020

The roots of gardening in Dalgety can be traced back a few hundred years. We know from the records that gardens were maintained, certainly in the 1560s, by the Henderson family at Fordell Castle, as "William Raa was hired to look after the yeard (the garden) of Fordell throughout the year and plant and prune trees. He was also instructed to plant only beans and peas and for his labours he received 6 bolls of meal a year, together with the 'profit' from the yeard and the use of two acres of ground and grass for two cows. Gardens were also maintained at Leuchat, the home of the Spittell family, although nothing remains of that house and its precise location is not known.



St Bridget's Kirk

Evidence of gardeners can also be found with his tour of Scotland. He described Donibristle as a stroll around the graveyard at St Bridget's Kirk. At the west gable-end of the church a grave slab tells us that a George Liddell was the gardener at Donibristle House and died in July 1690, at the age of 45. We also know from the Moray Muniments, documents belonging to the earls of Moray and held at Darnaway Castle, that George's son, Alexander, was contracted on 10 December 1697 "for the keeping of the earl's gardens at Donibristle". He was followed by David Couper who died in August 1736 at the age of 48 and by David Hutton who died in 1748. A tablestone, near the sea wall, commemorates a William Harper (d. 1814) who combined his gardening duties at Donibristle with being a tenant farmer in Leuchat and Craigs Beath.



Gravestone 1690 George Liddell, Gardener

The gardens at Donibristle were visited in 1677 by Thomas Kirk, a Yorkshireman, during being "a fine house, built square and regular with the windows proportionable. In the middle of the eastern court is a

fountain, in the middle whereof stands a Mercury, with one foot on the back of a tortoise, which turns up its neck and spouts water up to a great height and washes the Black's skin. Here are many good gardens, walks and groves and a very fine bowling green." Sir Robert Sibbald in his 'History of Fife and Kinross' (pub. 1803) recorded Donibristle as a "pleasant house, well adorned with gardens, terraces, statues and large inclosures".



Gravestone 1685 Robert Meikle

A mural tablet, now missing, was also on the west gable-end of the church. We know from records in the Carnegie Library that Erskine Beveridge, a Dunfermline linen manufacturer and keen local historian, recorded the inscription in 1897. It was in memory of Robert Meikle, gardener to the earl of Dunfermline at Dalgety House, who died in 1685 at the age of 45. Dalgety House lay just to the north of St Bridget's Kirk, and was described by Sir Robert Sibbald as "repaired and beautified with gardens by chancellor Seaton, Earl of Dunfermling". In writ of 1611, it was described as the "Manor place of Dalgatie" and in 1677, it was noted by 4 Thomas Kirk

that “the garden and walks were in very good order”.

Gardening was a hard physical life and the gardener was expected to keep the grounds tidy, maintain the paths and scythe the grass, cut hedges, plant and prune trees, maintain an orchard, sow vegetable seeds and harvest the produce for the household. In addition, he might have been expected to train an apprentice, maintain flower beds, manage bee-hives, make cider from the apples as well as having to make seed boxes, prepare compost heaps and repair his tools.

The position was well-recompensed, as we learn from an account rendered in 1643 by James Cuthbertson, gardener at Donibristle, that he was owed one hundred and twenty-eight pounds Scots, as a year's wages for him and his man. As the under-gardener would have received little more than half of the gardener's wage Cuthbertson would have been paid around ninety pounds Scots per year, equivalent to between £7 and £8 sterling. He also received “for the space of three years for three suits of clothes at 20s sterling the piece”. That record also tells us that Cuthbertson bought items for the gardens, such as nails, ‘ane syth’, ‘seids three years... ilk year’, ‘three scor loads of land gravell to doe the walkes of the gardeine at aughteine pennies the load’, pear, apple and cherry ‘Impes’ i.e. scions for grafting as well as trees to ‘graff’.

The roots of gardening go deep! So, the next time your spade goes into the soil - just remember, someone's probably been there before you!

ANNUAL SHOW 2026

Handicrafts

Section 4 Industrious

Handicrafts

- 4.9 Pot with Sea glass
- 4.10 Bookmark
- 4.11 Crochet item

Section 26 Handicrafts

- 26.1 - 26.10 Remain unchanged
- 26.11 Something to represent the World Cup

Section 27 Handicrafts - Contemporary

- 27.1 Decorated Tea Light Holder
- 27.2 A bowl made of any media
- 27.3 A picture made from buttons
- 27.4 A basket with knitted/crocheted fruit
- 27.5 A felted flower or flowers
- 27.6 A novelty doorstop
- 27.7 One article in bead work
- 27.8 Pop up card
- 27.9 Diamond printing u/12
- 27.10 Diamond printing

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