**Scotland’s Great Climate**

By Tina Will

My husband and I visited gardens and castles in southern Scotland in July, and kept marveling at the variety. Scotland’s climate is amazing; though far north of Virginia (and USA), the effects of the Gulf Stream create a mild and moist climate which keeps plants happy and growing. Palm trees at Crathes and Culzean Castles, and other gardens can be grown in protected areas. At Benmore Botanic Garden ferns are several feet high in their 150 year old ’fernery,’ and Giant Sequoias are ‘teenagers’ at 170 years old and close to 200 feet tall. On the island of Iona fuchsia grows as a large shrub.

The pandemic changed many things for gardeners around the world. At some castles and gardens the reduced staffing meant that lawns didn’t get mowed regularly. Light dawned when they realized that leaving grasses to grow under trees was a better choice than mulching, and that just mowing a path around or through their meadows created a different and lovely effect, and was also a winner for the pollinating insects, small animals, and employee work load as well.

I am always drawn to color and contrast in the landscape, but it’s not that easy to do well. Reds, yellows, blues, and greens add great interest, but foliage size and overall height or shape also play a part. While there we toured some of the loveliest gardens and professional horticultural schools (Threave and Royal Botanic Garden) that demonstrate and teach aspiring students how to grow and display shrubs, trees, foliage, and flowers in ways that were not repetitive or predictable no matter where we went. A few pictures are provided; better yet, plan a trip!

**Flower Show in August**

Master Gardeners launched the second Pollinator and Flower show event at the downtown library in late June. Children and parents asked lots of questions and received sprouted plants that will flower in time to be part of our 2nd Flower Show that will be held August 22-23. The goal is to encourage people to enjoy growing flowers for beauty and fun, and for the benefit of the pollinating insects as well. Information to participate is at <https://www.mgacra.org/june.html>, and the August calendar also. Bring a flower; earn a ribbon!

**Seed Swap 2024**

My Echinaceas will be setting seed soon, so this is a reminder to harvest seeds to bring to our Seed Swap planned for January 27, 2024. Our event last January was a great success, educational, and great for children too. Encourage your friends and family to participate. Look for information later this Fall on mgacra.org.