

## **Gardening Against the Odds**

A happy gardener is a resilient optimist. Nature always wins and attempts to thwart it mostly end in defeat. Work with nature and you might reach a happy compromise.

In this strangest of times nature lobbed in the coronavirus trump card turning all our lives upside down but gardeners by and large, are resolute optimists and can busy themselves with gardening tasks. Without the motivation of getting everything in visitor ready condition by the end of June I thought I'd lose momentum but nature again obliged by throwing in the latest of frosts (x2), icy winds from the east, unexpectedly hot weather, drought and now gales and cold rain. So what might have been a gentle amble up to opening day has been an exercise in patching up the damage or just acceptance as with my red leaved Japanese acer which looked magnificent by mid May and now is stark naked without a single leaf - all its glory shrivelled and shed. Beans planted out too early (Garland Day being the local deadline and ignored in my haste to 'get on') wilted and died, huge hosta leaves coming into their own for the first time were reduced to green slush, hydrangea leaves and buds shrivelled and brown, bedding plants gave up the ghost - I could go on but I might weep.

Accepting the inevitable disasters, dealing with what can be remedied and looking forward to better times is the only way; just like life really but with added mud, greenfly, mice, pigeons, woolly aphids, slugs, squirrels, blight.....there's always next year. See what I mean about being an optimist?

Our gardens will be without your welcome company this June and we will miss you and your garden gossip but we will open again in 2021 (June 26th & 27th) whatever nature throws at us as long as it's not another virus; something beyond even the most determined gardener. Enjoy your own garden whether it's a window box or sweeping acres; I know you are up to the challenge!

Linda Jackson