

Gardening in Shetland

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The Shetland Isles are the most northerly islands in the British Isles, situated where the North Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean at 60 degrees north. They are often confused with the Orkneys which lie much closer to Northern Scotland. Orcadians however are said to be farmers who fish whilst Shetlanders are fishermen who farm. Indeed a visit to Orkney has the feel of Northern Scotland but the Shetland Isles feel



different - maybe because of its strong Scandinavian heritage.

Until the early 1970's life was hard in the Shetlands and there was no spare money for such luxuries as plants. Electricity did not arrive on the islands until the 1950's. Most Shetlanders farmed the croft and were self sufficient. They caught fish from the sea and kept sheep for wool and meat. On the croft would be a "plantiecrub" or stone enclosure, which was used to grow veg, mainly brassicas, for winter food. Few species of moths and butterflies survive on the Islands so these crops don't get too nibbled.

With the discovery of oil off the shores of

Shetland, prosperity came to the islands and an influx of new residents saw many new homes built. These new houses tend to have a garden, just as they would on the mainland.

Shetland is often thought of as a bleak place where no trees will grow, but Sycamore trees

are found throughout the islands, also Birch, Alder, Scots Pine and the occasional Horse Chestnut. Where these trees have been planted to provide a shelterbelt from the strong salt laden winds attractive gardens have been created. Hedges are frequently composed of these trees. Other plants for hedges are mainly Rosa rugosa, Fuchsia and Flowering Currant and Potentilla. Within the hedges the plants still need to be tough to withstand the exposure and the acidity of the soil so the range of herbaceous plants grown is fairly limited. They are frequently killed by the cold winds and where they do survive, have stunted growth. Over

wintering is a challenge as glasshouses are not really an option in the strong winds.

However the Shetlands do have relatively mild summers and this together with up to nineteen hours of daylight each day provides the perfect growing conditions for short season plants. Annuals such as Mesimbranthemum, Lavertera and Poppies thrive in the long days as do bedding plants bought in as young plug plants each year. Gardens, in summer at least, are often a riot of colour.

Wild flowers adorn the crofts and fields with dandelion like hawkbit and yellow flag iris seeming to be just about everywhere. Celandine, Tormentil and Silver weed are the more common yellow flowers, but fox and cubs, geums, red campion, heathers, orchids, ragged robin, cranesbills, gentians, meadowsweet, daisies and sneezewort complete the colour spectrum.

Enjoy your gardening, it could be worse!

Nadia

Silloth Bowling Club



This year, Silloth Bowling Clubs Interclub Champion of Champions was between two of Cumbria's finest champions.

Sandra Parker and Edwin Orchard are both worthy champions in their own right and both also represent Club and County. Played for the fifth time this years the competition was won by Edwin Orchard who was on form with a convincing score of 21-09. The game was played in wet and windy weather, yet the standard of bowls was superb, both players are a credit to the Silloth Bowling Club.

Silloth Tennis Club

Success For Silloth Tennis Players At County Championships

Greg Ramsay led the way as Silloth's

young tennis players put up a good showing at the annual county championships which were held at Penrith during the last week of the summer holidays.

By his own admission Greg has not had the best of summers but he kept his best Tennis for the under 10 singles final

where he beat Brampton's Chris Edge in a high class match by 4-1, 5-4. He was also a runner up in the doubles.

Dawn Graham and Hannah Story were also successful as they claimed the under 16 and under 14 girls doubles titles respectively with Dawn teaming up

with Jenna Blenkarn (Penrith) and Hannah partnering Kelly Spry (Barrow).

Other good displays came from Emily Wise (under 12 singles and doubles runner up), Ryan Johnstone (Under 16 plate runner up) and Robert Jefferson (under 18 plate runner up).

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