

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Farrer Medal Kendal 2016

Hepatica japonica gyousei

Shown by Shelagh & Brian Smethurst

Super! Shelagh! Brilliant! Brian or should that read 'Super Shelagh & Brilliant Brian'

Shelagh and Brian's dazzling *Hepatica japonica* 'Gyousei' vanquished all-comers to be win Best in Show at Kendal. How refreshing it was to see the Farrer Medal going to a hepatica. At the early shows the perfect cushions of *Dioynsia* and *Primula allionii* are hard to beat but this year the judges kept their fingers on the pulse of rock gardening where favourite genera wax and wane. As was obvious on the benches Hepaticas are in! There were many varieties on the benches. The combination of flower colour and form coupled with different stamen colours has produced a seemingly infinite variety in the genus. This is the boost the genus deserves.

The magenta flowers on the Farrer winner shimmered in the hall light, contrasting perfectly with a huge neighbouring pan of citron yellow *Eranthis*. Even Brian confessed that he thought the *Eranthis* offered stiff competition in the class. Buckland Plants describes 'Gyousei' as having "luminous deep magenta red flowers and dark bronze green foliage. Good in a trough, spectacular in the cold greenhouse". Edrom Nursery, specialists in Hepaticas advise growing it in moist well drained soil in partial shade. The leaves on the winning plant can just be seen below the flowers. This selection has bigger flowers than some Japanese hepaticas. The show report will feature the other hepaticas in the show. None was as big nor as dazzling as Shelagh & Brian's plant. Well done both and well deserved!

