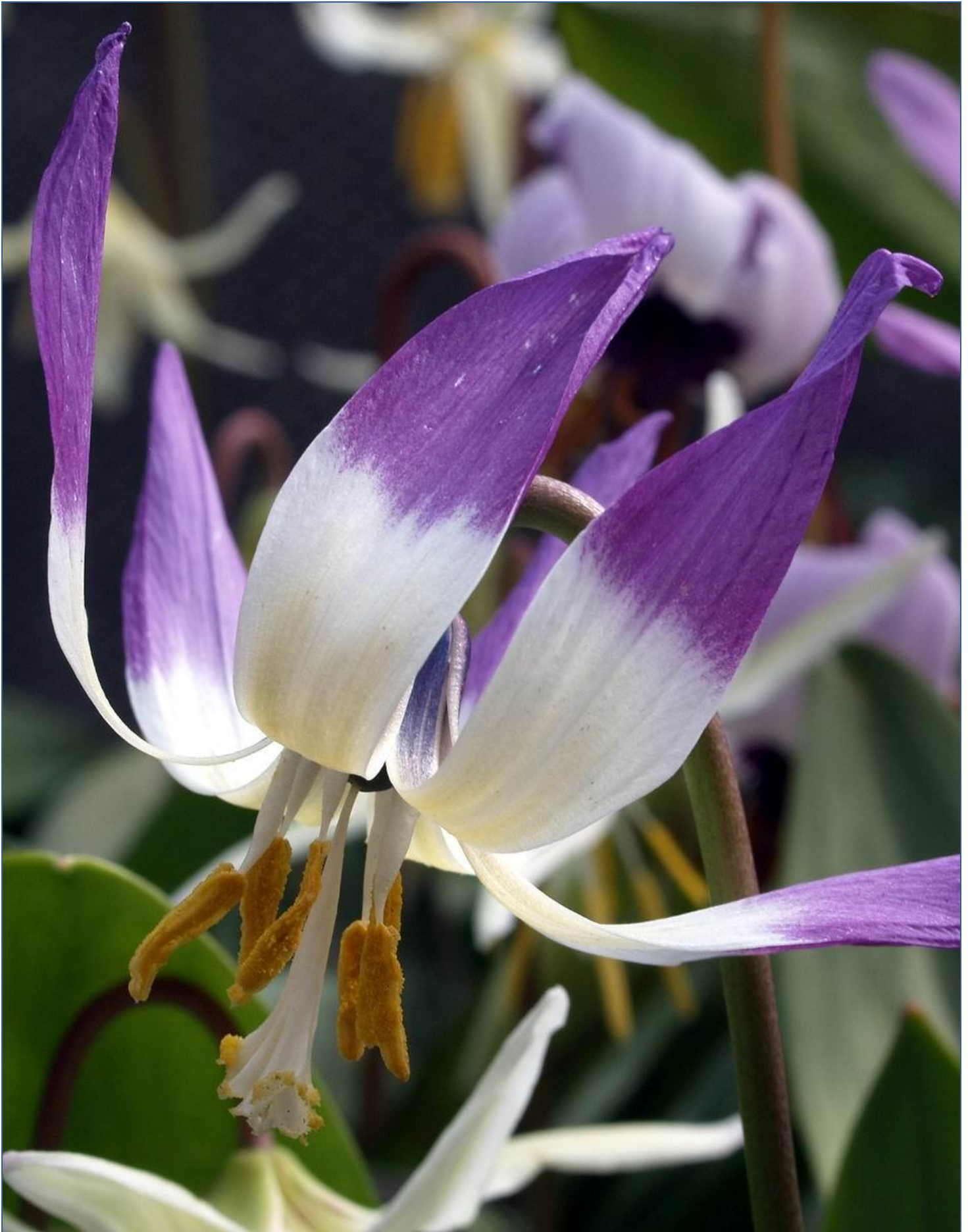


International Rock Gardener



---International Rock Gardener---

December 2012



We have heard [before](#) from John Mattingley of Cluny House Gardens, near Aberfeldy in Perthshire, Scotland but readers have asked for a little more background on this charming garden. Bobby Masterton, a veterinary surgeon with a love of quiet peaceful places, bought Cluny House and its six acre policies in 1950. With his wife, Betty, a wonderful woodland garden was created high above the river Tay in Perthshire, which provided an ideal home for not only a wide range of trees and plants, but also for local wildlife. After the death of the Masterton's in 1987, their youngest daughter Wendy and her husband John Mattingley took over [the garden](#) which had already become a happy obsession with them. The garden is cultivated organically, without the use of insecticides or pesticides (which doubtless benefits the local Red Squirrel population) and is home to an important collection of Asiatic primulas and a large array of Arisaema, Erythronium, Lilium and Trillium growing expansively in this stunning natural setting. The specimen trees include a huge *Sequoiadendron* which holds the British record for its massive girth.

Austrian plantsman Franz Hadacek visited Cluny in 1982, with an English friend, the late [Eric Hilton](#), who had a notable garden just north of Bristol.



Left: Bobby Masterton, Eric and Mrs Hilton, Betty Masterton at Cluny in 1982.

Franz recalls: "My visit to Cluny House Gardens was a high point of my several journeys to Scotland. In spite of the rain the garden was marvellous and I saw many rare plants. The many Primulas were particularly impressive. I spent a beautiful afternoon with Bobby and Betty Masterton and the tea and cakes were wonderful too! I dream still about this garden."

More photos from Cluny from Franz Hadacek:



Far left: *Aciphylla aurea* from New Zealand, with *Meconopsis paniculata* towering above the "Speargrass" flower spike.

Left: A grand display of *Meconopsis grandis* along a path, again from 1982.

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---Mountains in the Gardens---

Interesting Plants at Cluny by John Mattingley

Well, after a brilliant early spring, came the shocking return to winter. The *Primula sonchifolia* that looked so promising (see [May edition](#)) aborted their seed-setting along with most of the early plants, even the trillium seed set was poor and this was the first time in over 25 years that this has happened. It was now up to the rest of the plants to provide interest.

The main *Arisaema griffithii* clumps were affected, however the *Arisaema elephas* were terrific and looked so healthy. This one grows amongst the roots of a large Eastern Hemlock amongst the dense leaf litter.



Arisaema elephas



Left: *A. propinquum*

Our largest arisaema, possibly a *propinquum* type, grew to over 1.7m tall and we also had an almost black spathe on another type. (See [IRG 29](#) for photos of the tuber and emerging shoots).

Our arisaemas occupy the same habitat as our candelabra primulas. The fruit are much loved by wasps which dismantle the red/orange juicy part allowing the seed to fall to the ground near the base, hence the clump-forming habit of many arisaemas.

Part of this winter's job will be to try to identify two arisaemas that have persisted in the garden for the last three years and

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so can now be thought as permanent fixtures hence my wanting to find out their names. The first, shown in the two images below, grows on the woodland edge and receives a lot more light.



Unknown Arisaema - suggested by Pascal Bruggeman to be a narrow leaved form of *A. triphyllum*



The second has a flowering part of only around 12cm tall, under the much taller tripartite foliage, and most people do not give it a second glance but I like it.

The plant itself is growing under a 2m high rhododendron canopy and the ground is annually covered with leaves of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* which act as a mulch. There is no direct sunlight but a lot of dappled shade.

Pascal Bruggeman, who researches widely in arisaema nomenclature and relationships, helpfully tells us this plant suggests the *wilsonii* alliance which often have their flowers close to the ground. *A. galeatum* might initially have been considered a possibility but it seems the spathe, from what can be seen in this photo, does not look galeiform (helmet-shaped).

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Above and left: *Lilium wardii*

I secured seed of *Lilium wardii* about five or six years ago and, at last, this year it came up trumps with a couple of lovely flowering stems. This plant has been missing from Cluny for over twenty years. The next stage is to try to establish it elsewhere in the garden and to try to locate other sources of seed to increase its gene pool.

I planted these bulbs within the woodland in a fairly productive soil where they would get early morning dappled light but would get considerable shade in the heat of the day. The early morning image (left) shows the proximity of the trees. This placing was based on the last known location of the previous planting of *L. wardii* which had persisted for a couple of decades.



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Last year and this year saw the introduction of *Meconopsis staintonii* to our usual range of poppies. The seed had come from Chris Chadwell's [Himalayan Seed](#) Collection.



More *Meconopsis staintonii* variations



These wonderful monocarpic poppies came in many different leaf forms and flower colours, from white, pink, red to purple. Some flowered early towards the end of June and some flowered as late as October, some were around 1.2m and some were well over 2m tall. Notice that one has a two tone flower colour: something I have never seen in a meconopsis. These may not be the correct name for any of these but they all came from wild collected seed. I am propagating these initially in the soil beds in my polytunnel

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until they reach the stage where I might consider putting them individually in a 5cm pot then skipping that stage and placing them into a long pot approximately 10cm diameter and 15cm deep to facilitate their long tap root. From this pot they go straight into the garden. Each rosette gets covered with a small polythene cloche open at both ends to give maximum ventilation but prevents the rosette from suffering from excessive winter wet.



Above: John Mattingley with Margaret Young at an SRGC Show in Perth - an editor may sometimes have to go to considerable lengths to persuade authors to make a contribution!

Left: John placing a cover in December to keep winter wet from a meconopsis rosette – we can see the temperatures are already low-see the rolled rhododendron leaves in the background. These two photos by Stan da Prato.

This little Meconopsis, an unnamed beauty (below) from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, decided it liked our gravel: I hope it is not monocarpic.



There were others planted which did not flower this year. *Meconopsis aculeata* came up in several locations but although it was interesting it was totally out-done by the beauty of the afore-mentioned plant that just happened to be flowering close by and at the same time.

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The little primula shown (right) flowered its heart out and I think it may be *Primula tibetica*. It had a wonderful scent and I had enough of these to introduce them to the garden in the hope that they do as well in the soil as they do in pots. What a lovely colour of calyx and a good rich purple-blue corolla. The compost is our standard mix which is 50% a bark based, peat free compost called "New Horizon" and 50% our own compost formed from our weed piles which stand untouched for a minimum of 3 years.

Not to be outdone a hybrid form of **aquilegia** (below) popped up in the gravel right next to the seat and stole the show; even if you avoid most aquilegias in your garden you have to admit this is rather nice.



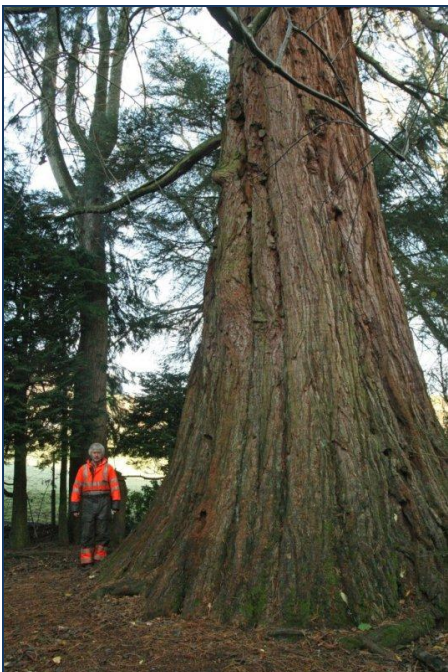
Left: Wendy and John at Cluny

Please feel free to put names to any of the plants you have experience of. It can save an awful lot of time.

Happy seed sowing.

J. M.

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John at Cluny in December



Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)

photos by Stan da Prato



Erythronium sibiricum text and photos **J. Ian Young**

Cover photo: pollinated flower of *Erythronium sibiricum* by J.Ian Young

I acquired my first bulb of *Erythronium sibiricum* many years ago from Brian Mathew and my first attempts to grow it were not that successful. As the name suggests it is a plant from the cold regions of Northern Asia and Russia and so it is used to having a long very cold winter followed by a sudden warm spring as the snow melts away. While I did not have a real problem growing and increasing the bulb I struggled to get it to flower properly. Most years the flower stem did not elongate at all resulting in the flower trying to open underground so by the time it eventually appeared above ground it was already past its best and the petals were withered.



As I was growing the bulbs in plastic pots in an outside plunge frame I decided to try bringing them into the bulb house as the winter subsided to see if the extra heat provided by the glass would encourage the stem to elongate and indeed this worked. By this time I had also received another bulb and over a number of years I had managed to build up a small stock of both. By moving them into the bulb house in early spring I not only managed to get them to flower on decent stems but the pollen also ripened well, allowing me to cross pollinate them in the hope of getting a good seed set.

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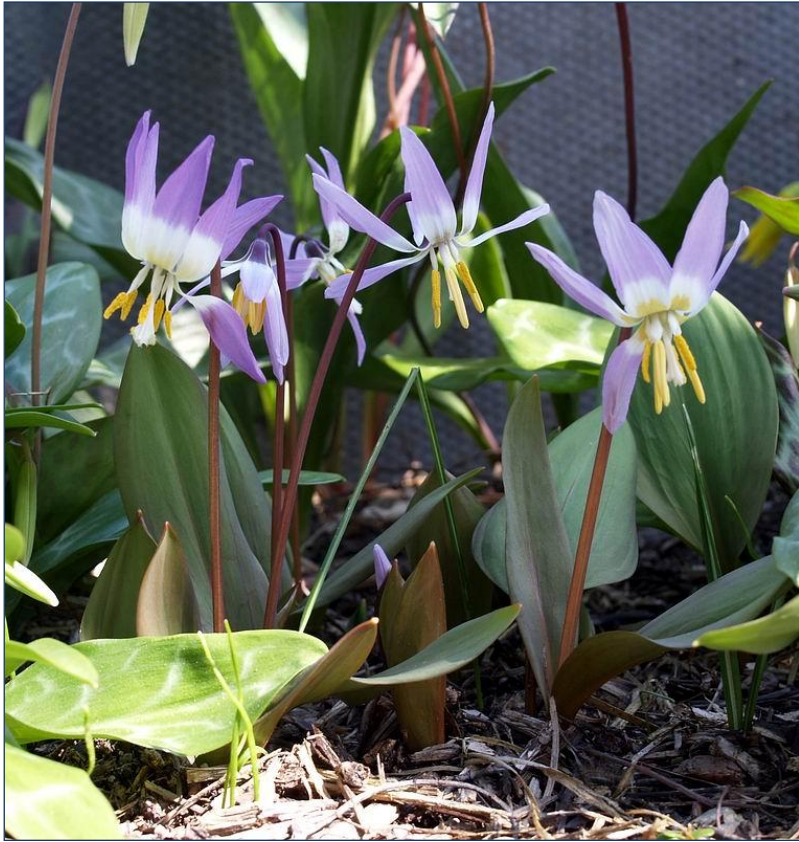
Erythronium sibiricum seed

Again my efforts were successful and I was rewarded with a fine pod of plump seed which I harvested in mid June, sowing it immediately. At the same time a kind friend who grows this species very well in the far north of Norway had sent me some seed which had just started to turn brown with exposure but had not dried out. Studying the seeds you will see that they have a fleshy attachment, in this case it is curly, which has evolved to encourage ants and or other insects to help disperse the seeds over a wide area. The western North American species of *Erythronium* do not share this feature – their seed distribution mechanism depends on the catapult action of the drying stem to shake the seeds out of the capsule as it dries and opens. This is a very inefficient method of seed dispersal and it would not take much of a physical barrier to be insurmountable and could go some way to account for the narrow patterns of distribution of the western North American species. Interestingly the Eastern North American species such as *E. americanum* and *E. albidum* also have similar appendages to their seeds to attract insects to aid their distribution they also share a number of other morphological characteristics with *E. sibiricum* and the Euro-Asian complex showing they are more closely related to those species than they are to their geographical closer western North American species.



The seedlings grew on and in five years most had grown into mature flowering sized bulbs.

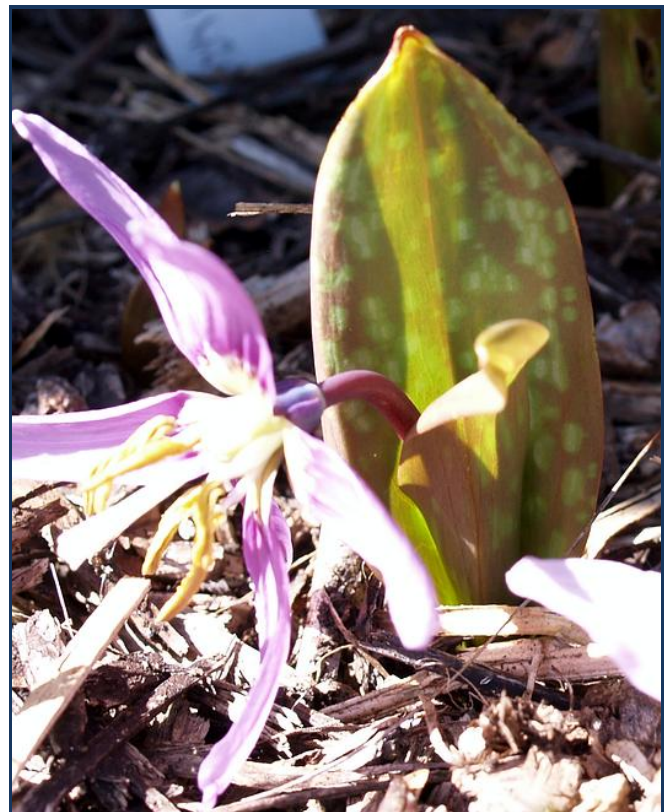
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My favourite way to get new bulbs is by growing them from seed so whenever I am given a bulb my main aim is to get it to flower and set seed as soon as possible. The beauty of raising plants from seed is you get genetic variation not just in the appearance but also in the tolerance the individuals will have to different growing conditions. When I raise bulbs from seeds the ones that survive to flower are those that can adapt to our growing conditions and this selection process means that each subsequent generation I raise from our own garden collected seed becomes more adapted to our climate and conditions.

The outcome of this is that by the second generation of my own seedlings I have managed to get clones that flower as normal on a good length of stem even in our temperate climate. I like to think that it is me that is selecting the bulbs but in reality it is the plants that are selecting me

as those that cannot tolerate our garden conditions will not survive.



Flowering seedlings with plain leaves, left, and *dens-canis* type leaves, right. As well as the variation in how they cope with different climates seedlings will show variation in appearance: one of the first things I noticed was that some had plain green leaves while others bore markings similar to those seen on *Erythronium dens-canis* leaves.

---International Rock Gardener---



The flowers also displayed a wide variation in the way their typical colours were displayed: some had wide dark centres while others had less zoning.



I am delighted that I have now managed to have grow a wide range of colour forms of this beautiful *Erythronium* as can be seen from this montage of flowers.

You will see in the flower pictured at lower right, above, that very pale forms of *E. sibiricum* do exist. This is the palest colour form I have and it is nearest to a white form of *E. sibiricum* but it is distinctly different to the plants that have been in cultivation under various names for some time. These have been described by Janis Ruksans to be *Erythronium sibiricum* subsp. *altaicum* and I would agree with this new classification as they differ in a number of ways from the pale form I have raised from seed.

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Left: My palest form, raised from seed.

One of the main qualifications for the awarding of the subspecific status must be that seedlings come white and if it were just a white clone most seedlings would revert to the typical colour range to the species. J.I.Y.

Below and far below:
Erythronium sibiricum
subsp. *altaicum*



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---Plant Portrait---

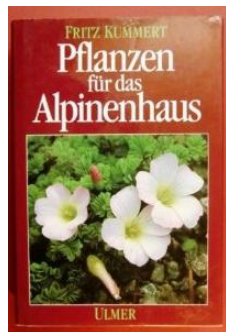
One Fine Austrian Hybridising Effort by Zdeněk Zvolánek

Fritz Kummert is an Austrian plantsman known from his breeding of small Daphnes. My intention is to show one result of the breeding of Gentians in Fritz' garden near Graz, in Southern Austria.



Gentiana 'Trumpets Of Jericho' in the Beauty Slope.

He was fond of the late Joyce Carruthers and offered her (during our visit) his best hybrid with the blood of *Gentiana clusii* var. *clusii*. It was planted some five years ago at our Beauty Slope and there was very slow and compact growth and striking flowers to be seen every season. This unnamed hybrid was achieved by the effort of crossing and selecting with *Gentiana clusii* var. *clusii* from the Eastern Alps and *Gentiana occidentalis* var. *aragonica* from the Western Pyrenees. It is very distinct from the classic Gentians or Enzians with its very slender and long dark blue and violet flowers born on medium tall stems. The hybrid is closer in its habit to *Gentiana clusii* and it does not make suckers underground. Its small pale green leaves are congested or crowded into a desirable clump. These characteristics are responsible for the selection this plant to the group of alpines suitable to small gardens.



Far left: Fritz with his dear wife, Sefi.

Fritz was a popular speaker on a [NARGS tour in 2012](#) having had great experience in his working life and in his many plant hunting travels. His photos have been included in books such as Baldassare Mineo's "[Rock Garden Plants: A Color Encyclopedia](#)". [This is a link to Fritz's author page](#) on Amazon's website. My fingers were burning with a desire to name this

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outstanding hybrid as a valuable cultivar, but without the breeder's blessing, one must wait patiently. This story has a happy ending. November 18th 2012, Fritz appeared at the German-Czech Annual meeting in the Botanical Garden in Tübingen (South of Stuttgart). His long-time wrestling with "[Mr. Parkinson](#)" has affected his previously big athletic man's frame, but his brain is still that of a gardening genius. So I asked him about proper name for his fine hybrid and he said immediately: ***Gentiana x 'Trumpets Of Jericho'***.



[The Seven Trumpets of Jericho](#), by J.J.J. Tissot (1836-1902)



Five shawm-players from Hans Burgkmair's Triumphal procession for Maximilian I - a woodcut published in 1526.

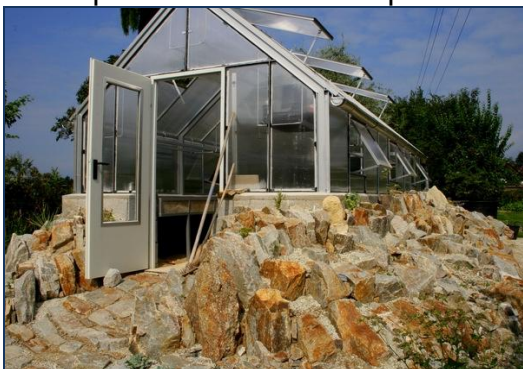


Single-drone Bagpipe & shawm. 14th-century manuscript illumination (detail) from Boethius, *De Arithmetica*. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale (The bagpipes - fine Scottish connection for the IRG!)

Well, it is very poetic and I know (and I have seen) the ancient long and narrow woody trumpets of shepherd origin used in a baroque music, which can somehow resemble the trumpets of Fritz' cultivar described here. To stay with the old biblical story, this Austrian powerful hybrid can break the conservative walls of the proud Albion Alpine Horticulture with a proper propagation and the proper propaganda.

Salute Fritz, keep marching on (with all saints at your side)! Z.Z.

Fritz Kummert designed a fine new alpine house for himself which was introduced in the [IRG for February 2010](#). Fritz and his wife garden at Wohngraben which is situated in the south-eastern part of Austria in the province of Styria.



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Seasonal Cheer: some photos from Fritz Kummert from his alpine house in December



Crocus biflorus subsp. *biflorus* from Jim Archibald, S. Italy



Crocus biflorus subsp. *nubigena*



Crocus alataevicus



Narcissus zaianicus var. *lutescens*



Narcissus romieuxii subsp. *albidus*



Narcissus albidus

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Titanopsis calcarea - a 'living rock' from South Africa.



Ranunculus ficaria – a diminutive type found near the Meteora monasteries of Greece.

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Helianthemum alypoides, which always flowers at Christmas - an example of the many rare plants specialising in the gypsum soil of Almeria.



Cyclamen elegans



Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for 2013 to all IRG Readers



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