



The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Forrest Medal - Glasgow 2017

Junellia coralloides

Shown by Sue Simpson



Sue Simpson's wonderfully 'unusual' *Junellia coralloides* vanquished all-comers at Glasgow. Its nearest rival for the Forrest Medal was a magnificent pan of *Calceolaria* 'Walter Shrimpton'. Who owned the rival? Sue Simpson herself! What a wonderful day. Sue also won the Crawford Silver Challenge Cup for most points in Section 1. She did this in style.

Back to the winner, *Junellia coralloides*. It was paired in its class [2 Pans native to the Americas] with yet another South American plant, the yellow flowered *Benthamiella patagonica*. Looking at the photographs I can't see why the *Benthamiella* was not considered for the Forrest as well. Sue can certainly grow these South American treasures. It is hard to see how deepest Ayrshire compares with the endless open plains of Argentina and Chile but she manages to create the conditions for these rarities to thrive. One thing they all need is care and attention. My understanding is that they can be martyrs to aphids. Patagonia is much drier than Ayrshire too.

I think that it is true to say that we see relatively few South American plants on the show benches these days except for the *Oxalis* species and hybrids *O. adenophylla*, *O. eneaphylla* and *O. lilacina* and their selections and hybrids.

Sue's *Junellia coralloides* was a much 'flatter' plant, growing closer to the ground than most pictures of it in cultivation. It has a nice pale lemon yellow flowers. It is a member of the *Verbena* family. The species was awarded a Botanical Certificate when shown by Martin and Anna Lisa Shearer in April 2015 to a London meeting of the joint Rock Garden Plant Committee. This means that they found it interesting rather than worthy for exhibition. A month later John Kemp's plant gained a Preliminary Certificate at the Malvern Show. What a pity there was no meeting of the Committee at Glasgow! FCC?





Sue had presented her plant in a most attractive way. She told me that she had already grown the species but when she re-potted it, the plant died. She surmised that it does not like root disturbance. When this plant filled its pot she potted it up, still in its original home, into a larger pot. For the show she repeated the process. Many exhibitors would have tried to disguise the first two pots by burying them successively deeper and hiding the old pots with gravel. Sue took the honest way and showed the three pots.

The effect was perfect and startling, resulting in a representation of a bull's eye target with the *Junellia* at the centre. For me it brought to mind the curious Nazca Lines of Peru, especially the enigmatic 'Spiral' near the tail of 'The Monkey'.

Junellia is described elsewhere as a shrub. Its stems are very flexible and covered in soft leaves which feel like feathers when touched. Other species of *Junellias* have been photographed in shades of pink as well as different yellows and white.

Sue has continued a trend started many years ago at Glasgow shows in winning a Forrest Medal with an unusual South American plant. In the late 1980's *Oreopolis glacialis* won the medal for Mrs Brenda Anderson. She with her husband travelled the



considerable length and relatively narrow breadth of Chile looking for alpinines and bulbs. She made her trips seem easy and success guaranteed by taking the ski lifts up into the Andes. Sue has made these and many other South American expeditions worthwhile. Bring plants into cultivation is one thing.

Growing them to perfection is another.

Well done Sue. Your medal is well deserved and must be the first of many.





Junellia coralloides

