

The Journal
OF
The Scottish
Rock Garden Club

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THE JOURNAL
of
The Scottish
Rock Garden Club

EDITED BY
KENNETH CHARLES CORSAR

No. 5-1948

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Photo: D. Wilkie

PRIMULA AUREATA

[Block kindly lent by the R. H. S.]

Editor's Notes.

SINCE the appearance of the last number of the "Journal" many changes in the hierarchy of the Club have occurred; a new President, a new Secretary, and two new Show Secretaries have been appointed and the personnel of the Committee has been considerably modified. The new office-bearers have brought with them a fresh outlook, energy and ideas, some of which are mentioned in the message from our President which appears in this issue. We extend a welcome to all our new officials.

As predicted in these notes last year, it was found necessary to double the amount of the annual subscription in order to provide funds to finance the activities of the Club on an adequate scale. In taking this step we have done no more than has been found necessary by every other horticultural society, and by many other associations as well, both here and in England. It is greatly to be hoped that the raising of the subscription rate will not result in the resignation of old members, or in deterring new ones from joining us, for obviously the greater the membership, and therefore the income, the more will the Club be able to offer. The cost of printing this "Journal" is greater than it ever was before, but the Club must have its publication, and though the number of its pages may have to be reduced on account of the scarcity of paper, it is hoped that it will be found by those who read it to be as interesting and useful as it has been in the past.

In 1947 only one Show was held—that in Glasgow—because at the eleventh hour the agreement to let us a hall in Edinburgh was cancelled. There being insufficient time left in which to seek another place of meeting, the Committee had no alternative but to abandon the fixture. Naturally, great disappointment was felt by members, and there can be no doubt that the step taken, inevitable in the circumstances, was detrimental to the reputation of the Club. But we can recover from this setback, and given anything like a fair chance, we

will once more regain our old position as one of the most conspicuous horticultural societies in the country. Every single member can help to this end by supporting the several activities of the Club, and by inducing gardening friends to join us.

Movement about the country is not yet easy—in fact it is more difficult than it was last year—so that the arrangement of excursions, or even of visits to private gardens, will have to wait yet a while. It is, however, not too difficult to reach Edinburgh by means of public transport and in Edinburgh there is the finest collection of rock garden plants in Scotland. The officials of the Royal Botanic Garden are always happy to meet members of the S.R.G.C. and to conduct them round their famous rock garden, either singly or in groups. They are ever ready to give advice, or to answer questions on points of difficulty in cultivation or identification of plants. All who wish to see Alpines at their best should pay regular and frequent visits to the R.B.G.

It is hoped that when conditions improve there will be an increase in the interchange of visits amongst members. There can be no greater pleasure than to conduct enthusiastic and knowledgable gardeners round one's own garden, and the sight of other growers successes cannot but please. Added to this is the certainty that much may be learned from the experiences of others, for no gardener, however long he may have been at the job, knows all that there is to be known. As our President has intimated, it is proposed to prepare a list of those members of the Club who would be willing to receive visitors to their gardens; it is believed that such a list will be of value to all, but particularly to those who are in the fortunate position of still being able to move about in comparative comfort and with some freedom.

I end these notes with an expression of my thanks to those who have contributed articles, notes and photographs to this number of the "Journal" and also to the good friend of the Club who has helped me with the correction of the proofs. I would like to stress that material for inclusion in this publication will always be welcome.

Message from the President

IN these difficult times when one is hedged in by restrictions and permits it is more than ever necessary to find some relaxation from everyday problems. Gardening provides this relaxation to an unsurpassed degree, and of all branches, that of rock gardening is the most fascinating. It can be undertaken as well by women as by men, nor need it be confined to those who have large gardens for many alpine can be grown most successfully in frames in a very small area.

THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB was formed to create an interest in Rock Garden Plants, and to do everything possible to encourage their cultivation. Of necessity little has been possible during the past eight years. But the Committee feels that, despite the increasing rather than diminishing difficulties, the time has come when a great effort should be made to do more for our members than has been possible in recent years. We are therefore going all out to increase the scope of our activities. To achieve this we want more members, and we want the help of all who can do so in supporting our Shows and meetings; and we want suggestions for furthering the interests of all.

In every part of the country there are wonderful opportunities for rock gardening, and there must be thousands for whom it is a keen enjoyment. But how much keener will that enjoyment be if, through membership of THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB, there are facilities for getting in touch with other members, seeing their gardens, comparing plants at Shows, and reading the "Journal" and other publications.

As President may I wish you all the fullest enjoyment from your garden, and may I ask you to get all your friends to join the S.R.G.C.

Primula aureata

By DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

PERHAPS I should begin this note by apologising for writing about a plant which is so rare and which is likely to be unobtainable from nurserymen for some time to come. *Primula aureata* has made its appearance at one of our own shows and at one of the Alpine Garden Society's shows where it gained an Award of Merit for Mrs. Crewdson whose splendid garden at Kendal is a model of what a rock garden can be. In these circumstances I think, and the editor agrees, that we should put *Primula aureata* on record in the "Journal."

The origin of *Primula aureata* is shrouded in mystery as it occurred as a stray seedling in a pan of *Swertia* in Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden. The *Swertia* seed, which had been sent from India to Edinburgh in 1935, had been collected in Sikkim which is, therefore, presumed to be the country of origin of *Primula aureata*. It is obviously of the Petiolares Section but Sir William Wright Smith and Dr. Fletcher in a paper on this Section say that no material of it has been recorded in the herbaria of Kew, Edinburgh, Calcutta and Dehra Dun. Nor is there any known combination of Petiolarids in that part of the Himalaya likely to produce a result similar to *Primula aureata*. Ingwersen in his excellent little pamphlets on Asiatic Primulas, shows *Primula aureata* to be a synonym of *Primula Petelotii*, but this is, I think, an error. At least the latter is described as without farina and is said to have rose-coloured flowers. This description most certainly does not fit *Primula aureata*. Here the matter rests for the moment but who knows some day the mystery may be unravelled.

Primula aureata is a beautiful plant, even out of flower, as its leaves are densely covered for the most of the year with white farina. At those times when the farina is less evident, during summer from my own

observations, the mid rib is seen to be deeply stained red. The leaves which are deeply cut are set evenly round the plant and the entire effect is so pretty that it would be worth growing for its foliage alone. Add to this the large breath-taking flowers, up to ten on a fully developed crown, and the result is a *Primula* as fine as any introduced from the Himalayas. The flowers, which are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, are yellow with a deep orange flush extending from the eye half-way along the petal. They are born on a scape which never develops and the flowers are carried just clear of the foliage by pedicels which are thickly farinose. The petals are of a thick texture and as the flowers age the petals reflex giving the appearance of a smaller but almost entirely rich orange flower.

Primula aureata demands the same conditions as the others in the Petiolares Section when they are pot grown, i.e. one third loam, one third leaf mould, one third sharp sand, good drainage and shade from summer sun. I have no experience of it in the open, but it did grow well in the peat wall in the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden facing north. Propagation so far has been by division of the root, but offsets hitherto have not been many. However, there are signs of its being more prolific and I am hoping that soon there may be many more than the present ten or twelve plants. So far as I am aware there is only one known instance of *Primula aureata* setting seed; Mrs. Crewdson's plant developed one capsule in 1946 but the seed failed to germinate. I have not the slightest doubt, if and when it is available, in quantity, *Primula aureata* will become a great favourite in Scottish rock gardens and in Scottish Alpine houses.

My Garden

Its Layout for Alpine plants and with Notes on their Cultivation

By ALEX. O. CURLE, C.V.O., LL.D.

A CONSIDERATION of the natural habitat of a plant is of the utmost importance; therefore, in the transitory shadow of the house there is a long narrow bed, containing a collection of double Primroses, the old double mauve, perhaps the most beautiful of its kind; the double red, "Irish Paddy"; "Marie Crouse," also double red with a thin white line on the edge of the petals; representatives of that handsome group of Polyanthus comprised under the type-name of Garryarde, a double *Wanda* Polyanthus; an attractive purple tone which stays long in flower, and others. These Primroses for the most part require a fairly rich soil and must not be allowed to remain for more than a couple of seasons on the same ground without encountering the risk of loss. In front of the house, and between it and rose beds is an area of crazy paving, laid on a pre-existing bed of ashes, which is of interest as showing how happily some Alpine plants will flourish on pure ash. Here *Lithospermum prostratum*, invariably frosted in other situations, survived even the rigours of last winter. *Androsace sarmentosa* throws its long arms about, promising a wide expansion; Sea-pinks brought from the north of Caithness selected for their fine colour, are perfectly at home; while *Geranium Pylzowianum*, the beautiful pink *Oxalis floribunda*, *Erinus alpinus* and others require no attention.

Against the south and west walls of the house, and resting on an ash path, is a collection of troughs, six in number, varying in size from modest objects which must have served for the watering of pigs to massive specimens which were probably horse-troughs. The trough in which the plants are most crowded shows the best results, while the largest and most massive is the least satisfactory. One has only to see



HELLEBORUS CORSICUS



THE GARDEN AT ORMSACRE

an Alpine meadow in its glory in the springtime to realise how companionable plants can be and, perhaps, there is merit in such crowding. No attempt has been made to specialize occupancy of the troughs, the only consideration being space in which to spread, height and character of growth.

To mention a selection of the plants in my troughs, there are *Polemonium humile*, which forms a compact tuft with pale blue flowers ; the dwarf Golden Rod, *Solidago brachystachya*, some 6 inches high ; *Geranium, cinereum album, sanguineum, lancastricense*, also *collinum*, which much resembles *Farreri* ; *Erodium corsicum* and its pink hybrid Saxifrages *Aizoon* and *Kabscia*, including the attractive *Aizoon rosea*, and *lingulata lantoskana* collected in its native habitat, Lantoskan, the Alpes Maritimes ; *Aster alpinus roseus* ; *Centaurea pindicola* and others. On the ash path on which the troughs are accommodated a colony of *Androsacea sarmentosa* has spread abroad and presents a lovely picture of rose-pink blooms in the early summer.

To the west of the house stands the Alpine house, the approach to which is flanked on either side by long beds enclosed with paving slabs, thus resembling troughs. Along the centre of each of these there has been formed a plateau, buttressed with stones in rockery fashion and leaving a narrow sheltered border between it and the stone sides of the "trough." This is a useful place for plants requiring shelter and a more humid bed than on the higher surface. Here flourish *Iris histrioides*, *Oxalis enneaphylla*, etc. In the front space grow choice Gentians, viz, *Loderi*, the so-called *cachemirica*, and the finest Gentian in the garden, an unnamed hybrid, in whose blooms and growths *Kurroo* and one of the *septemfida* family are suggested. These "troughs" seemed suitable for a collection of choice Saxifrages, but alas ! such an August as that of last year, with continuous sunshine, was outside my reckoning, and during a month's absence most of the Saxifrages were burnt brown and many killed. Double summer time is a fatal arrangement for a garden if there is no resident gardener and working hours cease

long before sundown ! The Alpine house has roof and side ventilators ; the former are never closed except for severe frost, and the side ventilators only in similar conditions, or when the wind is strong on the windward side. For watering, when it is desired to water from below, there are a couple of zinc tanks, occupying spaces between the front legs of the staging, 7 inches broad and 3 inches deep. This is found to be a most satisfactory arrangement as it allows many plants to be watered at once, and it also makes certain that the roots and not the surface growths get the water. At one time this house was almost entirely devoted to the cultivation of *Kabschia Saxifrages*, but it was realised eventually that *Saxifrages* looked more at home when growing among stones in a rockery formation than in pots under glass, so they were removed to other parts of the garden. Experience, however, has shown that the *Burserianas* bloomed more freely and better under the glass roof than when subjected to the elements outside. Stage *Auriculas* to a large extent took their place, but the finest—to own which was one's ambition, especially the farina leaved varieties—proved so infectious that they had to be given away. Now the plants within are various. Of *Primulas* there are a number of pans containing varieties of *Primula Allionii*, a reddish purple variety ; one of deeper colour called the Cowsley variety ; one which is the earliest and most lovely, a large clear pink bloom ; and lastly a white variety *P. Allionii* is very easily cultivated in a house if attention is paid to certain details : (1) on no account must it be watered overhead, presumably because it is a crevice plant growing in nature on a cliff face ; (2) the decayed leaves around the collar of the plant must be carefully removed annually when growth commences with the aid of tweezers ; (3) it must be potted up and repotted annually ; and (4) in the repotting the plants should be pressed between fragments of limestone thrust into the soil, though some growers declare that this procedure is unnecessary. It will stand any amount of frost, and appears to prefer shade to sun. During the height of last summer my pans rested on the floor of the Alpine house.

Lewisias are excellent subjects for the Alpine house. They are exacting only in regard to water. During their resting period they must be kept absolutely dry, except for an occasional trickle round the edge of the pot. When growth has well started they can be watered freely. Some other good plants for the Alpine house are *Rhododendron leucaspis*, a beautiful plant from 8 to 10 inches in height, with pure white sweetly scented flowers and dark stamens. As buds and flowers are tender, light protection is necessary in frosty weather; *Crassula sarcocaulis*, which forms a gnarled tree, 8 to 10 inches high; *Silene Wherryi*; the *Soldanellas*, which must be carefully preserved from attacks of woodlice; various *Primulas*, *Linda Pope*, *Berninae Windrush variety*; the varieties of *marginata*, viz., *coerulea*; *Pritchards var.*; and the *pubescens* varieties, *Mrs J. H. Wilson*, *Faldonside*, and *Rufus*, which grown in pans make a lovely show in spring; *Primula involucrata* with its white sweetly scented flowers is another good plant, while many other plants can be grown to advantage with no difficulty. An Alpine house is wasted if its use is confined to the growing of difficult plants. It presents an opportunity of growing to perfection many plants which rarely attain that condition when subjected to the rough vicissitudes of our climate, and not the least advantage, it makes a pleasant place to linger among one's treasures when storms render unpleasant such loitering out of doors.

At the west end of the lawn there is a small flower garden enclosed in a Privet hedge kept low so that the flowers may be seen above it from the house, and in narrow borders along the fronts of the beds grow various plants, which may rightly claim an Alpine qualification. Here is *Anemone sulphurea*, raised from seed brought from Italian Dolomites; of *Gentians* *Veitchiorum*, *Macaulayi*, *Kidbrook seedling*, *stevenagensis*, *Bernardii*, *sino-ornata*, and bordering the front, *acaulis*. The last named flowers so freely here that it matters not if it is planted in the flower bed or on top of the wall-garden; and one plant which was lifted

annually and potted up as an exhibit for our Rock Garden Show increased the number of its blooms each year. Another interesting plant is a unique variety of dwarf Daffodil gathered in the mountains above Vence on the French Riviera. Behind the enclosed flower garden, forming a wind-break and a background to the flowers in the beds, is the wall-garden, or more properly an elevated-rock garden, for the interest lies not so much in the walls as in the rockery arrangement on the top and in the plants which grow on it. Two mounds of soil with a space of 4 feet between them, each 28 feet long, 6 feet broad at base, 3 feet 6 inches high, and 4 feet 6 inches broad at the top, are furnished with numerous large stones forming rockeries, in which grow Alpine plants and bulbs. The direction of this wall-garden, if so I may call it, is north and south. It is constructed with a view to growing plants on the wall as well as the top, and on the vertical faces grow such plants as *Cytisus*, *Genista*, *Aubretia*, Rock Roses and other plants that require such a habitat. The walls were constructed with a turf inverted, and covered with grit, between each course of stones. For the first year the grass flourished, but after being once pulled out it ceased to give trouble, and supplied a bed for the plants. Unfortunately the walls were not sufficiently sloped backwards. In such construction the angle of the slope should be such that water falling on the projecting surfaces should be directed onwards. It would probably be advantageous in order to prevent the stones eventually lying in close contact and so hindering the ingress of roots into the soil beyond, to lay, occasionally, at either end spalls of stone or pieces of slate. The great advantage of such a garden is that the plants are all brought up near to the level of the eye and stooping is thus avoided. Another advantage is the comparative freedom from slugs which are not naturally wall climbers. There is a collection of *Kabschia* Saxifrages on the wall. These plants seem to flourish best with an eastern exposure, being less exposed to the glare of the sun and probably suffering less from evaporation,

especially the *Burserianas*. *Buttercup*, a comparatively recent introduction is an admirable plant. It grows freely and has rich yellow flowers and deep green foliage. *Laudaneri*, as an *Engleria* hybrid with white pink-flushed flowers, is also worthy of recommendation. It is less affected by sunshine and draught than most of the others, and is the first to flower, commencing to bloom in mid-January. For *oppositifolia* the position is perhaps too exposed and too dry for successful growth. Campanulas do well on the wall where *Raineri*, *Saxifraga*, *Australiana*, *Allionii*, *rot-arvatica* all do well; *Allionii*, which spreads under the surface, requires the stems to be covered with grit; *Poscharskyana* growing up over the face of the eastern wall threatens to smother the summit and needs severe handling. There is a single plant of *Daphne petreaa*, the survivor of a group of three, both the others having died from no apparent cause when in full flower, probably being grafted specimens; *Calceolaria Darwinii*, for several years was a valued treasure, but it too for no obvious reason faded away. It is not a long lived plant and it may have completed its span of life. There are *Genistas* both on the walls and upper surface. Of these the dwarf *delphinensis* is suitable for the latter situation. It is in appearance a miniature of the better known *G. sagittalis*. *G. dalmatica*, a miniature whin, grows on the wall face. The *Cytisus* group is more fully represented. One of the earliest and most beautiful on the wall face is *C. Ardoinii*, which spreads out in a profuse display of rich golden flower close against the grey background. It is moderately hardy; only in the extreme cold of last winter did it suffer, and that to the extent of a few branches.

C. januensis is rather wilder in its growth and slightly less golden in colour. *Beanii*, a great beauty, which formed in spring a dome of golden florets on the top of my wall, perished in last year's frost. The double *tinctoria* lies very flat on the wall-top and would have grown more suitably on the side wall. *C. demissus*, a parti-coloured hybrid, shows restraint in its growth, and is a beautiful plant.

The dwarf Willows form an interesting collection on the wall-top; *Salix Boydii*, with a tree-like growth, is the most attractive; *herbacea*, a native, keeps close to the ground. A plant given to me with the name of *Cerophylla*, with branches spreading like the antlers of a stag, is a little too vigorous for a wall garden; Gentians of the *septemfida* class, at the edge of the wall facing east, flower admirably. Besides the type plant, which, after many years, makes a fine spread of flowers, there are *linearis*, *bracteosa*, *hascombensis*, and *dahurica*.

Arnebia echioides, the "Prophets' Flower," has flourished for years there; numerous *Dianthus*. Of bulbs grown on the wall there are *Fritillaria Mel-eagris*, purple and white; *Galanthus latifolia*; species Tulips; *Sisyrinchium grandiflorum*, blue and white varieties. *Crocus speciosus* makes a pleasant group, while a collection of hybrid *Crocus E. Bowles*, *etruscus* and others were so devoured by field-mice, that, notwithstanding intensive trapping and protection with dead twigs of whin, etc., a small and precious remnant had to be removed and potted up in the Alpine house. Dry though the soil must be, *Anemone Pulsatilla* grows exceptionally well; both purple and dark red varieties. Of Phloxes, besides the more common varieties, there are *adsurgens*, slightly shaded and top-dressed with leaf-mould, a fine Phlox from Oregon, salmon pink with a darker stripe on each petal; while on the east front *May Snow* and *Model*, hybrid *Douglasii*, making compact attractive tufts. Plants, which though not properly rock plants, provide fine splashes of colour on the wall-face, after the regular classes have ceased, are *Erigeron Elstead Pink* and specimens of the dwarf Michaelmas Daisies. Nor must I omit to mention a rare plant, *Crepis incana*, with jagged grey-green leaves and innumerable pretty soft pink flowers; which has proved itself absolutely hardy, growing in a dry position and quickly expanding into a plant a couple of feet across.

So much for my garden! One other detailed matter in connection with its management may be

of interest to my readers, and, if there are novices among them, ultimately to their advantage should they care to adopt my system. Since the year 1927, I have recorded, in small bound notebooks the accession of every plant which I have received, stating the date of acquisition, the source from which it came, be it a gift from a friend or a purchase from a nurseryman, and latterly by a system of letters I have indicated in what particular part of the garden it has been placed. To read through the pages of this inventory is a constant interest. In the first place, I am appalled by the number of plants which have disappeared. Perhaps some may have died out from old age; many certainly succumbed for want of proper attention in the heat of summer when I was engaged in other occupations or in distant parts of the country and my garden was under less responsible management. The distractions of the war years undoubtedly are accountable for many casualties. On the whole, excessive sunshine, with consequent scorch and drought, have been the worst factors. Hard frost has accounted also for many losses; slugs for a few, as these pests do not affect to any extent either troughs or wall gardens. Against such twinges of conscience what recollections are evoked from the names of many friends who have contributed treasure. The memories awakened of hours spent talking garden-lore, with some now gone for ever, and others with whom intercourse has been debarred in recent years by the restrictions of the times in which we live. Lastly, by conning the pages of the record, the names of plants are kept alive in the memory and labels, which had faded out or been lost, become replaceable.

In conclusion, may I quote a phrase which I heard frequently on the tongue of a very learned and wise gardener, "Gardening is a gift, a divine Providence for the pottering peace of virtuous eld," and this heavenly gift I have enjoyed to the full.

A Visit to the Jura Mountains

By Lieut.-Col. J. C. DUNDAS, D.S.O.

IN the second half of May and first week of June, 1947, we spent a very delightful holiday at Nyon on the Swiss shore of Lake Geneva. During our stay we spent a good deal of time wandering about in the Jura Mountains which lie behind the town looking, amongst other things, for plants.

In my ignorance I had supposed that the Jura, both in formation and in flora, would be similar to the Alps, but I was rapidly undeceived.

To reach the mountains one takes a quaint little electric train, drawn incidentally by an astonishingly powerful locomotive, which winds its way round sharp bends and up steep gradients to St. Cergue at a height of about 3,400 ft, and thence by a gradual climb over a low part of the crestline to La Cure on the French frontier (3,750 ft.).

For the first part of the journey one passes through an area of intensive cultivation, both arable and vine. At the time of our visit the fields were a riot of colour from meadow plants.

Next, one enters the forest zone. The trees are mainly hardwood and magnificent Beeches predominate. This belt reaches up to a height of about 3,000 ft. The topsoil in the forest is deep leafmould but under that limestone rock is close to the surface and occasionally reaches it.

Next, comes a wide belt of magnificent Spruce trees interspersed with glades of short grass, or "alpes" as they are called, which provide the summer feed for the cattle from the villages lower down. On Whitsunday all the cattle of these villages are decorated with flowers and ribbons, and have heavy bells hung round their necks, and they start forth in procession with the young men of the village in attendance singing and yodelling as they go. Delightful both to see and to hear.

It is only at the highest points that one finds any really open country with a certain amount of rock formation. Even at these levels short grass prevails.

The two highest points of the Jura within reach of Nyon are La Dole (5,460 ft.) and Mt. Pelée (5,000 ft.). The view from the former, to all four points of the compass, is wonderful.

The soil, both in the Spruce belt and at higher levels is extremely calcareous.

When we arrived a late spring, as in this country, had retarded growth and few flowers were out even at lower levels. Only the *Crocus* which covers the higher alpes was over.

A few days of hot sun, however, completely altered the picture and each day that we went up we found more flowers in bloom.

I must confess that I was disappointed to find so few real "Alpines" even at the higher levels as compared with similar altitudes in the Alps.

The following is a list of plants which I noted, with some comments.

Anemone alpina On the slopes of La Dole.

Anemone narcissiflora. Much less common than *A. alpina*. Only a few plants on La Dole.

Aquilegia (?) *vulgaris*. In the hardwood forest. Not in flower.

Aster alpinus. On the higher slopes. Not in flower.

Astragalus alpinus. An attractive Vetch in the forest above St. Cergue.

Campanula (?) *barbata*. I only saw one plant on the slope of La Dole while climbing up and meant to investigate coming down but the plant had mysteriously vanished in the interval.

Campanula pusilla.—A single plant in a rock crevice on La Dole.

Dentaria pinnatox digitata. This formidably named plant is an attractive woodlander growing both in the hardwood and Spruce forests. It has 3-lobed flowers varying in colour from white to deep mauve.

Dianthus sylvestris. Common below the forest zone.

Draba aizoides. Rare on higher levels over 3,400 ft.

Genista sagittalis. On banks in the open and also in the middle of the Beech forest at medium levels. Not common.

Gentiana verna in masses on "alpes" over 3,000 ft.

Gentiana acaulis. One plant only below St. Cergue on the railway embankment. I suspect this of being an escape from the nursery which M. Correvon had in the vicinity but which is now, alas, a mass of weeds. I believe that *G. acaulis* can be found in the Jura further north, but is very uncommon. The soil is apparently too limey.

Globularia cordifolia. Very common on La Dole. It seems to differ from the plant one meets with as *G. cordifolia* in this country. It is much more dwarf in habit and the flowers are on short stems and paler in colour. A Professor of Botany at Geneva University whom I met, however, named it thus.

Geum reptans. Gorgeous clumps at levels over 3,300 ft. wherever there was a rocky outcrop.

Hutchinsia alpina ("Lily of the Valley"). At upper edges of forest zone. The interesting thing was that it grew both deep in the shade under Beech trees (plant life seems to flourish under the Beeches in a way it does not at home) and also out in the open amongst limestone rocks wherever there were some scrub bushes on the sunny side of which it was to be found. In the latter case its roots must have existed in vastly drier conditions than in the former. It apparently did not grow in the open in moist spots.

Lilium sp. I thought this plant, which was not in bloom, was Martagon Lily but my Professor friend named it, I thought Haggeri, but I cannot find such a name. Two seeds I brought home have germinated, so I may eventually find out its name. It is common on the higher levels in the open.

Linum alpinum (white and blue). Not common. Below La Dole.

Orchis masculata. Plentiful on higher meadows.

Orchis pallens. A lovely yellow. Large clumps but very local on N. side of La Dole.

Ranunculus aconitifolius. A few plants on roadside near upper level of Spruce belt but not common.

Saxifraga. I only found one, a crusted one, on the extreme top of the rockwall on La Dole. There seems to be a complete absence of Saxifrages on the Jura, or certainly in the areas we visited.



WAHLENBERGIA SERPYLLIFOLIA MAJOR



OMPHALODES LUCILÆ

Senecio Doronicum. A mass of yellow at lower edges of forest and below.

Soldanella alpina. Often found in unexpected places and at lower levels than one would have anticipated in comparison with the Alps.

Scrophulariaceae. Many of varying and brilliant colours in open places at lower forest levels. A grand splash of colour.

Thalictrum sp. Not in flower. In Beech forest.

Veronica sp. Blue, mauve and white corymbs ; only in one meadow towards Mt. Pelee.

Viola biflora. Very rare apparently ; in rock cleft near La Dole.

A pretty little woodlander about 3 inches high with white corymbs which I have not identified but which will, I hope, appear in my rock-garden next year.

We also visited the Botanic Gardens at Geneva where plants are usually arranged according to the countries from which they come, and as regards Swiss plants by areas. The collection of Swiss Alpines is of very great interest.

While at Geneva also we called on M. Correvon. The garden is now run by M. Henri Correvon's son and grandson. The war has led to great difficulties but none the less we saw a number of interesting plants, and M. Correvon was able to let me have seed of plants unobtainable at home, all of which has germinated well.

A visit to Les Rochers de Naye proved somewhat abortive since the mountain top where the garden is situate was deep under snow except for the arrête at the highest point where we could see *P. Auricula*, *A. glacialis* and *Soldanellas* just emerging. We ended in dense fog and with a 10 mile walk down the hill as the normal route to Caux ("une heure seulement, Monsieur je vous en assure") was 10 ft. under snow ! None the less we saw many pleasant plants en route and only hope that the old lady with a recently sprained ankle and damaged knee whom we had met at the summit and who, with her daughter, had been persuaded to follow the same route eventually got home to Montreux.

Some Good Alpines.

By JACK DRAKE (*Illustrated*).

MORISIA HYPOGAEA. This little crucifer comes from the Corsican seashore. It forms little rosettes of shiny toothed leaves from which emerge in spring quantities of almost stemless brilliant yellow flowers. Easy in any light warm sunny place or the scree, but not completely hardy in the coldest regions. Increased by root cuttings.

Draba mollissima. This delightful little plant comes to us from the Caucasus. It makes a tight woolly green cushion not unlike an Aretian Androsace and every bit as choice. In spring the cushion is covered with showy flowers of a good yellow on two inch wiry stems. Although perfectly hardy, this plant needs a certain amount of care. It is best kept in the Alpine house, although I have grown it successfully for a time in a sunny and fairly rich scree under the shelter of a rock ledge and protected with a pane of glass in winter. In any case an open gritty soil is necessary and the plant **MUST** be protected from overhead moisture in winter. Increased by seed and, with care, by cuttings.

Helleborus corsicus. This very handsome Corsican can grow up to as much as three feet. The flowers, which are produced in umbels in very early spring, are of an indescribable shade of palest creamy green. The glossy toothed leaves are a perfect foil. This plant appears in any good soil in full sun. I, personally, have only grown it in the South where it gave no trouble at all, but it is just possible that it may not be completely hardy in the coldest places. Although strictly not an Alpine it inhabits the wild Corsican mountain gorges. Increased by seed, which is slow, and, presumably, by division.

Wahlenbergia serpyllifolia major. When in bloom, this plant is one of the loveliest that the rock garden

has to offer. Perfectly easy in any well drained sunny soil or rich scree, the plant makes almost prostrate, rather loose hummocks of dark stems and little dark-green leaves from which rise in summer the almost stemless flowers, like large Campanulas, of vivid glowing tyrian purple. It comes from Bosnia and can be increased by cuttings.

Weldenia candida. This remarkable plant comes from the highest mountains of Mexico, and is proving much hardier than was at first supposed, although safest in the Alpine house. From a tuft of almost succulent pointed leaves rise the fleeting white flowers which are produced in endless succession over a long period. Farrer likens the flowers to "the ghost of a snowy Tradescantia long since drowned", but they are much better than that! A warm light soil and full sun are essential and the plant disappears below ground in winter. Increased by seed when procurable.

Lewisia brachycalyx. This delightful American throws up from a carrot-like rootstock an upright rosette of fleshy leaves from which emerge in spring an endless succession of miniature "water lilies" of a diaphanous white, sometimes faintly tinged with mauve or pink. The leaves disappear in late summer and appear again before the winter. Although perfectly hardy this plant is seen at its best in the Alpine house where the delicate flowers can be protected from rough weather. A rich leafy soil seems to suit it best and give it plenty of moisture in the growing season. Seed is the only means of increase.

Omphalodes Luciliae. A lovely plant with glaucous blue leaves and sprays of flowers of an attractive shade of opalescent blue and pink on and off all summer. Some people find difficulty in growing this plant. The best chance of success will be to give it a light gritty soil or scree in full sun. If you like you can put a few bits of mortar rubble under its roots, although I have never found this necessary. It comes from Asia Minor and can be increased by seed and careful division.

Three Good Crocus

By LOUISE WALMSLEY.

MANY people are apt to forget the humble Crocus when ordering bulbs or planning a rock garden, but the genus Crocus can be a very useful and decorative addition to any rockery. A sunny and well drained position is all it requires and the rest can be left to the Crocus. I particularly stress a sunny site as the blooms are only seen at their best in sunshine and as most Crocus flower during the shorter days the more sun they can have the better. A well drained position is just as essential—indeed I have seen very good results from Crocus planted in a gravel path, this being preferable to heavy loam.

Crocus pulchellus is an autumn flowering species and will bloom from mid-September to the end of October. It is a delightful shade of lavender blue, in fact it comes nearer to a blue Crocus than any I have yet seen. The stamens are yellow and insignificant but the stigmata is a flaming orange and a brilliant contrast. The corolla is clearly veined, shaded to a very pale orange at the base, and the throat inside is yellow. Few Crocus are easier to grow or more free flowering. I grew it first in a pan in the Alpine house and had nearly fifty flowers from twelve bulbs. I have since established it out of doors where it does equally well.

Crocus Imperati is a winter flowering Crocus. The flowers may start to bloom in December. All through January whenever there is a bright spell the blooms will open wide in the sun and be a brilliant patch of colour even in snow. It is bi-coloured, the outer petals being fawn and the inner petals violet feathered purple. Some people say they can detect a faint sweet scent, personally I have not noticed this. Again as in *C. pulchellus* there is the strong contrast of an orange-scarlet stigmata and also, in this case, distinctive



LEWISIA BRACHYCALYX



WELDENIA CANDIDA

yellow anthers. The bulbs do equally well in an Alpine house or out of doors and increase very quickly in number and size. It sets seed readily too, but we have never bothered to gather the seed as it reproduces itself easily when left alone.

Crocus corsicus is an early spring-flowering Crocus which we collected some years ago in Corsica. We were very lucky to find a few of the white variety which is evidently rare as I cannot find it in any reference book. We tried to establish *C. corsicus* outside and met with some success, but I think the numbers dwindle slightly each year. It is reputed to be difficult to increase as the bulbs are slow and chary in the production of seed and offsets. The most accurate description of *C. corsicus* is lilac, with the outer segments buff coloured and feathered deep purple. The orange stigmata protrudes well beyond the pale yellow anthers and as the flowers open in the sunshine the lilac corolla shades to a pale mauve throat. *C. corsicus albus* is a jewel and easily my favourite Crocus. It has shining pure white petals and a soldier-scarlet stigmata. Originally we had five bulbs in a pan in the Alpine house but they have never increased so we have not had the opportunity to try them out of doors. Two years ago we obtained seed from these bulbs which we are growing on, but it is doubtful if they will come true as *C. corsicus* is close by.

Native Plants worth a place in the Rock Garden

By J. L. MOWAT.

WHY do so many people refuse our native plants a place in the garden? So often when they stop to admire some particular plant and are told that it is a native they at once lose interest and remark "Oh, just a wild flower" or "just a weed" and pass on to something perhaps far less attractive, but interesting to them because it is from some other country. Yet there are few more attractive subjects in a rock garden than well-grown patches of *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, *Silene acaulis*, *Dianthus deltoides*, *Armeria maritima* or *Thymus Serpyllum* in its several shades; and there are at our command many other native plants which will do well and be equally attractive under cultivation in the rock garden, not all of them being necessarily inhabitants of difficult heights in their natural conditions.

From our coasts for instance in addition to the well-known Thrift or Sea Pink, which is such a wonderful sight among the rocks with its vast carpets of pink and here and there a variation to a deeper rose or sometimes to white, we can get *Glaux maritima*, a creeping mat covered with masses of small pink flowers, *Astragalus danicus* with its large heads of deep purple, the brilliant *Geranium sanguineum*, the graceful *Thalictrum dunense*, *Mertensia maritima*, *Anthyllis Vulneraria*, the ubiquitous *Thymus Serpyllum*, *Helianthemum*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, and (from the South coast) *Frankenia laevis* which does so well in the moraine.

Few plants can look better under cultivation than the common *Campanula rotundifolia*, and other plants of more or less general distribution which are worth a place in the rock garden are *Antennaria dioica*, *Saxifraga granulata*, *Sedum Telephium* and *S. roseum*, and *Scabiosa succisa*, while *Polygala calcarea* and the two *Genistas*—*pilosa* and *tinctoria*—make beautiful

rock plants. A number of fine dwarf shrubs are available in *Betula nana*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Juniperus nana*, *Salix reticulata* and *Salix herbacea*, *Loiseleuria procumbens*, and, of course, the many forms of *Calluna* and *Erica*.

For those whose rock garden includes aspects which are shaded, or partly shaded, there are several good plants such as the lovely *Linnaea borealis*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, the mossy *Saxifraga caespitosa* and *hypnoides*, *Cotyledon Umbilicus*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, and *Anemone nemorosa*. In damper parts *Primula scotica* and *Primula farinosa* are worth growing, and all the species of Orchis do well and make a great show, while if one can provide a bit of real bog-bed we can have the beautiful *Anagallis tenella* and *Parnassia*, *Narthecium*, *Drosera*, *Pinguicula*, and Bog Myrtle—*Myrica Gale*.

On a shady bank or rock wall I don't think anything is more attractive than a collection of the less robust-growing species of fern such as *Polypodium Phegopteris* (Beech Fern), *Polypodium Dryopteris* (Oak Fern), *Polypodiums alpestre* and *vulgare*, *Asplenium Adiantum nigrum*, *Trichomanes*, and *viride*, *Blechnum Spicant*, *Ceterach officinarum*, *Cystopteris fragilis* and *Cystopteris montana*, and *Scolopendrium vulgare*. A bank of these ferns when their young fronds are just unfolding in spring and with common Primroses interplanted is a very satisfying picture. From the list of ferns we must not omit the Parsley Fern, *Cryptogramme crispa*, but I find that it prefers the moraine to the shady bank.

One could add to the list many more native plants well worth a place in any garden for their own beauty but I think that a most attractive show could be obtained with those already mentioned.

Ben Lawers

By J. C. DUNDAS.

NOT long before the war I camped for two nights with a couple of plant-loving Scouts at the foot of the Ben and spent two days seeing what we could find on the hill. The date was mid-July.

The following is a list of the plants seen. I believe the nomenclature to be reasonably accurate. In a few cases it was checked for me by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Saxifraga aizoides.</i> | <i>Parnassia palustris.</i> |
| <i>Saxifraga hypnoides.</i> | <i>Vicia Cracca.</i> |
| <i>Saxifraga stellaris.</i> | <i>Rubus Chamaemorus.</i> |
| <i>Saxifraga oppositifolia.</i> | <i>Rubus saxatilis.</i> |
| <i>Saxifraga tridactylites.</i> | <i>Drosera rotundifolia.</i> |
| <i>Sedum villosum.</i> | <i>Pulicaria dysenterica.</i> |
| <i>Sedum roseum.</i> | <i>Gnaphalium supinum.</i> |
| <i>Epilobium alpinum.</i> | <i>Erica Tetralix.</i> |
| <i>Epilobium (?) alsinifolium.</i> | <i>Erica cinerea.</i> |
| <i>Epilobium anagallidifolium.</i> | <i>Calluna vulgaris.</i> |
| <i>Silene acaulis.</i> | <i>Veronica (?) montana.</i> |
| <i>Arenaria Sedoides.</i> | <i>Statice maritima.</i> |
| <i>Cerastium alpinum.</i> | <i>Arctium Lappa.</i> |
| <i>Athyrium (Polypodium) alpestre.</i> | <i>Vaccinium Myrtillus.</i> |
| <i>Asplenium viride.</i> | <i>Pedicularis sylvatica.</i> |
| <i>Erigeron alpinus.</i> | <i>Euphrasia officinalis.</i> |
| <i>Saussurea alpina (identification not quite certain).</i> | <i>Myosotis rupicola.</i> |
| <i>Gnaphalium dioicum.</i> | <i>Eriophorum polystachyum.</i> |
| <i>Lotus corniculatus.</i> | <i>Orchis latifolia.</i> |
| | <i>Orchis mascula.</i> |
| | <i>Pinguicula vulgaris.</i> |

- Arabis petraea.*
Cardamine pratensis.
Lychnis Flos-cuculi.
Ranunculus sp. (leaves lanceolate).
Stellaria graminea.
Oxyria digyna.
Viola (?) *hirta.*
Viola, large blue flowers.
Hypericum perforatum.
Lathyrus pratensis.
Potentilla Crantzii.
Potentilla Fragariastrum
Potentilla Tormentilla.
Geranium pratense.
Geum rivale.
Polygala vulgaris (White, blue and pink).
Rhinanthus Crista-galli.
Gentiana campestre.
Thymus Serpyllum.
Ajuga reptans.
Habenaria conopsea (?).
Scrophularia nodosa.
Narthecium ossifragum.
Melampyrum (?) *pratense.*
Thalictrum alpinum.
Solidago cambrica (?).
Trollius europaeus.
Angelica sylvestris.
Cochlearia alpina (or *micacea*).
Polygonum viviparum.
Alchemilla alpina.
Linum catharticum.

Forgotten Rockeries

By MARGERY DUFF.

UP and down the country you find them—inside the walled kitchen gardens of the mansion houses, the amateur handiwork of the ladies of those houses. They are generally badly constructed and always incongruously placed—often near a range of glass houses or beside serried rows of annuals. Nowadays they are a mass of Periwinkle and the coarser Sedums with perhaps a surviving clump of mossy Saxifrage. To me they have the faded charm of an old water colour, they represent far more than a futile attempt at self expression.

Think of the terrible bloodless battles that must have ensued between the ladies and the head gardener before these rockeries were ever there at all! Even to-day the estate gardener (unless specially trained) despises and dislikes Alpines and all that goes with them. The firm obstructionism of your Scotch gardener has to be endured to be understood and to indulge the whimsies of the “ lady bodies ” was no part of his job—I know because I tried ages ago and was defeated by a staunch Geranium and Calceolarea man. However, where the ladies had their way—all that was known of Alpines twenty or thirty years ago—was put into these rockeries. All visitors were taken to view them, and it is safe to say the Alpines were more precious to their owners than the range of glass houses or the formal gardens.

The ladies have now passed on—Mamma has died—daughters have married or the estates have changed hands, but with the innate conservatism of gardeners the rockeries have survived. Maintained largely by one grand summer weeding, I have found them where the ground was entirely given over to market gardening, and of all the vanished glories of mixed borders, Roses and formal bedding, only this little oddity of former owners remained. At one such place I was amazed

to hear the Head Man say, casting a look of sour approval at the sorry little rubbish heap, "Aye, its a bit dirty but it's fu' o' grand stuff"—this from one who is a well known Show Judge of fruit, flowers and vegetables.

I once visited the famous gardens of a castle in East Fife. Everything was on such a grandiose scale—such exotic plantings and perfection of culture—such flights of stone steps, balustrades and topiary work, one felt there should be a race of super-humans about ten feet tall to fit into the surroundings—and then, away from the formal splendour, in a corner of the kitchen garden I found it—the old neglected rockery—so obviously someone's labour of love—it struck one homely note—a fumbling amateur effort amidst professionalism. It charmed me more than any of the other beauties of those lovely gardens.

Primula Clarkei

BY DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

PRIMULA CLARKEI, a fairly recent addition to the long list of Primulas suitable for the rock garden, especially the *Scottish* rock garden, is now a firm favourite in a fair number of gardens and a few nurserymen offer it for sale. As this species is likely to win a place in the affections of rock gardeners as high as that occupied for so long by *Primula rosea*, I think a few notes in our Journal are called for.

Primula Clarkei was first found in 1876 near Kashmir at a height of some 7,000 feet but it was not until 1935 that it was found again and sent to this country. In 1939 it was granted an Award of Merit by the Royal Horticultural Society. Scientists between the years 1876 and 1935 seem to have been uncertain of the Section in which to place it, presumably because of inadequate herbarium material. Sir William Wright Smith and Dr. Fletcher in a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1943 placed *Primula Clarkei* in the Farinosae section and related it to *Primula elliptica* and *Primula rosea*. There, I should think it is likely to remain for there is no doubting its affinity to *Primula rosea*.

Primula Clarkei makes a neat little plant with attractive rounded leaves. In the late Autumn it dies down leaving bud scales as the only visible evidence of life. With the rapidly lengthening days and warmer sunshine in April the rich pink buds soon make their appearance, and, as the flowers open, the bud scales give place, as in *Primula rosea* to the ordinary leaves. The flowers first are a glowing pink but change with age to a more delicate shade. The flowers, which are about half an inch in diameter, are borne on pedicels some 2 inches long. Often the scape never develops but sometimes it may reach 2 inches high and bears an umbel of up to half a dozen or so flowers. *Primula Clarkei* may flower again in late summer or early

autumn but this tends rather to spoil the display in the following spring.

This species of the usually difficult Asiatic *Primulas* is an easy doer in almost any good garden soil, but it does better with half-shade. This is particularly desirable in a summer such as we had last year. *Primula Clarkei* does equally well in a pot in a mixture of equal proportions by bulk of loam, beech or oak leaf mould and coarse river sand. Again, of course, shade must be provided in summer and great care must be taken to give the plant an adequate supply of water. *Primula Clarkei* in pots seems to have a greater thirst than any other of the Asiatic *Primulas* I grow this way. I find that, whether grown in the open ground or in pots this *Primula* behaves in somewhat the same fashion as the *Auricula* and should therefore be broken up and replanted every two or three years. Failure to do this may result in the plants being found, after frost, lying on the ground almost rootless.

Primula Clarkei is easily propagated by division of the root immediately after flowering. It is a good thing this is so because it is exceedingly shy at setting seed. It was therefore with some excitement that my friend and fellow member of the Scottish Rock Garden Club, David Frame, harvested one seed capsule in July, 1946. This seed was sown immediately and germinated in late April, 1947, giving eighteen plants, but my friend was not to see the final results as he was taken ill during the summer and died on 4th October. Of the eighteen plants seven survived the neglect caused by his illness and these have now passed into my care, and I await their flowering with interest.

Primula Clarkei is a real gem for the rock garden and I recommend it without reserve.

Plants and Problems

PRIMULA STUARTII.

This *Primula*, belonging to the *Nivales* Section gained the Award of Merit at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show at the end of May, 1946. It has been in cultivation, fitfully, for many years, but never for very long at a time.

The plants described were grown from seed sent to this country about 1938, flowered first at Silverwells in June, 1942, and have flourished and increased in size ever since; although they have not flowered as well as they did the first year, many plants missing the spring flowering and blooming in the autumn instead. The flowers, which are a lovely pale sulphur-yellow, are very sweetly scented.

In a bed which gets very little sun, among ferns and shrubs and in association with *P. nutans* and *Mecynopsis quintuplinervia* *M. superba* and a beautiful white hybrid of *M. grandis*, they flower very well in spring, but in a moister soil and more open situation they are usually autumn bloomers, and here we have found self-sown seedlings round the established plants.

Owing to the labour shortage the *Primulas* have received the minimum of care since they were put out, but seem in no way discouraged by the invading hosts of weeds, Creeping Buttercups, Daisies, Docks, Nettles, Chickweed, and all kinds of grass.

Other species in this Section which do well here are *P. chionantha*, *sino-purpurea*, *sino-plantaginea* and *melanops*; these all seem to prefer a more open situation and more sun.

H. M. LOGAN HOME.

MORISIA HYPOGAEA.

Morisia hypogaea always refused to stay with me. In the moraine it dried off in summer. Elsewhere it rotted off at the crown if the slugs did not earlier eat it.



DRABA MOLLISSIMA



MORISIA HYPOGÆA

I put a plant of *Morisia* in a pot and sank it in fine ashes in a frame. The plant flourished. Later, on trying to remove the pot from the frame I found that the roots of the *Morisia* had grown deep into the ashes. As an experiment I planted another root of *Morisia* in a pot containing ashes only with some gravel round the collar. It did extremely well and I am inclined to think that this may be the best medium for growing *Morisia* when it does not like one.

J.C.D.

GENTIANA VERNA

Many years ago when visiting Six Hills Nursery I saw a trough filled with *G. verna* covered with flowers. I had never succeeded in making my verna perform similarly so said to Mr. Clarence Elliott, "How on earth do you do it?" His reply was, "It is quite simple and no trade secret." He then told me that when in the Alps he had wondered why *G. verna* always grew best on the meadows where the cows fed in summer. It then struck him that the answer probably was cowdung. He therefore mixed his soil, a normal compost, and in the lower part, up to a point just below that which would be reached by roots of newly planted plants, interspersed small bits of dry cowdung. He then planted the verna in ordinary compost but leaving the two inches or so next the surface entirely chips or gravel.

I went home and planted an old Scottish kern in like manner. That was 14 years ago and the same plants which I originally put in are many of them still there and flowering well in spite of the fact that verna is supposed to be short-lived, and perhaps more interesting still the seed germinates each winter when we have heavy snow, and the seedlings fill the gaps as the older plants die out.

It may well be that these facts are well-known to experts, but I know that many amateurs of my acquaintance have difficulty in keeping *G. verna* well.

J. C. DUNDAS.

RHODOTHAMNUS CHAMAECISTUS.

This small Ericaceous shrub has a name for being difficult to establish and flower in this country. Coming as it does from the limestone formation of the Austrian Alps it nevertheless seems happy with us in a well-drained lime free soil. It makes a small compact evergreen bush, probably never attaining more than a foot in height, and the flowers open towards the end of April, with sometimes a second crop in the autumn. They are saucer shaped, about the size of a halfpenny, and in colour a dainty shell pink, which is enhanced by the ten stamens each with its dark purple anther.

Rhodothamnus is one of the most attractive of Alpines. It is quite hardy and can be propagated by cuttings taken in the summer.

A.W.

GENTIANA ACAULIS ALBA.

This plant is perhaps more curious than beautiful but, however that may be, it is one which has given me a lot of trouble, and I shall be very grateful for any advice on management. When I got it from the late Peter Aitken's Nursery it was a fine upstanding plant with a dozen or so big white trumpets streaked and spotted in the throat with green. Apart from the fact that the leaves are of the pale green typical of the albino, the plant looks just like the ordinary *G. acaulis*, and I gave it treatment as such. The normal *G. acaulis* grows and flowers well with me, and I did not expect any difficulty with *var. alba*, but regrettably it started to "go back"; so much so that I lifted it and potted it up. On later inspection I found that the main body of the plant had died completely, but left a ring of quite healthy young shoots each with its own roots. These were planted in two large pans, about ten in each, and after an initial loss of one or two in each pan they settled down and are looking quite healthy but they have stayed much the same for over eighteen months, having made little or no growth. I do not

want to lose the plant entirely, and I would like to get it growing well and flowering—can anyone offer any suggestions as to what I should do?

HENRY TOD.

LINNEA BOREALIS.

I have heard it said that this is a fragile little woodlander. My experience has been that it is a robust and rampageous little invader that thrives on heat and drought and will work its way through and over anything—all in the daintiest way possible. My plant went into the rich scree in my small rock garden—it was obviously far too tender a treasure to fight its way on the big rock garden—or so I thought! It has twined its way through Gentians, round *Cyananthus* over a dwarf Heather and through an *Ourisia*, and last summer we had the odd sight of these four plants (and many others too), each with several pairs of little pink bells, dancing in the wind—a curious phenomenon.

With all its liveliness *Linnaea* is a really charming little plant. Its leaves lie neatly in pairs on the ground as it wanders here and there, and at intervals it throws up wiry flowering stems each with two pink thimble-shaped flowers which, like Janus, face in opposite directions. This is the plant that the great Linnaeus chose to perpetuate his name, and it has a neat miniature distinction which makes it well worthy of such an honour.

HENRY TOD.

MORISIA HYPOGAEA.

This is a plant which I have repeatedly failed to grow, yet it has the reputation of being quite accommodating and reasonably easy. In my last garden, which was very exposed (hot and dry in the summer and never getting too wet or suffering too much frost in the winter as it was on a hill-top) with a light soil I managed to flower it once and keep it for eighteen months, but it was only languishing at the best. Here,

on a damper site, it will do neither in sun, part shade or full shade. I have tried it in ordinary loam, in scree, and in the compost in which it arrived in a pot plunged in ash, but every time it dies in a matter of months. I am completely at a loss to know why it should be so totally impossible for me—can anyone help?

HENRY TOD.

BRYANTHUS EMPETRIFORMIS.

This is a most delightful little member of the *Ericaceae*, a neat and tidy shrub with shining green leaves like a Crowberry, as the specific name indicates. The flowers are surprisingly large in comparison with the leaves; pink bells at least as big as those of a *Daboecia*, with a solidity which means that they last well on the plant. They are borne on long pedicels at the end of the shoots, and are freely produced, about three or four on each shoot.

Bryanthus has the name of being rather temperamental, but I have found that it does well in the rich scree without any special treatment, and this last year (1947) it gave two flourishes, one in the spring and the other in the early autumn. This may, of course, have been the result of the heat and drought experienced this season following on the wetness of the early summer.

HENRY TOD.

SENECIO PULCHER.

Most of us agree that one plant flowering in autumn is worth a dozen in spring so far as the rock garden is concerned, and this prompts me to record my experience with *Senecio pulcher*, introduced from South America seventy-five years ago, and which commonly persists after *Polygonum vaccinifolium*, *Cyclamen neapolitanum* and even *Serratula Shawii* have passed.

Each year, in late October, it sends up its foot high, branching, flower stems capped with large crimson-

purple flowers which generally last throughout November and into December. It seems to be very hardy, and in winters of early snows its bright flowers can be seen standing, undamaged, above the snow. It is perfectly happy in its impoverished pocket well up on the rockery, where it has probably been for thirty years, but strangely enough we cannot grow this plant successfully in the herbaceous border.

J.L.M.

X *SAXIFRAGA MYRA*.

This hybrid Saxifrage, though the first of the red-flowered Kabschias, still maintains its position as the best of its colour over all the more recent introductions. The cross was made by that great gardener Reginald Farrer, and the first seedlings flowered in his garden at Ingleborough shortly before his death. The parentage of this very charming little Alpine was, for a time, obscure, but it now seems probable that it was got by crossing *S. lilacina* on to *S. scardica*, the characteristics of both these species being present in the hybrid. *X S. Myra* forms a cushion of neat grey-green rosettes tightly packed together, and above these rise large cherry-red flowers of considerable size, borne on one inch stems. As these flowers are produced early in spring, when the weather is inclement, it would be well to treat the plant as an Alpine house subject; but it is perfectly hardy and will thrive in the outdoor scree, though here the protection of a sheet of glass is recommended. Moreover, if the true colour is to be preserved, some shade from the strongest sun must be afforded. As with all hybrids, the only safe method of propagation is by cuttings or division of the plant, and one of our present-day authorities has drawn attention to the deterioration of the constitution of *X S. Myra* which has been the result of prolonged employment of this means of increasing stock. The suggestion has been made that a fresh start should be made by reintroducing this hybrid, but it is well to bear in mind that never again might so richly coloured

a Saxifrage be produced, even by the use of the same parents. Those who possess a really good X *S. Myra* should, therefore, cultivate it with care for the time may come when it will no longer be obtainable.

K.C.C.

A PROSTRATE VIOLA.

Viola aetolica saxatilis is a tiny prostrate growing, very rich yellow Viola, which produces its flowers in astonishing profusion and with great regularity. The flowering season lasts from June into November. This little Alpine is not long lived and should be treated as an annual, but as it sets seed in plenty it may be readily propagated. It likes a well drained sunny spot but it is perfectly hardy; it has lived through 25 degrees of frost without a covering of snow. This Viola may be relied upon to produce a mass of colour in summer and autumn.

R.S.M.

AN ANNUAL FOR THE ROCK GARDEN.

Among rock garden enthusiasts annuals are usually frowned upon, but the following is well worth growing. *Felicia Bergeriana* is a very easy plant to manage, and it will flower profusely from June to October. A few plants grown together will soon produce a fine mass of flowers, very dainty with yellow centres and bright pinkish-blue petals. The latter have a peculiar habit of rolling up when it is dull, and unrolling in bright sunlight. Seed is set in abundance which makes propagation easy.

R.S.M.

Glasgow Show, 1947

THE Glasgow Show was fixed for 16th and 17th April, 1947, but owing to the exceptionally severe winter, it had to be postponed to 7th and 8th May. It was again staged in the East and West Halls, in the Christian Institute, 70 Bothwell Street, and taken as a whole was a very pleasing Show, and great credit is due to the competitors, who in spite of great difficulties, staged such fine plants. The severe winter proved too much for the Members of the Trade, and only Mr Wintersgill, Thornliebank, was able to stage an exhibit of rock plants. He had a very nice stand which included several good plants, such as *Primula Faldonside*, *Linda Pope* and *pubescens alba*, also good plants of *Sax. l.*, "Tumbling Waters," and several of the dwarf *Rhododendron* species. The only other trade exhibit was from Messrs. Dobbie & Co., who had a very fine exhibit of Daffodils in variety, as well as several pans of Tulip species. It is to be regretted that the Tulip species are not better known, some of them are very beautiful and not difficult to grow. The beginner, who would like to compete, should consider potting up a few bulbs in the autumn and bringing them forward for competition, in the appropriate class at our spring Shows.

In the competitive classes, the entries were well in advance of last year, and the quality, all over, was of a high standard. The Trophy for Six Rock Plants, was awarded to Mr. A. Archibald, Carnwath, who had a very well balanced six consisting of, *Rhodo. fastigiatum*, *Daphne petraea grandiflora*, *Shortia uniflora grandiflora*, *Rhodo. racemosum*, *Androsace pyrenaica* and *Sax. Griesbachii* Wisley variety. The second prize went to Major and Mrs. Walmsley, who had two outstanding plants, in *Rhodothamnus Chamaecistus*, which was awarded the Geo. Forrest Medal, and *Phyllothamnus erectus*, a bigeneric hybrid, which would not find favour with the purists. It was, however, a particularly well flowered specimen, and was greatly admired. Throughout the show many fine exhibits were shown

by Mr. David Frame, Carluke, and he was runner-up for the Forrest Medal, with a well grown and well flowered plant of the rare *Primula obtusifolia*. It is with deep regret that we learn of Mr. Frame's passing. It was the only occasion on which he had competed at our Shows, but all his exhibits were of the highest merit. Another exhibitor from Carluke, was our new Secretary, Mr. David Livingstone, who was very successful in many classes, and had the honour of showing *Primula aureata*, for the first time at our Shows. The same plant had been shown a few days previously at the A.G.S. Show, in London. Dr. Tod again brought his plants from the East of Scotland, and was again successful. It is a great pity that his enthusiasm is not shared by more of our Members. A plant that attracted much attention was exhibited in the non-competitive section, by Mr. E. Darling, Port Glasgow. This was *Dondia Epipactis*; not a rare plant nor by any means difficult to grow, but an unusual plant. A first glance gives one the impression that the flowers are green, but closer examination shows that the "green flower" is a green bract, having in its centre a small insignificant yellow dot, which is the flower proper. It is a pity that Members do not exhibit more of these unusual plants. Considering the innumerable species and varieties of rock plants grown, it is difficult to understand why so few are seen at our Shows. It is hoped that Mr. Darling's example will be followed, at future meetings.

Major Walmsley again exhibited his beautiful water-colour drawings of his plants, and seen in a better light than in Edinburgh, last year, they were very much admired. The Shows would greatly benefit if Members would send in any of their flower studies or photographs.

It was most gratifying to see the classes for Narcissi so well supported, and some very fine vases were exhibited. Mr. Neil, Blantyre, was the principal prize-winner, and flowers of "White Emperor," "Beersheba" and "Prothilly", were outstanding.

THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB.

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