

THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB & THE Alpine Garden Society Hexham show 13 4 24



Spring starts in earnest with the Hexham show. The sun usually shines and the wind is also a bit warmer. Along much of the journey from Dunblane the roadside is bright with daffodils and the blackthorn is starting to bloom. Even Northumberland in the far north of England gardeners welcome spring earlier than we do in Dunblane in Perthshire. This year I had a relatively short drive to Hexham as we for the crown Hotel in stayed the weekend in Wetheral, a beautiful village East of Carlisle. I recommend it for food and comfort.

I love English villages especially where planning rules require new build houses to use traditional materials so that the new blends seamlessly with the old. Even the auction market where the show is held and which was built 30 years ago reflects an older style. Detail like the clock tower would not be out of place in Jacobean building. So after a relaxing breakfast I drove parallel

to Hadrian's wall along to Hexham. Parking was easy but entry to the hall a bit slow as there were crowds of people waiting to enter and many more milling about in the entry hallway where the nursery stands were. Having devoured a big 'English' breakfast I passed through the catering area but was definitely tempted by the cakes and sandwiches on offer. I am sure I smelt bacon rolls!

I admit to returning later for fish and chips which were delicious but I certainly did not need the calories.





Just as if I had uttered the magic words 'open sesame', an Aladdin's cave of wonderful plants was spread before me.



More domes than Moscow!

Several alpine plants grow to form a dome or a cushion, either large or small. On the show bench we can compare cushions of various genera.



Androsace villosa



Iberis sempervirens



Draba dedeana



Dionysia involucreta



Saxifraga 'Bridget'



It'll be all white on the night!

Is it just me or can you see a wee
monkey
face in
this
drumstick
primula?



The R B Cooke Plate for most points in Section I was won by Don Peace



The Gordon Harrison Cup
most points in Section II and
the SRGC Bronze Medal were
won by Michael Wilson

Keith Robson won The Cyril Barnes Trophy
for the AGS Novice section



Derek Pickard's Primula henrici was judged the
best plant in a pot not exceeding 19cm & won the
Sandhoe Trophy

The David Boyd award for 1 pan
Ranunculaceae was won by John
Bunn's *Ranunculus amplexicaulis*



The E G Watson Trophy for 3 pans new
or rare in cultivation was won by AGS
Past President John Richards

Keith Robson won The Northumber-
land cup fo 1 rock plant shown by a
new exhibitor

Certificates of Merit

were awarded to

Lamium armenum shown by

Tommy Anderson

Podophyllum delavayi shown by

Bob Worsley

A **Gold Award** was awarded to a
wonderful display of plants, books
and pictures put on by the Tees-
Swale Group depicting the resto-
ration of an Upland Hay Meadow
in Teesdale





Mucedonii rossii has been appearing on the show bench from the earliest show but here it was in its true glory. Its flower stems appear before the leaves which, when they catch up with the flowers, reveal the beauty of this herbaceous member of the Saxifragaceae. It is native to N.E.China & Korea. Its leaves turn scarlet in autumn. A good plant for a largish trough.

Peter Hood won the 'native to the British Isles' class with his *Paris quadrifolia*.

Adoxa moschatellina is a native British plants noted for its 'highly distinctive inflorescence.



Saxifraga rosacea is known colloquially as 'The Irish Saxifrage'. This one's ancestry is on the Scottish Isle of Arran.

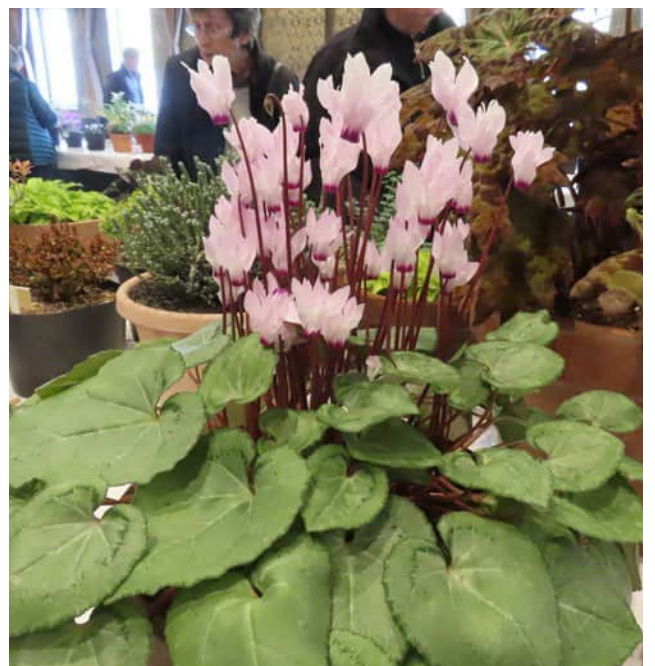


Umbilicus rupestris is a favourite native of mine. I remember many plants growing on a dry-stone wall in an Irish garden at Chelsea several years ago.



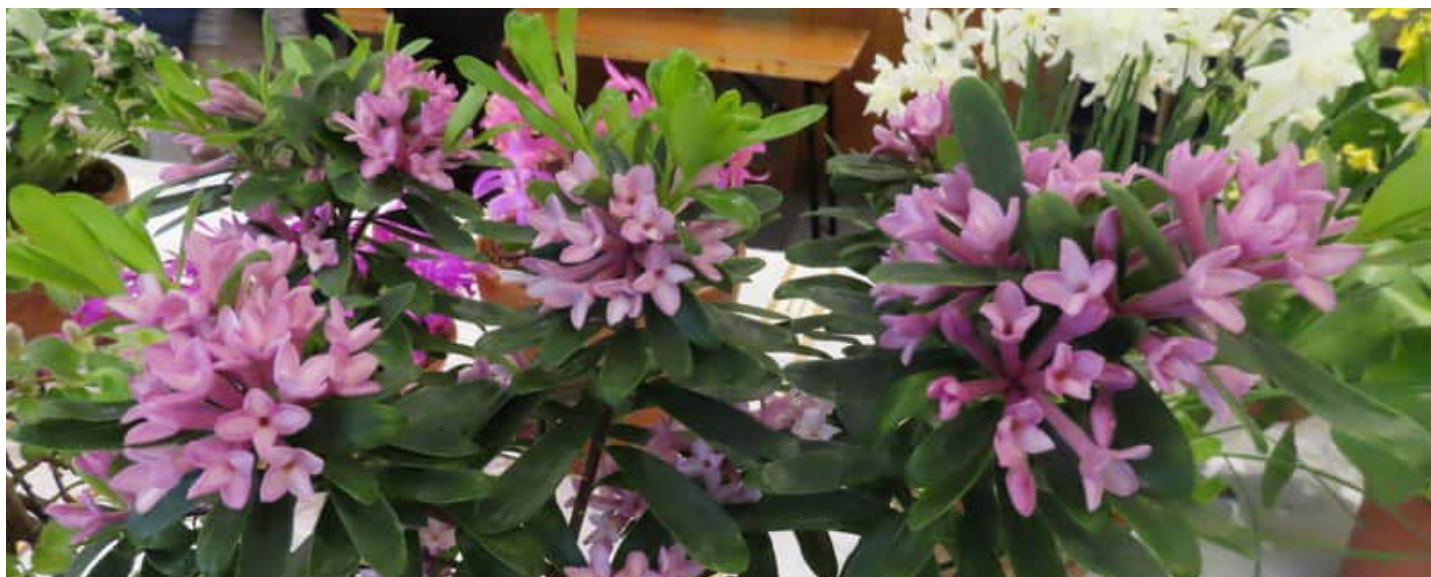
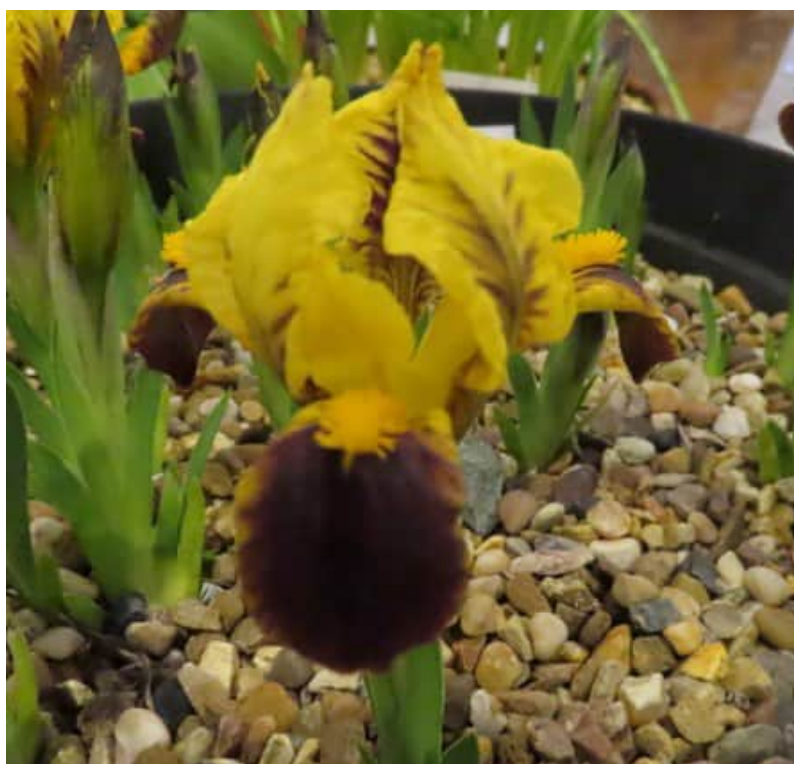


Don Peace had one of the brightest entries with his winning trio of Pleiones in the class for 3 pan plants of one genus.





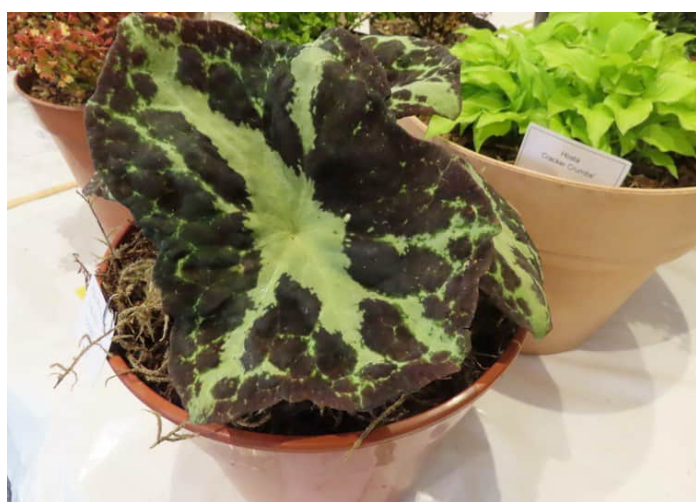
This Jim & Jenny Archibald form of *Iris pumilla* shown by George Young is spectacular. Its collection number is JJA 199590, I note that it is offered for sale by Potterton's Nursery. I will be in touch!

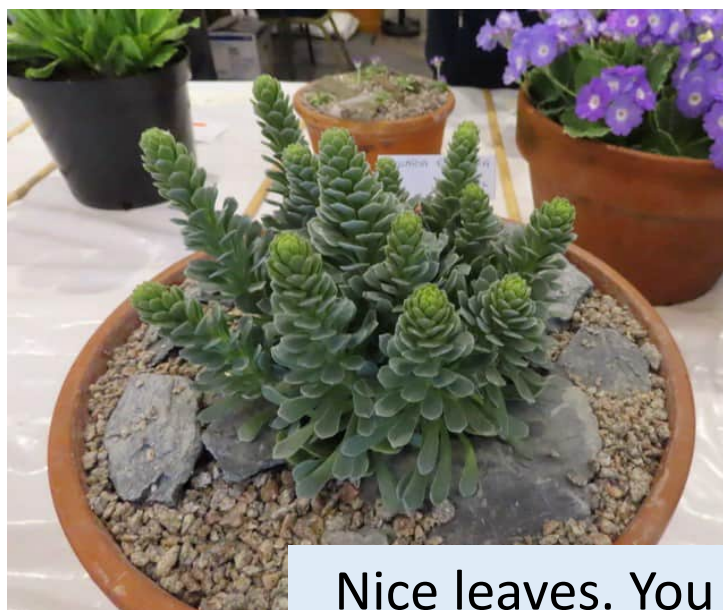




Chris Lilley showed this good compact form of *Rhododendron groenlandicum* 'Helma'. Old fashioned folk like me remember the species as a *Ledum*! The species is native to the sub-arctic regions of Greenland and Labrador. Indigenous people use it to make Labrador Tea. Do you take milk and sugar with that?

Rhododendron 'Egret' is a beautiful fairy bell type hybrid [*campylogynum* x *racemosum* 'White Lace'] raised at the Cox nursery in Glendoik. It makes a super garden plant.





Nice leaves. You don't need flowers





Interest comes in many ways. Above is a very rare South American plant, *Benthelmenia patagonica*, which grows in harsh dry steppe regions. Even with a few flowers it is entrancing. Probably just as difficult to grow to this standard is *Gypsophila aretioides* which hails from Iran. At the other end of the scale are these individual blooms in tiny vases which demonstrate the wide range of species and forms we rock gardeners grow.





More interest. These two pictures illustrate what you might do with a container. Above Carol Kennet has decided to grow 20 or more small alpines set in tufa in her container. Below Frank Hoyle is standing beside his Forrest medal winning *Androsace villosa*. He has decided to grow one plant to perfection in a container of similar dimensions. Both pans are wonderful in their own way. Carol can change the plants in her wee garden but Frank will have a great plant to compete for next year's Farrer medal at Hexham. SRGC / AGS shows offer something for every one, unless you want to grow your own vegetables.

