

THE ROCK GARDEN 115

July 2005

Kees Jan van Zwielen & Marijn van den Brink
on AUTUMN in the PELOPONNESE

Malcolm McGregor on AUTUMN SAXIFRAGES

Sandy Leven on WHITEFACE MOUNTAIN

Ian Young on PLANTING TROUGHS

Mrs Judy Brunskill's pre-war ALPINE DIARY

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The ROCK GARDEN

The Journal of the
Scottish Rock Garden Club

July 2005

Number 115

COVER: *Cyclamen graecum*
near Elia in the Peloponnese
(photo: Kees Jan van Zwienen)



2 In Search of autumn-flowering bulbs

– Kees Jan van Zwienen
& Marijn van den Brink



22 An alpine diary, 1936

– Mrs Judy Brunskill

61 Planting your Troughs

– Ian Young



78 Autumn Glories

– Malcolm McGregor

109 Whiteface Mountain

– Sandy Leven



REGULARS

36 Discussion Weekend

39 Show Reports

59 Correspondence

71 Book Reviews

Heucheras and Heucherellas

The Impossible Garden

Creating and Planting Alpine Gardens

118 Seed Exchange



The ROCK GARDEN

is published twice yearly by The Scottish Rock Garden Club
on 31 January and 30 June

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The Editor welcomes articles, photographs and illustrations on any aspects of alpine and rock garden plants and their cultivation. Articles, if submitted in manuscript, should be double spaced but it is hoped that authors will submit material on disk, either in Microsoft Word or some compatible software.

The deadlines for contributions are 1 November for the January issue and 1 April for the July issue.

These dates also apply for material for the Yearbook & Show Schedules.

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Tel. 01482 225663 (Evenings only)

Individual copies are available from:
Glassford Sprunt
17 Claremont Drive
Bridge of Allan
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THE DIANA AITCHISON FUND

As announced in January, *writes President Ian Bainbridge*, the SRGC has received a substantial sum from the estate of Diana Aitchison to provide grants to support young people who are wanting to pursue a career in horticulture to help them further their knowledge of rock and alpine plants and their cultivation. The Diana Aitchison Fund has been invested by the club and the income from this will be available in grants each year. Initially it is anticipated that around £5000 will be available in grants in 2006. The priority will be given to students following courses lasting one or more years and might go towards fees, living costs or travel expenses, either on a full-time course or at another location e.g. summer experience at a botanic garden. A personal contribution toward the cost of any course would be expected from any recipient.

Full details of the purpose and terms of the grants, are available on the club website at www.srgc.org.uk or by post from SRGC Secretary Mrs Liz Mills, Upper Kinneddar House, Saline, Fife, KY12 9TR. The deadline for initial applications is October 1st 2005.

In search of autumn-flowering bulbs - ten days in the Peloponnese

Kees Jan van Zwienen & Marijn van den Brink

WE ESCAPED the wet and cold Dutch weather on October 22 and arrived at Athens airport in fine weather. Although we had not made an exact itinerary for our trip, we had a short list of places of botanical interest. Renting a car at the airport was fairly straightforward so we soon found ourselves on the newly constructed by-pass north of Athens heading for Korinth.

The Peloponnese

The Peloponnese is cut off from mainland Greece by the Korinth Canal. The peninsula is 190 km long and 160 km wide. The landscape is very diverse, and, in common with much of Greece, quite mountainous. Although there are some major motorways, for instance to Patra and Tripoli, it is the innumerable number of small roads that offer plant hunters good access to many of the floral treasures.

The Taigetos Mountains in the central Peloponnese run more or less north south for approximately 100 km. These are the highest mountains in the Peloponnese; Prophitis Ilias, the highest summit of the Taigetos, rises to 2404 m. On the eastern slopes of the Taigetos some deep gorges are carved into the limestone. The Langada gorge is readily accessible from the Sparti-





2 - Fortified towers on the Mani Peninsula

Kalamata road. Mount Parnon (1935 m) is situated in the eastern part of the Peloponnese. Some important mountains in the northern part of the Peloponnese are Mount Chelmos (Helmos) (2341 m) and Mount Killini (2376 m). The higher mountains consist primarily of limestone, but in the foothills other rock types can be found, including conglomerate and sandstone.

The land use is diverse and generally on a small scale. Olive groves are common, but orchards of almond and walnut can be found as well. In areas with a very mild climate, and plenty of good topsoil, oranges are grown. In the valleys and on the plains, small areas of crops are grown and much of the area is grazed by goats to some extent. There are four peninsulas in the southern part of the Peloponnese of which we have only explored the Mani peninsula.

The Peloponnese is famous for its archaeological sites. As an extra bonus some sites, such as ancient Olympia and Mycene, have interesting plants as well.

Climate and plants

The climate on the Peloponnese is typically Mediterranean, with warm dry summers and mild, quite humid winters. From April to September there is little in the way of precipitation. In late summer and early autumn short periods of intense, high rainfall occur. In early winter there can also be much precipitation, with snow on the higher mountains.



3 - A typical valley in the northern Peloponnese



4 - Walls of old building with *Euphorbia dendroides*

Of course there are local differentiations in climate. The climate of the Mani peninsula for instance, in the extreme south of the Peloponnese, is drier. The moderating effect of the sea on summer and winter temperatures is most profound in the coastal areas. The climate in the mountains is more extreme; typically there is snow from December to April.

Due to several factors, such as the lack of glaciation during the ice ages and a high degree of isolation as a consequence of mountains, gorges and islands, the Mediterranean area is one of the floral hot spots of the world. Many Mediterranean plants have developed the strategy of surviving the unfavourable summer weather in the form of bulbs or similar underground storage organs.

The Peloponnese harbours a great diversity of spring-flowering bulbs, but it is the diversity of autumn-flowering bulbs that singles out the Peloponnese for an autumn visit. Although some autumn-flowering bulbs can be found in the mountains, most species grow at a lower level. We will discuss some of the more interesting plants that we found during our short stay, mainly focusing on the 'bulbs'.



5 - The *Colchicum* found near ancient Olympia, probably *Colchicum graecum*

LILIACEAE

Although mainly autumn-flowering, several species of *Colchicum* tend to flower a bit earlier than the majority of autumn-flowering bulbs. During our trip we found three species. The first was spotted on a roadside near ancient Olympia. Although we did not manage to identify this species in the field we later learned this was most probably *Colchicum graecum*, which is known to occur at this particular site and is one of several species in which leaves are absent at flowering time. Our second species, *Colchicum psaridis*, was found in the hills near Areopoli (Mani peninsula) not far from *Crocus goulimyi*. This is one of the species



6 - *Colchicum psaridis* near Areopolis



7 - *Allium callimischon*



8 - *Scilla autumnalis*

with hairy leaves but we later learned that the leaves of plants in this population are much hairier than in other populations. It is interesting to note that this species forms underground stolons and consequently sometimes grows in small groups. *Colchicum psaridis* has purple-pink flowers and a style in a similar colour, in contrast to its close relative, *C. cupanii*, which has a yellow style. The third and last species we found is *Colchicum boissieri*, a more distinct species which also forms underground stolons but in this case the leaves are absent at flowering time. We found this species on the slopes of Mount Parnon. Even a few hundred metres beneath the summit several plants were found in full flower; this clearly is a mountain species!

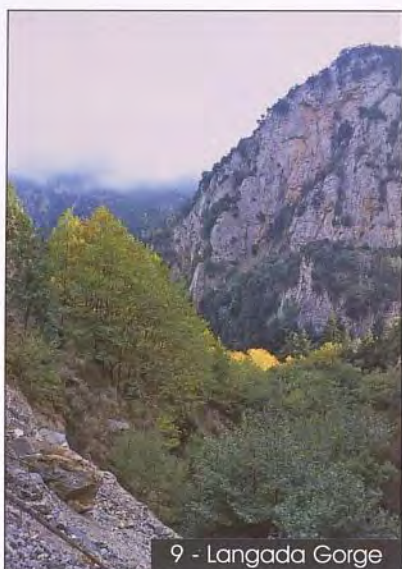
Allium callimischon is of botanical interest but not an eye-catching plant. It has cream-white flowers on 10 cm stems and usually grows through spiny dwarf shrubs.

The genus *Scilla* is represented in autumn by *S. autumnalis*, the autumn squill. This species is widespread in the Mediterranean area. Compared with populations we saw elsewhere in the Mediterranean area the plants in the Peloponnese were generally somewhat shorter (approximately 10-15 cm tall) with flowers which had a more intense colour.

Urginea maritima has a long flowering season from July to October. During our visit in late October we only found one specimen still in flower. *U. maritima* is a very spectacular bulbous plant. The very large bulb, which often rests on the surface of the ground, gives rise to a 1.5 m tall flowering spike with numerous white flowers, the effect is not unlike that of *Eremurus*.

AMARYLLIDACEAE

The autumn-flowering snowdrop, *Galanthus reginae-olgae*, is quite well known from the gorges of the Taigetos Mountains. It certainly was one of the species that was very high on our list of 'must see' species. Finding this snowdrop proved easy; we soon found it in the Langada Gorge, the first of the Taigetos gorges and valleys we explored. All the snowdrops we found in the Langada gorge grew at the base of the steep, northfacing slope, mostly in the accumulated leaf mould of plane trees. This is, at least in the wild, not a clump forming species, most specimens grew singly. Leaves tend to be entirely absent during the flowering season. We later found more snowdrops in a valley near Kastorio on the banks of a small stream. At this location the ground was moister and clearly more fertile, which resulted in taller plants.



9 - Langada Gorge



10 - *Galanthus reginae-olgae*

Pancratium maritimum, the 'Sea Daffodil', is a summer-flowering species that we only found in fruit. It is a typical species of sand beaches. The flowers develop in late summer and are large, white and resemble a daffodil.



11 - *Pancratium maritimum* in fruit

Narcissus serotinus was another species we hoped to find. The first population we found was on the west coast, near Elia. The flowers of this species are generally facing upwards, rather than sideways.

Sternbergia sicula is the most common *Sternbergia* on the Peloponnese. Whenever we were able to find plants with leaves, the leaves were distinctly narrow and dark green with a greyish stripe in the middle. This species can grow in huge numbers, often resulting in spectacular displays. Sometimes bulbs can be found in small crannies in the rocks. Although *Sternbergia sicula* has pointed tepals in its typical form, we were occasionally confused by the variability in flower form and size. We have also seen populations in which leaves seemed to be absent and some of these might have been *Sternbergia lutea*. This species normally has larger and more rounded tepals and wider (7-15 mm) leaves, without a grey stripe in the middle.





13 - Marijn van den Brink (left) & Kees Jan van Zwienen



14 - *Urginea maritima*



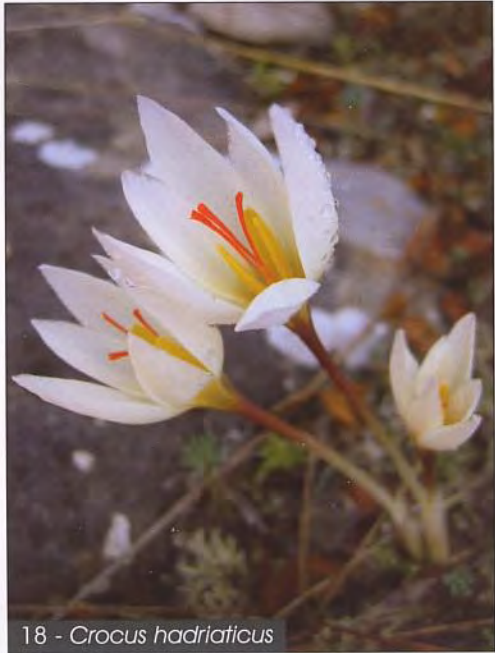
15 - *Crocus biflorus* ssp. *melantherus*



16 - *C. cancellatus* ssp. *mazziaricus*



17 - *Crocus goulimyi*



18 - *Crocus hadriaticus*



19 - *Crocus boryi*



20 - *Crocus cancellatus* ssp. *mazziaricus* with paler flowers

IRIDACEAE

The family *Iridaceae* is well represented with the genus *Crocus*. The great majority of autumn-flowering crocuses are white, which makes identification a bit daunting at first sight. *Crocus boryi* and *C. laevigatus* are easily distinguished from other white-flowering crocuses by the white anthers and feathered styles. Both species can grow side by side which makes identification difficult. *Crocus laevigatus* normally has smaller, goblet shaped flowers and partially developed leaves at flowering time. *Crocus boryi* has larger, goblet shaped flowers and has generally developed leaves at flowering time.

Crocus biflorus ssp. *melantherus* is also a white-flowering species but much easier to identify. The black anthers are characteristic as well as the presence of three purple stripes on the outer surface of the three outer tepals. The leaves of this crocus usually are partially developed at flowering time. This is the only autumn-flowering subspecies of *C. biflorus*, and a mountain rather than lowland crocus.

Crocus hadriaticus is white flowering as well. It is best recognised by the orange style that is divided into three parts. The anthers are yellow. Leaves are absent at flowering time or rarely partially developed.

Crocus cancellatus ssp. *mazziaricus* has a feathered style, just like *C. boryi* and *C. laevigatus*. The flowers are white, lilac or blue, with violet blue veins on the outer surface of the petals. It is a mountain species that flowers before the leaves develop.

Crocus goulimyi has a restricted distribution. We only found one population on the Mani Peninsula, near Areopolis where it was first discovered, near where we found the hairy-leaved *Colchicum psaridis*. The lilac flowers have a perianth tube that is much longer than any of the other crocuses we have seen. Leaves are partially developed at flowering time.

ORCHIDACEAE

We only found one population of *Spiranthes spiralis*, an autumn-flowering orchid. The leaves of this species form a basal rosette. The spiralled flowering spike contains many small white flowers.

PRIMULACEAE

Cyclamen graecum is a very common plant of olive groves and stony places in hills and coastal areas. It prefers warm and rather sunny



21 - *Cyclamen graecum*



22 - *Cyclamen hederifolium*

conditions. Even on the arid Mani peninsula it grows in full sunshine. The leaves of *C. graecum* are somewhat rounded and have a finely toothed margin. There is a lot of variation in leaf patterns and some forms are very attractive.

Cyclamen hederifolium, unlike *C. graecum*, prefers semi-shaded conditions. We sometimes found this species at quite a high altitude, up to 1500 m, in mountain woods. The ivy like leaves are variable but usually absent at flowering time.

ARACEAE

Biarum tenuifolium often grows alongside *Sternbergia sicula*. It looks just like a small *Arum* and has a chocolate-coloured spathe and a very dark spadix.



23 - *Biarum tenuifolium*

NON-BULBOUS PLANTS

There are a few non-bulbous plants that are well worth mentioning in this article. *Bellis sylvestris* is a taller version of the common lawn daisy. It flowers in autumn and can often be found in large numbers, for instance in ancient Olympia.

Campanula versicolor is a wonderful species that we found on limestone cliffs of the Taigetos Mountains and also on man-made walls. It has ascending flower spikes, approximately 50 cm tall. It flowers in late summer and autumn. The flowers are pale blue with a contrasting deep violet centre.

October is not an ideal time of year to look for alpine plants, although there is still a lot to be seen in the mountains. We explored the upper slopes of Mount Chelmos and were thrilled to see *Saxifraga scardica* and *S. sempervivum*. Both are species of section *Porphyron* and flower in the wild in late spring and early summer. We also found *Saxifraga sibthorpii*, *Saxifraga adscendens* ssp. *parnassica* and *Saxifraga exarata* ssp. *exarata*. A visit in May or June will no doubt be very rewarding; among a host of other alpine species several other saxifrages can be found on the slopes of Mount Chelmos and other Greek mountains. Some other interesting alpine plants that we found on our visit to Mount Chelmos were the spiny cushions of *Acantholimon androsaceum* and the dwarf shrub *Daphne oleoides*.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Abies cephalonica and *Pinus nigra* ssp. *pallasiana* are common trees in the mountain forests. In the north of the Peloponnese we have seen



24 - *Campanula versicolor*



many of these two conifers with mistletoe, *Viscum album*. A very special, smaller, conifer is *Juniperus drupacea*. This species has very nice, large blue fruits. We found this juniper on the slopes of Mount Parnon, which is, according to Polunin, the only place where it can be found outside Turkey.

Platanus orientalis, the plane tree, indicates moisture in the ground and is mostly found in gorges and alongside streams. Old specimens can often be found near springs.

Oaks are an essential element of many Mediterranean landscapes. We found *Quercus aegilops*, a species new to us, on the Mani peninsula. *Quercus pubescens* is a much more common species. Some of these oak trees were colonised by mistletoe. *Quercus coccifera* ssp. *coccifera* is not a tree but a shrub. The leaves are reminiscent of holly. This oak can often be found on warm, rocky slopes.

Although the Peloponnese is hardly a part of the world where one would expect to find interesting ericaceous plants, we were impressed by two species. The first is *Arbutus unedo*, the Strawberry tree. This shrub grows to a few metres, during our visit it was full of white flowers in drooping panicles. The second autumn-flowering ericaceous subject that caught our attention was *Erica manipuliflora*. This is a very attractive pink flowering heather that grows to about a metre. Both species are quite common on the Peloponnese.



26 - *Juniperus drupacea*



27 - *Arbutus unedo*

Conclusion

Many travel companies organise guided tours to see the autumn flowers of the Peloponnese. Although these tours do have the added bonus of guides and local knowledge, one should certainly not be put off exploring the Peloponnese independently. A car is a very useful method of transportation in the Peloponnese. It enabled us to see much of the Island in only ten days. It is helpful to have a good road map and the quality of maps varies. The 1:250,000 'Road Editions' map seems to be the best choice and covers the entire area. For exploring

the mountains on foot, which should be very rewarding in spring or summer, one is well advised to obtain more detailed maps.

There are very few tourists travelling in the Peloponnese in autumn, which could be considered an added bonus. This also makes it very easy to find overnight accommodation. We usually enquired at the local tavern, which invariably resulted in fine accommodation.

Finally we would like to thank everyone who helped us in identifying some of the more "difficult" species. We were particularly puzzled by two of the *Colchicum* species. One is well advised to obtain good descriptions of species that might be encountered during an autumn visit and make adequate field notes and take photographs when one comes across plants that cannot be identified in the field.

Useful books and further information

- Marjorie Blamey, Christopher Grey-Wilson, *Mediterranean Wild Flowers*, 1993 (field guide)
- Christopher Grey-Wilson, *A Greek Miscellany, Alpines 2001 – Proceedings of the Seventh International Rock Garden Plant Conference* p. 90-92, 2001.
- Dr. Paul J. Krause, 'Autumn bulbs of the Peloponnese', *The Alpine Gardener* No. 298, December 2004
- Anne Wells, 'Impressions of the Peloponnese', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society*, No. 268, June 1997
- Oleg Polunin, *Flowers of Greece and the Balkans*.
- Roger Phillips, Martyn Rix, *Bulbs*, 1989 (good photographs)
- E Pasche & H Kerndorff, 'Die Gattung *Stembergia* Waldst. & Kit. im Vergleich, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der wiederentdeckten *Stembergia schubertii* Schenk', *Stapfia*, 80, 2002.

The following website, maintained by Tony Goode, offers detailed information and pictures of (autumn) flowering crocuses:

www.thealpinehouse.fsnet.co.uk

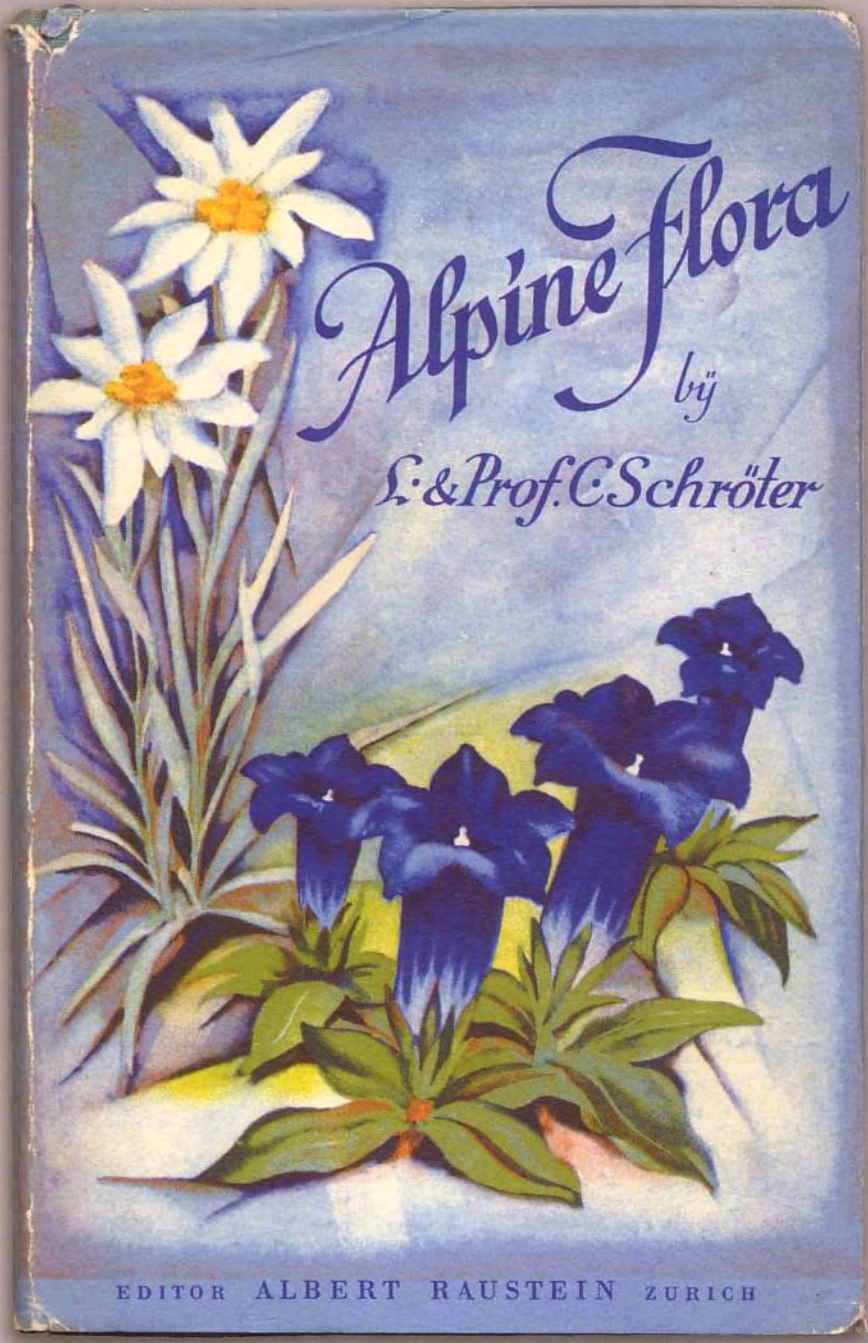
More pictures of this trip to the Peloponnese can be found on Marijn's website, follow the links at:

<http://vandenbrink.demon.nl/marijn/photos/photos.asp>

Photographs:

Kees Jan van Zwiene: 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24 and Front cover;

Marijn van den Brink: 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27.



First published around 1900 this is a typical example of the books that were still available in the 1930's

An alpine diary, 1936

Mrs Judy Brunskill

This diary was written during a trip to Austria in 1936 when Judy Brunskill was 31 years old with a small boy who was left at home. In a number of ways the trip that Judy Brunskill wrote about is one that you could take today, but in many others the world has clearly changed. Plant collecting, about which attitudes have changed so much, is seen as a perfectly proper thing. But other things too have changed as can be seen right from the first day.

June 28th

A lovely morning, got up at 6.45 and packed, frightful rush - managed at last to get off [by] 9.30. Bill motoring us up to London. Arrived there 11 am - went straight to look for tickets. After lunch at Club with Dad - very late as Cook kept me for over an hour. Then to station - Lois and I seen off by Bill, Dad, Mr. & Mrs. Wainwright and Lois's sister-in-law. Left Victoria 2 pm. Before we got to Dover I found my passport was a year out of date! Frightful consternation! Passed through customs at Dover without being noticed. Went on board to passport office and told them. It was a French boat so not a very easy conversation. Would not let me disembark at Calais without escort!! Taken by representative of French Foreign Office to British Vice Consul in the town of Calais having first of all left luggage in luggage office and seen our train, plus our sleepers, steam out of station. Vice Consul offices in dingy street and shut for the day. So taken, still by Foreign Office official, to small hotel - presumably suitable for two lone women! Felt very depressed, but cheerful little Frenchman who spoke English showed us a nice clean room only very hot. Washed and felt better. Had to wait until next morning to see Vice Consul - so went out and did Calais for a bit - smells awful. Found a good restaurant and dined. Then back to hotel and bed at 9 pm. I was asleep in 3 minutes!

June 29th

Had a good night. Down for breakfast of coffee and rolls at 9 am. Had a visit from M. Corbiere, a representative of Nord Railway, that had been very kind to us on boat and on landing. He told us we must go to Boulogne if we wanted to catch a train that day. Walked to Vice

Consulate, anxious and hot, to find the renewing of passport only too easy – 12 francs a year. As mine had run out June 1934, had to renew for 2 years. Vice Consul very kind, English but appeared more at home when speaking French. He found out trains and said we must leave Calais at 3.30, get to Boulogne at 4.30, try and book sleepers and leave there 8.30. This we did. Very hot journey from Calais to Boulogne. Went straight to Maritime Station getting there at 5 pm and everything was closed – so had tea and made great friends with an English-speaking waiter. He helped us a lot, spoke to Wagons Lits representative and we got sleepers and on the train just after 8 pm, hardly believing we were there. Dinner at 9.30 – were very hungry. Met Mrs Jim Morrell and husband in dining car. To bed at 12 midnight. Got myself to sleep, having got top bunk, after we tossed for it!!

June 30th

Had a pretty good night and woke when we were at Basle and then dozed for 2 more hours. A lovely morning [as we] came through Zurich. Breakfast on the train whilst we were in Switzerland. Then dealt with our attendant and collected back from him [our] tickets and passports. Our sleeper did not go on to Innsbruck so we had to change carriages. Got two seats in next coach shared by two very kind Dutch, man and wife, and an American. Found Dutch were going to Ötztal too [and then] to Sölden. Told them where we were going and he spoke to the guard and as there were some more for Ötztal they stopped the express there and we got out at Ötztal without having to go on to Lanleck or Innsbruck. Ourselves and luggage just dumped out on railway line and watched express leave us. Station with little hotel in pine wood, so lovely and cool and fresh after hot train. Had lunch there and left at 2.30 by motor bus for Zwieselstein. A most lovely drive, but terrifying sheer drops down to the river and very narrow road. Passed several little hamlets on the way up, and over several what seemed rickety bridges. However, got there at last with a terrific burst of speed and flourish on part of bus driver, who had been accompanied since Sölden by four men who sang and yodelled all the way! Hotel Post very clean and friendly. After unpacking a little and tea, went for a short walk. Much amusement over ordering dinner with a dictionary as they knew no English and we no German!

July 1st

Both slept well and set off with lunch and on a very hot morning for a walk towards Ober Gurgl. Very hot. Struck away to right of the Gurgl road or track and climbed to some high hay fields – flowers good – heat

terrific – hay not cut and lay in shade of some logs for lunch. Back down a slope of masses of willow and alpenrose. Passing herds of goats that we made friends with – found 64 different flowers, mostly common. So nice to meet old friends again like *Nigritella*, alpenrose, *Pyrola* and *Atragene*. Back for supper and in time to see the cows come in and later goats. All with bells and each going off to its own home in the village chased by the smallest of children.

They have very queer shaped carts here for carrying goods up to Vent and Ober Gurg, shaped like a boat with 2 sets of wheels and drawn by a pair of horses. One had one roan, one chestnut, and one bay and another a pair of mules. They all look very well indeed and are strong and short-legged, driven from behind with a long whip and specially shod with a sharp nail in front of the shoes.

July 2nd

Packed up our luggage and left Zwiesstein with lunch on a very hot morning at 10.30 and with some regrets as both like the hotel. Started off to walk to Vent, our luggage to follow in one of the cars in the afternoon. Very hot walking. Just before we reached a small hamlet on our route saw a large patch of crocus under a drift of snow which had not yet melted. They looked very happy in the cool drips of melting snow and we envied them! On up a steep path and to a little church which had a wonderful view right back behind the way we had come. On through some small farmsteads where the cowsheds seemed to have a very primitive form of sanitation – a hole in the wall through which the manure appeared to be flushed into a pit for collecting it. All the houses made of wood and with window boxes of geraniums and begonias!! Such a queer choice when masses of far prettier flowers were growing in hay fields. A little girl with bare feet tried to make us buy bunches of *Edelweiss*, *Nigritella* or *Daphne*.

We stopped for lunch at 2 pm in the shade of a larch tree and had not been there long when a thunderstorm broke; we sheltered for an hour and then struck off in fine weather but it soon poured again. Wilder scenery as we followed the stream up and at last saw Vent in front of us after passing over a snow bridge and still following the river. Of course our hotel was the furthest off and we got there very damp and tired at 5 pm to find no luggage. However this had arrived by the time we had finished a wonderful drink of tea and a piece of iced cake. To our horror hotel contained 4 other parties of English – so early to bed.

July 3rd

A dull morning but sunnier later. Decided to have a slack day so

after breakfast wrote a few postcards and then had a wash – 7 pairs of stockings etc – made a line of string from window to washstand and hung it all up. Met our host at breakfast – Herr Scheiber, he speaks a little English. Asked for a front room and he told us we could have No. 9. Looked at it but too small – so stay where we are. Lois watched ring oussel and other birds from our window. Went to post and tried unsuccessfully to get in shop. After found a much smaller one and bought walking stick etc.

I sat on hillside whilst Lois birded, terribly hungry for lunch at 1pm. After went upstairs and were so sleepy lay on beds and went to sleep!! Just as well as it poured with rain, rained all evening hard. We talked to young English couple who were interested in flowers – and knew about them.

July 4th

Meant to start early for Breslauer Hutte but pouring with rain. This cleared only clouds hung over all the mountains quite a long way down them. Decided to go as needed exercise, left soon after 9 am. A stiff and steep walk up in dull weather, once or twice mist lifted for a short space, got up to hut, after slow walking in mist most of the way, at 2 pm, to find snow sitting on the table and chairs outside and temperature only slightly above freezing. Took some time to find entrance then were taken into kitchen, a lovely fug! Took off macs, I was soaked through from inside – a wretched mac – quite dry outside!! Lois lent me a sweater and hung mine on the stove. To our horror found we only had 2 schillings – but they gave us a wonderful drink, hot chocolate, boiling, without milk, lots of sugar and a jug full each for 1 schilling = 9^d. Should not care to have to do this at about 9,000 ft – for the money. Bought one postcard and had it stamped twice! On the way up we had found first one plant of Primula glutinosa and were thrilled, only later to find sheets of it, a wonderful sight. A funny little hut and we regretfully left its warmth at 3.30 without having had any view at all. Did not like to dress myself in front of the man at hut, so had to strip to vest in cold mist on hillside soon after leaving!! While I was doing this found we were in masses of Ranunculus glacialis – so filled a tin with small plants of this and Primula glutinosa, then off home. After half an hour caught up our English friends of last night who were walking up and as mist was bad had just decided for home. So we went back together, they had found the other Pyrola which we did not see and we showed them with glee the yellow Aconitum. First time any of us had seen it. Back in hotel 5.30 and glad of tea. After did up box of plants. Lois took them to post and I had a wonderful bath in a

basin!! Very pleased with my skiing trousers, the first time I'd worn them. Down to supper and both of us very hungry. After, English woman asked if we'd had a letter and later I found she was in tears because she had not heard of her baby at home for over a week. Took her to our room and tried consolation – then hotel porter brought her a letter!!

July 5th

Up early, a lovely morning so decided to go off for two nights – John's birthday and thought of him and what he was doing. Packed our rucksacks, cashed a cheque and collected our lunch, and left hotel at 9 am. After saying goodbye to our English friends who were off to Innsbruck we set off to Hochjoch-Hospiz. A lovely walk right up the valley from Vent following the river all the way, at first through hayfields, then through a deep gorge, later over debris where a glacier must have been and then a climb up to the Hutte where we arrived 1 pm. Had not hurried at all and found time was getting better. Hoedecker gave 3 hours and we took 4 hours, having stopped sometime to watch an absurd ring ousel collecting grubs until her beak was over full, and all only a few feet from us. The Hochjoch-Hospiz was built recently and is in view of the old one in ruins across the valley. Views from here are wonderful especially of the Hintereis glacier and the mountains in the distance beyond the valley we came up from Vent. We appear to be the only visitors and our

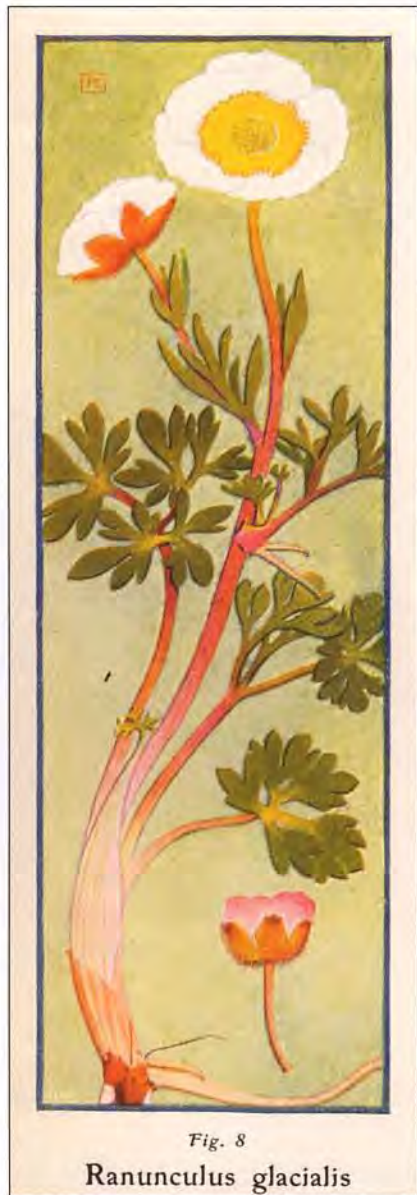


Fig. 8

Ranunculus glacialis

host persuaded us that we must go on to the *Brandenburger Haus*. Spent the afternoon sleeping on a hillside with a flock of long legged sheep with long ears that look like Nubian goats. Then went for a scramble, nothing new in plant line. Met an aged person walking with black cloak nearly to the ground and long beard. A lovely evening and wonderful sunset turning the tip tops pink. To bed at 9.15 after having disturbed a concert party in the kitchen to arrive at supper of soup and omelette made with worts!! And eaten with knife and fork. A dear little bedroom and an east window and 6 blankets and most of our clothes on – very quiet.

July 6th

A lovely morning and up just after 6.30, sun already very warm. Dressed and packed up and downstairs to breakfast – a truly wonderful morning, paid bill and left *Hochjoch-Hospiz* at 8.10 am to follow a man carrying an enormous case to the *Brandenburger Haus*. Owing to the weight of this he had to go slowly and this suited us. Quite a stiff climb at first and then an easier gradient over snow all the last bit with hot sun and biting cold wind to the *Barndenburger Haus* in 3½ hours – better time. The most wonderful views of glacier and sheets of snow. A very welcome lunch of hot soup and meat in the kitchen as the wind now was almost gale force and very cold. Intend spending night here and shown to nice room for two. Much too cold to sit anywhere but in kitchen. Am writing this in the early evening and it is snowing hard at present and all the view gone. Very friendly and kind people keeping the hut – Lois lying down and looking very green. Rather alarming for me with my limited vocabulary. She was very sick and then much better. Two English climbers came about 7 pm and were very kind as I told them about Lois and they gave her two pills and I made her drink a glass of brandy. So we went to bed hoping for the best and still snowing.

July 7th

I woke at 3.40 am, still snow so went to sleep again. Clear at 5 am and to sleep again, but when we got up at 6.40 snowing once more. Dressed and packed and came down to find only the two women of the hut in the kitchen. Breakfast of weak tea and a biscuit. Asked them if it was safe for us to go down alone and they said yes, so paid the bill and left at 8.10 with all clothes we had on our backs – forgot to say we had slept fully clothed and with 8 blankets and eiderdown and only just warm enough!

Started badly, got in a snow drift up to our hips and could only see a few yards ahead. However soon struck to track just noticeable and felt





Fig. 111

Campanula barbata

much relieved. Stuck to this and walked as far as possible, snowing hard. It cleared as we left the snow. The curious part was how warm we were when walking on the snow. Passed the Hochjust Hutte in 2 hours and did not stop as had no money left and did not want to waste time. Very soon got into heavy rain clouds, very damp and this continued intermittently all the way. Were glad and relieved to reach hotel at 12.30 – greeted warmly by Herr Schieber who gave us a bunch of letters. Changed a bit and ate an enormous lunch, afterwards rested in our rooms and slept! Down to tea and some more visitors in hotel. It was much colder. Found the Dents had arrived in hotel and we sat together in hall, grateful as she got an electric fire going and we were fairly comfy. Discussed flowers and birds!

July 8th

A lovely morning and met Dents after breakfast and fixed up to walk towards Vernaght Hutte together. Lois seemed much better but about 2 hours after we started said she would drop out and sleep on hillside. I was a bit worried but thought it silly to wait as I felt extra strong for me. The flowers all through the field after Vent were quite lovely, best

masses we'd seen yet for colour – masses of blue campanula, yellow rattle, orange (dark one) hawkweed, anemone sulphurea, nigritella,

the pale blue *Campanula barbata*, thyme and many others with lots of silver-leaved *Gnaphalium* and *sempervivum*s on all the rocks. Also the bright orange *Doronicum* between the boulders.

The Dents and I walked on some way and then had lunch – I was ravenous and we had a perfect view. We climbed a lot after but did not reach the hut or the way to Breslauer as Mrs Dent had done enough, and I too, 4 hours walking – not fast – and quite a stiff climb as we left the hut path and were a lot above it on the other side of a bare barren looking valley when we turned for home. It was the best panoramic view I'd yet seen, and such perfect weather. Collected Lois on the way back, said she was alright but struck me as being a bit scratchy!

Home to tea 5 pm and feeling ready for it. Afterwards tried to make plans. Had meant to go on to Gurgh next day, after a lot of arguing persuaded Lois to spend an absolutely slack day in Vent and then hope to go on.

July 9th

A lovely morning, Lois a bit better. After breakfast went to post office and shop where much amusement was caused by our lack of German. Came back and Lois did a bit of "birding" with Mr Dent, whilst I gossiped to her in deck chairs. Hotel staff, porter, housemaid and manager very busy hay making – it was turned between 12 and 2 pm for the first time and carried between 3.30 and 6.30. This entailed putting it in huge piles on top of the porter's back and a small child also, latter being about six years old. It was then stored in a large shed at the back of the hotel. I made Lois keep quite still all afternoon. I went out before tea to grub up a box of plants for Susan and was much amused to see hay being carted everywhere and it looked just like walking hay cocks!! I did not have far to walk and soon got a box full. After tea went to post and had a talk to the head guide man. He came to see us after supper bringing a guide who was to take us next day. Appeared kind. Packed and then bed having decided to leave at 7 am.

July 10th

Woke at 6 am, seems nice and fine. Got up and packed clothes that were still to go in my cases then started to wash. Very little clothes on and a loud bang at the door, thought my watch was wrong, but turned out to be porter for our luggage. Scrimmage to finish the cases off, then breakfast and left Vent with guide at 7.20 am. It was fine, but very stuffy and close, seemed a stiffish climb up and we got hotter than ever before. After 2 hours had short rest and were told stiffest part was behind, then a lot of walking over rough wild sort of rock debris stuff

and so to a signpost marking Rancol Haus (our stop for lunch) 1¹/₂ hours. Depressing as we'd hoped we were further on. However soon got to snow and after climbing this for some way we stopped and were roped. Had passed several parties descending to Vent but none going our way. We were now on the first glacier and soon reached the Rancol Joch – it was the highest point we had to make and were not sorry to get there. The most wonderful view imaginable. Down across another glacier and along a nasty steep path to the rocks again, and a good path where we were unroped. A fine view of Zucke Glacier on one side and the Rancol Kugel behind us. Then to the Rancol Haus over a big snow patch. We had taken just under 5 hours from Vent.

Lunched here and did not like the hut as much as some. Paid our guide and said goodbye to him and left the hut at 2.10 pm. Steep down at first with wonderful views of the glacier. A wet but interesting descent to Obergurgl. A prettier village than Vent. Our hotel looks hideous, very new and built to catch all the sun, the site chosen is very clever as you would never know there was any village and it looks straight at the mountains and glacier.

Bargained a bit for terms, got a minute room but with the view. Comfy beds, running water, all modern conveniences but nowhere to put clothes at all. Found Mrs Dent's friends here and Mrs Tooth and two attractive daughters.

To bed and not sorry to get there, our luggage having come round by Zwieselstein.

July 11th

Decided on a slack day as we had had a long day yesterday, walking for 8 hours. Went and played about in the village and then sat down by river and back to lunch. I spent afternoon in deck chair on veranda and Lois slept on hillside. Went for walk after tea and had a good scramble but just lots of alpenrose - very trying. Hotel Hoch just comfortable and best food we have struck, also it is a little out and above the village. A great ski-ing centre during winter and spring.

July 12th

Another lovely morning, left Gurgle at 8.30 for Hohe Mutt – name attracted us. It is a dull and somewhat tedious walk but very well worth it, as the hill is situated so that one can get a view right round of the mountains and down the Gaisbach glacier below. It is a really remarkable viewpoint – we had not hurried up, and then lay down and were halfway through lunch when Mrs Tooth and daughters appeared. Having meant to do a short walk up the Gaisbach glacier and then

home to lunch, they were very hungry indeed and rather tired. We fed them on our hard boiled eggs and ham and then they set off for Gurgle, hotel and meal. We lay in the sun for a bit and then descended to the glacier and so home. On the way down the hill Lois found Ptarmigan's nest and egg. It appeared old and not wanted so I carried it home. Came down rather steeply at first and found sheets of Dryas, the first we'd seen. Afterwards saw men jumping about hillside and thought there'd been an accident but they were only picking Edelweiss!

Meant to have tea at other hotel but felt so dirty and there were far too many people around so came on home after stopping at shop and buying slippers, socks and chocolate. Lois got her first lot of photos – quite good.

July 13th

Still fine and set off, we hoped for Essener Hutte, walked quite a long way 1½ hours when we consulted the map and found we were in the wrong valley!

However decided to go on. Very bleak and a very poorly marked path. We were in the Konigstal, it got wilder and wilder and I am sure as we got higher up no one had been there before this spring. No marks in the snow. We climbed up quite high on the left

side and had lunch near a snow drift with 5 sheep. They were so pleased to see us, 2 black ewes with black and white children. After that



Fig. 90

Leontopodium alpinum

walked on almost to the head of the valley which was formed in a sort of half circle of rocky mountains and is the frontier between Austria and Italy. We again struck upwards left handed to find the source of a small river – it turned out to be the sweetest little lake, quite blue and nothing to be seen anywhere but mountains and sheep, and a certain amount of snow. We found tracks in this of an animal with 5 toes and wondered if it could be a marmot. Sheets and sheets of soldanella, the ground purple with them where the snow had done. Never seen so much.

Had rather a trying walk, Lois tried to take a short cut and missed the path through masses of alpenzoss.

After this the diary starts to tail away as the holiday gradually winds to an end.

Mrs Brunskill died around twenty years ago. Her husband was an ex-Army man who was a Master of Hounds. Her knowledge of plants was fostered by her godmother in Cornwall who subscribed to many of the collecting expeditions to China and after the War she managed the Blue Bell Hotel at Belford where she built gardens which were much visited and admired. Mrs Brunskill was for many years the Convenor of the North Northumberland Group.

Many thanks to Philippa Craig who inherited the diary with Mrs Brunskill's house.

The illustrations on pages 22 and 29 are of the cover and one of the plates from *Alpine Flora* by L & Prof C Schröter published in Zurich with text in English, French and German. The illustrations on pages 27, 30 and 33 are by Philippe Robert from *The Alpine Flora* by Henry Correvon & Philippe Robert and that on page 35 is from *The Story of My Rock Garden* by Reginald Malby.



ROCK PRIMULA—*Primula viscosa*.

Pitlochry Discussion Weekend 2005 7-9 October



Discussion Weekend - 7th to 9th October 2005
The Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry, Perthshire.

This is the first time that the Discussion Weekend has been in the heart of Perthshire at Pitlochry which is also called “The Gateway to the Highlands”. Pitlochry is on the main A9 north of Perth. There are rail links from Edinburgh and Glasgow but also a direct line from London. The nearest airport is Edinburgh with bus and rail links to Pitlochry.

Pitlochry is a tourist town with many Hotels and B& B's. It is set in the most beautiful countryside with Ben Vraackie looking over the town. We have 2 distilleries near the town: Bell's and Edradour, the smallest distillery in Scotland. There is good High Street shopping and, of course, the House of Bruar just up the road. Gardens of interest include Cluny Garden and all the Perthshire Garden Collection, in total 11 gardens. The hotel, on the southern approach to Pitlochry, is set in 48 acres of beautiful grounds with red squirrels frequently seen and lovely walks into the local Black Spout Wood. Facilities include a pool, spa-bath and tennis courts. It is within an easy walk of the town - about 5 minutes - for shopping.

Please book early to prevent disappointment, as we have an allocated amount of space in the hotel.

All accommodation at the Atholl Palace Hotel will be in double, twin or single rooms. If single members prefer to share a room, it will be greatly appreciated if, when booking, they could arrange this between themselves. Tell us the name of the person with whom you will be sharing. Otherwise, we will use our best judgement when allocating single delegates to twin rooms. Extra nights on the Thursday night before and the Sunday night after can be booked at a specially negotiated rate of £45 per person per night, sharing a twin room to include breakfast. Tell us on the reverse of this form if you need this extra accommodation and we will book it for you. There is no ground floor accommodation but there is a lift to all floors.

Star attractions will be the **PLANT AUCTION, RAFFLE** and **50-50 PLANT SALE, PLANT SHOW,** and **HOLIDAY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION.** Details are in the Year Book.

Please use the booking form enclosed with the Secretary's Page.

Members should make sure that the form and remittance reaches Julia not later than 19th September:

The Registration Secretary, Miss Julia Corden, 2 Lettoch Place, Pitlochry, Perthshire PH16 5BB (Tel. 01796 474410)

Members wanting further information should write to Julia Corden at the above address or email julia.corden@pitlochry.org.uk

RESIDENT	
Friday Dinner – Sunday Afternoon Tea	£175
Saturday Lunch – Sunday Afternoon Tea	£120
NON - RESIDENT	
Saturday (morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea)	£35
Saturday Dinner	£21
Saturday (morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner)	£56
Sunday (morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea)	£35

FRIDAY 7TH OCTOBER

- 16:00 Registration
19:45 President's Welcome Address
20:00 The Bulb Group Lecture – 'In Search of Bulbs'
Jim Archibald
21:30 Small Bulb Exchange

SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER

- 08:00 Registration
08:00 – 09:30 Setting up plants for show
09:00 Optional tours – Cluny, distillery or The Scottish
Plant Hunters' Garden
11:15 'North East of Shimla' – Henry & Margaret Taylor
12:30 Show Opens
14:00 The Harold Esslemont Lecture
'Botanising in South America' – Ger van den
Beuken
15:30 'George Forrest' – Brenda McLean
19:30 Dinner
22:00 Plant Auction and Raffle

SUNDAY 9TH OCTOBER

- 08:00 Registration
09:30 The William Buchanan Lecture
'Alpine cushion Plants and Porphyryon Saxifrages'
– Ger van den Beuken
11:00 'On the Rocks' – Jim Archibald
14.00 The John Duff Scottish Lecture
'Glendoick Gardens' – Jens Nielsen



Show Reports 2005

BLACKPOOL SHOW

March 12th

LOOK FORWARD to driving to Blackpool each spring. This year the late snows and hard frosts meant that there were fewer daffodils by the roadside but the scenery was memorable. Blue skies and early morning sun lit up the Campsie Fells. Snow-capped Cumbrian peaks sparkled over the Solway Firth on the approach to Gretna. A broken bridge near Carlisle brought back memories of the recent disastrous floods. How still the river Eden looked on a quiet Saturday morning in February. After leaving the M6 you approach Blackpool via the A6, which passes through several little villages. Several gardens had clumps and even big flower beds of *Narcissus* 'Tete-a Tete', just a hint of the floral feast waiting at the Collegiate High School. Blackpool Tower on the horizon brought memories of the Rotary conference held there two years ago. Perhaps the SRGC could hold a Discussion Weekend in Blackpool!

Back to Business: show entries suffered a bit in number but nothing in quality and interest. Does everyone show different plants? There were scarcely two the same. Exhibitors travel huge distances to bring their plants to the benches. It is a privilege to know these people. They are friendly and generous. The SRGC and AGS exhibitors are like a club within a club. The shows may be the shop windows of the clubs but they are also the centres of the greatest interest and camaraderie.

Show Secretary Lionel Clarkson won the first George Forrest Memorial Medal of 2005 at his own show in the school where he worked until recently. You can't get more home grown than that! His plant of the pale blue *Iris nusariensis* was simply magnificent. It truly did, stand out from the competition. A relative of *Iris aucheri* it comes from as far away as Syria. To my mind Syria and Blackpool have 3 things in common - sand, good light and rock. Syria can't compete with Blackpool's rock but I bet there isn't a clump of iris like Lionel's in Syria. Innumerable light blue softly textured flowers perfectly



complimented the shiny light green foliage.

After judging, when the judges found out whose plant had won, Lionel was accorded a generous round of applause. Well done Lionel! A fine plant from a fine grower. When asked to hold it for the picture, Lionel said it was so heavy that we agreed to let him pose beside it. After all he still had the show to run and we did not want him to rick his back!

Cecilia Collier, from Norwich, had a very good show, winning both the large 3-pan and small 6-pan class. The latter gained her an AGS medal. The Simon & Garfunkel song goes, "Cecilia you're breakin' my heart, you're shakin' my confidence daily!" Cecilia is 'shakin my confidence! I had one bulb of *Ipheion dialystemon* and it has taken 3 years to increase to give 3 flowers. How long will it take to fill a 12" pan like Cecilia's? Absolutely superb.

As usual there were superb pans of Primula. This year excellent asiatics complimented the allionii types. Many of these were grown by AGS President, John Richards, who is also an SRGC member. We are lucky that John is a great grower of, as well as the world expert on; Primula. Skill and knowledge hand in hand! He had a super 3-pan entry of *Primula whitei* x *P. bhutanica* 'Ardounie', *Primula moupinensis* and *Primula verticillata*. Terry Mitchell won first with his stunning *Primula megasaefolia*. It is native to woodlands on the Black Sea coast of Turkey, where it must get a lot of rainfall. It prefers shady places in the wild and I suspect appreciates some shelter in



Iris nusariensis



Ipheion dialystemon



Primula 'Ardounie'

cultivation. A Primula I loved was *Primula sinensis*, with its powder pink flowers and slightly bronzy foliage. Between the wars [World not Iraq!] it was a popular plant for the cool greenhouse. As such, it was denied a first, second or third prize but it is still a beautiful thing. Edward Barraclough showed my favourite European Primula of the day, *Primula* 'Clarence Elliott'. But I think *Primula allionii* 'Anna Griffith' is one the finest selections ever and here it was, grown to perfection. It is always nice to see primroses and there were two very good plants of *Primula vulgaris* in section 3.

You expect Dionysias at Blackpool and this year there were plenty of good ones. Last year there were more but this time I was fascinated by the 'love me or hate me', 'propagate me or destroy me' plant of *Dionysia freitagii* grown by Derek Pritchard from Stockton-on-Tees. It has staminode petals, though this was also disputed. It is certainly on its way to becoming double ... a curse to purists but exciting to those of us who might love a Dionysia covered in tiny double rosebud flowers. A small *Dionysia afghanica* was one of the most beautiful of all.

Sticking with Primulaceae we come to The Duncan Lowe Award for The Best Plant in a 19 cm pot, which went to *Cyclamen alpinum*, the perfect plant for an Alpine Flower Show, part of Cecilia Collier's ACS Medal winning, 6-pan entry.



Dionysia afghanica

Bulbs are becoming a mainstay of many shows. Members are building up superb collections of *Corydalis*, *Crocus*, *Iris*, *Fritillaria* and *Narcissus* and many other treasures. Clare Oates was in competition for the top award with her huge pan of Certificate of Merit winning,

Narcissus cyclamineus with 60 or more flowers in perfect condition,

glowing in the sunshine. Wordsworth would have liked a host like these. Now very rarely seen is the delicate *Narcissus cantabrica* var. *petunioides*. Ivor Betteridge included it in his 3-pan entry along with *Scilla mischtschenkoana* 'Tubergiana', the plant with the longest name in the show! Margaret Taylor drew my attention to the delicate white flowered *Narcissus dubius*. It comes from limestone areas near the coast in the south of France and north of Spain. Margaret says it is rare to see it flowering in cultivation. Again this was an entry in section 3!

Crocuses can give superb displays. SRGC President Ian and wife Carole had a fabulous pan of *Crocus malyi*; and *Crocus chrysanthus* 'Ladykiller'

showed you don't have to spend a fortune to get an excellent result. *Crocus heuffelianus* 'Carpathian Wonder' - a Janis Ruksans' collection has been much commented upon on the SRGC Forum crocus pages this spring. It is a wonderful selection, pure white flowers with a suggestion of light violet flecking near the tips.

Ian Leslie's *Callianthemum anemonoides* was the equal of any I have seen. The judges felt it was 'lost' amongst the top dressing which was too similar in colour. I suspect that next week, when the remaining central flowers fully develop it will sweep the boards. It is a good example of how important members of the Ranunculaceae are in springtime.

Drabas seem to be less popular than they were a few years ago. Their bright lemon flowers are quite a distinct tint of yellow. *Draba yunnanensis* is Chinese but there is a remarkable similarity between the yellow drabas from Europe, the Americas and Asia. Some are quite easy to please but this takes a bit more skill. There are so many other great plants but space is limited. I could write on and on but it will soon be time for the Edinburgh show.

Barry Tattersall from Twickenham showed some wonderful orchids reminding me of spring in the Mediterranean, *Ophrys atlantica*, *xSerapicampsis capitata*, *Orchis brancifortii*, the latter gaining a Certificate of Merit. Ian Kidman won the Kirby cup for Best foliage Plant with *Saxifraga longifolia* and a Certificate of Merit with his *Haastia pulvinaris*.

Sid Cumbus from Lancaster took great trouble selecting, enlarging, mounting and exhibiting a huge collection of photographs of alpine plants which was

unanimously acclaimed as being worthy of its Gold Medal. Winners of the Aggregate prizes were Cecilia Collier with the Hollet Trophy for most points in section A; Peter Farkasch the Michael Roberts Memorial Trophy in section B; and Michael Morton, winner of the Reginald Kaye Trophy in section C. Trevor Harding won an SRGC Bronze Medal.

Once again Blackpool provided great plants, good company and an opportunity for AGS and SRGC members to mix and chat about the plants we love. Thanks to everyone involved in running the show. *Sandy Leven*.



Callianthemum anemonoides

EDINBURGH and the LOTHIANS

March 19th

The range of plants seen at Edinburgh, the earliest of the Scottish shows in Scotland, depends very much on the weather in February and early March. The omens did not bode well this year after a long cold spell followed by just a few days of improved temperatures in the run up to the show. Contrary then to what was expected on the day, there was rather more variation on the bench than we have become accustomed to in recent years. Thus, it was a delight to see both the last of the snowdrops (usually long since over) and the first of the orchids. The latter was a particularly fine *Orchis italica*, exhibited by Cyril Lafong. This delicate, wispy-flowered species seemed to be earlier and better this year, and was awarded one of five Certificates of Merit.

Though the weather left some classes without entries and, sadly, Section II was very thin, we were nonetheless treated to a fascinating range of varieties and forms of rock garden and bulbous plants. Variation was illustrated



RBG Gold Medal display

particularly well by the non-competitive Gold Medal display from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and the Silver Medal display of photographs by Ian McNaughton; the former included the strikingly white *Narcissus papyraceus* and golden yellow *N. jonquilla*,

and among the fritillaries, the black *Fritillaria obliqua*. Many colour forms of *Corydalis solida* made their customary appearance on the bench and the *Trillium rivale* exhibited varied from almost white to the very attractive, finely speckled form, 'Purple Heart'. Many other variations were exhibited of species and forms of *Tecophilaea*, *Fritillaria* and *Hepatica*. At least eight distinct forms of *Hepatica* were on display, an unusual sight in recent times.

Many forms and hybrids of *Primula allionii* were displayed, the best of which was *Primula* 'Broadwell Milkmaid', a hybrid between 'White Lady' and the species. It grows very slowly but readily covers itself in yellowish-white flowers. Cyril Lafong's plant was perfect and was judged the best European or American *Primula* (K C Corsar Challenge Trophy). Fewer Asiatic primulas were on show, but the R E Cooper Bhutan Drinking Cup also went to Cyril for *Primula whitei*. Of the numerous forms of *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* on the



Classford Sprunt

foliage of rock plants. The main honours this year, however, were taken by friends from south of the Border. One of these Border 'raiders', David Boyd, brought an extraordinary selection of fine plants and was justly rewarded with the Reid Rose Bowl for most points in Section I, the Henry Archibald Rose Bowl for Class 2 (3 rock plants) and the A O Curle Memorial Trophy for Class 5 (3 pans from seed). David's skills as a grower were demonstrated by the large specimen of *Helleborus niger* from his Class 2 entry (Certificate of Merit), which was regarded by many observers as quite the best of its kind seen. Ben and Angela Wilson from Duddo in north Northumberland, received a Certificate of Merit for their pan of *Narcissus cordubensis*. The striking 25 cm high stems held strongly

bench it was Cyril's that also took honours with the Henry Tod Carnethy Quaich for the best bulb, corm or tuber. Fritillaries are popular show plants and a Certificate of Merit was awarded to Fred Hunt for his large pan of the diminutive Greek *Fritillaria davisii*.

Edinburgh Group members were also successful. Ron Stewart won the Boonslie Cup for his slate crevice garden which was overflowing with a multitude of foliage colours and textures. He also took the Midlothian Bowl for the best plant in Section II which was *Sempervivum ciliosum* ssp. *octopodes* var. *apetalum*. Vera Reid was awarded the Alfred Evans Quaich and the Special Prize by a first-time exhibitor with *Gaultheria procumbens*. Finally, Sue and Hector Riddell Tarbrax took the Kilbryde Cup for their arrangement of cut flowers and



Ron & Lyn Bezzant

scented deep yellow flowers. Tom Green, from Rowlands Gill in Co Durham, was awarded the Bill Mackie Quaich for best Saxifrage with *Saxifraga* 'Your Smile'. Finally, the crowning glory of the show's highest accolade went to Alan Newton for his large, extremely well flowered, *Dionysia curviflora* EGW No 9. Richly deserved, this was Alan's first Forrest Medal: Eric Watson would have been pleased to see that others have mastered the cultivation of such splendid specimens of the species that he championed for so long. *David Millward*.

STIRLING March 26th

It was déjà vu at Stirling. We have had déjà vu before but not at this show. The Forrest Medal and the Ben Ledi Plants Trophy for the Best European Plant in the show went to Cyril Lafong's wonderful pan of *Orchis italica*, for the second time, in three years. Its tall spikes of pink flowers contrast beautifully with its spotted leaves. Cyril also won the Spillar Trophy for best Primula with *Primula* 'Broadwell Milkmaid', a fabulous white dome of flowers, and a Certificate of Merit for *Trillium rivale*. A good day for Cyril. Fred Hunt's is now master of the Pleiones and his large pan of *Pleione* 'Shantung Ducat' won the Institute of Quarrying Quaich for Best non-European Plant in the Show and a Certificate of Merit. Ian and Carole Bainbridge's distinct form of *Narcissus watieri* also gained a Certificate of Merit. The Carnegie Dunfermline trust Trophy for Most Points in Section 1 went to show secretary Sandy Leven.

Entries this year were disappointing in number but there were plenty of quality and interesting plants on the benches. We are especially worried about section 2 where this year's sole exhibitor Liz Mills swept the board. Next year we hope to cajole local members to exhibit in section 2. Watch this space!

Jim and Janet Paterson won the Jubilee class A with six different *Corydalis*, including several different forms of *Corydalis solida*. The two 6-pan classes for bulbs were won by Sandy Leven. In his entry he included *Allium paradoxum* which is a superb early onion with no scent and large white flowers, and *Narcissus* 'Mitzy' which had been in flower since the February Early Bulb Show a month before.

Erythronium americanum, shown by Cyril Lafong, is a fabulous thing when its flowers open. The trouble at Stirling was that there was not enough daylight for it to open. In the new and rare class Jean Wyllie triumphed with her New Zealand raised, *Narcissus* 'Twin Stars' just pipping Margaret & Henry Taylor's *Primula mistassinica*. Bob Meaden took first in the seed class with a

beautiful *Viola calcarata* with deep blue flowers with just a tiny yellow centre and it was nice to see *Calceolaria uniflora* back at Stirling after an absence of many years. Thank you Margaret and Henry for raising it.

Although it did not win I liked the patriotic 3-pan *Corydalis* entry in red, white and blue featuring *Corydalis solida*, *C. solida* 'Alba' and *C. fumarifolia*. The beautiful *Erythronium citrinum* helped Ian & Carole Bainbridge win the class for 3 pans bulbs. The 2-pan bulbs class was won by x*Chionoscilla allenii* and *Ipheion* 'Alberto Castillo' from Roma Fiddes. Barry and Cathy Caudwell showed an unusual *Iris bucharica* named 'Tony Hall'. Unusual in that its flowers are blue instead of yellow/white. Fool that I am I thought it was *I. nusariensis*!

Mention must be made when plants with a history turn up. Just such was Bob Maxwell's *Narcissus* 'Douglasbank'. Named for the garden of the fabled Willie Buchanan it was nurtured by several gardeners including Lyn Bezzant and Jean Band. It prefers the open garden to pot culture. *Narcissus* 'Gypsy Queen' from Ian Christie was a great new form. It has small bi-coloured flowers in pale yellow and cream. This is one to look out for!

Luckily for visitors there were plenty of *Fritillaria*, *Corydalis* and *Primula* to provide colour and interest. Fred Hunt's *Fritillaria bauchinia* and *F. graeca* ssp. *graeca* were especially noteworthy while Jean Wylie showed two forms of *F. tubiformis*. In the red *corydalis* strains, Helen Greenwood's form *Corydalis* 'Rucksan's Red' is one of the reddest. Memories of former SRGC President Joan Stead swept back when I saw the delicate tubular red and yellow flowers of *Tropaeolum tricolor*. The other

colour is black. There seems to be a steady trickle of new Asiatic *Primulas* reaching our shores and Margaret and Henry won with *Primula nana* and *P. knuthiana*. Among the European *Primulas* there was a fantastic *Primula marginata* 'Laciniata' with very dissected leaves. The 3-pan *Primulaceae* class allowed John Lee and Sam Sutherland to show us how well they grow *Dionysia*. They had 6 different ones between them including *Dionysia* 'Chris Grey-Wilson', *D.* 'Schneeball' and *D. lurorum*. I find them all impossible to grow but I do admire them. There were several *cyclamen* and one of my favourites was Graham Butler's *Cyclamen pseudibericum*. Notable among the



Primula marginata 'Laciniata'

foliage plants were two *Celmisia spectabilis* plants from Graham, one with maroon-tinted leaves and the other with golden-edged leaves.

So although entries were down on previous years there were still lots of great things to see and there is always something new! *Sandy Leven.*

HEXHAM SHOW

April 9th

The Hexham Show never ceases to amaze me; it seems to just go from strength to strength. As you can imagine with 77 exhibitors staging well over 850 plants in just 1½ hours the activity at set-up was frantic. The hall seemed to be covered with plants; here staging is at an end and judging is just about



The show hall at Hexham

to start. Firstly may I thank all exhibitors for coming and making Hexham such a fine display?

You can do the maths as well as I, on average there were 11 plants per exhibitor. A number of the classes were hotly contested. Top honours, a Farrer Medal this year, went to Mike and Christine Brown for a superb plant *Parquilegia anemoniodes* in Class 27. But it was Ian Kidman's efforts which won him the RB Cooke Plate for the most first prize points in the Open



Paraquilegia anemoniodes

Section. Both the Gordon Harrison Trophy and a SRGC Bronze Medal went to Trevor Harding for the most first points in Section B; whilst the Cyril Barnes Trophy went to a local group member, Jim Watson, for the most points in Section C.



Primula fasciculata

Section C at Hexham was a little sparse in entries but the standard did not suffer in the slightest, and just one of Jim's plants, *Primula fasciculata*, illustrates why. The Northumberland Cup, for exhibitors who have yet to win a national 1st prize was contested and won by Sue Gill.

This year Hexham hosted the RHS's Joint Rock Committee who enjoyed the task of examining some 11 plants. Typical of the standard of plants submitted is John Mullaney's *Saxifraga columnaris*, which had been sown in 1996. Within the show John's plant gained first in Class 70 and a Certificate of Merit.

A plant of note was Glassford Sprunt's Pleione. He tells us it is probably 'Tolima' or 'Rakata' and it gained first in Class 20. A fine plant, but it was Glassford's cultural notes which I found extremely helpful:

Total Mistreatment of Pleione for Over 5 Years
Pans removed from Alpine house to open garden – No protection
Reason:- Suspected Brevipalpus ocideae infestation. Stock health declining
Compost unchanged since removal. Watering:- Celestial only.
Fertiliser:- None
Exposed to all weathers:- Winter 2003 – 2004 Min. Temp. -9C
Winter 2004 – 2005 Min. Temp. -6C
Seems to have cured the infestation, but not necessarily a recommended method of treatment



Cecilia Collier's *Trillium rivale*

George Young's *Trillium rivale*



There is always something different at Alpine Shows and Hexham this year was no different. Cecilia Collier had a fine display of *Asarum* amongst her many exhibits, Class 30, 3 pans from one continent, with *Asarum forbesii*, *A. maximum* and *A. delavayi*, whilst *Trillium rivale* was on show in many classes, some 17 individual entries, it was not the general standard that caught my eye but the unusual colour break of Cecilia's plant, and the dark colouring of George Young's plant in Class 51, in contrast to the more usual white or faintly speckled flowers.

Scent, that attribute of plants, is often ignored not just in alpine plants but for plants in general. On entering the show hall you were assailed by that "fresh" smell you occasionally meet in a glasshouse. On exploring the show benches, various smells and scents were encountered, such as the



Asarum delavayi

pungent and heavy scents of the many *Fritillaria* and *Asarum*; not entirely pleasant in my opinion. However this was soon dispelled by the honey scent of *Polygala chamaebuxus* or the warm heavy musk-like scent of the many *Primula marginata*. One surprise was the lemon-honey scent of the unusual *Primula maximowiczii* of brick red flowers and reflexed petals. And finally the sweet strong scent of *Arcterica nana* which was shown by Alan Furness and won him the Sandhoe and Ralph Haywood Trophies.

A good number of the classes were hotly contested starting with Class 3 with 7 entries and won by John Richards with a superb plant of *Caltha himalaica*. Or those classes involving *Primula allionii*, in Classes 58 and 59 alone I counted 14 entries. Judging the many *allionii* hybrids cannot have been an easy task but the plants of *Primula* 'Aire Mist' shown by Don Peace and *Primula* 'Broadwell Milkmaid' shown by Ian Kidman were deservedly first in their classes. The contest and range of exhibits was reflected in Class 47, Cut Alpine Flowers, where Clare Oates took first, but the class contained 6 entries and 30 different alpine flowers.

The end of the show brought yet another twist, I don't suppose Hexham can claim it a first but it was quite a sight to see many exhibitors racing down



The end of the show at Hexham

the show benches at the close with super market shopping trolleys picking up plants just as though they were groceries. It never ceases to amaze me. I should end this report with my thanks to the many exhibitors who shared their superb plants with us all and provided such a magnificent display on the day. *Peter Maguire.*

PERTH SHOW April 23rd

Section I

The George Forrest Memorial Medal, the Bulb Trophy and the Murray-Lyon Trophy were awarded to Fred Hunt for a wonderful pan of *Fritillaria liliacea* – this Frit was covered with about a hundred cream coloured flowers with



Fritillaria liliacea

contrasting yellow stamens. Fred's medal-winning plant is a species that comes from the San Francisco Bay area of the US Pacific coast. It is best grown under frost-free conditions in a mix of J13/grit/peat. It is around 15 years old and has previously been awarded an FCC.

Another of the features of this year's show was the number of *Primula maximowiczii* on the show bench. Ian Christie from Kirriemuir was the winner of the R. S. Masterton award for the best Asiatic Primula with this species, as well as the Joyce Halley award for the best plant from seed. Ian's plant was two years old and grows happily outside in the garden – it was grown from Ron McBeath's seed collected in NW China.



Primula maximowiczii

The L.C. Middleton Challenge Trophy for Class A was won by Cyril Lafong with 6 pans that included *Daphne x susanna*, *Androsace vandellii*, *Dactylorhiza sambucina*, *Daphne petraea*, *Anemonella thalictroides* and *Fritillaria pyrenaica* 'Bernard Tickner'. Class 1 was another excellent exhibit of plants by J & J Paterson for which the Alexander Caird Trophy was awarded – these were *Trillium cuneatum*, *Muscari* 'Valerie Finnis', *Anemone nemorosa*

'Vestar', *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Corydalis* 'Kingfisher' and *Dicentra cucullaria*. The E. H. M. Cox Trophy for the best dwarf Rhododendron was again won by Viv and Anne Chambers who are developing a tradition in this particular class. This year it was a superb specimen of *Rhododendron* 'Shamrock' (Class 31).



Rhododendron 'Shamrock'

Section II

It was great to see so many interesting plants in Section II – many of them from local exhibitors. Leslie Drummond who was awarded the Bronze Medal and Perth Salver, had several pans of interesting Primulas which he grows exceptionally well – these included *Primula rotundifolia* and *Primula wollastonii* as well as *Meconopsis x cookei*. Susan Band was the winner of the John Duff prize with *Lathyrus vernus albo-roseus* and the Perth Trophy. W.S. Johnstone won the 6-pan (Class B) with six different pans of Sempervivums.

Junior section

In the junior section Katie Paterson was an enthusiastic entrant & awarded the Georgina Blackwood Trophy for *Narcissus* 'Hawera' (Class 92) and *Primula vulgaris* (Class 93) - both of them very well kept plants. Well done Katie.

We were pleased to have in addition to the normal show classes, an interesting display of photographs of alpine plants from Mike Almond's recent expedition to Georgia and a special display of Japanese Acers by Alan Gardiner. These extra exhibits add a great deal to the attraction of the show for members and public alike. *Cathy Caudwell*.

GLASGOW May 7th

A couple of showers in the afternoon ended our sunshine record but didn't spoil another good show. A quick glance round the benches spotted some old favourites but on closer study there were some plants new to this show at least. Ian Kidman came up from Ebchester (south of The Wall, just!) to vie with Cyril Lafong for the Crawford Silver Challenge Cup. At the final count they were equal and the trophy was shared which seemed to be a fair result since both had produced quality entries for the multi-pan classes.

One of Ian's gems in class A was a *Dionysia involucrata* 'Gothenburg White', another the dark purple *Edraianthus serpyllifolius*. We are used to seeing impressive pots of *Daphne petraea* 'Grandiflora' but the smaller-flowered forms are just as attractive. Ian showed *Daphne* 'lydora' and *D.* 'Persebee', and Cyril the 'Tremalzo' form.

One of Cyril's winners in class I was the hybrid *Dactylorhiza majalis* 'Alba' x *D. sambucina*, an impressive plant with many stems of creamy flowers that, for the second year in succession, gained him the Charles Simpson trophy for best plant in Orchidaceae. In class 3 for new, rare or difficult plants he showed an impressive little dome of *Benthamiella patagonica* studded with tiny



Paeonia cambessedesii

tubular flowers. Some of these plants were included in the line-up for the top award in the show, but at the final vote Brian Davidson's stunning plant of *Paeonia cambessedesii* was the unanimous Forrest Medal winner. The deep pink flowers and dark foliage combine so effectively in this beautiful species.

The other contenders were all judged worthy of Certificates of Merit: Fred Hunt's yellow *Fritillaria pyrenaica* 'Bernard Tickner', Ian Kidman's *Globularia cordifolia* 'Blue Bunnets' - that is the correct spelling! - and two of Cyril's plants, *Androsace studiosorum* 'Doxsa', a form that was collected by

Margaret and Henry Taylor in north-west India, and *Trillium grandiflorum* 'Flore Pleno'.



Primula bracteata

There were nice examples of *Primula reidii* and *P. bracteata* but they were eclipsed in the contest for the Joan Stead Prize for best Primula by Fred Hunt's immaculate pan of *Primula marginata* in its white form of 'Linda Pope'. This year has seen several re-introductions of Chinese primulas on the benches. I'm a primula freak but have to admit that

species in the Subsection Maximowiczii with their narrow reflexed petals – the yellow *P. szechuanica*, the maroon *P. tangutica* and the orange form of *P. maximowiczii* – can best be described as interesting rather than stunning. “Interesting” is how many people regard the increasing number of *Arisaema* species now being shown, definitely luv ‘em or hate ‘em plants! Some are suited to pot culture like the well-grown *Arisaema thunbergii* ssp. *urashima* in Section II, but others will grow leggy and out of character if cosseted. Anne and Viv Chambers’ compact *A. nepenthoides* was lifted from open ground.

Stella & David Rankin’s entries took the Don Stead Prize for most points in the bulb classes, and Bob Meaden’s pot of *Dactylorhiza majalis* gained him the Ian Donald Trophy for the best plant native to Scotland.

The Section II entry was thin but there were several new exhibitors which augurs well for next year. One of them, Dai Davies, got the Best Plant Special Prize for a pot of *Gladiolus tristis* var. *concolor* grown from seed. Kate and Bob Blackie gained most points.

In the non-competitive section this year we were fortunate to have two entries. Graeme Butler’s carefully staged display of auriculas was awarded a Gold Medal. It is always a pleasure to see these plants, which so fascinated the Victorians, especially when one knows the skill and time they demand. And I’m sure the Victorians would have appreciated his wife Hilary’s calligraphy on the labels. Richard Barr staged a display of Pleione hybrids that allowed us to appreciate the subtle differences between the many forms currently available. We have to thank both of them for enhancing the show.

Heavy downpours and high winds in the preceding days spoiled many plants but Jamie Taggart of the Linn Gardens, Cove produced a display of rhododendron and azalea trusses to take the awards in the section VI. *Anne Chambers*.

ABERDEEN

May 21st

Among the worries that haunt a Show Secretary as show day approaches is “will there be enough plants on the benches?” We had been putting out appeals begging people to bring along anything that they could but on the day my problem was how to fit all the plants onto the display benches. In Aberdeen, plants must be staged and the hall cleared of all but the show officials by 9.15 am and judging begins at 9.30 prompt. I do not like it if the judges have to write N.A.S. (Not According to Schedule) on a card so this 15 minutes allows me and my stewards to check the benches and ensure, as far

as we can, that all exhibits have a class entry card and are in the correct class before Judging begins.

The Judges had to work hard to separate the four entries in the small (with a pot size restriction of 19 cm) six pan class as they were all of an extremely high standard. Cyril Lafong won in the end! Class 1, the 'Big Six', as it is known, has no size restriction and is for the real heavy weights in the pan size. It was also won by Cyril with six of the best plants you are likely to see but he did not get it all his own way as Jim and Janet Paterson, who have just progressed to Section 1, mounted a spirited challenge of well-presented healthy plants. The classes for plants raised from seed are always well supported in Aberdeen and full of interesting plants. I was taken with some of the many unusual Gesneriaceae shown by Maureen and Brian Wilson,



Saxifraga cespitosa

including their own cross x*Ramberlea* 'Inchgarth'. Nick Boss grows his plants, such as *Saxifraga cespitosa*, in as natural a way as is possible in a pot and he also provides informative notes on his labels which all goes towards making them very interesting exhibits for the public; something we should all remember as the main reason

we put on the Shows is to display our plants to the public. The one pan cushion class gave the judges a tough choice for first place between a large perfect cushion of *Gypsophila aretioides* and a 16-year old *Raoulia eximia* growing naturally with a few small dead patches between the spreading cushions of a single plant. Either plant would have been a worthy winner but this time they chose the *Raoulia*. Many fine dwarf shrubs were spread through the classes with conifers, sweetly scented daphnes and a nicely flowered *Leiophyllum buxifolium* 'Nanum'. There were not so many *Lewisia*s as there usually are at Aberdeen perhaps because of the poor weather. The Ashwood *lewisia* hybrids have become a regular feature of the shows, these well-flowered compact plants are ideal subjects for growing in pots.

The major award, The Forrest Medal, was a very close competition



Cyripedium parviflorum var pubescens

between several plants; whittled down to *Silene hookeri* ssp. *bolanderi*, *Cyripedium parviflorum var pubescens* and *Arisaema wilsonii*, the judges eventually awarding it to Viv and Anne Chambers for their perfect exhibit of *Arisaema wilsonii*. This is the first time an *Arisaema* has had the major award. Our Section II was the best there has been at any of our Shows this year with plenty of plants, many of a high enough quality to have won in the open section. Two first time entrants John Graham and Joan Rowe both entered several classes with good success and I hope that others will follow their example. The future of our shows is dependent on a continual flow of new exhibitors coming forward to show their plants and let the public see the wide range of plants that is grown by our Membership. The best plant in Section two went to a very large pot of *Saxifraga* 'White Pixie', a super mossy saxifrage, shown by Carol Divers



Arisaema wilsonii



Oxalis laciniata

who also won the Bronze Medal for most points. Carol exhibited for the first time only last year.

I am keen to encourage non-competitive displays of plants and was delighted to have two very different entries. One, a large collection of Sedum, Sempervivium and Jovibarbas, shown by Brian Hammond, received a Silver Medal and an equally interesting group of Oxalis, mostly forms of *Oxalis laciniata*, shown by Carole and Ian Bainbridge was awarded a Bronze Medal. The Shows are the 'shop window' for the SRGC, it is our way of spreading the word by sharing the range of plants common, rare, easy and difficult that we grow with both fellow members and the public, so please support our Shows. *Ian Young*.

Photographs by Sandy Leven, Glassford Sprunt, Peter Maguire & Ian Young

Correspondence

Two letters about the Highland Trough Workshop seem to raise points of interest and possible concern. The first discusses the methods and raises an issue of health and safety

Dear Mr McGregor

I felt some alarm after reading the article 'Highland Trough Workshop' in the January issue.

I had previously thought that these troughs were produced with very little cutting, let alone rasping and distressing with tools to the extent that it looked like a blizzard had occurred.

The Health and Safety implications of inhaling airborne particles of expanded polystyrene were well known at least fifteen years ago. Schools were advised to ask parents not to send any polystyrene articles to craft classes because of the inherent risks to lungs of the easily inhaled particles when polystyrene is cut or broken.

At the very best this practice should cease to be recommended, and at the very least the Health and Safety aspects should be highlighted at workshops, on your website, and in the next journal, so that risks can be minimised.

The wearing of safety masks, while being of importance, does not lessen the risks of airborne particles entering the lungs of children, pets and other adults in the vicinity of the wayward granules and fine particles that are almost impossible to collect.

I believe these concerns are valid although I personally have not researched them. I felt I had to write to you and pass them on.

Yours sincerely

S. V. McGee (Mrs), Rotherham, S. Yorkshire

The second raises a few points about alternative approaches but starts with a comment about the article on saxifrages in the last issue:

Dear Editor

Some comments are called for on two matters in the latest issue of The Rock Garden.

(1) In an otherwise superb article on Saxifrages you lead off with the statement "The dome is an incredibly efficient form: for a greenhouse it is very strong and provides the largest ratio of ground covered to surface area [of the dome] ..." I am not clear where you get this from, or even that I have the ratio the right way up. Do you really mean that AREA OF BASE/AREA OF CURVED SURFACE is maximised? That a given quantity of glass provides cover for the most ground if arranged in a dome?

There might be a significant result in thinking about the VOLUME of AIR enclosed by a given area of exposed surface and enquiring how that can be maximised.

(2) The making of polystyrene troughs

It seems to me to be daft to start by damaging the surface of the boxes and then having to repair it [with the hot air gun]. Why not just paint the surface with something that is viscous enough, and stiff enough, to give all the ridges and grooves that one wants? It could be the sort of roof seal I have been using a lot lately, with its obvious weather-proofing qualities, perhaps reinforced with some plaster-like substance, or some of the sand. I enclose a specimen that took me about 5 minutes just using materials to hand.

There are not just fish boxes. For example, a well-known company in Aberdeenshire, which sells meat by mail order, despatches it in polystyrene cases with closely fitting lids and their couriers won't take empties back. So there is a steady supply (if you can afford the meat!). They do not smell of meat or fish since the food is packed in sealed bags.

I found No. 114 very interesting for all sorts of reasons.

Yours sincerely

Clem Thomas, Perth

All I can say in answer to the first point is that it was one of those statements which seemed at the time to be obvious and which in retrospect are completely off-beam. Suffice it to say that domes are mechanically very efficient and that a circular outline is the shortest line enclosing a given area. Sorry about that! *Editor*

Correction – 2004 RHS JOINT ROCK GARDEN PLANT COMMITTEE

The awards of Certificate of Preliminary Commendation made at the Edinburgh Show in March 2004 were incorrectly reported. They should have read

Edinburgh – 20th March 2004

Certificate of Preliminary Commendation (as hardy flowering plants for exhibition) to

Narcissus x koshinomurae exhibited by F. Hunt, Invergowrie.

Fritillaria kotschyana 'Craigton Max' exhibited by F. Hunt, Invergowrie.

Apologies, particularly to Fred Hunt.



Fishboxes, of high density polystyrene, can take quite a weight

Planting your Troughs

Ian Young

In the last issue of *THE ROCK GARDEN* Davie Sharp reported on the Highland Trough Workshop and on making fishbox troughs. This article follows that up with a discussion about planting your trough.

Planting a trough is great fun; it is your chance to design a garden in miniature (not a miniature garden which is something else entirely). I like to think I am creating a small section of a landscape lifted from nature into my garden, but before we embark on the creative side we have to address the practical issues of drainage and compost.

COMPOST

The plants that we grow as 'Alpines' come from many countries and very different growing conditions. It is remarkable that so many can be grown in very similar conditions in our gardens. The main point about any growing medium or compost is the drainage. Water should be able to

STAGE 1 PREPARATION – DRAINAGE

It is essential to have drainage holes in the base to allow surplus water to drain out of the trough. Cover these with something like mesh and cut it into squares a bit larger than the drainage holes.



54



55

You can put a small handful of gravel over the mesh if you prefer.

STAGE 2 ADDING COMPOST



56

Make sure you add enough compost - mound it up so that you cannot get any more to stay in - make a mountain. Many lament the fact that their garden is flat and uninteresting; now is the chance to create your ideal garden.

pass freely through the compost, which should then remain moist but not water-logged. Air is also an important requirement at the roots of plants, without it, they, like us, will die.

A simple compost that will suit nearly all alpiners is a 50/50 mix of a John Innes compost and a 3 – 6 mm sharp grit. There is no difference between a J. I. no. 1, 2, or 3 compost, except for the amount of chemical fertiliser added; the higher the number, the more fertiliser; after six weeks of use they should all be more or less identical as the fertiliser is used up by this time. The plants can be roughly divided into coming from three types of habitat; High Alpine or Scree, Meadow and Woodland, all will do well in the 50/50 compost. If you wish, the scree plants could stand more grit, up to 75 percent, but as this is a much more sharply drained (leaner) mixture, it will require more frequent watering. Many specialists prefer this mix for cushion plants. Similarly you may wish to add extra peat or leaf-mould to the basic 50/50 mix for woodland plants. This has the effect of holding on to moisture for longer and suits plants usually found growing in cool moist conditions.

Whatever mix you use, the most important factor is that the plants have a steady supply of moisture when in growth and do not become bone dry, even when resting. You have to learn by your own experience (that is; your own mistakes) how often you need to water your plants. Feeding your alpiners while growing is also important. Even in extreme conditions, alpine plants receive nutrients and minerals while growing. On mountain scree the minerals come from the breaking down of the rocks, nitrogen is produced in lightning storms and these are often stored up in snow and ice to be released in the spring thaw, just when the alpiners are coming into growth. The best way to imitate this is by using some of the many liquid feeds available, on a regular basis. 'Little and often' is always better than one big feed once in a blue moon; just think how you would like to be fed. The same rules apply to garden soils: if you have a light, sandy soil then add 5 to 10 cm of 3 to 6 mm grit and dig this in to the top 15 cm of the bed and you have an ideal medium to receive your alpiners. If you have a heavy clay soil, you will need a lot more grit and a soil conditioner such as peat or leaf-mould until you get a freely draining mix. Once your plants are in place, a top dressing of 3 to 6 mm grit should be added; this not only looks good but helps the drainage around the small plants.

DRAINAGE

As shown in the previous article on making Fish Box Troughs it is essential to have drainage holes in the base to allow surplus water to drain out of the trough. You will have to cover these drainage holes with something

STAGE 3 THE HARD LANDSCAPE



57

First get your rocks – garden centres often have a good range

Add the rocks to your mound of compost and roughly position them to a pleasing shape that will also provide planting opportunities.



58



59

You may have to remove some compost to bed some of the larger rocks down.

Once your main rocks are in place you may have to add some smaller pieces to help retain the compost in the raised up areas. Now fill all the pockets and crevices with compost.



60

that will allow the water to escape but keep the compost in. I find that some small plastic mesh, available at most garden centres, is ideal. Cut it into squares a bit larger than the drainage holes and place it over the hole.

I also sometimes cut a strip of cloth from an old towel, or some capillary watering mat, about 2 to 3 cm wide by 15 cm long and push it through each drainage hole so that half the length is inside and half outside the trough. I then put the plastic mesh over the hole and the strip of cloth pinning it in place with a small nail. This strip of cloth then acts like a wick helping to remove surplus moisture from the trough whether your trough is placed directly on the ground or raised up on blocks.

Adding crocks as a drainage layer in the bottom third of the trough has long been advised but I do not do this, if your compost is well drained as described above the drainage is all through the mixture so there is no need to take up space in a shallow trough for a drainage layer when that extra bit of compost would be of more benefit to the plants. You can put a small handful of gravel over the mesh if you prefer.

If you live in a hot dry climate you may even want to place a layer of some good garden compost or some rotted turfs in the bottom third of the trough to act as a reservoir for moisture to prevent the trough from drying out too quickly.

ADDING COMPOST

The next stage is to add your compost. First rule, if you think the trough will be too heavy to move once it is planted, is to place it in situ before you start to fill it up. Troughs look best raised up on a few bricks or blocks but make sure that the bricks are not going to be directly under the drainage holes as this will defeat the object and stop the moisture escaping.

At workshops I find that people rarely add sufficient compost, they usually fill it to about 2 to 3 cm from the top of the sides. You should mound it up so that you cannot get any more to stay in. Remember you are creating this landscape from scratch, and you want an interesting effect as well as a suitable environment to grow mountain plants, so make a mountain. Many lament the fact that their garden is flat and uninteresting; now is the chance to create your ideal garden.

ROCKS

There is a huge range of rocks that you can use to create your landscape. I would suggest that you use large pieces of rock as these will produce the most dramatic effect and create a good environment for the plants.

Most garden centres now stock a selection of rocks for sale from limestone to granite. Remember if you are collecting the rocks from nature you should do this within the laws of your country and also think of the natural environment and do not take them from the wild and beautiful places that could be damaged. I get rock from a local quarry and can select the sizes and shapes for myself.

Add the rocks to your mound of compost and roughly position them to a pleasing shape that will also provide planting opportunities. You may well need to remove some compost, add smaller bits of rock, but you do need to make sure that you bed the larger rocks down well; sometimes the rock goes to the bottom of the trough.

Once your main rocks are in place you may have to add some smaller pieces to help retain the compost in the raised up areas. I like to use long thin bits of rock the bottom half of which is pushed into the compost to hold it in place. Sometimes I mix a small amount of cement mortar to hold these small rocks firm.

Taking your time at this stage is important; if your trough looks good before you start to plant it up then it will look great with some plants in. Now fill all the pockets and crevices with compost.

As you'll see in some of the pictures I also encourage you to be imaginative and recycle materials such as broken concrete paving slabs and blocks even old roofing slates which are excellent for creating a crevice type trough. Again the object is to create height. Excellent planting sites for small alpiners can be created using a few bits of broken paving slab which will soon weather to look like stone.

By creating this extra height you have also increased the volume of compost that the trough can hold and so make more nutrient and moisture available to the plants.

PLANTS

Adding the plants is the last bit and it is much better to use small rooted cuttings or seedlings as these are easier to fit into the small planting spaces.

Small plants also establish quicker and grow into the overall shape of your trough and rocks, giving a more natural effect.

If I do use larger, nursery bought plants, I always wash as much of the compost from their roots as I can before planting them. This may seem to be extreme but they will establish much better this way. Sometimes it is necessary to add a plant with a bigger root system as you are placing the rocks.

STAGE 4

PLANTING & TOP DRESSING

It is much better to use small rooted cuttings or seedlings as these are easier to fit into the small planting spaces.



It may be necessary to add a plant with a bigger root system as you are placing the rocks rather than trying to push it in later.

Top dress with gravel just like in a scree. It is best if you can get gravel that is made from the same type of rocks that you have used for the trough or at least something close and water everything well once it is set up.

STAGE 5

AFTERCARE

With proper aftercare and an annual feed a trough can last a long time.

Here are a group of troughs with *dianthus alpinus*, *primula marginata* and saxifrage that were planted up ten years ago and still look good every year. (The *dactylorhiza* have self seeded.)



TOP DRESSING

Once you have finished planting up your trough it is time to top dress it with gravel just like in a scree. It is best if you can get gravel that is made from the same type of rocks that you have used for the trough or at least a close approximation. It also looks more natural if the gravel is not uniform in size and shape but has a mixture of sizes. I often break up the same type of rocks that I have used with a big hammer to produce the small quantity of gravel required to finish off a trough.

WATERING

Always the last stage is to water the trough thoroughly to settle the compost and top dressing and ensure that the plant roots are in good contact with the compost.

AFTER CARE

As long as you start out with a good compost mixture your trough should look good for several years. I always top dress our troughs in February with a dusting of a good balanced fertiliser mix that also has added trace elements such as Vitax Q4. It is extremely important to water this in as soon as you apply it as it will burn any foliage that it comes into contact with. This application of fertiliser gives the plants a boost as Spring arrives and guarantees healthy plants and a good flowering.

CONCLUSION

There are many ways to plant up a trough, my message is be bold, use your imagination and get your trough looking good before you put any plants in. The above planting methods also apply to real and synthetic stone troughs.

I will finish off with a selection of troughs made and planted at some of the SRGS workshops. Many of these have been made by people new to trough gardening and so I hope they will encourage you all to go out and have a go.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

Be imaginative and recycle materials such as broken concrete paving slabs and blocks or even old roofing slates. They are excellent for creating a crevice type trough and they can look good too. Again the object is to create height.



Excellent planting sites for small alpines can be created using a few bits of broken paving slab which will soon weather to look like stone.

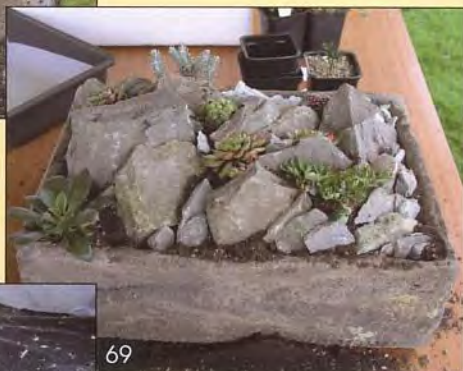
Old roofing slates stood on edge to create a series of crevices provide well drained sites suitable for saxifrages and other small cushion-forming plants.



Old tree stumps and weathered bits of wood can be used to make an interesting trough for small woodland plants, ferns and grasses.

AND FINALLY

To show some more possibilities here are just some of the troughs made by people at the Highland Trough Workshop



As you can see there are lots of possibilities - have fun!

Book Reviews

HEUCHERAS and HEUCHERELLAS - Coral Bells and Foamy Bells

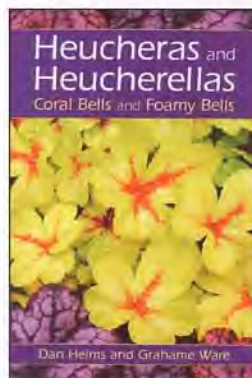
Dan Heims & Grahame Ware

208pp, 116 colour illustrations

ISBN 0 88192 702-3

Timber Press

£19.99



Dan Heims has been working for many years to produce heucheras and heucherellas (as well as a range of other genera) in ever more exotic colours. Heuchera belong to the saxifrage family and are most closely allied to Tiarella (with which they have been hybridised to produce xHeucherella), Tolmiea and Elmera, and can be found in the eastern woodlands and the western mountains of North America. There are a number of rather nice species for the gardener interested in wild plants, but few of them assert themselves, except perhaps *Heuchera sanguinea* with its vivid red flowers which, apparently, "Hummingbirds cannot resist and every garden should have it in lieu of garish plastic hummingbird feeders." If only! Not that it is the exotic flower colour that has most attracted the hybridiser.

Dan Heims says of himself, "I've had a lifelong love affair with foliage and variegated plants (my passion for variegation led to my forming, along with fellow hortiholic James Waddick, the variegated plant freaks society know as ABG, 'Anything But Green'), so it's no wonder I fell for the evergreen leaves and shimmering jewel tones of heucheras." It is a mark of his success as a nurseryman that so many of these plants have crossed the Atlantic.

Usually new plants from the North American horticultural trade take a while to penetrate the European market if they ever do. This has not been the case with the productions of Dan Heims at Terra Nova nurseries

in Oregon and this book helps show why. *Heuchera* 'Amber Waves', for example, which is a marvellous plant to set amongst the dark leaved cultivars was released by Terra Nova in 2000 and is now very widespread here, and the 2004 release 'Marmalade' was already being sold in the UK at some autumn shows last year.

For many, the heart of this book will be the 62-page listing of all the garden hybrid *Heuchera*, with that for *xHeucherella* being another 7 pages. Each cultivar is listed alphabetically, with the date of its introduction and the name of the breeder and a description of the plant, and the only quibble is that cultivars of species such as *Heuchera americana* 'Harry Hay' are found under the species name, under "*americana*" rather than under 'Harry Hay', which meant I kept having to use the index to trace particular cultivars.

There are nine chapters: *Heuchera* in the wild, a Gardener's guide to the species, Breeding *Heuchera*, Hybrids and Hybridisers, Culture and Care, and Propagation as well as the two central chapters listing and describing the cultivars of *Heuchera* and *xHeucherella*, and there are the 116 colour plates.

There is no one who could write about these plants with more authority than Dan Heims and, together with his co-author Grahame Ware, he has done the plants proud. I have only one real reservation and that is that the *Tiarella* are not dealt with here. One can only hope that there is a plan for an equivalent treatment of them in the future.

The generous range of photographs show a formidable array of plants in a quite extraordinary range of colours. The flowers of *heucheras* range from white and creamy yellow through pale pink to shocking pinks and reds. But it is the foliage which has become the great glory of these plants and which has brought them into the foreground of the nursery trade's consciousness. The colour range of the foliage make these some of the most splendid of foliage plants. Bright lime-greens and acid yellows, warm yellows and orange, deep shocking pinks and rich reds, through to dark purples laced with light grey.

There are some beautiful plants which are more restrained, such as 'Magic Wand' with its green leaves and large bright cherry-pink flowers, and 'Sparkling Burgundy' with deep red leaves setting off the clean white flowers. But if your taste is for something more striking then there are

some stunning plants: x *Heucherella* 'Sunspot' (shown on the cover) is an extraordinary yellow and bright red combination, and among the newest heucheras are the "peaches": 'Peach Flambé', 'Peach Melba' (there is also a beautiful *Porphyron* saxifrage under this name) and 'Peachy Keen'. These have foliage which would as they say "bring colour to the darkest corner". 'Peach Melba' is like a pink-tinged version of 'Amber Waves', 'Peachy Keen' is a striking combination of shocking pink, cream and grey-green and 'Peach Flambé' with the most dramatic scarlet-vermilion leaves, will have to be a truly startling plant to live up to its photograph.

One of the few snags for the European reader is the lack of a list of any European stockists – American readers are well served by the list of both retail and wholesale outlets.

This book is not for the faint-hearted gardener. Although there are plants in this book for those with more restrained taste, those that stand out are the ones whose foliage is in a range of outrageous colours that seem to come straight from the palette of someone like Christian Lacroix or Andy Warhol. But anyone with the slightest interest in garden design, or with a taste for strongly coloured foliage plants, as well as those directly interested in these American members of the saxifrage family, should look for this book. You will be buying some of the plants, so you should get the book to go with them! *Malcolm McGregor*

THE IMPOSSIBLE GARDEN

Rosa Stepanova

241pp, 298 colour illustrations

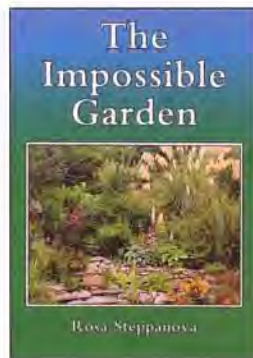
ISBN 1 898852 99 5

The Shetland Times Publishing Ltd, Lerwick, 2004

tel 01950 460578

c.black@shetland-times.co.uk

£25.00



Put at its simplest, this is a book about gardening in Shetland. As one gets into it however, it becomes more and more evident that this fascinating book is an inspiration for gardeners everywhere and not just a "reference

book for all northern coastal gardeners", as Tony Schilling puts it in his introduction.

The title of the book, surely apt for a garden created in treeless Shetland at 60 degrees north and famous for its ferocious winds, stems from a conversation between the author and an Aberdeenshire nurseryman. On reading her extensive list of desirable plants, the grower commented "I think you want the impossible". As Stepanova herself asserts, she now has the impossible: a garden which is home to a collection of about 1500 species and cultivars, representing 400 genera.

The book takes the form of an account of the gardening year, with a chapter devoted to each month, January through to December. There is also an introductory chapter which tells the story of the garden's genesis and also includes sections on key elements in the gardener's armoury such as wind breaks, staking, mulching, feeding and drainage. The text is enlivened at intervals with extracts from the author's diary, the difference between the two narratives emphasised by setting the diary extracts in green panels. The author's style is at once accessible, authoritative and, set in the context of the most exacting standards of garden writing, of high quality.

Stepanova has a gift for distilling the very essence of a plant's appearance and a rare talent for describing colour. Here is Stepanova on *Erythronium* 'White Beauty': "When it pushes through the soil its buds nestle inside a tightly rolled funnel of leaves, like the ringer inside a bell. The leaves are a glossy green with pale, narrow banding, like the ripples left in the sand by the receding sea during a low tide." Here is Stepanova on a pet hate, modern hybrid daffodils: "those circular combinations of white and orange which look like fried eggs on stilts," and on the colour of the leaves of a climbing hydrangea in October: "*Hydrangea petiolaris* paints the byre roof in glorious shades of primrose and maize." How remarkable then, to learn that Rosa Stepanova is German by birth (although of Czech extraction), only settling in Shetland as an adult following a Shetland holiday in 1976.

Never mind the encomiums, I hear you say, what does this woman actually grow in her garden? Well, there are New Zealanders which are sometimes encountered in gardens on some Scottish islands and on the west coast of the Scottish mainland such as *Myosotidium hortensia* the

Chatham Island forget-me-not, *Bulbinella hookeri* and of course *Celmisias*. The “usual suspects” for that environment, such as *Fuchsia magellanica*, *Griselinia littoralis* and lots of *Olearias* are also to be found. More appealingly, there is a suite of choice Chileans such as *Crinodendron hookerianum*, *Embothrium coccineum*, *Lapageria rosea* and *Ugni molinae*, the Chilean guava.

One of the charms of the book is that the author is very profligate with her affections, lavishing equal praise on, for example *Lunaria annua*, honesty, as on say, the less commonly encountered *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, the Tasmanian cedar.

One could go on making lists, but it would be counter-productive in a short review of a book about a garden, in which the assembly of different species and cultivars is so eclectic as to defy classification. Viewed perhaps as a manual, rather than just an enjoyable read, the book certainly has a lot to offer gardeners who face similar challenges: wind and salt spray, peaty and often waterlogged soil, and a short growing season.

The photographs are by Derek Fell, who clearly enjoyed his year in the garden, as he indicates in his preface. There are nearly 300 photographs, some of which are no more than 5 cm by 4 cm. There are many other publications in which one can see illustrations of say, *Galanthus nivalis* or *Anemone blanda* and a more selective approach would have provided an opportunity to include more full or half page illustrations. There is an exhaustive index, from *Abies koreana* to *Zantedeschia aethiopica*, a useful reference for gardeners on similarly challenging sites as to what will or will not grow. There are also some very tasty recipes. How about Anatolian Lentil Soup or Morello Sorbet (with Kirsch)? Rosa Stepanova is evidently a prodigious cook as well as an obsessive gardener. How determined, well I will let her have the last word: “I rarely manage to get enough sleep while new plantings are on the go. The garden follows me to bed and glorious visions of the new plantings haunt me into the small hours. Sometimes I steal out of bed in the middle of the night to note them all down; sometimes I sit up half the night, surrounded by reference books, compiling long plant lists.” *Richard O'Connor.*

CREATING and PLANTING ALPINE GARDENS

Rex Murfitt

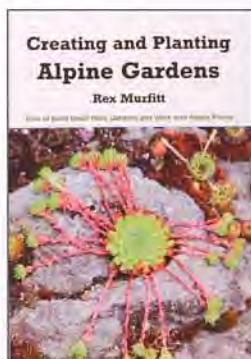
ISBN 1 893443 07 8

B B Mackey Books, PO Box 475, Wayne, PA 19087

www.mackeybooks.com

276pp with 19 colour photos and numerous
b&w photos.

US\$22.50 (plus \$6 international shipping
outside the US)



Rex Murfitt sets himself a task that others have carried out before him: nothing less than presenting an introduction to the subject of rock gardening. It's aimed specifically at the North American reader but much of what is written would apply to any rock gardener anywhere and it's based on a lifetime of experience. Rex trained with Walter Ingwersen at Birch Farm and later spent time building rock gardens with Will Ingwersen. He became Head Gardener to Constance Spry before he moved to New York and set up Stonecrop Nurseries with Frank and Anne Cabot. Rex now lives in Victoria, British Columbia. This book brings Rex's vast knowledge to bear in his typically engaging and down to earth manner.

This book falls naturally into two halves: the first half deals with everything from the site and the type of rock garden that might be built on it, the nature of rocks, choosing and handling rock, building rock gardens and raised beds, soil and topdressing, to troughs, pots and alpine houses; the second half describes the plants. There is discussion of some 40 odd genera of herbaceous and semi-woody subjects and there are also separate treatments of small bulbs, and dwarf trees and shrubs, and some typically valuable comments on using annuals in the rock garden.

Rex is a disciple of "natural rock gardening" as is evidenced in his citing of Symons-Jeune's book as well as in his discussions about building rock gardens. His whole approach is based around the idea that there is no better way of learning about rocks and rock gardens than by looking at rocks and alpine plants in the wild. Spend time looking at rock outcrops,

observe the way in which your site functions – how and when the sun falls on particular area and so on.

Although the experienced gardener would find interest in this it is clearly to the person starting out that this book is most likely to appeal. And they could do a whole lot worse! It's rather like having an experienced gardener showing you the ropes, pointing out things which once stated may be obvious, but which are so easily overlooked. But I think there is more pleasure in it than that, in the wealth of knowledge and the years of experience and the wry voice with which these are deployed. Writing about whether troughs should be raised above ground level there is a comment on the fact that any space provides a haven for pests and it goes on "The answer belongs once again with the individual. It is traditional for troughs to be elevated at various heights, depending upon the landscape and the number of troughs involved. Where a number of troughs are involved, variety can be an important esthetic factor. When personal convenience is a factor, simply do what suits you. After all, it is your garden!" All very sensible, but few writers about rock gardens would or could finish this off in the way Rex Murfitt does, "On a visit to Sissinghurst Castle I noticed that there were several troughs spaced along the building, and they were raised quite high on brick and mortar stands. I found them a little too high for me, until I remembered that Vita Sackville West was taller than I." *Malcolm McGregor*.



AUTUMN GLORIES

The Far Eastern saxifrages of
Section Irregulares

Malcolm McGregor

For many years the saxifrages of section *Irregulares*, which stem from the Far East, have had a place in the autumn garden but there were only a handful of cultivars and a limited number of species available. This has now changed with a number of specialist nurseries on both sides of the Atlantic introducing ranges of species which have only rarely, if ever, been available before, and cultivars which are far more diverse than any previously seen. It is less than ten years since the first of these new cultivars appeared but already there are dozens in circulation with others waiting in the wings. Few groups of plants have undergone quite such an explosion in just ten years or so and this article brings together information on all the plants and the latest thinking.

THE LATE AUTUMN garden has a limited flora but a distinctive one. Himalayan gentians, a few colchicums, some cyclamen and crocuses, chrysanthemums and Michaelmas daisies, will all flower into November and even December. Among the rich colours of the fall, the effects of this late flowering can be especially beautiful – and the Far Eastern saxifrages which make up section *Irregulares* add an air of dainty elegance. Their flowers have petals which are dramatically exaggerated to the point where they only seem fit for a place in some Darwinian cartoon-strip. The elongated petals catch the eye in the dappled light in which the plants are often found, and then persist as the seeds ripen and the capsules open, and seem to contribute to seed dispersal by catching the lightest breeze. The foliage, which assumes rich autumn colours, enhances the way in which the plants feel at one with the fallen leaves.

Although there are quite a number of species from this section that appear in the garden of the specialist from time to time, there are only a handful of species which most people have been likely to meet. Most saxifrages flower in the first half of the year, but these are the exception and they have always had value in the garden. Now, for the first time in many years, interest in them is being re-awakened by new introductions which are distinct, pretty, and equally importantly, available.

PLANTS IN CULTIVATION

The three species that are most likely to be met with in cultivation are *Saxifraga fortunei* and *S. cortusifolia* which are non-stoloniferous; and *S. stolonifera* which has coloured runners, technically aerial stolons, carrying plantlets at their tips. This may still be found under the very old name *S. sarmentosa*, and into it have also been incorporated the

well-known *S. cuscutiformis* and *S. veitchiana*. This may seem an extremely abbreviated list but the range has been greatly extended, particularly in recent years, by a range of introductions of cultivars of these species from a number of sources.

A number of the other species are brought into cultivation occasionally and none seem impossible to grow, although some from warmer and more humid regions, such as the Tsangpo Gorges in Tibet at the far west of their range, or the southern Japanese islands, may prove tender in Britain even when they are available. Although few of the species are widely available there are many that are in the specialist trade, although unfortunately far fewer are available to the mail-order customer. What is clear however is that in recent years it has been the proliferating number of named cultivars, particularly of *Saxifraga fortunei*, which is leading to a revival of interest.

In Britain there has been the introduction of collections from the wild by Bleddywn and Sue Wynn-Jones which are given collection or introduction numbers with a BSWJ or BWJ prefix. Others have come from the horticultural trade in the Far East, particularly Japan, introduced by Bob Brown and others; and new hybrids have been raised in the UK by Keith Lever. In North America most of the new introductions are coming from Dan Hineckley at Heronswood, who has introduced plants in the same way as Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones; and Dan Heims at Terra Nova Nursery who has bred a number of beautiful saxifrages to sit alongside the much larger range of *Heuchera* and *Tiarella* cultivars which he has produced. The success of these new plants from other genera of the Saxifragaceae may be judged by the fact that many have already become well-established in the nursery trade in Britain. Dan Heims' new book on the *Heucheras* will help cement their reputation.

Most of the introductions which stem from the Japanese horticultural trade have been given English language trade designations such as BLACKBERRY AND APPLE PIE or SUGAR PLUM FAIRY when they appear in Britain, although they have Japanese names. These are given where known in the discussion below and they are the proper cultivar epithets. For example, there is a *Saxifraga fortunei* cultivar which has the Japanese cultivar name, when transliterated into Western script, *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Toujya'. This is the same plant which in the European trade has been given the trade designation *Saxifraga fortunei* SUGAR PLUM FAIRY. This can be further confused because in some cases the trade designation is a translation of the Japanese name but in many cases it is not. 'Toujya'

can be translated as “plum happiness”, so it is possible that the plant could also be found with labels to this effect. Although trade designations should be orthographically distinguished, for example by the use of small capitals, as in *Saxifraga* SUGAR PLUM FAIRY, this can only be done consistently if it is clear which plants are being treated in this way. Failing this I have chosen here to treat all the names as normal cultivar names. Lewis Carroll would have loved this, and so presumably would the Rev. Dodgson.

BOTANICAL HISTORY

The saxifrages of this section, which is now usually known as Irregulares, were for nearly two hundred years known as the Diptera saxifrages. Unlike the flowers of most saxifrages, the flowers of plants in this section are not rotationally symmetrical. The petals are not all the same length, with one, or more usually two, being substantially longer than the others.

Recent genetic analysis makes it clear that of other saxifrages the early summer-flowering *Saxifraga mertensiana* (sole member of section Heterisia) from western North America is the most closely related to section Irregulares, but there are no direct equivalents; no saxifrages which flower in the autumn. The niche is probably best filled in Europe by the evergreen *Gymnopera* saxifrages (London Pride Group), which inhabit more or less dense, deciduous woodland both as woodland floor plants and as cliff dwellers. There is also the taller woodland species *Saxifraga rotundifolia* from section Cotylea, growing in moist woodland and stream edges.

In the wild, the Irregulares saxifrages originate from Japan and Korea, westward through China, to the south-eastern reaches of Tibet, and this meant that they only came into cultivation in the West very gradually. The



73 - *Saxifraga stolonifera* on the cliffs of the Po Tsangpo gorge in south-east Tibet

first species introduced into Europe was *Saxifraga stolonifera* (known for many years as *S. sarmentosa*), before 1771 according to Bailey Balfour, which would indicate that it was of Chinese origin since very few plants came from Japan in the period between Kaempfer's visit to Japan in 1693 and Thunberg's in 1776. That *Saxifraga stolonifera* was widely grown after its introduction is obvious from the number of common names it has acquired: Mother of Thousands, Roving Sailor and Wandering Jew all referring to its stoloniferous habit which helped make it easy to propagate and pass on to other growers. It was some considerable time before the second species, *Saxifraga fortunei*, was collected by Fortune in 1863, and sometime before 1874, *Saxifraga cortusifolia* was either collected by Maries and introduced by Veitch, or by Fortune and Standish. Wilson collected *Saxifraga veitchiana* in 1900 which was also introduced by Veitch, and *Saxifraga rufescens* was collected by Forrest in 1906 and subsequently introduced by Bees. The key authors who set about making sense of the material collected up to that point were Balfour and Engler.

The story is confused; Engler first worked on them, publishing a couple of new species in 1913. Bailey Balfour published his major account in 1916 without obvious knowledge of the 1913 publication and then Engler, with Irmscher, continued his own work in the second half of the *Saxifraga* volume of *Das Pflanzenreich* published in 1919. This last appears to have been done without sight, or presumably knowledge, of Balfour's work, as Balfour's had been without sight or knowledge of the earlier Engler publication. For some species it is possible to disentangle the overlap since, in some cases, they used the same herbarium specimens with different results. *Saxifraga mengtzeana* of Engler & Irmscher in 1913, for example, was described by Balfour as two species, *S. aculeata* and *S. henryi* equating conveniently to vars. *cordatifolia* and *peltifolia* of Engler & Irmscher; but it has left a legacy of confusion which has not served us, or the plants, well.

Another area of confusion which persists even today is the relationship of *Saxifraga fortunei* and *S. cortusifolia*. Balfour, Engler, Tebbitt and Pan, Gornall & Ohba each emphasise different characteristics. As can be seen in the illustrations which follow, the differences in leaves and flowers together make it easy to distinguish the two species in their typical forms, but difficulties arise with some of the more exotic forms.

Plants such as *Saxifraga* 'Cheap Confections' and *S.* 'Cotton Crochet' do not have leaves that match the characteristics outlined above for *S. fortunei*: they have thicker leaves which are not coloured



74 - *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Wada' (x0.75)
showing the thick texture of the leaves
and the red reverse





76 - *Saxifraga fortunei*

The flowers of *Saxifraga fortunei* and *Saxifraga cortusifolia* are quite distinct. The long petals of *Saxifraga cortusifolia* are untoothed but those of *Saxifraga fortunei* often are. The small petals of *S. cortusifolia* are quite differently shaped, being broadly cordate, and have yellow markings which those of *S. fortunei* do not.

As can be seen from the previous pages the leaves of each species can also be quite distinct.

Pictures of flowers on this page are shown x2.5



77 - *Saxifraga cortusifolia*

on the back, and the complex doubling of the flowers in some of these cultivars mean that it is difficult to establish the species from which they are derived by obvious morphological differences. It is clear that our previous assumptions of knowledge in the UK probably need to be revised (possibly more than once) as new plants continue to be made available and as information from Japan comes to us about the origins of these plants.



78 - *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Rubrifolia'

WHERE AND HOW TO GROW THEM

If we compare the Irregulares saxifrages with the London Pride Group of saxifrages, section *Gymnopera*, they might seem rather difficult and picky, but in fact they are really quite straightforward. They are probably somewhat less hardy than the London Pride saxifrages, but given a bit of shelter from the most extreme cold they pull through most winters well enough. *Saxifraga fortunei* and *S. cortusifolia* are herbaceous and non-persistent, dying right back as and when the frosts catch them, but some species such as *Saxifraga epiphylla*, *S. stolonifera* and *S. nipponica* are persistent. I have found them to be resistant to most pests except vine weevils which enjoy the fleshy stem bases although I have been told by some people that they have had problems with slugs.

Most of the plants met with regularly can be grown in pots. A leafy or peaty soil seems to suit them very well although unfortunately peat mixtures also suit the vine weevil. A compost using a loam-based mix with quite a bit of added sand and some grit can be very successful although weaning the plant from its original peat-based compost is not always easy. Great care needs to be taken with plants which are bought in to ensure they are pest-free. Since they are usually grown in a peat-based compost it can be difficult but it is well worth the effort.

The main decision as to whether they are plants for the open garden is to do with scale (some are very small), shelter, and finding a spot which does not dry out - I have to add leaf mould to our clay soil to open it up (in the same way I would for *Meconopsis* for example). The most obvious species for the open is *Saxifraga fortunei* particularly in its standard unnamed state and in its larger cultivars such as 'Wada'. Forms much smaller than this, such as 'Rokujo' or 'Mt Nachi', really need to have rather more attention focussed on them because they can otherwise be overwhelmed. This can obviously be done in an appropriate raised bed or in a small shaded corner of a rockery. In general terms, in the open garden the larger forms can be seen and treated as plants for the woodland garden and the smaller ones, which often originate at higher altitudes, for the rockery. Plants grown in the open garden seem to last longer than those in pots if the right situation can be found.

PROPAGATION

Most saxifrages can be propagated by taking cuttings, but that is not really an option with these plants. For the gardener, the primary method with Irregulares saxifrages has to be division which works very well. It is quite straightforward to cut a plant into pieces, or tease it apart if you are lucky, so that each piece still has some of the root system. For the trade, many of these plants have been propagated using cell culture, micro-propagating plants which would otherwise have taken many decades to become widely circulated.

It is possible to grow saxifrages in this section from seed. The difficulty, apart from the fact that the seed is extremely fine, is that very few plants ever set seed in the UK so seed is rarely available. The seed is small and should be surface sown. I have raised *Saxifraga stolonifera* from seed and there seems no particular reason why others should not be equally possible if seed is obtainable.

THE SPECIES

The very recent appearance (only on the internet so far) of the English language Flora of China volume which includes *Saxifraga* (by Gornall, Ohba and Pan) has cut through much of the previous confusion, most dating back to the overlapping work of Balfour and Engler & Irmischer. The new delineation of the Chinese species submerges some of those with which we have been familiar, although often only by name, and in one notable case separates a new species out from the pre-existing order.

There are around twelve species of which six only occur in China: *Saxifraga stolonifera*, *S. rufescens*, *S. mengtzeana*, *S. epiphylla*, *S. imparilis* and *S. kwangsiensis*. A seventh species which occurs in China, *Saxifraga fortunei*, is also found in Korea and Japan where there are also *Saxifraga cortusifolia*, and *S. madida* if it is regarded as separate, *S. nipponica*, *S. sendaica* and *S. serotina*. A final species which is found in Siberia, *Saxifraga sichotensis*, may well be misplaced in section Irregulares.

All the species have flowers with some petals elongated except *Saxifraga sichotensis* where petals are absent. Only two species are stoloniferous: the Chinese *Saxifraga stolonifera* and a variety of the non-Chinese species *S. cortusifolia*; and one, *Saxifraga epiphylla*, is unique in having plantlets developing in the axil at the base of the leaf blade, technically they are referred to as foliar embryos.

Saxifraga fortunei

In the wild *Saxifraga fortunei* is a very variable species in terms of size, leaf shape and ecological situation. It has the widest geographical and ecological distribution of species in section Irregulares, being found in China, Korea and Japan and from wooded riverside slopes to rocky clefts in higher mountains. The Flora of China gives var. *fortunei* (*cortusifolia* var. *fortunei*), and var. *koraiensis*, and Japanese texts typically give varieties such as: var. *incisolobata*; var. *obtusocuneata*, var. *minima* (sometimes var. *alpina*), var. *partita* and var. *crassifolia*. A number of botanical forms are in cultivation although they are less commonly met with than a number of the named cultivars which will be discussed in a separate section after the account of the species. Typically in cultivation we find plants that have flower stems about 30 cm (12") tall with often around 30-50 white flowers in the inflorescence. The leaves have a broadly semi-circular blade with markedly toothed and lobed margin. This blade has a petiole about one and a half times the length of the blade, the whole being around



79 - A variety of cultivars and forms of *Saxifraga fortunei* showing the great variation in size

about 12 cm (5") long. The leaves are typically drab to olive-green above, and shiny reddish-purple underneath. The foliage dies down in winter with the frosts. But if this is the typical form variation is dramatic.

Overall size, and leaf shape are very variable within the species. The smallest forms such as var. *obtusocuneata* and var. *minima* are plants which may be no more than 8 cm (3") tall and wide, while the largest may be 50 cm (18") tall and 40 cm (15") wide. There are also three broad types of leaf-form which can be found within *S. fortunei*. In forms easily found in the trade, these equate to those of 'Wada' and 'Mt. Nachi' the typical form with markedly toothed and pointedly lobed leaves; 'Cheap Confections' and 'Blackberry and Apple Pie' which have lobes that are much more rounded; and 'Cotton Crochet' which has the most fan-like blade which is also thickly textured. In horticultural forms these differences are supplemented by variations in leaf colour, and flower colour and form.

Saxifraga cortusifolia

Saxifraga cortusifolia is a Japanese species. The distinctions between this and *S. fortunei* have already been discussed. The most useful are the incomplete nectary ring, and the smaller petals being spotted and

abruptly narrowing at their base. *Saxifraga madida*, which is also Japanese, was separated originally by thinner leaves, more deeply cut, possibly rather larger and more hairy, but is now normally included in *S. cortusifolia*. As with *Saxifraga fortunei*, there is a wide range of variability, particularly in leaf colour and form. Stoloniferous forms of this species are found on Kyushu: *Saxifraga cortusifolia* var. *stolonifera*.

The cultivars of *Saxifraga cortusifolia* are discussed with those of *S. fortunei* later in the article.

Saxifraga stolonifera

Saxifraga stolonifera has long been in cultivation. Like *Saxifraga fortunei*, it is widespread, being found in China, Japan and Korea. Plants may have stems of many hundreds of flowers which come much earlier than do those of many other species in this section. The flowers are white or pale pink with a yellow spot and deep red-pink dots on each of the smaller upper petals. I find the ordinary unnamed form hardy in the open garden where it is established among rose bushes. The only named form, until recently, was 'Tricolor' which can be very dramatic with the mid-green leaves very markedly bordered by irregular creamy-white splashes and often having pink tinges to areas of the leaf. Recently there have been a number of additions to this: 'Hsitou Silver' (BSWJ1980) has green leaves with broad silver-grey markings on the upper surface; 'Hime' normally has green leaves with a network of much finer light veins; 'Kinki Purple' (BSWJ 4972) has dark purple leaves, particularly on the lower surface; and 'Maroon Beauty', which is not unlike the form of *S. stolonifera* normally in circulation, with perhaps somewhat smaller leaves.



80 - *Saxifraga stolonifera*

It is noticeable that all the plants that are being selected have foliage with some sort of variegation, but plants with very dark green

unmarked leaves with red hairs are in cultivation and would make very attractive additions to those already in circulation.

Saxifraga cuscutiformis has now been incorporated within *S. stolonifera*, but from a horticultural point of view it is a plant worth preserving and Crug Farm, for example, list 'Cuscutiformis' as a cultivar. This is distinguished by the profusion of the aerial stolons. There had not been any named cultivars of *Saxifraga cuscutiformis*, as it was, until recent years, however a yellow leaved form called '**Harvest Moon**' has started to become available. With the disappearance of *S. cuscutiformis* into *S. stolonifera*, 'Harvest Moon' should now be listed as a cultivar of *S. stolonifera*. Wherever it sits in this respect it is a very pretty plant when grown well. Heronswood list it as a sport of *S. 'Eco Butterfly'* although no information is to hand regarding this particular cultivar.

Saxifraga veitchiana has also been incorporated into *S. stolonifera* in the Flora of China. Since, like *S. cuscutiformis*, it is currently in cultivation, and since the plant, which has smallish white flowers, is recognisably different from most plants under the name *S. stolonifera*, it would probably be useful to continue use of the name as a cultivar name: *S. stolonifera* 'Veitchiana'.

Other species names which have over the years disappeared into *Saxifraga stolonifera* include *S. chaffanjoni*, *S. chinensis*, *S. dumetorum*, *S. iochanensis*, and *S. sarmentosa*, which was for many years the normally accepted Latin name for what was known colloquially as the Strawberry saxifrage because of the aerial stolons, like strawberry runners. There is a variety in Japan with five equal petals, var. *aptera*.

Saxifraga epiphylla

This newly described species from China is in cultivation both in the UK and in North America. The foliar embryos which develop at the base of the leaf blades in this species make it wholly distinctive and also make it easy to propagate, with the plantlets easy to root once they have developed sufficiently. Various clones have been named by Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones: the first was



81 - *Saxifraga epiphylla* leaf showing foliar embryo (life size)



'Purple Piggy' (BSWJ 4966, originally listed as a cultivar of *S. mengtzeana*) obtained by them from a nursery in Japan where it was being sold as "a new species from China". A smaller form has been called **'Little Piggy'** and a form introduced by them in 2004 as **'Precious Piggy'** has light markings on the upper surface of the leaves. Heronswood have been listing what appears to be the same species, possibly from the same Japanese nursery, under the designation "*Saxifraga* sp. (Gotemba)".



Saxifraga nipponica

82 - *S. nipponica*
'Pink Pagoda'

This is a valuable plant, being one of the few in this section which flower in summer rather than autumn.

Winton Harding grew this species in the open for a number of years, and I have found this to be persistent during the winter, not dying down, with the plant having bright green hairy leaves with a round, toothed blade on quite a long petiole. The flowers are like those of *S. cortusifolia* with cordate upper petals with a large yellow spot. There is one cultivar *S. nipponica* **'Pink Pagoda'** that flowers in May with distinctly pink petals. In the USA Heronswood list a cultivar **'Yukino Shita'** with white flowers.



83 - *Saxifraga nipponica*

Saxifraga rufescens

The single most striking thing about this species, which separates it from the others in cultivation, is the densely hairy red flower stems with the red colouring often staining the numerous white flowers. It is earlier flowering than many of the other species in cultivation flowering in July or August. Collected by Forrest in Yunnan, this species is also found in Sichuan. It is rarely cultivated and then, seemingly, with some difficulty although Bailey Balfour notes that it was hardy in Edinburgh. Effectively a Chinese equivalent of *S. cortusifolia* there are no named cultivars but there are three botanical varieties:

var. *rufescens* (syn. *S. sinensis*; *S. zhejiangensis*)

var. *uninervata*

var. *flabellifolia* (syn. *S. flabellifolia*; *S. zhejiangensis*)

The last variety probably deserves specific status and should then be *S. zhejiangensis*.

Saxifraga imparilis

This Chinese species from Yunnan, where it is found in rocky habitats at about 1800 m, is occasionally available. It is closely related to *Saxifraga rufescens* var. *rufescens* and also generally similar to *S. cortusifolia*, with leaves having a broadly circular blade with 7–11 lobes. The flower stems are up to 40 cm with a loose panicle in the upper half of flowers which are very similar to those of *S. cortusifolia*. Capsules are distinct in being truncate rather than having an erect style.

Saxifraga mengtzeana

Synonyms for *Saxifraga mengtzeana* include *S. aculeata*, *S. geifolia*, *S. henryi*, *S. lancangensis*, and *S. ovatocordata*. These hide a variation in leaf and flower colour, with some described as having red flowers, but it is likely that cultivation will remain difficult even when material is available. In general terms it has an oval leaf blade which is thick, crisp, fleshy and hairy on the upper green surface as well as having a bristly hairy margin. The lower surface is mottled purple. *Saxifraga epiphylla* used to be included within *S. mengtzeana*.

Saxifraga serotina

This species does not appear to be in cultivation. It has leaves with a rounded blade on long pubescent stems and the flowers are white to pink. It is another species found on Japanese islands in damp shaded rocky ground. It flowers in September.



84 - *Saxifraga sendaica*

Saxifraga sendaica

Being found among rocks in mountainous areas on the southern Japanese islands, it is not surprising that this species is rather tender in the UK. It has thick, rather swollen stems, large, thin leaves and a complex although quite compact inflorescence. The longer petals are jaggedly cut. A very well protected woodland garden or a fairly frost-free well-shaded greenhouse seem to offer the best chance of success. The leaves are rather larger than in most other species with the circular blade up to about 10 cm long and broad, with a long petiole. A variety with much more cut leaves has been named var. *laciniata*.

Saxifraga kwangsiensis (syn. *S. longshenensis*)

Growing in waterside rock crevices at around 800 m in Guangxi in China, *S. kwangsiensis* is not in cultivation. It has white flowers, is about a foot tall, narrower leaf-blades, with a cuneate base.

Saxifraga sichotensis

This species from Siberia is somewhat obscure. Originally described as having affinities with *S. nipponica*, its leaves have rounded blades which are broadly and sharply toothed, with both the blade and petiole being hairy. It looks rather like a large *S. debilis* and may in fact turn out to be a member of section *Micranthes*.

CULTIVARS of *SAXIFRAGA FORTUNEI* & *SAXIFRAGA CORTUSIFOLIA*

For many years the list of cultivars in this section was quite limited. Some of them are quite well known, others slightly less so, but they are all long established: *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Wada', 'Rubrifolia', 'Mt. Nachi' and 'Rokujo' have been well-known but there have been others which are far less known in the UK at least. In the last few years there has been a new stimulus to interest stemming from the work of a small number of nursery men and women. Already a number of the new introductions have started to make an impact on the show bench in the UK and it is likely that a number of these plants will become firm favourites. It is also clear that there are a wide range of others, some apparently very pretty, waiting in the pipeline. In some cases names are already filtering through and there are signs that others will follow.

The major developments are the result of two complementary processes which have involved some crossing and selection by nurserymen in the UK and in North America; and introductions from the wild and from the nursery trade in Japan and possibly Taiwan and China. These developments have seen the number of species and the number of cultivars rise dramatically. As has been outlined, the range of cultivars of *Saxifraga stolonifera* has been extended by a widening of the range of leaf colour and some cultivars of *S. epiphylla* and *S. nipponica* are also being distributed, but it is in *S. cortusifolia* and particularly *S. fortunei* that there has been most development. There are now far more cultivars of *Saxifraga fortunei* than there are of all the other species in section Irregulares put together.

In *Saxifraga fortunei* and *S. cortusifolia* the range has been extended in four different ways:

LEAF COLOUR – greatly extended with many cultivars with variegated and unusually coloured foliage;

LEAF SHAPE – in *S. fortunei* there has been the introduction of plants with more fan-shaped leaves and



85 - *Saxifraga* 'Crystal Pink'



86 - *Saxifraga* 'Black Ruby' (x5)

these new cultivars among the most exciting of new introductions. As will be seen, in some cases, the cultivars of *S. fortunei* and *S. cortusifolia* have become confused in the general horticultural trade as well as in the literature. Wherever possible cultivars are allocated to the appropriate species and where there is uncertainty this is noted.

OLDER CULTIVARS

When compared with the spectacular range of plants introduced recently the list of older cultivars seems very short and rather limited in ambition with the main variation among the forms of *Saxifraga fortunei* being in overall size.

Saxifraga cortusifolia

From a garden point of view there are great advantages to this species compared with the normal forms of *S. fortunei* in that it flowers around a month earlier. Until recently, the only named cultivar has been the pink-flowered '**Rosea**' which is interesting but not dramatic.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Mt. Nachi'

'Mt. Nachi' was collected by the Japanese botanist Rokujo. There are at least two forms going under this name both of which are smaller than most other cultivars although generally not quite as small as *S. fortunei* var. *obtusocuneata*. The two forms differ in leaf colour and size. The larger, similar to 'Rokujo', has darker reddish leaves while the green leaf form has the backs of leaves green rather than red. The leaf outline in

ones with more rounded outlines, and there have been forms of *S. cortusifolia* with more lacinate leaves;

FLOWER COLOUR – extended range of colour from white and very pale pink to greeny-yellow and deep pink;

FLOWER FORM – range extended from single flowers to extravagantly doubled flowers and flowers with bracteose petals.

The combined effect of these has been to make

both is very similar and they both flower at a similar time to 'Rokujo'.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Rokujo'

An older cultivar, although not very widespread, this was collected (presumably) by Rokujo. It has leaves very similar in size and outline to 'Mt Nachi' but rather differently coloured. In 'Rokujo' they are a much warmer mid brown-purple, like deep autumn tree leaves. The flowers are very pale pink when set alongside 'Wada' and the anthers coral. It is floriferous and not too late, flowering after 'Rubrifolia' and 'Blackberry and Apple Pie' but before 'Black Ruby'.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Rubrifolia'

One of the well-established cultivars, and one of the first to flower, this represents the typical form of *Saxifraga fortunei* in cultivation but with dark reddish-green foliage with turns dramatically orange-red in autumn. It has a larger leaf than 'Mt. Nachi' but similar in shape with bright reddish-purple backs. The flowers are pure white.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Wada'

This is the largest form of *S. fortunei* in cultivation and, along with 'Rubrifolia', one of the first to flower. Its flowers are very similar in size to those of 'Rubrifolia' although the longer petals are somewhat longer and narrower and are generally not toothed along the margin. The anthers are white or very pale cream.

NEW CULTIVARS in the UK

There have been a large number of introductions in recent years in the UK from a number of growers. Many of these new introductions are now on their way to becoming firm favourites.

Saxifraga cortusifolia 'Ruby Wedding'

This has strongly coloured leaves with light grey-green bars along the veins on a dark reddish-purple ground.



87 - *Saxifraga cortusifolia*
Ruby Wedding'

Saxifraga fortunei 'Blackberry and Apple Pie'

The flowers are greenish yellow, not as large as those of 'Rubrifolia', which it flowers after, and the stamens are coral orange. The petals are often slightly bracteose. The leaves, which have a red stem, have a broadly rounded outline with a few only slight indents, with the margins stained deep red particularly at the base of indents and tips of the broadly rounded lobes. In the autumn the whole leaf can turn deep red and the effect of the staining is masked. Introduced and named by Bob Brown, the Japanese name apparently means "greenish yellow variety".

Saxifraga fortunei 'Black Ruby'

The leaves are small to medium in size, and extremely deep purple-brown on both surfaces. The flowers are a rich warm pale red but they are very late, usually too late for me, the buds being caught by the frosts in late November. In the south of England it seems to flower fairly regularly; further north it seems to need protection. Introduction and name from Bob Brown; the Japanese name apparently means "black leaf".

Saxifraga fortunei 'Crystal Pink'

The leaves are small, pale green and white during the growing season, but variegated white, green and pink when new. It very rarely flowers, but if it is kept away from the frosts then it may flower in December. Another of Bob Brown's introductions into the UK.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Fumiko'

This is from a collection (BSWJ 6124) by Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones on Yakushima. It is a very dwarf alpine form of *S. fortunei* but with normal-sized white flowers. It is quite unlike *S. fortunei* var. *obtusocuneata* which is the other very small form of the species which is normally in circulation.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Conwy Snow'

This is one of the 2003 introductions from Keith Lever at Aberconwy. It is similar to 'Mt. Nachi' except that the flowers have extra petals which are not broadened as they are in many of the other cultivars with double flowers. Keith Lever has raised a number of cultivars. To start with plants were made available under the general description of "pink seedling" (now as "mixed pink seedlings") with plants having



88 - *Saxifraga* Blackberry and Apple Pie'



red stems to the leaves which have green blades with rather rounded lobes. The flowers are a pale pink, rather cooler in colour than in many cultivars. The longer petals are quite sharply pointed. Crosses between these and *Saxifraga fortunei* var. *obtusocuneata*, a very small wild form of the species, have produced 'Pink Cloud', 'Pink Haze' and 'Pink Mist'. Also introduced alongside the white-flowered semi-double 'Conwy Snow' are 'Conwy Star', and 'Autumn Tribute' which derives from 'Mt. Nachi' and has very dark foliage and mid-pink flowers.

Saxifraga 'Cotton Crochet'

Like those of 'Cheap Confections' the leaves of 'Cotton Crochet' are fleshy, crisp and bright green both on the top and on the reverse. Flowers are white and double, and can be quite spectacular, although very often it has a number of smaller and less spectacular ones as well. It is late flowering although still well before 'Black Ruby'. The leaf outline and texture suggests that this may be a development from *Saxifraga fortunei* var *crassifolia*.

Saxifraga 'Cheap Confections'

It is the pale to sugar pink bracteose flowers of this plant which make this cultivar so distinctive. The individual petals can be quite broad



and have a deeply cut, lacinate, margin, which can give the flowers a quite spectacular outline. The anthers are coral pink. The foliage is quite large, with the thick, fleshy, crisp, green leaves having a rounded outline like those of 'Blackberry and Apple Pie', and being green on the reverse. It is one of the earlier forms of *S. fortunei* or *S. cortusifolia* to flower, along with 'Rubrifolia' and 'Wada'. Along with 'Cotton Crochet', this may be a cultivar of *S. cortusifolia*. Introduction and name - Bob Brown.

***Saxifraga fortunei* 'Kokaku'**

See notes in AGS Bulletin Dec 1999 p. 432. This may be the same as 'Blackberry and Apple Pie'.

***Saxifraga fortunei* 'Sugar Plum Fairy'**

Pictures show this to be very pretty with individual pale "sugar-pink" petals toothed rather like those of 'Cheap Confections' but with the lower petals clearly longer than the upper. The leaves are large and pale green. Its Japanese name is 'Toujya' which apparently means "Plum Happiness".

There are a couple of other named new cultivars in the UK trade: *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Spinners Snow-storm' listed by Spinners Garden,

Lymington, Hampshire, and *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Black Forest Gateaux' from Long Acre Plants in Somerset, but I have no further details of either of these.

NEW CULTIVARS in NORTH AMERICA

While a number of nurseries in the UK have been involved with bringing in plants from Japan and China so too have Daniel Hineckley at Heronswood Nursery near Seattle; and Dan Heims at Terra Nova Nurseries in Oregon. Between Heronswood and Terra Nova, some very distinctive cultivars have already been introduced and a number of other very striking plants are in the pipeline.

Saxifraga cortusifolia 'Velvet'

The handsome velvety leaves are deep purple green overlaid with a richer grey-brown. Flowers are very slightly off-white or very pale pink with a yellow spot on each of the three upper petals.

Saxifraga fortunei 'Five Color'

This is a cultivar with foliage variegated green, grey, white and pink although what the fifth colour is I am uncertain. It has white flowers and the Japanese name is 'Go Nishiki' which translates literally as 'Five Color'.



91 - *Saxifraga*
Jade Dragon'

Saxifraga fortunei 'Jade Dragon'

The glossy rich green leaves with deep rich red-purple on the underside are held on deep red, quite long stems and the flowers are pale green.

Saxifraga fortunei 'White Chrysanthemum'

The leaves of this are attractively variegated with extensive white markings. Flowers are white and have numerous extra long and short petals although, unlike those of 'Cotton Crochet', the flowers retain the normal form with normal ovaries and styles. This was brought into America from a nursery in Japan and may equate to 'Shiraito-no-Taki' ("White Cotton Waterfall") or 'Shiraito-no-Taki Variegata'. Pictures on the internet, of the flowers of the former show them to be extremely close to those of 'White Chrysanthemum' but I have not seen pictures of the foliage to confirm this.

***Saxifraga* 'Silver Velvet'**

This is a new introduction from Dan Heims with nicely scalloped, velvety leaves which are pale lilac and rich grey-purple and is an extremely attractive plant. It is unclear whether this is a cultivar which should be listed as *S. fortunei* or *S. cortusifolia* although it seems likely that, like 'Velvet', this is a cultivar of *S. cortusifolia*.

There are a number of other forms being grown, some of which can be seen in the

gardens at Heronswood, some with cultivar names. Of these

***Saxifraga* 'Quadricolor'**

struck me as particularly attractive but does not yet seem to have been made available. Two other new cultivars from Heronswood are 'Berry Coulis' with variegated foliage and pink flowers, and 'Red October' with "rose-red" flowers.



92 - *Saxifraga* 'Quadricolor'

CULTIVARS in JAPAN

It is clear from fragments on the web, originating both in the West and from Japan, that there are a very large number of cultivars in Japan. In some cases these have been described, in others pictured. Some have been posted under Japanese names, some under English ones. The following notes bring together the best summary of what I have found and at least provide some pointers for the adventurous web gardener.

JAPANESE CULTIVARS with WHITE FLOWERS

***Saxifraga* 'Shiraito-no-Taki'** ("White Cotton Waterfall" or "White Thread Waterfall")

Pictures of the flowers of this cultivar show white flowers with multiple and elongated petals. This plant was discussed under 'White Chrysanthemum' which may equate to 'Shiraito-no-Taki Variegata'. The name refers to a beautiful waterfall in Japan.

***Saxifraga* 'Shima-no-Shiraito'**

Of all the plants here that I have managed to trace only through a

picture on the web this is the most desirable. The flowers are numerous, pure white and seem to have extremely elongated and doubled petals. However, the foliage is even more remarkable, with the roundly scalloped leaves (in outline like those of 'Blackberry and Apple Pie') being mid-green with a complex of broad and discrete cream veins.

Saxifraga 'Ucho-no-hikari'

Pictures show this to have white flowers with the tips of the petals slightly notched. The flowers are very like those of 'Blackberry and Apple Pie' except for the colour.

JAPANESE CULTIVARS with CREAMY-GREEN FLOWERS

Saxifraga 'Apple Snow'

The Japanese name of this cultivar has not been traced but it has clean pale green-yellow flowers, petals more rounded than in many others, and shiny green leaves.

Saxifraga 'Momo Henge' ("Plum Symphony")

This sounds similar to 'Blackberry and Apple Pie' being described as having pale biscuit-coloured flowers with a pink flush, and medium-sized, scalloped leaves.

JAPANESE CULTIVARS with PINK-RED FLOWERS

Saxifraga 'Aya'

A picture on the web, of a single flower, shows that the flower is very similar to a deep pink version of that of 'Cheap Confections'

Saxifraga 'Beni Fuji' ("Red Flames"), 'Beni-fuzi', 'Beni Fusha' ('Red Windmill'), and 'Red Jacket', all probably refer to the same cultivar and are variously described from different sources as having deep pink or red flowers, cleft, semi-bracteose petals; slightly bristly leaves with red backs and pale veins, bright pink or red petioles.

Saxifraga 'Cherry Pie'

Pictures show this as similar to 'Red Jacket'. The flowers are very similar to those of 'Black Ruby' although rather more magenta than warm red and with rather narrower petals but the foliage appears deep green rather than very dark purple as in 'Black Ruby'. The leaves are said to have "plum blotches in their cruxes" which makes them sound like the leaves of 'Blackberry and Apple Pie'.

Saxifraga 'Tamayura'

Said to have sugar-pink flowers and dark red stems, this has dark leaves with red undersides, and sounds rather like 'Black Ruby'.

Beyond these, about which I have been able to assemble some information, there are many other Japanese names which must conceal between them other wonderful plants:

'Ayanishiki'	'Hiten'	'Shichihenge'
'Benikujaku'	'Kizakura'	'Shiranui'
'Buko'	'Miyaki'/'Miyuki'	'Shirohohoh'
'Daiuchu'	'Momo-Benkei'	'Tamamushi'
'Hagoromonomai'	'Nachinohanabi'	'Tenho'
'Hanaguruma'	'Nishikikujaku'	'Togen'
'Hanamatsuri'	'Ryokuho'	'Yaguruma'
'Hien'	'Ryokuo'	'Yamabiko'
'Hiho'	'Ryokusen'	'Yamato'
'Hime'	'Secchubai'	
'Hinotsukasa'	'Senhime'	

'Hanamatsuri' is a flower festival celebrating the Buddha's birth.

'Hinotsukasa' seems to mean "maple".

'Nishikikujaku' seems to mean "azalea".

'Yamabiko' refers to the Hokkaido highlands.

The only other area of possible confusion is the possible use of Japanese names for the species which are appended at the end of the article.



93 - *Saxifraga* 'Mt Nachi'



94 - The gorge of the Po Tsangpo in Tibet. *Saxifraga stolonifera* and *Saxifraga mengtzeana* are both found on the cliffs



95 - *Saxifraga* Black Ruby' (x0.85)

CONCLUSION

This outline of the current situation and the developments of new cultivars and of the general taxonomy among Irregulares saxifrages makes it clear that this group of plants holds out great fascination for the grower and deserves far more attention than it has been receiving. They are both fascinating and beautiful. What has been a revelation in recent years is the variability that they can demonstrate – many of the plants are quite delightful. These new introductions have already led to revived interest and the trend will continue in the years to come as more of these magnificent plants become more widely available.

JAPANESE NAMES for SPECIES

- Saxifraga fortunei* = DAI-MONJI-SO (= var. *incisolobata*)
Saxifraga fortunei f. *partita* = KAEDE-DAI-MONJI-SO
Saxifraga fortunei var. *obtusocuneata* = UCHIWA-DAI-MONJI-SO
Saxifraga fortunei var. *crassifolia* = IZU-NO-SHIMA-DAI-MONJI-SO
Saxifraga cortusifolia = JINJI-SO
Saxifraga cortusifolia var. *stolonifera* = TSURU-JINJI-SO
Saxifraga nipponica = HARU-YUKI-NO-SHITA
Saxifraga sendaica = SENDAI-SO
Saxifraga stolonifera = YUKI-NO-SHITA
Saxifraga stolonifera var. *aptera* = HOSHIZAKI-YUKI-NO-SHITA
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SUPPLIERS

- Aberconwy Nursery**, Graig, Glan Conwy, Colwyn Bay, Wales LL28 5TL.
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Cotswold Garden Flowers, Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 5EZ. Phone (10386) 422829. www.cgf.net
Crûg Farm Plants, Griffith's Crossing, nr. Caernarfon, Gwynedd, Wales LL55 1TU. Phone (01248) 670232. No mail order.
Heronwood Nursery, 7530 NE 288th St., Kingston, WA 98346.
Phone (360) 297-4172. Email: heronwood@silverlink.net
Terra Nova Nurseries in Oregon are wholesale only.
Website: www.terranovanurseries.com
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Photographs of *Saxifraga* 'Rubrifolia' and 'Mt Nachi' are by John Howes and that of *Saxifraga nipponica* is by Winton Harding who, sadly, died in late April and to whom this article is dedicated.



96 - A view from Whiteface Mountain

Whiteface Mountain

Circumpolar plants the easy way!

Sandy Leven

WHITEFACE MOUNTAIN rises above valleys and farms near Lake Placid in upstate New York. This is beautiful country just 45 miles or so south of the Canadian border. A land of rolling, tree covered hills and mountains dotted with hundreds of lakes, this is where *The Last of the Mohicans* is set. It is part of the Canadian Shield, which comprises some of the oldest rocks in North America, west of the beautiful Hudson river, south of the mighty St Lawrence and east of Lake Ontario. Whiteface and Lake Placid sit towards the north-eastern end of the Adirondack Mountains.

Once the home of the Iroquois and the Algonquins, the region was fought over from 1754 till 1763 by the Anglo-American forces and the French. We won that time but later we lost to the Americans in the American Revolution, the War of Independence! In this wonderful country you are only 250 miles north of New York City.

The earliest settlers criss-crossed the whole area and left their mark in the towns, roads, farmland, canals and place names. The names on the roadsides are a mish-mash of the towns and cities of Britain, classical Greece and Rome, other European countries, famous settlers, prominent citizens and residents of the state. The result is an extraordinary juxtaposition of words and names. Troy is close to Malta, Cambridge, Amsterdam, Albany and New Scotland, while close by are Gloversville, Johnstown, and Warrensburg. I like the sound of Mechanicville. Names of places have been almost totally europeanised but Saratoga Springs, Schenectady, and Ticonderoga, recall the original native Americans. Any American from this neck of the woods will be totally confused by a map of Europe!

You don't have to be an athlete to reach the summit of Whiteface Mountain. A drive in an automobile to a mountain-top car park; a short stroll down a paved road; transit through a long, cool, damp tunnel cut under the summit; and up in a lift and you are there. Well almost there. The lift deposits you in a mountain top building bedecked with military flags just a few yards below the actual summit. This is the Summit Weather Observatory. I have no doubt that, if so inclined, you could observe the weather coming from and going to all points of the compass, just passing you by on its way from Niagara to New York City or from Newfoundland to Philadelphia. I may have exaggerated a bit but the views from the summit of Whiteface Mountain are superb. In the north-east of America where there are so many tree-lined roads, a view like this is, literally, a breath of fresh air. Normally you cannot see the woods for the trees or the landscape for the woods but from up at the top you can see all the trees and all the hills. Whiteface is not high by world standards but at 4867 ft (1483.5 m) it is higher than Ben Nevis.

"The Whiteface Experience" has been well thought out. The short trail down from the summit, or up to, if you are perverse, is excitingly rugged but completely safe, unless you land on your bottom. The difficult bits have railings and steps. No doubt many people would prefer to wander all over the mountain sides and would feel constrained by the path. As far as I could tell, there was nothing to stop the adventurous from making their own route either up, down or across the mountain. A series of information boards tells the story of the mountains and the results of glaciations and weathering. Lichens, Flag Trees, An Alpine Garden, and Mountain Habitat Succession are among the subjects covered. Even when



you know something about the mountain plants it is still interesting to read about them *in situ* and no doubt many who read the signs go on to develop a deeper interest in the world's high places.

Normally a mountain climb starts at the bottom and ends at the summit. This time we go the other way from wind-blasted summit down to birch woodlands. This makes you think differently and it is certainly good for the brain cells to ponder the vegetation dwarfed by the high winds when you are fresh and raring to go, and then observing how the vegetation becomes more lush and prolific as the plants benefit from shelter, water and warmth, as you jump from step to step down the rugged path.

The summit area itself has been denuded of most of its soil, scraped clean by glaciers 10,000 years ago. At first only lichens and rock-growing mosses could survive, requiring only rainwater and the minerals in the rocks. These gradually broke down the rock surfaces to primitive soils, adding humus from themselves as they died. This started a whole succession of plant development. The soil slowly builds up in crevices and rock hollows. Next soil-growing mosses and *Arenaria groenlandica*, Mountain sandwort, began to grow in the thin soils. The arenaria forms large mats of moss-like foliage which themselves hold windblown soil and debris, building up more and deeper soil with humus derived from



plant material. The white flowers brighten the path sides all summer. This alpine survives even where human feet have destroyed the habitat of other plants.

Small perennials and dwarf shrubs follow these first plants and in sheltered places trees will establish, growing until they are blasted and deformed by the mountain winds. These trees are known as Flag Trees or Krumholtz, deformed *Abies balsamea*, Balsam Fir, which at lower altitudes develop into a traditional Christmas-tree shape. It is a very tough tree growing from Labrador to Alberta and from the most northerly US states



east of the Rockies. Interestingly it produces a resinous gum, known as Canada Balsam, which chemically is really a turpentine, which when dissolved in xylene produces a cement with the same refractive index as glass. Thus the cement was used to fix lenses in spectacles and to mount specimens onto microscope slides. The seeds in its cones are eaten by all sorts of mountain creatures and birds, and it was used as chewing gum and in another form as a wound plaster.

The whole summit area seems to be one huge lump of granite with enormous granite boulders lying where they have split from the mountain. Jumbles of rocks, piled on the slopes where they have rolled down over the centuries, shelter lots of mountain plants. Most noticeable are the dwarfed trees and ericaceous shrubs which carpet the lower slopes but which at altitude grow more sparsely. Looking along the summit ridge and down the mountain you can see how the trees get taller as altitude diminishes and how large rocks afford shelter to the trees.

Most of the mountain top is covered with mixed ericaceous plants with small perennials dotted amongst them. I find some of these small mountain ericaceous plants difficult to identify: *Gaultheria hispidula*, Creeping snowberry; *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, Bearberry; *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, Mountain cranberry; and *Vaccinium uliginosum*, Mountain bilberry; intertwine in large mats. The last is an eye-catching plant because of its glaucous foliage. The oval leaves sometimes have a thin red border. The



100 - Whiteface Ridge

fruits are glaucous blue berries and can be eaten - if you are desperate! The most conspicuous and widespread ericaceous plant up here is *Ledum groenlandicum*, Labrador tea. This is a tough little rhododendron-type shrub with light green lanceolate leaves which are rust-coloured underneath. It has clusters of creamy-white flowers with fine long stamens giving the flowers a frothy appearance. It seems to thrive high up on the mountain if given just a little shelter and is also as happy growing in bogs in the valleys. When happy it grows to a height of about 3 ft (1 m). The mountain plants were a third of that height.

Cornus canadensis, Creeping dogwood or Bunchberry, grows happily beside rocks and through other vegetation. Its white bracts last for ages, slowly becoming tinged with pink. Further down the mountains the clumps are bigger. Identifiable by its 4 white bracts surrounding the tiny white central flowers and, having its leaves in whorls of 6, it differs from *Cornus suecica*, Swedish bunchberry, which also has 4 white bracts but these surround purple central flowers and its leaves are in pairs. *Cornus canadensis* has spectacular bright red berries appear in late summer giving rise to its name of 'bunchberry'. A few years ago on Mount Washington in New Hampshire we saw plants in fruit and plants in flower at the same time and at the same place in mid-July.

Running under and alongside the cornus you can find the bright green creeping stems of the club moss, *Lycopodium clavatum*. This is a



101 - *Cornus canadensis*



circumpolar plant which grows happily near Aviemore as well as here in New York State. The spores were used in physics as a very fine powder to demonstrate sound waves before oscilloscopes were invented.

Solidago cutleri is a dwarf goldenrod. No could say it is showy but it does flower at 4000 ft. Its flowers are not plumed like other goldenrod, but it has narrow stems whose flowers seem

reluctant to open into true daisy-shaped composites but seem to open so far and then no further. It has quite large, coarse, toothed leaves for such a small plant. Much more desirable is *Potentilla tridentata*. Again, I remember this from New Hampshire and Vermont. It is a super little white-flowered cinquefoil. It runs along cracks in the rocks when it can or forms clumps in places where the soil is better. Its leaves grow in groups of three and are shiny dark green like little strawberry leaves. At almost any

time you can find some leaves turning red. It is a magical little thing which is easily grown in a raised bed. It spreads slowly but is never invasive. I bought plants in a garden centre purporting to be *Potentilla tridentata* but these had semi-wooden stems and did not disappear completely in winter. The wild plant is better and further down the mountain the little potentilla grew at the





104 - *Maianthemum dilatatum*

roadside and literally in the tarmac and here its flowers were held on stems about 2" (5 cm) tall.

Further down the mountain at the edge of the birch woods, at around 3000 ft, the roadsides were very wet. Here we found the yellow flowers of *Clintonia borealis*. This member of the lily family usually has 3 magnificent strap-shaped shiny leaves with a prominent central vein and the flowers are on a raceme emerging from the centre. Later in the year it has dark blue-black berries. Growing under and beside the clintonia was *Maianthemum canadense*, whose creamy bottlebrush flower appear between twin heart-shaped leaves. This is a little treasure which I am sure would delight most rock gardeners. It is a much more delicate plant than the familiar, often rampant, *Maianthemum dilatatum* whose flowers are whiter. If you looked closely amongst the maianthemum it became apparent that not all the spikes were the same. We were delighted to find some *Pyrola rotundifolia* popping up. Just to make us feel at home clumps of sorrel, *Oxalis montana*, dotted the leaf litter in the birch woods and crept amongst the trees. Its familiar shamrock leaves and white flowers confirmed our feeling that although we were far from home we

were seeing many plants which grow back home in Scotland. The last plant I will mention is the bright red orange *Hieracium aurantiacum*. Although an alien species in New York State it has made itself at home. Its fiery orange flowers are a shocking contrast to the more muted whites, creams and yellows of the native plants.

A day or two later we visited the studio of the artist Lynn Benevento. She has captured many woodland plants in her paintings. Her style is distinct. Her plants are depicted against a dark background, often with trees or branches as a foil for the flowers. She paints mainly plants from her garden but what delightful plants they are: *Trillium undulatum*, *Trillium erectum*, *Cypripedium reginae*, *Cornus canadensis*, *Hepatica acutiloba* and many more. You can find her on the internet at www.lynnbenevento.com.

As we returned to Lake Placid to see the Fourth of July fireworks we saw a sign for John Brown's Grave. Sure enough it was *the* John Brown, the famous abolitionist who was hanged on December 2nd 1859 for leading the raid on the US Arsenal at Harper's Ferry in West Virginia on October 16th of the same year. We must all have sung, "John Brown's body lies a mouldering in his grave but his soul goes marching on". Here was his grave, on his farm at North Elba, NY, within sight of the Olympic Ski Jump at Lake Placid. Today it is a peaceful place and well worth a visit. It is part of the magic of our holidays, which are usually spent in mountainous places that we frequently cross onto other paths which enrich us further.



105 - Statue of John Brown with Olympic Ski Jump in background

PS. We ate that evening in the restaurant in which US President Bill Clinton celebrated his 50th birthday!

Seed Exchange

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THERE are now in place [*Stuart Pawley writes*] certain general phytosanitary conditions which will have to be applied to all recipients of the Seed Exchange, excepting those within the European Union. Anything that is not seed, Pleione bulbils for instance, all rice, bulblets and tubers, described as 'living matter', cannot be sent outside EU without specific certification. Therefore we may well collect these items together in the Seed List, so would donors please make sure they indicate when packets contain anything other than seeds.

For the posting of seeds to USA a certificate will have to be acquired by the requesting member and sent to us with the order. Last year the US system was still in flux, and we had to make an unscheduled payment for seed examination, and we will do that again this coming year if bounced into it, but we are hoping for the stable system to emerge by the Fall. With all these restrictions it was inevitable that some postings were delayed too long, but we hope our US members will realise we are trying our best to overcome the impositions.

We should apologise to a few overseas members who made requests which did not materialise. This was because a requirement on electronic ordering was that payment should be sent with the member's details, and unfortunately our developing system did not catch those members who omitted to send these details. There will always be teething problems with new developments, but we hope this year our system will be improved (and our members a little more careful!)

*DETAILS OF THE SEED EXCHANGE ARE IN THE
YEARBOOK BUT HERE ARE A FEW SIGNIFICANT POINTS*

DONATION OF SEED

Seed as early as possible but no later than **31 October 2005**. Seed will be accepted after this if a list has been sent earlier by post or email to gsp.srgc@tesco.net. Even in this case, please post seeds quickly as they are soon passed on to the Taylors' packeting team, after which there are considerable logistic problems.

SEED LISTS

1. Overseas members are automatically sent one.
2. Home donors automatically receive one.
3. Home non-donors need to request a list either by sending a C5 (24 x 17.5 cm) stamped addressed envelope or by emailing details to gsp.srgc@tesco.net

The formal closing date for requesting a list is **14 December 2005**. Your S.R.M. is planning an extensive holiday thereafter, so mail will remain unanswered for a long long time! After that it is all down to Rob and his team.

DISTRIBUTION

Completed by end of January. Requests for seed need to be received by **7 January 2006**.

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a day of workshops
on digital photography
and presentation.

Taking digital pictures

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To help us to assess the demand for a Digital Day please notify your interest by writing with details of your digital camera and whether you have a laptop computer you could bring along on the day if you have one.

Ian Young, 63 Craighton Road, Aberdeen AB15 7UL.

If using post please enclose an SAE for return of information.

We will then assess how, when, and where we can best hold such a day. If there is sufficient demand we may hold a series of workshops in different places.

Only those who write in will receive further details

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Arisaema asperatum



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