

# The Journal OF The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Editor—J. L. MOWAT, University Botanic Gardens, St. Andrews



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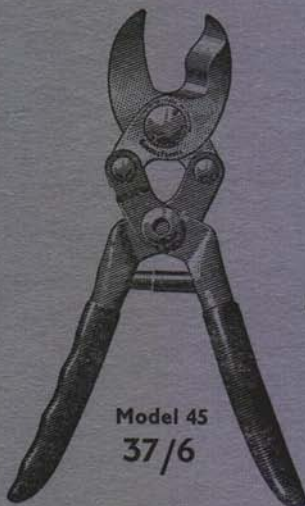


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# The Journal OF The Scottish Rock Garden Club

*Editor*—J. L. MOWAT, University Botanic Gardens, St. Andrews.

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## Editor's Notes

THERE IS certainly much to be said in favour of the issue of a *Journal* at the end of the summer season, with its opportunity of reporting the Club activities throughout the spring and early summer—Club Shows with all the fine plants and newcomers seen thereat, garden visits and the like—but on the other hand there are certain factors which always react to its disadvantage. In all the hustle and bustle of garden demands and activities in Spring and summer, seed-sowing, pricking out, transplanting, weeding, showing, and then seed collecting, it is very understandable and even excusable that active members have little time for writing reports, far less undertaking lengthy articles. But what a headache it is for the editor !

It is therefore only right that we should put on record our sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks to those members who in all the manifold calls of the busiest and most active season in their rock gardens still make an opportunity to report what is going on or to write an article on something which they think may be of help or interest to fellow-members. Without the generous sacrifice of some of the all-too-scarce leisure at their disposal by these members the editor's would be an impossible task and much of interest would be denied to their less active fellows.

What a fine thing it is that we do not all think alike, and that all, or most of us, have our own likes and dislikes—and very often are found expressing ourselves forcibly about them ! If we all liked the same plants, the same methods, or the same constructions, surely a great deal of the pleasure of rock gardens would be gone ; indeed it is not easy to imagine that there would be very much of real pleasure left. It would seem that only a rivalry as to who could best grow the same sort of plants would be all that remained, and without the sweetening of differing fancies and tastes that would soon lead to bitterness or boredom.

Something of the above thoughts are suggested by reading the articles of two writers in this issue of the *Journal* who very evidently have derived much pleasure from following their 'fancies.' In "Why rock gardening ?" Miss Currie digs down into the question she propounds and turns up a selection of possible answers. Mr. Daw in his article—"A little of what you fancy . . ."—describes to us just what has given him interest and pleasure in the garden. But while we in the S.R.G.C. derive so much satisfaction out of our cultivation of the smaller plants of the high hills and distant parts of the earth, or the reproduction on greatly reduced scale of a bit of landscape, we can well afford to allow to others their pleasure in giant dahlias, outside onions, or lengthy leeks. Again—"A little of what you fancy . . .!"

Almost inevitably the above thoughts bring to mind the subject of shows. Throughout the country flower shows large and small seem to draw the keen growers of plants as if an infectious epidemic were sweeping through the gardening community. But what of our Club shows ? The Club's steadily increasing roll of members does not appear to be reflected in a corresponding increase either in competitors and

entries or even in attendances at our shows ; and so far as non-members and the general public are concerned it would almost seem as if their interest in S.R.G.C. shows was next to nil in spite of all the work of advertising and publicity. At at least two of our shows this year there were occasions when there was *not one single person* in the hall other than one or two very bored and lonely looking trade members on duty at their stands ; doubtless the same state of affairs could be seen at other of the Club's shows.

This seems a very poor response to all the hard work and effort put in by show secretaries and groups of members organising the shows in their areas, and very often making special efforts to raise funds locally to help finance the shows concerned. Does it mean that only a limited number of members, and of the public practically none, are really interested in Club shows ? Or does it mean that we are suffering from an overdose of them, all (with the exception of one in the Autumn) packed into the short space of a few weeks from April to early June ?

When one thinks of the rent charges to be met for the halls of some of our larger shows, the labour and effort put in by show secretaries and their helpers in organising and beating up support, the labour and expense incurred by trade members in so loyally turning out in support of our shows—often surely for little or no return, one would expect a much more enthusiastic response from the Club as a whole, even if the general public show little interest.

After the remarks we are continually receiving in Club correspondence it is only right that we should pass on to all those who—past or present—have had to do with helping in any way in the Seed Exchange. If they could only have read some of the many complimentary letters which refer to this important branch of Club activities, and could realise just how much pleasure they are giving to many, we are sure they would feel repaid for all the time-absorbing labour involved, and enheartened for the coming season's work again. Quite obviously, for many of our members the issue of the Seed Exchange List is the event of the year and plays a very large part in their enjoyment of Club membership.

Many of our more advanced members have an unflinching urge to 'have a go' at some of the rarer and more difficult items which sometimes appear in the List. These members, through this urge and after subsequent trial and error, do much to popularise newly introduced or less well-known items and to help their fellows in their problems of treatment and cultivation. In this issue Professor Philipson's absorbing article on—"The Scree Plants of the Southern Alps, New Zealand"—opens up a vision of new problems to be tackled, and no doubt there will be enquiries as to where and how seeds of these plants may be obtained. From past experience it is not too much to hope that future Seed Lists may be able to provide an answer to some of these enquiries through the goodness of some of our overseas fellow members. In the S.R.G.C. New Zealand often seems to be no further away than "second turning on the right."

St. Andrews, *September 1960.*

## Third International Rock Garden Plant Conference 1961

### HOSPITALITY FOR THE CONFERENCE

WILL ANY members who are willing to offer hospitality for the Conference in Edinburgh please write to the S.R.G.C. Hospitality Organiser, Mrs. W. Robertson, 17 Cluny Gardens, Edinburgh, 10 **before 1st January 1961** and give particulars of what they have to offer? Also, will any members who desire hospitality in Edinburgh please write to Mrs. Robertson, giving information of what they require? It is appreciated that probably most members are limited by a variety of factors from offering to help on the scale of previous days, but any assistance in this line will be gratefully received.

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### CONFERENCE WEEK, EDINBURGH 1961

ENCLOSED with this issue of the *Journal* members will find a copy of the Programme of the Conference in both Edinburgh and London. It is hoped that the talks, etc., arranged will be of really general interest to the members and for this reason they are perhaps rather less technical than at earlier Conferences. The text of the various talks will be published as a Conference Report in the September 1961 issue of the Club's *Journal*, and it is hoped that there will be a good attendance of Members of the Club at the Conference Meetings both in London and in Edinburgh.

*Will Members please note the following important points :*

(1) The Edinburgh Show Schedule is printed in the Programme. It will NOT be reprinted in the *Year Book*, for reasons of economy.

(2) Will Members please fill in the forms enclosed in the Programme by the required dates? These have been left as late as is reasonably safe and if these are not filled in it may prove impossible to fix bookings later, so **PLEASE DO COMPLY** with this request. Owing to the Royal Horticultural Society's regulations, no Conference fee may be charged and this means that the Club must keep costs to the absolute minimum. To do this all last-minute alterations must be avoided and everything must run with the minimum upset, so please help in this way.

HENRY TOD,  
*Convener, Edinburgh.*

## Discussion Week-end

29th-30th OCTOBER 1960

### FISHER'S HOTEL, PITLOCHRY

#### PROGRAMME

Saturday 29th	2.30 p.m.	Opening Address
	2.40 p.m.	“Pools in the Rock Garden” T. C. Clare, Esq., Ascot
	4.00 p.m.	Afternoon Tea
	5.15 p.m.	“Plant Hunting in Yugoslavia” Dr. James Davidson, F.R.C.P.
	7.00 p.m.	Dinner
Sunday 30th	8.15 p.m.	Brains Trust
	10.30 a.m.	“Saxifrages” David Livingstone, Esq., Dunbartonshire
	11.40 a.m.	Break
	1.00 p.m.	Lunch.
	2.30 p.m.	“Some Plants that do well in my Garden Major Alan Walmsley, M.C., Wigtown- shire
	4.00 p.m.	Tea
	5.00 p.m.	Close down

#### AUTUMN COLOURS

If sufficient people are interested, a bus trip up Strath Tummel and back by Trinafour, Struan, Blair Atholl, and Killiecrankie will be arranged for Saturday morning.

#### SUNDAY MORNING BREAK

During this time visits to one or two local gardens will be arranged for those who would care to visit them.

#### CHARGES

(A)	RESIDENTS for the whole week-end, including full board and accommodation from 2 p.m. Saturday till 5 p.m. Sunday .. .. .	£3 3 0
(B)	NON-RESIDENTS for the whole week-end, including meals, but WITHOUT Bed and Breakfast	2 2 0
(C)	NON-RESIDENTS—All lectures but NO meals	0 17 6
(D)	NON-RESIDENTS—3 lectures on Saturday—NO meals .. .. .	0 10 6
(E)	NON-RESIDENTS—2 lectures on Sunday—NO meals .. .. .	0 7 0

These charges include share of expenses but do NOT include the fare for the Bus Trip on Saturday morning.



## RESERVATION FORMS

These may be obtained from Mrs. T. A. Stuart, Tigh-a-Chladaich, Moulin, Pitlochry, and should be completed and returned to her, accompanied by the appropriate cheque, as early as possible.

*N.B.*—The number of single rooms is limited ; they will be allotted to applicants in the order in which their reservation forms are received back.

Those who wish hotel accommodation before and/or after the official week-end (i.e. other than Saturday night) should state their requirements and the accommodation will be booked for them. Such EXTRA accommodation will be paid for *direct* to the hotel by the person concerned.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE BRAINS TRUST

Members who have any questions they would like to have answered by the Brains Trust should send them in, on a post card, with their Reservation Forms, or later.

## PLANTS FOR SALE TABLE

It would be much appreciated if those who can would bring a choice plant or two for sale to help meet the expenses of the Discussion Week-end.

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## Annual Subscription 1960-61

1. All members who have not already paid their annual subscription of 10/-, due on 1st September 1960, should do so as soon as possible. Please remit direct to the **Hon. Treasurer : Mr. D. ELDER, Jessamine, Kirkhill, Penicuik, Midlothian.** You are invited to renew your subscription by sending a Bankers' Order ; it saves much trouble to yourself and to the Subscription Secretary. A form is enclosed with this *Journal*.

2. The enclosure of these forms with *every* publication indicates that it is *not* their sole purpose to remind members of unpaid subscriptions. The largest proportion of our NEW MEMBERS are enrolled on these forms by individual members introducing the benefits of the Club to their friends. **HAVE YOU A FRIEND WHO WOULD BE GLAD TO USE ONE ?**

3. *Note : Overseas Members.* Would Overseas Members who pay their subscription by British Money Orders please make sure that they notify the Subscription Secretary that they have done this. Otherwise there is no means of tracing who has sent them.

## S.R.G.C. Christmas Cards

THE CLUB CHRISTMAS CARDS will be made this year from the four colour plates in this *Journal*, i.e. figures 7, 8, 9 and 10. They will be supplied in lots of **not less than one dozen**, which may be either all of one kind, or mixed, as desired. It will be sufficient to give figure numbers when ordering.

The price is 9/6 per dozen, post paid, including envelopes. Orders should be sent as soon as possible to the Hon. Treasurer : David Elder, Esq., Jessamine, Kirkhill, Penicuik, Midlothian, enclosing necessary remittance.

The steadily rising costs of production and postage of the *Journal* can be offset to some extent by your active support of this Christmas Card Scheme. Please place your orders **EARLY**.

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## Index to Journals 1 to 19

THIS INDEX for *Journals* 1 to 19 inclusive (price 2/6, post free 3/-) is now in print and available to all who apply with the necessary remittance to the Hon. Editor : J. L. Mowat, University Botanic Gardens, St. Andrews, Scotland.

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## The Dryas Goes South

SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB Stands at Shows organised by other societies have been a fruitful source of new members. In the past, apart from Newcastle, these stands have been limited to Shows in Scotland.

As part of the arrangements for the 1961 International Rock Plant Conference, however, our sister society in the south—the Alpine Garden Society—are to give us facilities for a stand at their Conference Show in London. We look forward to this with enthusiasm, because we are confident many potential members can thus be introduced to the Club.

So at the London Show on 18th and 19th April the Scottish Rock Garden Club Dryas emblem will be on show.

Members can help the Club to make best use of this facility in two ways :—

(1) Members are needed to staff the stand. These may be either London members or members from outside London who can make themselves available during the Show, or at least part of it.

(2) It is hoped that there will be London members able to provide hospitality to members from outside London who will be on duty.

Members who can help in any way—or who have any suggestion regarding this stand—are requested to write as soon as possible to the Club's Honorary Publicity Manager : Mr. J. T. Aitken, 75 Whitehouse Road, Edinburgh, 4.

## Seed Distribution

THE SEED LIST will be sent out in December to ALL Overseas Members. It will also be sent to Home Members who donate seed this year. Other Home Members may obtain a copy by sending a stamped (2d) self-addressed envelope, marked "Seed List," to me, Mrs. B. B. Cormack, The Cedars, 199 St. John's Road, Edinburgh, 12. Please apply by 1st December 1960.

As your new Seed Distribution Manager, I hope that members will continue to send their generous donations of seeds. Clean and accurate naming greatly helps the work of packeting seed for distribution. Locality of collected "wild" seed should be noted. Seeds of uncommon alpiners and dwarf shrubs are always in demand, as well as rare trees, shrubs and border plants.

All donations of seeds or list of seeds "To Follow" should reach me **not later than 31st October 1960.**

B. B. CORMACK

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## Why Rock Gardening ?

By GERALDINE CURRIE

I HAVE OFTEN wondered what it is that makes us grow rock plants. Why do we have rock gardens ? Is there one common feeling running through us all that makes us go to such infinite trouble to grow plants under conditions made by man ? I have searched in books and asked many people and not one gives the same answer. This is because rock gardeners are individualists and each likes this or that plant and this or that way of growing it.

During the last forty years the popularity of the rock garden has increased to an astonishing degree. In all forms of gardening it is the most adaptable to the particular enthusiasm of the individual. Few features in a garden provide such a variety of interest in so little space, but there is always one aspect which pleases the owner most and expresses his personality.

There are some who get their pleasure from the construction of a rock garden. Ever since Farrer raised rock gardening to the dignity of a well-constructed garden, in which plants could live under conditions as near to those in which they naturally grow, endless trouble is now taken in the creation of a background for the plants. The construction gives a basis for a picture in three dimensions. The builder reproduces in miniature, rock and crevices, crags and cliffs, by the careful study of the line of the strata and graining of the rocks ; screes are made ; little bays and plateaux are formed between the rocks ; and at the

base of the rock features the moraine merges itself with its surroundings. The soil used is carefully mixed in different proportions of sand, loam, leaf-mould and chippings ; each pocket filled with a diet suitable to the varying palates of the plants.

Others go in search of plants in their natural surroundings. They travel to all corners of the world as alpine plants are found in every continent and nearly every country of the globe. They return with new plants from the highlands of Nepal and Kashmir, the Himalayas and North Persia, Siberia and Tibet, China and Japan, the Alps of Switzerland, Italy and Austria, the grassy plains of Central and Eastern Spain, and the sandy coast of the Mediterranean. Each plant is carefully packed to be brought back to this country and to be placed in its position in a rock garden which is most akin to its natural surroundings. What more can be asked than to be able to go into a garden and see a plant which, if left in its natural habitat, would be seen by only a few ? What joy it is to see these plants grow and increase and give such pleasure to their owners !

Some like to grow their plants from seeds. From the smallest of beginnings they are able to watch a plant's gradual growth. The trouble, care and attention of years is completely recompensed when the plant eventually reaches its perfect form and produces flowers which could only be made by nature.

The Alpine house gives us flowers which, if left in the open, would be damaged by the rain and snow and the attack of birds. It affords not only protection but also prolongs the flowering season of a plant and so increases our enjoyment. The choicest Saxifrages, with their neat, compact foliage, the Calceolarias, with their golden and orange "slipper" faces, the Cyclamens with their delicate "fly-away" look, and the purple, lilac, yellow and wine-coloured Primulas. What pleasure to the owner to be able to protect such glorious treasures !

But, as all good gardeners know, knowledge can only be gained from first-hand experience. One can be advised but it is only by personal trial and error that knowledge can be really obtained and by knowledge, real pleasure achieved.

Each one must buy for himself. Each plant pleases the owner as an individual and expresses his personality. He must discover for himself how he wants to grow it and what its background is to be.

An escape from reality ? Surely not. For such close association with nature is to be in touch with reality and to leave an unreal world of hurry and atom bombs.

## The Scree Plants of the Southern Alps, New Zealand

By W. R. PHILIPSON

THE ROCKS over the greater part of the Southern Alps are composed of a friable greywacke. Fragmentation is progressing rapidly, producing unstable slopes of angular detritus. In the central ranges, where the rainfall is high, the cover of vegetation has been able to stabilize the slopes. Beech forest is well developed to around 4000 ft., and above that there is a cover of herb-field or snow-tussock grassland. Bare detritus is confined to the summits and the bluffs and steeper gullies.

Further east, two factors have tended to prevent the stabilization of the rock fragments. There the ranges are renowned for their vast bare screes, or shingle-slips, stretching from their summits to the floor of the valleys. These factors are, firstly, a rainfall which is considerably less than on the main divide, so that the protective cover of vegetation was never so luxuriant. It is thought in any case that the rainfall has diminished during the last few hundred years, so that the cover was deteriorating. Add to this, the second factor, that these ranges have felt the impact of man much more severely. There is reliable evidence of early and extensive Maori fires that destroyed the protective forest. The record of European fires shows them to have been as destructive. Grazing by sheep, and also by deer and chamois, has weakened the plant cover.

There is, therefore, good reason to believe that many of these scree slopes are recent in origin and occupy land previously covered with forest and snow-grass. The landscape is probably becoming similar to that left after the last retreat of the ice. Then, enormous deposits of scree built up "shingle fans" which later became stabilized and covered with forest or tussock grassland. For some thousands of years no large shingle fans were built, but now they are forming again, sometimes gradually, sometimes explosively. The accumulation of shingle in a mountain valley will become loosened after excessive rain and pour into the valleys in a few hours.

If you trudge over these vast slopes of moving stones you would think for a time that they were completely lifeless. First you might notice the movement of grasshoppers and spiders, both coloured blue-grey like the rock fragments. You would wonder what they found to live on. Then, if you were lucky, you would find a plant. I cannot forget the amazement and awe which held me the first time I saw a plant thrusting through a steep slope of stones so loose that it was difficult to prevent myself slipping. The habitat seems an impossible one and yet there is a distinguished band of plants which occur on these slopes and nowhere else. They at least benefit by the rapid erosion of these mountains.

About nine species are most characteristic of the screes. They are never abundant. Acre after acre will be bare of all plants, and then you may find one, or a drift of half a dozen scattered over a few yards, or, rarely, some scores spread over a few favoured square chains. Unless you search for them they are easily missed, because most of them, like the grasshopper, are the blue-grey colour of the stones. I can suggest no reason for this coloration, but most of the species are glaucous, often tinged with purple. Another feature shared by nearly all is their succulence, a character otherwise rare among New Zealand alpiners. They are mostly rhizomatous plants, the underground stems creeping down with the slope of the mountain and confined to the accumulation of silt below the stones. The shoots which make their way up through the stones are either annual or biennial and die after flowering. So many shoots are sheared off by the moving shingle that they must be expendable—survival of the rhizome, however, is vital.

The stones are usually dry and under the summer sun are often unbearably hot. But below the loose cover of stones the soil in which the plants are rooted is always moist. The risk of drought seems remote with so much melt-water from the winter snows and so much mist and dew.

Let me now enumerate the most characteristic species, naming after each its family: *Stellaria roughii* (Caryophyllaceae); *Ranunculus haastii* (Ranunculaceae); *Notothlaspi rosulatum* (Cruciferae); *Acaena glabra* (Rosaceae); *Epilobium pycnostachyum* (Onagraceae); *Anisotome carnosula* (Umbelliferae); *Lobelia roughii* (Campanulaceae); *Cotula atrata* (Compositae); *Poa sclerophylla* (Gramineae). Two interesting facts emerge from this list. Firstly, they all belong to families (and mostly genera) which are familiar in north temperate regions, and secondly, each belongs to a distinct family—that is to say, all are quite unrelated. It is interesting to note that except for *Notothlaspi*, all belong to genera that occur in more usual habitats in the surrounding country. In fact, most belong to genera with many local species, e.g. *Ranunculus*, *Anisotome*, *Cotula*, *Epilobium*, *Poa* and *Acaena*. This raises the interesting question of the origin of these very specialized plants. In the case of the *Ranunculus* and the *Epilobium* it may be possible to see relationship in other neighbouring species, for example in *Epilobium melanocaulon*, which is rather similar in several characters and also in its choice of habitat, for it grows in the unstable but flat, shingle of river-beds. But most scree plants show little resemblance to their nearest relatives, so that their origin remains a mystery.

*Stellaria roughii*: The stems which arise from below the shingle are excessively fine and hair-like. Above they branch repeatedly and bear large clumps of strap-shaped dove-grey leaves which are markedly succulent. Among the leaves are the rather large but quite inconspicuous flowers. Nothing can be seen of them but the long narrow sepals

which are exactly the same grey colour as the leaves. Because of the nondescript flowers it is a plant scarcely worth cultivating.

*Ranunculus haastii* : This plant has a great deal in its favour. If there is no more than a single leaf projecting through the scree I must pause to admire it. In fruit, the generous size of its heads above the wreath of bracts is a noble sight, and the wide-open golden cups in early summer can hold their own in any company. Add to this the appeal of its strange habitat and the challenge of its cultural difficulty and you have a plant for the most exacting connoisseur. The underground rhizome, which may be as stout as your thumb, runs down parallel to the slope of the scree at the level of the fine soil below the stones. From it, running into the constantly moist soil, are many stout cord-like roots. This rhizome bears leaves which thrust up, either singly or in pairs, to emerge through the scree. Their stout stalks end in deeply divided fleshy grey-green leaves. Other rhizomes will send up flowering shoots. These are exceedingly strong, leafless below, and above ending in a cirlet of divided bracts. Above this there is usually a single large flower, or rarely two or three flowered plants are found. The plant in the photograph with four seed-heads is most exceptional. (See fig. 11).

*Notothlaspi rosulatum* : Known as the penwiper plant from the regular arrangement of its grey felt-like leaves. These form close rosettes at the top of a thick tap-root. The plant is a biennial, sending up a dense pyramid of flowers in its second season. These appear in mid-summer and are delightfully fragrant. The plant is as striking in fruit, for each flower gives rise to a flat pod the size of a halfpenny and deep bronze-purple in colour. Easy enough to germinate, but difficult to keep to maturity.

*Acaena glabra* : This plant is exceptional among the scree plants in being neither succulent nor tinged with grey or purple. Indeed, its chief characteristic is its fresh green foliage which contrasts with that of other Acaenas from more normal situations. Among the best New Zealand Acaenas are *A. microphylla* with purplish leaves and *A. sanguisorbae* var. *pilosa* with glaucous foliage. The former is usually found in the gravel of a river bed and the latter on grassy mountainsides or among scrub. *A. glabra* has bright green feathery foliage to recommend it and in late summer sends up strong, very erect flowering shoots, each ending in a perfect sphere. Since it does not hug the ground it cannot be used as a carpeter, like the two mentioned above so frequently are.

*Epilobium pycnostachyum* : One of the more attractive of the New Zealand Epilobiums. The many ascending stems are crowded to form a bushy plant. The closely set leaves are narrow, finely toothed, and radiate rather stiffly around the stem. In late summer, white or pink flowers develop in the angles of the upper leaves. The flowers open only for a brief period each morning. The colour of the whole plant varies from a pale green to a deep red. The latter is to be preferred,

but seeds from the same parent will give a range of forms, so that selection has to be made from among the seedlings. Once established the plant is apt to spread by underground runner and by seed.

*Anisotome carnosula* : A plant which appears to have been turned to stone, it is so grey and stiff. The deeply divided leaves form a rounded filigree pattern through which the yellow flowers may be seen. The leaves are borne on succulent stems which taper as they run down among the stones. Where they join the creeping underground stems they are as fine as thread. As the seeds ripen on the female plants the thin base of the stem breaks and the whole visible part of the plant dries. This ball-like mass acts as a tumble-weed, being blown along the surface of the scree shedding seeds as it goes. Flowers in mid-summer. (See fig. 12).

*Lobelia roughii* : One of the less frequent of the scree plants, this small species of *Lobelia* is exceedingly difficult to detect. Its small bronze-coloured leathery leaves barely rise above the scree. Each is rather like a hand, being rounded with very deep bays between the narrow finger-like lobes. Each lobe is tipped with a pale spot where the finger-nail would be. These leaves are borne on fine stems which branch and creep among the stones. In late summer small white flowers appear among the leaves and are followed by unexpectedly large bladder-like capsules, each tipped with the enlarged calyx-lobes. As the capsules ripen their stems lengthen until at maturity they are raised perhaps three inches above the scree.

*Cotula atrata* : One of the commonest and most desirable of the scree plants. The thin creeping stems give rise to tufts of leafy shoots which flower in their second season. The leaves are finely divided and curled back like miniature ostrich plumes ; in texture they are slightly succulent and in colour vary from a pale glaucous green to deep purple. Each erect stem bears a few small leaves and a single button-like head of flowers. The flowers are a deep purple, almost black. Against this dark flat disc the pollen appears as a ring of rich golden dots which gradually closes in towards the centre as the heads mature. The plant is one of the most striking in the New Zealand flora. A less attractive form is known as var. *dendyi*. In this the disc, though larger, is buff or light brown. The two forms often occupy separate areas although present on the same mountain. (See fig. 13).

*Poa sclerophylla* : Although this grass is of no value in the rock-garden, it is interesting to note that the only grass characteristic of the mobile screes has thick fleshy leaves of a deep purple-grey colour. These two features it shares with most of its associates, but unlike them I have found it loses these when cultivated. Then its leaves are a fresh green and the blades are thin like a normal grass. I recently found a strain of *Viola cunninghamii* growing on a scree and the whole plant was a deep purple. I have it growing in the garden to see if it will keep this colour or revert to the yellow-green usual for the species.

A few other plants occur on screes without being strictly confined to them, so that this catalogue could have been extended. Perhaps



one of the Hebes (*H. epacridea*) should have been included (fig. 14), but it will also occur on the rocky debris around crags and even on the crags themselves. Another fine plant not strictly confined to screes is *Craspedia uniflora* var. *lanata*, so called because every part is coated with soft white wool. The flower-head is perfectly spherical and of a pale sulphur yellow at the time of flowering. As the fruits set this colour is lost, the whole plant then being pure white. The stems elongate after flowering and appear much thinner because the coating of hairs becomes drawn out. The plant is a perennial, overwintering as a short creeping rhizome. So do not be alarmed when everything above the ground vanishes, because new white rosettes will thrust their way through the scree in spring.

Also characteristic of the bare scree slopes is the famous vegetable sheep (*Raoulia eximia*), but as it is a plant which does not take root on unstable scree slopes it cannot strictly qualify for the above list. There are a number of vegetable sheep in New Zealand and they belong to two distinct groups, namely *Haastia* and *Raoulia*. These two genera both belong to the Compositae, but as they fall into separate tribes of that huge family they must be thought of as quite unrelated. So we must suppose that their superficial resemblances are due to convergent evolution.

The genus *Haastia* includes two woolly sub-shrubs with a rather open straggling habit. These are the buff-coloured *H. recurva* (fig. 15), which occurs in the cracks of high alpine rocks, and the greyish *H. Sinclairii*, which grows in the rocky debris below the summits or even on true scree slopes. In contrast to these, *H. pulvinaris* has its densely woolly shoots packed so closely together that the whole shrub forms a hard compact mass. This is the vegetable sheep of the northern half of the South Island. There it is particularly abundant on the barren tops of the Seaward Kaikouras. On the dry eastern slopes of the Southern Alps of Canterbury its place is taken by *Raoulia eximia*.

There are some two dozen species of *Raoulia*, mostly native to New Zealand. A few creep loosely over the ground, as does *R. glabra*, but most form dense carpets which spread by means of horizontal shoots. From these arise countless erect densely leafy shoots. The form of leaf in the horizontal and the erect shoots may be different. This is the habit of the well-known green carpets, *R. tenuicaulis* which flower in spring, and the silver *R. australis* which flowers in the autumn. The erect shoots will continue to grow indefinitely, dying off below and forming new roots and leaves above. Each in fact can be treated as a separate plant, though the whole forms a dense moss-like mat. In some the mat remains flat as in *R. lutescens* with hard lime-green foliage hidden by the sulphur yellow flowers in late summer. In others the mats grow unevenly and form attractive hummocks, as in *R. Haastii*, whose foliage ranges from apple green in spring through bottle green in autumn to a rich chocolate brown in winter. The flowers appear in early summer.

It is from such a habit as this that the form of the vegetable sheep

can be derived. The hard rounded surface of *R. eximia*, strong enough to resist the weight of a man and quite unyielding to the touch, is merely a crust enclosing a mass of peaty humus. The whole plant, some feet across, is an exaggerated hump caused by the uneven growth of a compacted mat of branches. These branches die away behind as they grow further upwards, leaving behind a mass of their decaying remains through which the young roots penetrate.

Seedlings of *R. eximia* occur in peaty soil often among fragmenting rocks, but also frequently on the decaying bases of grass tussocks. At first they are attached by the original tap root and all the branches radiate from the top of this. But soon this common attachment is lost. This habit of the young *R. eximia* persists to the adult in the smaller *R. mammillaris*. This species is more strictly a crevice dweller and seems to be dependent on continued attachment of the whole mass of branches to the original rootstock. This inserts itself deeply and inextricably into paper-thin cracks in the living rock.

A close examination of the surface texture of *R. eximia* shows the branch endings so closely packed that they form a mosaic of hexagons. The whole surface is thickly clothed in fine white hairs as though felted with hoar-frost. At the centre of each six-sided branch there is a faintly greenish eye, and from these emerge the small heads of flowers. All that can be seen, even with a lens, are the tips of the crimson corolla tubes either with a central ball of bright yellow pollen or with the divergent paler yellow arms of the style.

The great cushions of the vegetable sheep may be seen in drifts, or should it be flocks, over the steep, utterly barren slopes of the Eastern Alps. Their whiteness stands out even against the pale grey screes, and with rain, when the wet slopes darken in a few seconds, they glisten even more obviously. The water from a shower will collect on them in great drops, unable to wet the hispid surface, and these will run off like balls of quicksilver when disturbed by a sudden gust. Even in summer the air is rarely still. The plants are either dessicated by the hot west winds, or hidden by swirling mist driven against the crags by damp winds from the Pacific. In winter the white cushions merge with the first snows, until, for many months, they are buried deeply under the smooth drifts.

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## Meconopses in Westmorland

By C. M. CREWDSON  
Kendal

A FEW NOTES about the behaviour of Meconopses in my garden during the last two years may be of some interest to some members.

The dry, hot summer of 1959 and now again the drought in the early summer of this year has dealt hardly with all the species which I grew and there have been a great many losses, notwithstanding care and as much watering as I could do during the dry period.



*Photo—H. Esslemont*

Fig. 7—*Eritrichium nanum* on lime, Rolle Pass (see page 122)



*Photo—H. Esslemont*

Fig. 8—*Papaver rhaeticum* (see page 143)

Last winter in Westmorland was not a hard one, but I think it was a trying one for plants already weakened by the previous hot summer. A great loss to me were the plants of *M. punicea*, *M. delavayi*, and also my last plant of *M. sherriffi*; all of these species died during the late winter, which was a great disappointment to me. *M. quintuplinervia* and *M. cookei*, which usually are strong plants and flower well here, were disappointing in 1960, which I put down to the dry summer of 1959. All the seeds of the various species which I collected last year have been very erratic in germination; seeds of both *M. punicea* and *M. delavayi* sown as soon as collected came up well, but were weakly and succumbed during the winter.

I waited for several years for the flowering of the *Meconopsis* under the No. S.S.W.8620 and a group of them were lovely in the winter with their attractive rosettes with golden hairs. A few of these flowered in 1959 and most of these were a good red, though a few were stunted in growth and seemed to flower prematurely; the rest of this number flowered in 1960, some were red, others might have been crosses with flowers shading from deep rose to pale pink with a few completely white ones. The No. S.S.W.8648 grew to 7 ft. or over and were a very pure good yellow. S.S.W.7943 is (as Mr. Evans describes) a lovely plant and all the ones I have grown from seeds from the original plants have remained a deep and rosy pink, and I have had some fine plants from this number in bloom this year at the top of my peat wall. Another species which flowered early and well this year was S.S.W.8473 *M. gracilipes*, which also is so lovely in the winter and when it flowers has attractive but rather small yellow flowers.

Most of the old species of *Meconopsis* in my garden, such as *sheldoni*, *grandis* and *dhwojii*, have been poor compared to many seasons, and in some cases have collapsed and died from no apparent reason. An exception has been *M. chelidonifolia*; this species is seldom seen, for it is (again quoting Mr. Evans) "not a striking or appealing plant," but I have what I can only call a small hedge of this species and it has been much admired by visitors this summer. The plants stood unusually upright about 4 ft. or so from the ground and the small yellow flowers were freely produced and looked very pretty swaying and tossing in the wind. I am still waiting for plants of *M. latifolia* to flower, which I grew from seed from Mr. Polunin. I have planted them in crevices in the limestone rocks and I fear now they may look out of place when they bloom as I believe they reach a height of about three to four feet. However, I dare not move them now as they are happily established. (See fig. 16).

## Eritrichium nanum

By H. ESSLEMONT

“WE SPECIALISE in the difficult, the impossible takes a little longer,” is said to have been the motto of a certain R.A.F. Headquarters in the recent war.

After reading what has already been written about *Eritrichium nanum* in back numbers of the *Journal* and the *A.G.S. Bulletin*, it appears that this motto might well be adopted by members who attempt its cultivation.

Monsieur Aymon Correvon in his excellent little book \**“Rocailles Fleuris”* remarks that the English are passionately fond of *Eritrichium* and it is probably true to say that it is the secret ambition of most keen alpine gardeners to grow a well flowered plant of it.

I admit to being one of them and my excuse for writing these notes is that perhaps they may help other enthusiasts to avoid a few of the pitfalls. In addition, if they stimulate some discussion on the subject, I feel sure that the editor will welcome it.

Beginner's luck favoured my first attempt. Two seedlings were obtained in 1957 through the *Journal* and, believing them to be miffs, the pair were planted in a 5 in. pot which was plunged in sand. “Tri-tox” vanquished an early attack of greenfly ; after this the plants settled down and made growth. Three months later, to my surprise, I found the roots growing strongly through the bottom of the pot. Although it was the end of September, they were divided and potted separately in 5 inch pots with tufa. They did not resent this, and from October onwards they were kept very dry. When growth started in spring, bottom watering was commenced, gradually at first and later copiously.

The two plants had quite different habits ; one had long flowering stems and was successfully exhibited in May with 60 flowers (fig. 17), while its companion could only rise to half a dozen smaller sessile blooms of a paler blue.

Unfortunately, the better plant was lost a year later through over-watering in spring, but its companion is still with me and flowered reasonably well this season.

It was on the 1958 A.G.S. Tour to the Dolomites that I first saw the “King of the Alps” in his mountain fastness. There we found it at both the Pordoi and the Rolle Passes, at the former on granitic and at the latter on limestone rocks (see fig. 7). There were considerable variations in forms and in colours which varied from the normal blue to rather pinkish tones and a white form was also discovered. I thought it more interesting than beautiful.

\* *“Rocailles Fleuris”* par Aymon Correvon, 3 édition, avec 58 planches en couleurs et en noir. Frs. 15.50, obtainable from CORREVON, CHENEBOURG, Genève, Suisse.

A number of small seedlings were collected, brought home and successfully established. For transport, the roots were packed in damp sphagnum, surrounded by polythene, held in place by elastic bands. The leaves were left exposed to prevent damping off. On their arrival home the seedlings were immediately potted up, with small pieces of tufa at the neck, in 2 in. pots which were plunged in sand. (See fig. 18).

The majority came through the winter safely and the following spring, as soon as the roots were growing strongly through the bottom of the pots, they were potted on. At this stage, I suggest three methods of cultivation, all of which have proved encouraging. Each is an adaptation of a condition in which plants have been found growing in nature.

All offer some protection from damp at the neck of the plant, one of its most vulnerable points. Other three common causes of failure are dryness at the roots in summer, damp or overwatering in winter, and greenfly. "Tritox" will effectively control the latter.

I have not found that *Eritrichiums* are over fussy about soil, provided that it is reasonably open. I add a quarter of gravel and a little peat to mine. Drainage must be faultless and, to the optimists, I suggest long tom pots which will allow plenty of room for the root system to develop over a period of years.

I grow my plants in full sun with some shading in summer.

The three methods of culture suggested are as follows :—

1. Build a platform of tufa almost level with the top of the pot, over the usual soil mixture. Fit the tufa closely around the neck of the plant, and finish off with fine gravel.
2. Drill a half-inch hole through a large lump of tufa. Take a young seedling whose roots are growing strongly through its small pot. Shake off all the soil. Wrap a small piece of tissue paper lightly round the roots, which may be 4 to 5 ins. long. This will enable them to be drawn through the hole in the tufa without damage. Remove the tissue paper and place the tufa into the soil of a previous prepared pan. Fill in the hole in the tufa around the roots with sandy soil, packing carefully with a thin piece of the wire. Water well and place in a shady place for a week. If this operation is carried out in spring when the plant is making growth, there will be little or no check. Moisten the tufa occasionally until the roots have got a good hold in the soil, afterwards water the soil only.
3. Plant in the usual mixture with a good inch of gravel on the surface of the pan, removing as much of the soil as possible from around the neck of the plant. Small pieces of tufa might be substituted for the gravel. In each case plunge the pots in sand, which should be kept damp in summer, and in winter avoid direct watering from mid-October until March (in Scotland) and control the moisture by regulating the humidity of the plunge. Remove dead and decay-

ing leaves from time to time with a pair of tweezers. After some years the old growth becomes quite woody, but it will break away in spring. Select a good form of flower before trying to build up an exhibition plant.

Now that seed can be obtained from Switzerland and the seed exchanges, members may care to try raising their own plants from seed. Normal methods are fully dealt with in :—

Lawrence D. Hill's 1959 edition of "The Propagation of Alpines," a most useful reference book which should be in every grower's library.

Monsieur Correvon in his book describes another interesting method which may not be generally known to members. He states :—

"We have a very simple procedure for growing Aretian Androsaces and *Eritrichium nanum* from seed. Autumn sowing is recommended, for seeds collected in summer are fresher and it is often possible to cover them with snow in December, which seems to greatly help in activating germination.

"We use strong wooden boxes, 30 × 40 centimetres, and 40 centimetres deep. The bottom is filled to a height of 15 centimetres by a good drainage of crocks covered by sphagnum. Then between slates the width of the box, half a centimetre apart, we introduce a mixture of peat, turf, sand and broken slate. Holes are pierced to start with in the bottom and on the sides to allow the water to run away. There is nothing left to do but to sow the seed, spacing them one centimetre apart and jumping after each line a slate. Then we place the box in as cool a place as possible, taking care that it is covered by snow. If there is not any snow, watering in frosty weather is recommended, as ice is a good substitute for snow. It is a phenomenon still little known, that certain seeds must be frozen before they can germinate.

"When the plants have formed in spring and are half a centimetre in diameter, one turns the box on its side, opposite the lateral holes which are now used for watering. The slates form thus real fissures for perfect drainage.

"The advantage of this method rests in the fact that one can turn the box, according to the needs of the plant, towards any point in the compass, and one can take out plants without damaging the roots and re-plant with the maximum chance of success.

"Applying the same principle, we have succeeded perfectly with a large pot prepared in the same manner. The drainage and the slates are placed as in the box, but for watering one simply drilled, on the side, a hole on which one cemented another small pot, making the opening correspond with the drainage hole. This construction, rather strange at first, is placed in a rockery of tufa and hidden by stones which, hiding the pottery, only allow one to see the slate. One can construct quite a little rockery on this basis."

Shall we expect large classes of Boraginaceae at future Rock Garden Shows ?

Leaves from Ferny Creek, Victoria, Australia.

## In Quiet Appreciation

By B. WATSON

THE SUDDEN discovery of a patch of crocuses or cyclamen, or perhaps a clump of irises or daffodils, in bloom, is an unforgettable pleasure. You may have been intent on visiting something else of interest in the garden when a splash of colour catches the eye, and like a magnet compels you to head in that direction, and there the yellow crocuses have thrust upwards unnoticed, and opened their chalices before you had realised their seasonal appearance was due. And standing there gazing upon them you are inclined to reflect for a moment upon the subtle influence colour has on our lives, subconsciously enriching them. It is expressed in the rainbow, glimpsed in the sea-shell, escaping around the world in the multifarious gradation of shades seen in the flowers during the year's cycle. Furthermore, the hybridists are continually endeavouring to introduce new shades in certain flowers hitherto restricted in their range of colour. Thus, on whatever colour the eye rests, is portrayed the magical handiwork of the Great Artist.

Autumn is gradually taking over from Summer here just now, and the sprightly cyclamens and crocuses are stealing the affection once again. Both are remarkable for the way they set their seed. The stem of the former spirals down so that the seed-pod is protected by the coil thus formed, and months later when the matured pod is ready to burst, the seeds are close to the ground or even already bedded down in the mulch left by the seasons. If one has failed to collect the seed, to go out one morning and find the tiny leaves of the young seedlings in evidence is most gratifying.

On the other hand, the seed-pods of the crocuses rise up out of the ground on separate stems some time after the flowers have departed, so that the novice could be beguiled into thinking they had commenced to bud again !

A drift of *Sternbergia lutea* is helping to brighten a bend near a flight of steps, as though anxious to win approbation before the Autumn foliage takes pride of place.

Mention must also be made of *Alyssum saxatile*, *Convolvulus cantabrica* and *C. mauritanicus*, which have been generous with their flowers for several months, and are therefore invaluable over the Summer period.

This applies also to *Campanula isophylla*, which is showing its appreciation of the rock wall by tumbling down in a blue profusion, while *Achillea clavennae* is edging its silver and white way along one of the crevices.

*Cyclamen orbiculatum roseum* is in bud for the first time, and what beautiful deep pink buds they are ! These cyclamen have grown



conscientiously from seed received from the S.R.G.C. about two and a half years ago. (Later : It is now early Winter and the buds have opened out into attractive blooms which are the highlight of the rock garden at the moment. May I be permitted to add here that *Narcissus cyclamineus* is already up nearly two inches and two or three buds are showing).

Many other rock plants, owing to the warmth and sporadic rains of Summer, have increased in size, and characteristically some are giving each other a gentle nudge, subtly challenging their neighbours to the amount of available space, and some appear to have concluded an undeclared truce with those nearby, while others are lightheartedly romping on their way while there is yet time before resting for the Winter.

The fragrance of the garden cannot be disregarded. How often it greets us as we proceed to take stock of this or that. Seldom is it not noticeable, coming either from some small treasure, or maybe a large flowering tree. May it linger on.

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## NATIONAL TRUST CRUISES 1961

The National Trust for Scotland's programme of spring cruising, by the "Meteor", for 1961 includes visits to notable gardens in Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The Gardens cruise, 12th May - 19th May, will start from Oban and visit Colonsay, Inverewe and Gigha. One day will be spent in Northern Ireland as guests of the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn at Baronscourt, and then two days based on Dublin to see the gardens of Glasnevin, Mount Usher, Howth Castle, and Malahide. On the return journey Bodnant, south of Llandudno, and Brodick Castle on Arran will be visited.

The Islands cruise, 4th - 11th May, includes the Aran islands and the Tory islands off Ireland as well as Fair Isle and St. Kilda and, it is hoped, Foula and the Out Skerries,

The Highlands and Islands cruise, 20th - 27th May, arranged particularly for Commonwealth visitors, includes many ancient strongholds and clan seats.

Enquires about any of these cruises should be addressed to the Organising Secretary, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2.

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## A Little Of What You Fancy . . .

By R. A. DAW

THAT WAS more or less the principle on which I began to build a rock garden. A chance visit to a Scottish Rock Garden Club show in Waverley Market, Edinburgh—I believe it was the first show at which *P. aureata* was shown and the strange circumstances of its origin explained—lured me into membership. Soon after, my wondering eyes were examining the riches of my first Seed Exchange list.

After eleven years membership of the Society, I still know of no gardening delight to equal the Seed List. In those early days, perhaps, it was rather a heady brew. My garden, a pocket-handkerchief of a thing, would have had no room left for essential early potatoes and peas if the many boxes of meconopses and Asiatic primula which I sowed had come to maturity. Fortunately most of them did not ! I learned then how much work really was entailed in growing from seed—the need for constant watering and the necessity to give shade to seedlings and prick out at the right time.

A change of home also altered all my conceptions of rock gardening. We moved into an old house 600 feet up on the slopes of the Sidlaws. The winter climate was rigorous, but we had two bits of good fortune, the now complete absence of rabbits in the district and a beautiful leafy neutral soil with excellent drainage. The only snag was that this soil lay under an age-old accumulation of grass and weed and tree stumps.

Contrary to the best advice, we planted up as we cleared. The site did not lend itself to landscaping and it seemed to us that a few of the big stones we got from a broken-down pig styer would give us all the variations in height that we needed. We have had many more pleasures than disappointments.

It became apparent early on that this was no place for the more exotic items in the catalogue. The east winds of January, February and March would see them off in a day. A particular disappointment was the sad fate that befell a *Thuja occidentalis*, "Rheingold." We persevered for three years, during each winter of which the little tree was blasted beyond its ability to recover in the summer following. We decided thereafter we would have as little as possible to do with ever-greens.

Our rock garden, though sheltered by trees in the hottest part of the afternoon—whatever that amounts to in the east of Scotland nowadays !—is nowhere overhung and so we assumed that only the most ardent of sun-loving plants would feel unhappy. So it has more or less proved we can grow pretty well anything.

Two bushes of that odd shrub, *Leycesteria formosa*, were discovered in the midst of laurel clumps which we, after much labour, were able to clear. We have allowed the leycesteria to remain as the dominating

features of the garden. In a severe winter they are pretty well cut down, but they always come again and their sea-green stems provide something that is just a little distinctive.

Elsewhere in the garden—I should have said that it is roughly triangular, about fifty square yards in area—we have used for height variations *Potentilla fruticosa* “Katherine Dykes,” *Erica mediterranea*, *Erica stricta*, and Rhododendrons “Blue Diamond” and “Sapphire.” We plan to add a yellow *Rh. sargentianum* perhaps. There is also a bush of the very unexciting public parks hedging variety of veronica, which has the virtue of serving as a windbreak. It will not grow very tall, for nothing grows as tall in this wind-swept corner as the catalogues suggest.

We are very successful with the Carnea heaths, and almost equally so with *E. tetralix* and *Calluna vulgaris*. We can also layer *Erica vagans*, the Cornish heath, with great ease. *Erica cinerea* is not so happy, though it “does”: it does not get sufficient sun, I suppose. Helianthemums, too, are only moderate “doers” with us. The misnamed *Menziesia*, which is really *Daboecia cantabrica*, does not live through our winter.

Curiously enough, though aubrietia flowers quite freely, year after year, *Phlox subulata* is a complete failure. It grows vigorously but you can count the flowers without difficulty!

But I do not complain! So many other plants are so much at home: *Lithospermum*, *Lewisia* (*L. cotyledon* and hybrids of this), *Primulas rosea*, *alpicola*, *sikkimensis*, *polyneura*, “Garryarde,” and in the rockwork, *marginata*. I also have a good bed of copper-coloured candelabra which the seed list called *P. aurantiaca* but which is not like our Editor’s *aurantiaca*. Another good bed, grown like my primulas from S.R.G.C. seed, is of *Calceolaria biflora*. In mass this is a lovely thing.

When I take time to consider, I am surprised how quickly our garden has grown and how moderate the cost has been. This is due largely, of course, to the Seed Exchange and I am now glad to be able to return something in exchange for what has been so generously given.

We contrive to have colour most of the year. After the spring show of bulbs, aubrietia and the saxifrages, come *Gentiana acaulis*, *Linaria alpina* and *Saponaria ocymoides*, then the candelabra primula, *Potentillas* “Katherine Dykes” and *mandshurica*, the easier but very colourful campanulas, the beautiful cerise potentilla, “Miss Wilmott”—we also have that gleaming red “Mrs. Gibson”—and finally the callunas, *Gentiana sino-ornata*—I confess this grows as easily as dockens with us—*Silene schafta*, and the dwarf michaelmas daisies.

I give this catalogue of names in the hope that it may help beginners, for none of our plants is coddled. A small top dressing of peat from time to time and for the *Lewisias* a pane of glass in winter is the extent of our care. But how wonderfully rewarding it all is.

We have a few local hazards. An occasional mole will rouse us to fury. The sparrows picked off every yellow flower in a small bed of *kabschia saxifrages* which is our most recent ploy. Probably black thread would help here. And we lost quite a number of blooms from our *Primula sikkimensis* just as they had opened. We do not know the culprit here, but we suspect a cock pheasant which parades about the garden as if it owned the place ! Mice eat our new crocus bulbs, but they can be beaten by placing a flat stone on top of the area planted till the shoots are through. The mice are not interested then.

Talking of the Seed Distribution, I suppose there must be the odd accident. One of these turned out very happily for me. I asked for *Campanula collina*. So it turned out to be, but every one white. How well they look for weeks on end, when there is little or no white anywhere else. *Celmisia spectabilis* will provide another spot of white next year. The plant I bought this Spring has not yet flowered.

The garden is pretty well clothed, but we still have ambitions. I would like to see growing in our garden *Enkianthus campanulatus* and *Shortia uniflora* *gf.* I wonder how they will stand our North-easters ! And I still would like several more autumn gentians. I am waiting eagerly for "Kingfisher" to flower.

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## Letter from Beregonium

July 1960

Dear Mr. Editor,

I wonder how many of your readers know where Beregonium is ? I bet some of them think I have gone off to look for alpiners in the Abruzzi. But, as I sit in a camp chair writing to you in the evening sunshine, I see in front of me the great mass of Beregonium and beyond it the mountains of Mull, and the Firth of Lorne away down to the point behind which hides Oban. Beregonium was a palace of the old Pictish Kings. My guide-book says that the name is probably George Buchanan's latinised form of Barr na Gobhann, the Ridge of the Armourers, but my wife, who has no patience with Latin names either of palaces or flowers, calls it Pelargonium and that is that.

We came to Benderloch partly because it is within handy reach of the Appin country, and we thought it was time for the children to be introduced to the ancestral country of their clan, and partly because my wife and I had been greatly attracted by the district when we stayed at Connel for a holiday many years ago. And of course also because I looked forward to browsing upon the flora of a new district.

The two flowers that make immediate impact upon one's senses here are the bindweed and the honeysuckle. The bindweed flaunts magnificent white-striped pink trumpets from every hedgerow, and

never have I seen honeysuckle in such profusion anywhere. As we cycle along the byeroads we pass in and out of drifts of its sweet perfume, and I wonder to myself if any scent manufacturer has ever tried to bottle it. Surely all the young men would bow down before any girl who walked like a goddess in a cloud of that bewitching scent. Today my son and I climbed a little hill covered with ancient trees, oak and birch and mountain ash and hazel. On the flat top of the ridge of the hill we found a vast carpet of *Oxalis acetosella* interspersed with violets, and from this carpet emerged thousands of honeysuckle seedlings, while old plants twined up the trees as thick as cables. We cut a sapling which was being strangled by one plant, and now my son walks the roads like Hermes "with serpent-circled rod." Benderoch must indeed have a fertile soil and a mild and generative climate, for it is not only the honeysuckle that grows in this profusion. The wildrose is everywhere and its flowers seem exceptionally large, much larger than the wildroses of Arran and, I think, with less of their elfin beauty.

These are the flowers that hit the eye immediately, but then on succeeding days one adds to one's list, and one comes upon the occasional surprise. For example, on my first visit to Beregonium I found the approaches to the palace lined with sheepsbit, and a pretty flower it is when in substantial colonies. But only two days ago, returning from Connel, and tiring of the motoring-road, we cut across a field of haystacks to the shore, and there on the uncut border of the field I came on a clump of field scabious with its handsome flat pincushion heads. This is a flower I have never seen before in Scotland, although in Brittany two or three years ago it lined the roads.

On the moors, at first, I saw only the usual type of orchid, but then here and there I came on colonies of a kind I cannot remember seeing before, although McLintock & Fitter say that it is fairly common. This is the Butterfly Orchid, presumably the 'Lesser' variety, although its flowers are creamy-white rather than greenish-white. And a handsome plant it is, a pleasant change from the usual tight spikes of purple or pale pink.

My next discovery was the one that pleased me most, because it came nearer to the domain of the rock-gardener. It is very curious how one's eye picks out the unknown even when one is not consciously looking for it. On this occasion I was pushing my bicycle up a steep hill-road when out of the corner of my eye I saw a yellow flower of a different form standing out amid the yellow of tormentil and buttercup. I dropped my bicycle on the road and bounded over the ditch towards it. And there it was, in a largish clump, an unmistakable saxifrage! I restrained my natural instincts and took only one flower-stalk for identification purposes, and found when I got back to my book that it was the yellow mountain saxifrage, *saxifraga aizoides*. This discovery delighted my heart, as the only other saxifrage I have chanced upon in my wanderings is the golden saxifrage that abounds

in damp places in Arran. But a few days after making the discovery, we were taking the children on a walk which is an old favourite of ours. It goes from Creagan up Glen Creran past Fasnacloich and then over the ridge of the pass and down Gleann an Fhiadh to Ballachulish. When we got above the thousand feet level I found that the sides of every mountain runnel were lined with my *saxifraga aizoides*, and here and there it even carpeted the hillside. Be it counted to me for virtue that once more in spite of this great profusion I left them to bloom in peace and did not take the tiniest rosette.

But I confess that I did not show the same restraint a few days later. My son and I had taken the train to Appin, walked the long hand-bridge across the bay and paid our respects to Castle Stalker, visited Port Appin, and then followed the coast road round the North Shian peninsula until we came to Creagan Station, where we had forty minutes to wait for our train. The tide was in and so we could not pass the time looking at the seals playing on the rocks on the other side of Loch Creran. So we began to play ball at the east end of the long platform. I noticed little yellow flowers here and there, and then I saw that the whole of that end of the platform was covered with *Sedum acre*. The station master had obviously just hoed it all up, so I had no compunction in filling a polythene bag with about a pound of it—I could as easily have taken a hundredweight, so if there is anyone who likes this humble plant as much as I do they now know where to get it in quantity—unless the station master thinks of weed-killer! This sedum and its pinky-white brother are the only sedums for which I have any patience. The pinky-white one is widespread throughout Benderloch, but I have not seen the yellow one anywhere except on Creagan Station.

I think, Mr. Editor, I have now gossiped long enough. But I warn you that before the end of the holiday I mean to get to my ancestral island of Lismore, which means “the great garden,” so perhaps next week I shall be forced to send you a copious post-scriptum!

Meantime, since I am writing to you, I send you my sincere thanks for all the pleasure that your *Journal* gives me, and I send you also my best wishes for a happy holiday.

Yours sincerely,

“PIERRE”

If your interests are Primulas, Auriculas, Polyanthus, you would find the Year Book of the

## NATIONAL AURICULA AND PRIMULA SOCIETY

both interesting and informative; a coloured photograph of Premier Auricula “King Cup” is a feature of the issue.

Price 6/- post paid from the Hon. Secy.

R. H. BRIGGS, “Springfield,” Haslingden, Lancs.

## Not so 'New, Rare, or Difficult'

By F. C. B.

READING through the Plant Notes of previous *Journals*, I have been struck by the fact that the subject matter is usually plants which are, in the words of the Show Schedule, "new, difficult or rare in cultivation." Whilst this is as it should be, I feel there is perhaps room for some plants which do not qualify under any of these heads and yet would not merit inclusion in a list of the 100 best rock plants for, by definition alone, the great majority of species grown in our gardens must necessarily lie without either of these categories. I have therefore chosen for illustration of my point six plants which I have grown for some time and which I have found to be plants of more than average merit, obtainable without difficulty and yet, according to my observations, not as frequently grown as they deserve.

*Oenothera missouriensis*, or *Megapterium missouriense*, if you follow the American botanists, is one of the most spectacular of plants for growing in the rock garden. From a root-stock, which dies down almost to ground level in winter, it throws up a number of reddish stems to 9 ins. to a foot clothed with opposite lanceolate leaves about four inches long, the midrib and the main nerves of the leaves are a pale silver green in colour, contrasting markedly with the strong green of the body of the leaf and giving to the whole a distinctive architectural quality. The flowers which arise from the axils of the leaves unfurl from a calyx shaped like an old-fashioned candle-snuffer, yellow green in colour and spotted with red like the cuckoo-pint and are quite enormous for the size of the plant, up to four inches across when fully expanded; they are of a good clear yellow and, like many of this genus, open in the evenings of July and August, though in a dull season such as the present they have continued open for 24 hours or so. The seed pods which follow are also remarkably large and comprise four conjoined wings at right angles to each other. There appear to be no difficulties in the cultivation of this plant, which is quite hardy and not at all fussy about soil, though mature plants seem to resent disturbance as their roots are somewhat brittle. It comes readily from seed.

The Valerian family has given us an attractive acquisition suitable for even the smaller garden in *Patrinia triloba* (*P. palmata* to the trade). Introduced from Japan, this plant grows about a foot high and has incised leaves of three to five leaflets which are glossy and dark green, mostly radical. The flowers, which appear in July and August, are faintly but pleasantly fragrant, small, of a rich yellow, and collected in a rather loose cyme which stands well clear of the foliage. The whole plant has a slightly waxy appearance which, in conjunction with its neatness, gives it a faint air of artificiality that also appears to protect it against the ravages of the weather and insect pests. In cultivation it spreads by rooting, but at no great rate, and division is a practicable method of increase.

The Heucheras have of late years become the object of the hybridists' art in an endeavour to obtain bigger and brighter flowers. *H. micrantha*, whilst the parent of a number of good hybrids, is not likely to arouse the interest of the herbaceous border fan, for its flowers are minute and its colour a rather pale salmon. Nevertheless these are produced in such profusion that they would give the plant the name of Foam Flower were this not already allocated to its distant relation *Tiarella cordifolia*. Unlike its garden relatives, this is a neat and tidy plant which never displays, except in winter, its thick and fleshy shoots, keeping them well covered with a close canopy of round lobed cordate leaves about an inch across. It forms rounded hummocks and is an ideal plant for jamming in some vertical crevice between rocks : whilst it prefers sunshine it is quite happy with some shade and is not fussy about its soil and is very readily propagated by division.

Some three years ago I sowed a packet of seed from the S.R.G.C. distribution which was labelled *Celsia roripifolia*. I have never been able to discover any reference to this plant in the usual books except for a bare mention in the A.G.S. *Bulletin* for 1942, from which it appears that this *Celsia* is a native of the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria. In cultivation it has proved to be a biennial, producing in the first year a very flat rosette of shining bright green leaves about four inches long. In the second season it throws up from this rosette two or three flowering spikes, up to 3 ft. high, which in turn give rise to other spikes arising from the axils of the lower leaves. The leaves become progressively smaller going up the stem, giving the plant the form of a *Verbascum* of some delicacy. The flowers, of a good yellow and full in form, are about 1½ inches across ; the rear of the petals and the stigma are tinged with a purplish brown and the hairy anthers are purple. Whilst the original plants were put into a scree where their self-sown progeny continue to thrive, it is clear from the seedlings appearing and flowering in other parts of the garden that it has no particular requirements in cultivation. As is common in this family, seed is produced in great profusion.

*Brunnera macrophylla* was first introduced from the West Caucasus in 1830 and is known also as *Anchusa myosotidiflora* and *Myosotis macrophylla*. This latter name is a very apt one for, to the gardener at least, it is in fact a large-leaved forget-me-not. The basal leaves, which are heart-shaped and up to 6 inches across, are held about 15 inches high and are curved in upon themselves almost in the shape of an arum lily spathe. The flowers are small and pale blue and are produced abundantly on sprays which stand about a foot over the leaves. With me it commences to flower in late April, continuing until the middle of June. It is a good plant for the woodland and I have found that its soft green leaves and cool blue flowers are an admirable foil for the hot colours of azaleas.

The New Zealand Veronicas or Hebes as they have sometimes been classified vary very considerably in their habit and leaf shape, but



little in the shape of their flowers. Undoubtedly the finest of these is *Veronica hulkeana*, which this year celebrates the centenary of its introduction into this country. It is unfortunately not reliably hardy and though young plants seem to withstand, without protection, the Northumbrian winter, older plants seem to lose this robustness and in my experience usually succumb to the elements in their fourth or fifth winter. As propagation from cuttings is easy and a one-year-old cutting should flower and in its third year grow to a solid bush 2 ft. across and (in flower) as much high, this is perhaps no great matter for regret, particularly as this species, as with other shrubby Veronicas, evinces a tendency to legginess in old age. The leaves are about 2 inches long, glossy green, neatly toothed and edged with a fine red line which sets them off like the braid on a uniform jacket. The flowers are produced in panicles up to a foot long, are very numerous of a delicate mauve or lilac, and are surprisingly large for this genus. Flowering time is June.

F. C. B.

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## Aphis

or

### THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

By "LOCUM TENENS"

APHIS, I BELIEVE, may be Green, Blue, White, Black or Root. All of them are horrible and all do much harm. One authority, writing in about 1812, said that they very much annoy apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, currants, gooseberries and other fruits. I would add that they also very much annoy gardeners.

Last year the Root variety brought themselves to our attention. My wife said one day that some of her special plants, growing in the open, had Root Aphis, which was unusual. I really knew very little about such things, but as I am always anxious to learn, she dug up a plant or two to show me. Although I could see a lot of tiny white specks among the roots they did not seem to be alive, even when I examined them under a very powerful magnifying glass. I thought that they were nothing but grains of silver sand and said so. Nevertheless, she packed up the plants very carefully in sphagnum moss and sent them off to High Authority. I am not quite sure who that was. Personally I would have sent them to the Zoo. In due course she got the reply. It was most polite and kindly, but to the effect that not one single aphis could be found. Not only that, but High Authority was of opinion that the plants were in an extremely healthy condition.

I did not know quite what to say, but I laughed heartily, which is what no husband should do on such an occasion, even though he

thinks it is very funny. The gist of what my wife said was that I was a stupid fellow and that of course the Aphis had run away from the plants and taken refuge in the sphagnum moss, because they liked it better, and that High Authority had not thought of this. As a matter of fact, the actual words she used were somewhat more forcible than I have set down.

So she tried again. But this time, instead of sphagnum moss, she used soft paper to pack the plants in. Again the reply from High Authority was just as polite and kindly, but it said that the plants were crawling with the little brutes and recommended a particular chemical. It was now even more obvious that I should not have laughed the first time, but I was learning fast and, unbeknownst to my wife, I had already ordered a supply of that very chemical.

We used the stuff most carefully in accordance with the maker's instructions. Then, sometime later, we dug up a few of the plants just to make sure that all the Aphis had been destroyed. Not a bit of it; they were thriving mightily and raising large families.

During the winter we took no further action, but by the spring advertisements had appeared in gardening papers advocating another proprietary brand of substance as a complete cure for Root Aphis. Clearly this must be the very thing we needed. So we got some and sprinkled it on a corner of the bed where those special plants were growing. As a result I can most sincerely congratulate the man who invented this stuff, because about three weeks later there was not an Aphis to be seen anywhere. The only trouble was that all the plants were dead too.

At least I now know quite a lot about Root Aphis.

#### GENTIANA IMBRICATA

THERE ARE or have been three different gentians sheltering under the name of *Gentiana imbricata* (*Gg. bavarica*, *pumila*, *terglouensis*)—all of them native of our European Alps and very much like the better known *G. verna*. While *G. bavarica* is generally a habitant of wet meadows, the other two are found in open limestone scree at higher altitudes.

Unfortunately none of the three can be called easy plants in cultivation, in fact they have proved themselves so difficult that it would seem that we have not yet found the right treatment they require under garden conditions. Plants raised from seed and grown in sunny, well drained limestone scree with underground moisture throughout the growing season should offer some success. (See fig. 9).

## Letters to the Editor

The Editor,  
The Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club.  
Dear Sir,

May I as a novice rock gardener write of my experience with *Iris danfordiae* ?

In September 1958 I purchased a dozen bulbs of *Iris danfordiae*. Six I planted in the open in ordinary (stony) soil. The other six I potted up in a very amateurish mixture of some soil, a trowelful of sand, a handful or so of leafmould with a dash of superphosphate for luck. On 22nd February 1959 one bloom appeared amongst the iris in the pot and on 14th March two blooms appeared in the garden. I was very disappointed. Later, however, I was somewhat cheered to hear that *Iris danfordiae* was reluctant with its blooms and invariably decreased rather than increased in number. I concluded that my slap happy form of gardening was not the sole reason for three blooms from twelve bulbs. Thereupon I transferred the bulbs in the pot into the garden beside the others and wondered how to make them all bloom.

About this time I was given a present of some potato fertilizer. My method of reasoning was as follows : the fertilizer was used on potatoes to increase the number and size of tubers, therefore might it not increase the size of the bulb if used on *Iris danfordiae*. An increase in size which I hoped would be the embryo 1960 bloom. Therefore I duly applied a rather liberal dose of potato fertilizer just after the blooms had faded. The first obvious result was that the leaves grew in height till they were about two feet. This became rather an embarrassment when friends came to view the garden, as the question invariably was "What on earth are those ?" Eventually out of sheer necessity I was forced to fold the leaves down and try to hide them amongst the *Antennaria dioica rubra*.

The outcome of this was that in February and March 1960 I had no less than twenty-two blooms from twelve bulbs. Whether this was due to my treatment of the bulbs or to the long dry summer of 1959 I cannot say, but I have treated the *Iris danfordiae* once more with potato fertilizer in anticipation of better things in 1961.

Peeblesshire.

B. G. HENDERSON

Dear Mr. Editor,

In an idle moment the other evening I browsed through the pages of Dr. Sampson Clay's "The Present Day Rock Garden." Having done the same with Farrer's two tomes a little while previously, I found the contrast remarkable. The names which appear in Farrer are a roll-call of old friends and at no matter what page is opened there is always a high probability of meeting with a description of a plant which one grows, has seen at Shows, or has otherwise made



*Photo—H. Eslemont*

Fig. 9—*Gentiana imbricata* (*G. terglouensis*) (see page 135)



*Photo—H. Eslemont*

Fig. 10—*Geum reptans* (see page 141)

acquaintance with. On the contrary, Dr. Clay's book contains page after page of names which appear in no tradesman's catalogue, attend no Shows, produce no seed for the Club's Annual Distribution, and exist in these islands, if at all, as dried herbarium specimens.

Admittedly, of the upwards of 10,000 species enumerated between *Abronia* and *Zygadenus*, many will be synonyms or near synonyms, others may be impossible of cultivation in this country, others not worth the effort; but out of this huge corpus there must be many worthy plants still growing in one or two gardens which are not available through the normal channels. In fact it is doubtful whether more than a tithe of the things listed in Farrer and Clay together are available, for even the most enterprising of nurserymen can carry stocks of no more than a few thousand species, and fine though the achievement of the A.G.S. is in producing a Seed List of some 3500 items, this is only a scratching of the surface of the possibilities.

As the avowed object of the Club is to "spread a knowledge of (rock garden plants) and to encourage their cultivation," I feel that here we are presented with a field of activity of great potentialities and lying right at the centre of the Club's purpose. The only scope for debate lies in the methods to be adopted to gain the ends.

The ends may briefly be summarised as an endeavour to retain in cultivation as many species of plants suitable for the rock garden as possible, together with the means of ensuring that sufficient material is available to allow of propagation amongst those members who are interested in that particular species, thus allowing it to be grown, studied, and enjoyed on a wider scale.

I envisage as a possible solution to this problem a scheme whereby public-spirited members will each take a genus or perhaps a group of smaller genera in which they are interested and will strive to amass as complete as possible a collection of species, small stocks of those species which are not obtainable normally through the Trade being built up for disposal either through Trade channels or such other means as may be decided best. This very tentative suggestion is put out in no spirit of dogmatism, but in the hope that it will give rise to discussion and the eventual setting up of a scheme which will ensure that the Rock Garden of the future will be more variedly and interestingly furnished.

Yours sincerely,  
F. CYRIL BARNES

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EXTRACT FROM LETTER RECEIVED FROM  
COLONEL J. C. DUNDAS

Dear Editor,

By the latter part of April we decided to come for a month to Lake Como, which I hadn't visited for 50 years, when my uncle had a villa on the Lake. It is just as lovely as it ever was, though the towns on the shores have grown out of all recognition. Gone, too, are the

lovely sailing boats and barges—all is steamers and speed boats and on shore buses and cars rushing noisily down the narrow streets—the Italians adore noise ! This little place is still peaceful and the hotel, away from the main road, has a lovely garden stretching down to the shore of the lake.

The mountains come straight down to the shore and the villa gardens are ablaze with Wisteria (rarely the white variety), on trellises or climbing trees up to 50-60 ft., also yellow and white banksian roses, not to add Judas trees and massed flowers in beds, including a delightful dwarf and compact *Silene* of which I'm bringing some seed home. But the great glory of the best gardens is the fantastic display of rhododendrons. Himalayan tree rhodos up to 40-50 ft. in height down to dwarf ones of 3 ft., usually coupled with banks, hundreds of yards long and many feet, even yards in depth, of azaleas of every colour imaginable, covered with such a density of flowers as I have never seen at home—and here is the strange problem—to me, at any rate. They are all growing on the slopes of hills which are pure limestone. So far as one can see there has been no attempt to import acid soil and on the scale the rhodos are planted at, for instance, the Villa Carlotta at Tremezzo, it would have been a herculian task to import enough. Even so, the limey water would surely have percolated down the hillside whence they must derive their moisture. Can the lime be insoluble ?

We had hoped, when I was fitter, to get up to the mountain slopes over the 2500-3000 ft. cultivation limit, but haven't succeeded. We haven't a car and buses don't go near enough for my old legs. Friends who have a baby Fiat went up the mountain road that leads from Bellagio to Como and climbed over 300 ft. They brought back flowers of the finest form of *G. acaulis* I've seen—glorious deep blue and wide flowers, also the little sweet-scented pheasant eye narcissus (I can't remember its name) and a purplish orchis with racemes 6 ins. long. They said there were so many gentians near the top that they made a haze of blue. Yesterday we made our one attempt to look for plants. We took a bus which goes up into the mountains and ends at a spot called Lanzo di Belvedere. Thence there is a practically sheer drop of over 2000 ft. to Lake Lugano—we got there about 12.30 and had quarter of an hour to admire the stupendous view—the lake far below and the high Alps (Monte Rosa, etc.) snow-covered in the background. By the time we had eaten our picnic lunch it had clouded over and the view was gone. By quarter to two it had started to rain, so we fled to a chance bus that turned up and instead of spending four hours climbing 5000-6000 ft. after plants we had a hair-raising drive of two hours, mainly down a spiral road in torrential rain with lightning playing round us and thunder crashing overhead. So that's the end of our plant hunting !

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## Plant Notes

### PHLOX TRIOVULATA (SEE FIG. 19)

THE FIRST problem this phlox presents is to obtain a plant.

I secured mine, a rather unpromising specimen from a dispersed collection in 1956 and, the following spring, repotted the small piece of root, about four inches long, in a lighter and kindlier soil

Little growth was made that year, but in 1958 a strong shoot appeared. When it was about five inches high the tip was pinched out and two of the subsequent side shoots were pulled off with a heel and rooted as cuttings. The plant was not allowed to flower that season.

In 1959, when it was again repotted in a more gritty mixture, a portion of the root was cut off and three one-inch lengths were treated as root cuttings. Two of them established.

In the spring of this year the parent plant and the two smaller plants were panned up together in a very open, sandy, gritty mixture and placed in full sun. They proceeded to make strong growth and were successfully exhibited two months later.

It has proved an excellent show plant; the flowers stood up to two successive shows in a remarkable manner.

My recipe for this Phlox is a very open gritty mixture, full sun, plenty of water in summer, and keep dry, but not dust dry, in winter. It seems to appreciate a little weak liquid fertiliser when making its growth.

A friend in the A.G.S. has suggested a very interesting method of propagating this phlox. He places the pot in a shallow container filled with the same light gritty compost. He states that the plant will root into the container, and in due course send up small plants which can be cut off.

It sounds almost too good to be true, but needless to say I am trying the experiment with a reserve plant.

Aberdeen.

H. ESSLEMONT

### PRIMULA AUREATA (SEE FIG. 20)

(Forrest Medal, Aberdeen, 1960)

I AM AFRAID that having been asked to write a cultural note on *Primula aureata* I find myself in a bit of a dilemma, as all my potting mixtures are not made to any set recipe but consist of adding various ingredients until the mixture looks and feels right for the particular plant being potted. At a guess I would say it consisted of equal parts of coarse, open leaf-mould, sphagnum peat, soil and coarse sand. When I came to repot this plant into a larger pan (10 in.) I was struck by the coarseness of the leaf-mould I had used, which included small twigs. I

think this must be largely responsible for the success, as this open mixture gives very good drainage and at the same time water retention.

The pan is plunged in sand all the year round in an open north-east corner with no direct sunlight reaching it. During the winter it is covered with a cloche but is never completely dry at the roots. Most of the foliage is retained during the winter. The only treatment it seems to require is the occasional removal of any decaying foliage.

The plant exhibited had been in flower for at least four weeks and it was past its best. At the time of showing, seed capsules appeared to be forming and this was of considerable interest as this plant is reputed to have set seed only once before. However, with the luxuriant growth of the new foliage the flower stem and seed capsules became engulfed and have rotted off in a similar fashion to the old leaves. It is thus unlikely that any of the seed capsules salvaged will be viable. It might be necessary on the next occasion to partly defoliate the plant in the region of a flower stem in order to prevent this occurring. It is of interest that when this plant was repotted a small plant which looked like a seedling was found growing in the centre. This has now been potted and is growing well. Although it looked more like a seedling, it might of course only be some vegetative off-shoot.

Aberdeen.

H. ROBERTSON, B.Sc.

## TWO TASMANIANS

THE TWO plants I am going to try and describe were grown from seed sent to me by one of our members in Tasmania, Mr. A. E. Kenworthy.

*Helipterum anthemoides* (Compositae) is an Australian 'everlasting.' It has stems and leaves rather like *Linum narbonneuse* but only 6 or 7 inches tall. The flowers are carried at the ends of the stems, white with a double row of petals (or should it be sepals?) and a yellow boss in the centre.\* There is the typical 'everlasting' look and feel about the flowers, which are  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch across. The seed was sown on 5th June 1958 in a cold frame in which they wintered. The frame was never closed even in hard frost, so they seem to be hardy. They were planted out in spring in both normal scree and in rich scree, and flowered well in both August and September 1959. While not widely exciting, the plants are dainty and the flowers pleasant.

*Helichrysum dealbatum* (Compositae) has a tuft of greyish-green leaves about four inches across. The individual leaves are narrow,  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch wide and up to 3 inches long. The flowers, again of the 'everlasting' type, are borne at the ends of 9 inch stems and are about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch wide. They are white, but the outer bracts are tinged with pink on the back. These were treated in the same way as the *Helipterum*, and flowered in September 1959. It was a neat attractive little plant.

\*It should really be "ray florets."—Editor.

Pitlochry.

D. M. MURRAY-LYON



## GEUM REPTANS

MOST OF THE genus *Geum* consists of plants most suited to the herbaceous border or wild garden, but there are two or three members which are extremely desirable rock garden plants.

*Geum montanum* from the Alps of Southern Europe, a plant with large clear yellow flowers on six inch erect stems, is probably the best known of these because of its ease of cultivation in any reasonably decent rock garden soil and absence of fussiness as regards position. A second species which, if slightly on the large side, still qualifies for a place in the rock garden, is *G. pyrenaicum*, which might be roughly described as rather like a stronger growing *G. montanum*. Another species of great beauty is *Geum reptans* (see fig. 10) from the higher, mostly limestone, formations of coarse scree and rock of the European Alps. This species is not so well known as it ought to be, possibly because as a rock garden plant it is often far from being an easy doer, and is often not long-lived in cultivation.

The fact that in nature *G. reptans* limits itself to the higher altitudes and most rigorous surroundings probably has a lot to do with its rather unreliable response to garden conditions, but its beauty certainly merits a little extra trouble in trying to give it what it likes. The coarsest of thorough surface drainage with, deeper down, open humus and abundant underground moisture are most likely to meet its requirements, but I imagine that to do well it must have fairly rich conditions down at its roots to support its strong creeping rootstocks ; in hungry conditions they would soon dwindle for want of nourishment.

The leaves of *G. reptans* are about six to eight inches long and are irregularly pinnatifid, the larger lobes towards the tip of the leaf being obovate and deeply toothed, while the smaller lobes towards the base are ovate and often entire. Instead of hugging the ground as do those of *G. montanum*, the leaves rise in tufts from the thick creeping stems at an angle almost erect.

The flowers, about one and a half inches across and of a deep rich yellow, are carried singly on stiff erect stems about six inches tall. These flowers appear during July and are followed by heads like fluffy powder puffs of seeds, which usually set fairly freely.

Another worthwhile and showy *Geum* is *G. elatum* and though somewhat stronger growing its handsome flowers qualify it for a place in any but the smallest rock garden. Its flower stems, unlike those of the two preceding species, are usually once or twice branched, so that there are often two or three flowers per stem instead of only one. Although the flowers of the type are described as golden yellow, colour variations have been found even in the wild and there are both orange and even orange-scarlet forms in cultivation.

E. Scotland.

B. G.

## FLOWERS FROM THE ROCK GARDEN

IN THIS era of "Floral Art" even a small rock garden can help to add interest to flower arrangements, from the bulbs in early Spring until frost ends the late flowering Gentians.

Many of the dwarf bulbs have a charm and daintiness lacking in the "bigger and better" border varieties. Pulsatillas, in all shades from white to deep purple and ruby red, have a double use, as not only do the lovely flowers last well when cut, but the fluffy seed-heads have great decorative value. A few heads of the free-flowering forms of *Primula pubescens* can often be spared and if *Alyssum saxatile* needs to be kept within bounds by hard pruning, and it is done at flowering time, the cut flowers can be put to good use as a base for a large arrangement of flowering branches. A more unusual Spring-flowering plant is *Euphorbia myrsinites*, with minute flowers surrounded by clear citron yellow bracts, making an attractive contrast with the grey-green leaves.

There are fewer suitable flowers to cut in high Summer, but then the herbaceous border and annuals can give a plentiful supply. However, some dwarf shrubs may need a little judicious pruning to keep them in shape and so supply something out of the ordinary. Shrubby Potentillas will continue to open their flowers in water and the grey leaves of *Senecio greyii* are an excellent foil for strong coloured flowers.

Sedums can be useful all the year round; the rosettes of many varieties form good cover for chicken net in vases and the flowers are long lasting.

Then with late Summer comes the glorious blue of the Gentians and the soft shades of the Heathers. Sprays of "H. E. Beale," arranged in a bowl of damp sand, will keep their colour for months, until the winter-flowering *Erica carnea* can take their place.

B. B. C.

## HELXINE IS USEFUL

THAT arch-smotherer *Helxine soleirolli* can be useful. I let some ramp in an unwanted corner and in the Autumn, after planting dwarf bulbs for indoor use, dig some up and use it to cover the surface of the pans.

*Iris histrioides major* and *I. danfordiae*, flowering as they do before producing leaves, are greatly enhanced by the carpet of fresh green. In fact, many small bulbs look their best growing in grass, so Helxine IS useful.

B. B. C.

## PAPAVER RHAETICUM

THE POPPY family has provided rock gardeners with so many good rock garden plants that many in it of even first class merit tend to be overlooked. In addition to *Papaver* itself we have the genus *Meconopsis* (still producing newcomers to cultivation) with its great range of

widely varying but nearly always worthwhile species, the monotypic *Eomecon* from China, *Hylomecon* and *Pteridophyllum* from Japan, and *Sanguinaria* from N. America ; *Stylophorum diphyllum* also from N. America, the well-known *Dicentra* spp. from North America and Asia and, last but certainly not least, that large family *Corydalis*, so well-known to rock gardeners through the lovely blue *Corydalis cashmiriana*.

In *Papaver rhaeticum* we have a plant native to Europe and known and grown long before the introduction of many of its colourful Eastern relatives. Superficially it looks like a neat little dwarf lemon-yellow flowered Iceland Poppy of only about four to six inches tall. *P. rhaeticum* is usually regarded as the yellow form of *P. pyrenaicum*, whereas *P. sendtneris* is white flowered. They both differ from their cousin *P. alpinum* in that their leaves are softly hairy and, though perhaps of a slightly greyish shade of green sometimes, they are certainly never glaucous as are those of *P. alpinum*.

In the wild *P. rhaeticum* (see fig. 8), like its other alpine relatives, is found growing in high stony places and coarse limestone scree, and in cultivation should be grown in a well-drained sunny scree. Do not be dismayed to find that the plant is often not long-lived ; once it has flowered and seeded with you it should never die out if the conditions and site are suitable.

E. Scotland.

B. G.

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## Old Friends

IN THE current issue of a leading horticultural magazine an article—"The Submerged Tenth"—by Mr. Will Ingwersen, appealed to me greatly and gained my warm agreement. In it he mentions several rock plants of widely differing character which have in common the fact that they are all of monotypic genera, or in other words they are each the only species of their genus.

Two of the plants mentioned—*Eomecon chionanthum* and *Hylomecon japonicum*—in particular are old friends of long standing which, to my mind at least, can hold their own in any company and are worthy of a place in any garden. Strictly speaking I suppose that neither is really a true rock garden plant, because both are more truly plants of thin woodland, one a native of China and the other of Japan. Both like a well drained soil containing plenty of leaf mould or peat and like a certain amount of shade from the heat of the day. I have found both grow very happily on peat wall ledges, a north-facing pocket or ledge in the rock garden, or among rhododendrons and other dwarf shrubs.

*Eomecon* is particularly at home among dwarf shrubs because it tends to wander about a bit by its fleshy underground stems creeping

just below the surface and so is not always happy in bare open ground. *Hylomecon*, on the other hand, steadily builds itself up into a compact, tight growing clump which in Spring is covered with rich yellow flowers which rise just clear of the finely cut foliage. This is green, while the leaves of *Eomecon*—appearing through the ground in tufts of two or three—are a very definite glaucous grey with scalloped and waved margins ; they always remind me of a dwarfed *bocconia*, or of *Sanguinaria canadensis*. The flowers appear singly on erect stems of six to eight inches and their white shapeliness along with the grey leaves create an air of chaste distinction.

In the same issue Miss J. Frodin writes of an Asiatic sub-shrub—*Coriaria terminalis* and its variety *C.t. xanthocarpa*—which she describes as growing three to four feet high. In England it may very well do this, but I have had plants on sunny (and shaded) ledges in the rock garden for many years without their attaining this height or getting out of hand in any way. In passing I should say that experience has proved that *Coriaria* is decidedly a plant for a dry, sunny spot ; though it will live in a partly shaded pocket it does not do so well or set fruit freely.

The gracefully arching branches radiate from the central plant base at an acute angle and as the long racemes of brilliant translucent 'fruits' develop these branches are gradually weighted down till they are almost horizontal. On one of the higher ledges of the rock garden this brings the glowing 'fruits' into outstanding prominence as the branches jut out overhanging the rock face.

*Coriarias* are said to be not reliably hardy but in N.E. Fife plants have lived in the open rock garden for well over twenty years without any protection other than that of their own dead annual stems, which we do not cut back till the young growth commences in Spring.

Fife.

J. L. MOWAT

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## Review of the Year

By THE PRESIDENT

THE EDITOR has informed me that I must write the "Review of the Year" for the September *Journal* and, while I am willing to do this, I cannot help feeling that all I have to say is already known to most of our members.

The principal factor is the membership of the Club. At the end of the Financial Year on 31st August 1959 we had a total of 3448 members ; at the end of last month, June 1960, the total had risen to 3746. While these figures show the actual Members' Roll, it does not give the correct number of "new" members, because at the end of each month the number of members who have not renewed their subscriptions is deducted.

I think that we can take it that with our number of members, and the increase in nine months of nearly three hundred, that our Club is in good heart. I would like to thank those responsible—our Office Bearers, C.R.s, Show Secretaries and all others who have contributed to this good work. New members are always necessary to take the place of those who resign, and while we cannot expect the rapid rise which we had to the three thousand mark, there are still many people who are interested in rock garden plants who have not yet enrolled.

Our Shows will always remain one of the Club's attractions, not only to our members but to the outside public as well. From what I have seen and heard at the Shows this year, the standard of the exhibits were as high as always and many new and interesting plants were shown.

Our thanks are due in no small measure to the Show Secretaries and their Committees for the valuable work they do in arranging our Shows. A word of thanks also to the Judges for carrying out a most difficult task.

While on the subject of Shows I have one complaint to make, a complaint which has been passed to me by Show Secretaries and others. It is simply this : there are not enough people exhibiting and that it is left to a band of workers who sometimes travel quite a distance to show their plants. If you feel that you dare not compete against Mr. So-and-So, there are always the classes in Section II for the beginner, which Mr. So-and-So is not allowed to compete in. These Classes are especially for the beginner and if you have any doubt as to which Class to enter your plants, you will always find the Show Secretary and his Committee only too willing to help you. During the winter there are often lectures given on Showing and the preparation for Show. If you can attend one of these lectures I am sure many of your doubts would disappear.

We are indebted to the many Trade firms who put up some very fine stands at our Shows and show such excellent specimens. Several are increasing their collections and the day may not be far distant when a member will be able to procure in Scotland a rarity which at present is only found in the South.

Our winter season of Lectures was very full, but as usual the weather had an effect on the attendances. The C.R.s' work in arranging these Lectures and visits during the season is of vast importance to the Club : it keeps the interest in plants alive during the dead season and keeps the members in touch with each other. I feel that I cannot leave this subject without saying, as President, my thanks to our C.R.s and to the many Lecturers, some of whom travelled long distances, for their work.

The Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee had their two Meetings and many fine specimens were brought forward for their consideration. A Report is given elsewhere. Next year this Committee will meet at Edinburgh during the Conference, when we will have members and visitors from abroad and other parts of our own country. May I

ask members to do their utmost in growing and showing their plants on this occasion.

There is to be, during October, a Study Weekend to be held at Pitlochry, and full details are given in the April *Journal*. It is a delightful part of the country and should prove a most enjoyable weekend.

Next April, in conjunction with the R.H.S. and the A.G.S., we are having the International Conference, a week in London followed by a week in Edinburgh, with the Show during the same week. A very fine panel of speakers has been asked to give papers and there will be visits arranged to other Gardens. Members will have the opportunity of hearing the various authorities discussing their particular subjects. Details will be given later.

Many of us are inclined to take the Office Bearers for granted, especially when their work is, as it were, behind the scenes. This applies to the Publicity Manager and also to the Editor. The Editor has asked repeatedly for articles, both large and small, for the *Journal*, even short notes about the growing of some of your favourite plants. Help if you can. It is most disheartening to try to make a *Journal* without material.

The Seed Exchange had its most profitable year and the Club's thanks are due to those workers who took part in this important work.

By the time these notes are published I will be nearing the end of my year as President and I can only conclude with my thanks to Office Bearers and Members of Council who by their loyalty and support have made my time as President most enjoyable.

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## Royal Horticultural Society Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee

THE COMMITTEE met at the Scottish Rock Garden Club Show at Edinburgh on 19th April 1960, when the following awards were made :—

### AWARD OF MERIT :

To *Primula x pubescens* var. "Mrs. J. H. Wilson" as a flowering plant for the rock garden. Exhibited by Jack Drake, Inshriach Nursery, Aviemore.

To *Primula x pubescens* "Christine," as a flowering plant for the rock garden. Exhibited by Jack Drake, Inshriach Nursery, Aviemore.

To *Soldanella minima*, as a flowering plant for the rock garden, Exhibited by Miss Logan Home, Edrom Nurseries, Coldingham.

### CERTIFICATE OF PRELIMINARY COMMENDATION :

To *Primula* "Dienne." Exhibited by Jack Drake, Inshriach Nursery, Aviemore.

To *Soldanella alpina* "Tinkerbell." Exhibited by Jack Drake, Inshriach Nursery, Aviemore.

The Committee also met at the S.R.G.C. Show at Dunfermline on 3rd June 1960, when the following awards were made :—

**AWARD OF MERIT :**

To *Saxifraga cotyledon norvegica* as a flowering plant for the rock garden. Exhibited by C. G. Halley, Esq., 2 Priestden Park, St. Andrews.

**CERTIFICATE OF PRELIMINARY COMMENDATION :**

To *Campanula aucheri* (subject to verification of name), as a flowering plant for the rock garden. Exhibited by Mrs. A. Buchanan, Inner Bridge Villas, Guardbridge, Fife.

**CULTURAL COMMENDATION :**

To J. G. Carstairs, Esq., High Bankin, East Wemyss, Fife, for a fine plant of *Wahlenbergia pumilio*.

To Mrs. L. C. Boyd-Harvey, Boonslie, Dirleton, East Lothian, for a well-grown plant of *Senecio candicans*.

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## Show Reports

### PENICUIK

THE 1960 PENICUIK SHOW was held once more in St. Mungo's Hall in conjunction with the Penicuik Society's Bulb Show, and once again everything was made smooth for the Show Secretary by the ladies of the Industrial Committee. The Bulb Show itself was up by a large number in their entries, and as a result the whole Hall was filled with colour. The entries in the Club's Show were up just a little on last year—by about five per cent.—but the standard was even higher than last year. The Judges were Messrs. Evans, Hayes and Wilson.

The weather was kind, for it was dry and not too cold, though dull, but a week or so earlier prospects looked somewhat grim as Midlothian was well under snow, but fortunately it thawed away quickly. The season had been moderate—some snow, no very severe frosts, and not much wind—but following on last year's drought and heat there were some very odd results. Some plants which would have been in full flower for the Show were long past, while others were still in tight bud. This particularly hit the *Kabschia* entries, which were well down and not too well-flowered, whereas the bulb classes were very much better than usual. The crocuses and irises were quite unusually fine and the classes were very full. Some of the members had quite obviously profited by the talk on the genus given by Mr. Burt at the St. Andrews Week, for there were a number of pans of species and varieties of *Crocus* recommended by him on the benches.

We were particularly delighted to have Mr. John Archibald competing at the Show, for he has fallen heir to his father's plants ; we

missed the late Mr. Archibald sadly at the Show, but the award of the Forrest Medal to *Kalmiopsis leachiana* shown by his son gave us the greatest pleasure and would, I am sure, have delighted our old friend.

The Midlothian Vase was awarded to *Iris bucharica* as the best plant in the Restricted Section, shown by Dr. and Mrs. Tod. This was a good pan with three bulbs in full flower, and the scent wafted round the hall amazingly. The Midlothian Bowl was retained by the same exhibitors, once again from Mr. James Archibald of Musselburgh by a few points ; as runner-up he gained the Special Prize Voucher presented very kindly by Mr. G. B. Roberts of Kent.

The entries of Asiatic Primulas this year were mostly of *Primula bhutanica* in very good condition and full flower, but the "other sections" were weak, as they were one lot that were very far back this year. The class for three Rock Plants was won by Mr. Esslemont of Aberdeen with a superb *Rhododendron leucaspis*, a very strong plant of *Primula allionii*, exceptionally well-flowered, and a good form of *Ranunculus calandrinoides* in a full-sized "Long Tom" which aroused the greatest interest, as many at the Show had never seen one before. The second was gained by Mr. John Archibald of Wishaw with *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, *Ranunculus calandrinoides* and *Helichrysum virgineum*, and the third by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Baillie of Longniddry with a magnificent plant of *Draba mollissima*, *Jeffersonia (Plagiorhegma) dubia* and *Saxifraga irvingii*.

Miss Bowe's *Soldanella alpina* was again at the Show, not so fully flowered this year as last year, but still a very fine pan in excellent condition. There were a number of good pans of Cyclamen on the benches ; the season had obviously suited them, but the confusion about the wording of the "Bulb, corm or tuber, etc." class led to some difficulty in deciding just where they should go, and also, unfortunately, led to an unusually high number of "not according to schedule" endorsements on the cards. This mishap will be avoided in future by a change in the wording to get rid of this ambiguity, which was most certainly not intended when the new wording was worked out.

There was a good attendance of both Members and the Public, and for most of the afternoon the Show "went like a fair" and the Penicuik Ladies' teas were much appreciated.

HENRY TOD,  
*Hon. Show Secretary and C.R. Midlothian*

#### DUMFRIES (13-4-60)

IN A SPRING in which some plants were particularly early, the saxifrages being mainly over, and others were very late, an entry of 342 must be considered very satisfactory, and the only disquieting feature I noted was that the majority of exhibitors could be classed as experienced and the smaller and new exhibitors were almost entirely absent.

The Show was held in our usual venue, the Y.M.C.A. Hall in



Castle Street, Dumfries, which seems to have become our permanent home, being as it is very central. The opening ceremony was performed by Mrs. Scott-Elliott, Kirkconnel Lea, Glencaple, and while the attendance on the first day was down on last year, the second day more than made good the deficiency and ensured our success financially.

The Forrest Medal was won by Mr. and Mrs. Stuart, Pitlochry, with a very good pan of *Shortia uniflora* v. *grandiflora*\* shown in fine condition, and they were also successful in Class I (3 pans Rock Plants), for which is awarded the Walmsley Challenge Cup. The plants were *Pleione pricei*, *Cassiope wardii*, and the *Shortia*. Other plants shown in this class included *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, *Pyrus japonica*, *Cassiope lycopodioides* and *Primula allionii* "Beatrice Wooster." It is interesting to recall that Mr. and Mrs. Stuart won their Section II Bronze Medal at Dumfries a few years ago, and we congratulate them on winning their first premier award here also; Mrs. Stuart, by the way, is a native of Dumfries.

The Lewis Challenge Trophy and Club Bronze Medal for Section II were both won by Mrs. R. G. Smith, Dumfries, and while this section was not numerically strong, she is to be congratulated on the very high standard of her exhibits, particularly in dwarf bulbs.

Of the other special prizes, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart were also awarded the prize for Best Softwood Plant with their *Shortia*, and that for the Best Hardwood Plant was won by myself with a pan of *Cassiope lycopodioides* in good full flourish. Best Cacti or Succulent was shown by Mrs. W. Wilson, Dumfries.

Other plants noted in the various classes included *Primula tayloriana*, *Kelseya uniflora*, *Draba mollissima* (all the way from Aberdeen), *Primulae tsariensis*, *sheriffae*, *griffithii*, *boothii*, *bileckii*, *Thalictrum anemonoides*, *Gaultheria nummularioides*, *Silene acaulis pedunculata*, and many others of a high standard.

Clashing of our dates with the R.H.S. Show at Westminster resulted in fewer Trade stands than usual, but those presented reported business as excellent. Gold Medals were awarded to Messrs. Longmuir & Adamson, Holywood Nurseries, Dumfries, for their display of flowering shrubs and alpines in a built-up rock garden, and to Messrs. King & Paton, Barnbarroch Nursery, Dalbeattie, for a grand display of alpines in pans, among which *Erica* "W. T. Ratcliff" was prominent. Messrs. Ponton, Edinburgh, also showed a selection of rock garden plants in pans, including the unusual *Salix wehrhahnii*.

A display of Cacti by our local members Alistair Thomson and William Wilson, and a table of Sempervivum species and Alpine Auriculas by yours truly, both attracted attention, and as usual the stand of the Crichton Royal was outstanding and contained Primulas and Saxifrages in choice varieties, besides their pans of *Haberlea rhodopensis* and *Ramonda pyrenaica*. A Gold Medal was also awarded to this exhibit.

\*(See fig. 21).

Generally speaking, competition in Section I was very strong, and most classes here were well filled, several having over 12 entries. The tables of this section made a very attractive display.

Recruiting of members on both days was very good and resulted in a batch of new members for both our local counties, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, and also a few for counties further afield.

I am pleased to take this opportunity of thanking all those whose help made the Show a success, including all our Committee members, Judges, my assistants Dr. Gibson and Mrs. Campbell, and to Major Walmsley for presiding at our opening ceremony, also to our previous Show Secretary, Mr. Robert Forbes, for his advice and co-operation.

NORMAN M. BROWN,  
*Acting Show Secretary.*

### EDINBURGH

THE EDINBURGH SHOW was held in the Assembly Rooms, George Street, on the 19th, 20th and 21st April 1960. Due perhaps to the good weather which had prevailed for some little time previously and to the Easter weekend, which had given members time to make preparations, the entries were considerably more numerous than in the previous year's Show and the standard, in Section II particularly, was much more evenly high. The number and quality of the entries in this section was encouraging, for it is upon the members exhibiting for the first few times that the future of the Show necessarily depends.

The Club was honoured by the presence of the Lord Provost (Sir Ian A. Johnson-Gilbert) who, accompanied by the Lady Provost, formally declared the Show open with an elegant and apposite speech.

The Forrest Medal for the most meritorious plant in the Show was awarded to Messrs. Jack Drake of Aviemore for a large pan of *Pleione limprichtii* in beautiful condition. (See fig. 22). This genus of near-hardy orchids is, in spite of the high cost of acquisition of the pseudo-bulbs, becoming very popular amongst those growers who can give it the necessary protection and visitors to the Show could see a dozen or so pans of it in three species this year.

The best *Primula* species in the Show, the dwarf form of *P. gracilipes*, won for Mr. R. B. Cooke of Corbridge the R. E. Cooper Bhutan Drinking Cup. Though this was not the first time that this exquisite plant has been seen, it aroused as much interest as any in the Show, with its extreme neatness of form, its darker colouring than the type pervading both leaves and stems, and its incredible floriferousness evidenced by the buds yet to open.

The Reid Rose Bowl for the highest aggregate of points in Section I went to Mr. and Mrs. Baillie of Longniddry. Amongst the fine plants that they showed was a specimen of *Ranzania japonica*, which, improbable as it would appear, has affinities with *Berberis*: this delicate, six-inch high, apple-green leaved, mauve-flowered plant is not easy

to acquire or keep in cultivation for its underground stem is intolerant of winter wet and we were therefore glad that the skill of Mr. and Mrs. Baillie had given us an opportunity to admire it and to be tempted to try it ourselves.

The Corsar Challenge Trophy, awarded in the 6-pan class, was gained by Mr. John Archibald for a fine and well-varied collection of old friends comprising *Primula aureata*, *Celsia dumulosum*, *Pyrus japonica*, *Rhododendron forrestii repens*, *Soldanella villosa*, and *Lewisia tweedyi*. Mr. R. B. Cooke once again won the 3-pan class, and the Carnethy Medal, with a huge, well-flowered specimen of *Polygala rhodoptera*, *Pleione pricei* and *Shortia uniflora grandiflora*.

Three plants from Patagonia (*Senecio candicans*, *Oxalis laciniata* and *Primula decipiens alba*) won for Mrs. L. C. Boyd-Harvey the Elsie Harvey Memorial Trophy for new, rare, or difficult plants: whilst none of them can make a claim to outstanding beauty, they have a rarity value and interest and it is nonetheless gratifying that we should have had the opportunity of seeing them, thanks to Mrs. Boyd-Harvey's skill in raising them. Mrs. Boyd-Harvey won also the A. O. Curle Memorial Trophy for plants raised from seed by the exhibitor. Again relying partly on Patagonia, she showed *Primula decipiens alba*, *Ephedra frustrillata* and *Tulipa tarda*; it is sad to relate that the *Ephedra* did nothing to dissipate the opinion that Patagonia furnishes interesting rather than beautiful plants.

The Boonslie Cup for a miniature garden was awarded to Mr. and Mrs. Baillie: their entry consisted of a large irregular mass of tufa in which were growing very compactly various saxifrages and sempervivums. Mrs. B. B. Cormack won the Kilbryde Cup for an arrangement of cut flowers of rock plants which would have graced any dining table without overpowering it.

In Section II Mrs. S. Maule achieved the highest aggregate of points, thus gaining the Bronze Medal, winning also the Henry Archibald Rose Bowl for three pans of easy and common plants. Her plants comprising *Caltha palustris fl. pl.*, *Erythronium dens-canis*, and *Primula denticulata* seemed to find even their large pots too small and the luxuriant growth towered above all else in Section II: rarely have we seen a group of plants in such obvious rude health.

Certificates of Merit were awarded to the National Cactus and Succulent Society for a large, representative and beautifully staged display; to Mrs. Neilson for a magnificent collection of dwarf conifers, many of mature years and all of great character and in the best of condition; and to Mr. R. B. Cooke for a fine pan of *Cassiope wardii*.

The Trade gave good support to the Show and their stands were well up to the standards we have come to expect. Messrs. Jack Drake were awarded a Large Gold Medal for their exhibit, of which the Forrest Medal plant of *Pleione limprichtii* formed the centrepiece. Mr. J. R. Ponton gained a Large Gold Medal also for a built-up rock garden in which a drift of 40 plants of *Primula bileckii* was the highlight. The third Large Gold Medal went to Mr. Michael J. Jefferson-

Brown for a stand of Daffodils and Narcissi, a no doubt gratifying reward for one whom we welcomed to the Show for the first time.

Gold Medals were awarded to Airlie Bulbs for a display of new daffodils, to Messrs. Delaney & Lyle for a built-up rock garden, and to Lt.-Colonel J. H. Stitt for a display in which the dominant tones of gold and red blended in an unusually satisfying and majestic picture.

The Royal Botanic Garden, through the courtesy of the Regius Keeper (Dr. H. R. Fletcher) provided a fine display of Rhododendrons, mainly species, which furnished a beautiful and interesting backcloth to the Trade Stands, and also a small collection of the more unusual and difficult rock plants, impeccably grown, in impeccable pans and with impeccable labels.

Whilst the competitive classes by and large came within reach of the standards set by the Royal Botanic Garden in the first two of these respects, it cannot be said that the labelling was satisfactory. Many labels were ill-written and others were dirty almost to illegibility: some even did not exist! What was most disturbing, however, was the high incidence of names incorrectly spelt. There were three different spellings of *Rhododendron pemakoense* on view and in three consecutive classes with a total of thirteen entries no less than six labels were incorrect in one particular or another!\* Orthography is perhaps a small matter when compared with the growing of plants for exhibition, but after all exhibitors owe a duty to the public (and to their fellow members) to name their plants correctly lest error breed further error, and lead to utter confusion.

With this reservation even the carping critic must admit it was a good Show.

F. C. B.

### ABERDEEN

THE ABERDEEN SHOW was held on Thursday and Friday, 12th and 13th May. The opening ceremony was performed by Mr. K. C. Corsar, and the exhibits judged by Mr. J. L. Mowat, Mr. F. G. Sutherland and Dr. Henry Tod.

The general high standard of this Show was maintained and it was gratifying to see a number of exhibits which had been sent from members outwith the Aberdeen area.

The George Forrest Medal was awarded to *Primula aureata*,† exhibited by Dr. Hamish Robertson (see cultural note, page 139). There were, however, several other plants of outstanding merit. Mr. Harold Esslemont exhibited his pan of *Androsace imbricata*†† which in spite of its advanced age gets bigger and better each year. *Oxalis laciniata* was well to the fore with good pans shown by Mrs. Boyd-Harvey

\* In self-defence I claim here and now that any lapses in this respect in the foregoing report must be due to the printer!

†(See fig. 20).

††(See fig. 23).



*Photo—D. Hearn*

Fig. 11—*Ranunculus haastii* in fruit (see page 117)



Fig. 12—*Anisotome carnosula* (see page 118)

*Photo—D. Hearn*



Fig. 13—*Cotula atrata* (see page 118)

*Photo—D. Hearn*

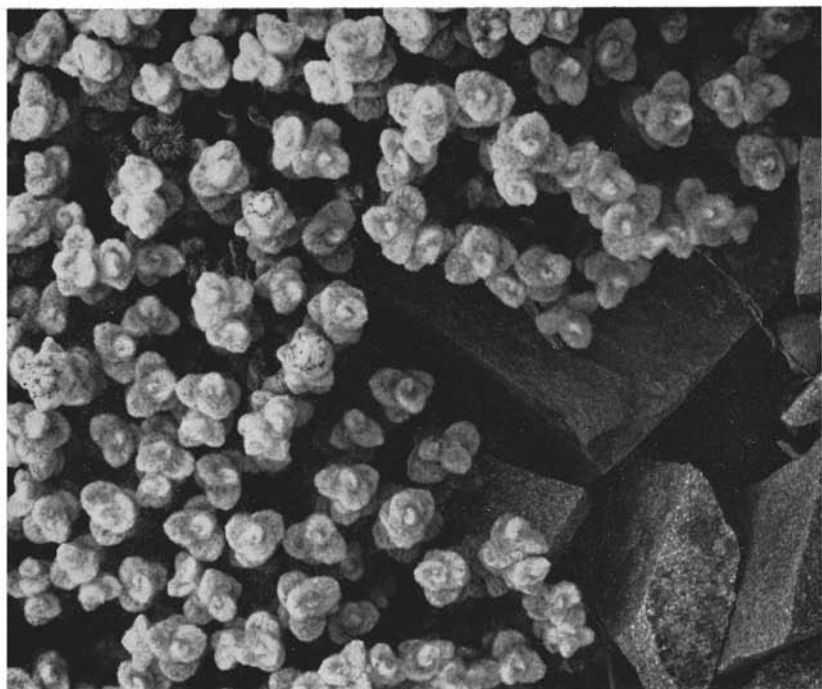


Fig. 15—*Haastia recurva* (see page 119) Photo—D. Hearn



Fig. 14—*Hebe (Veronica) epacridea* (see page 119) Photo—D. Hearn



Fig. 16—*Meconopsis latifolia* (see page 121)



Fig. 17—*Eritrichium nanum* (see page 122) Photo—H. Esslemont





Fig. 18—*Eritrichium nanum* (see page 122)

Photo—H. Esslemont



Fig. 19—*Phlox triovulata* (see pages 139 & 157)  
(George Forrest Medal, Dunfermline 1960)

Photo—H. Esslemont



Fig. 20—*Primula aureata* (see pages 139 & 152) Photo—H. Esslemont  
(George Forrest Medal, Aberdeen 1960)

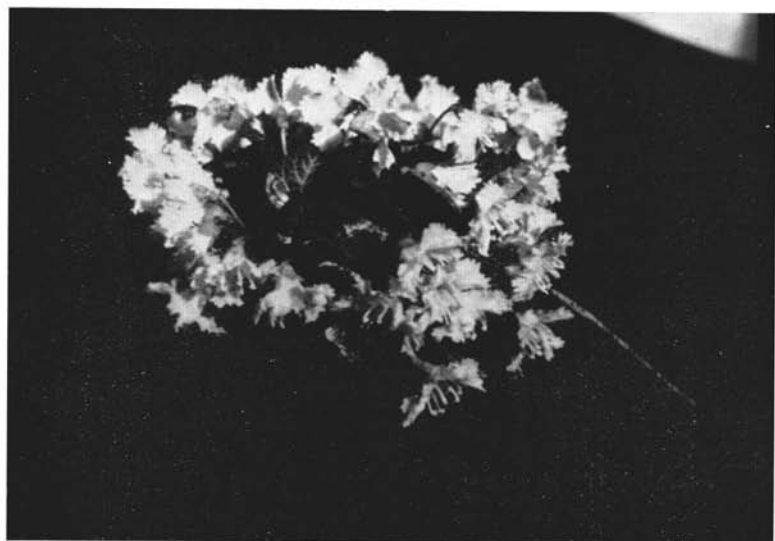


Fig. 21—*Shortia uniflora* v. *grandiflora* (see page 149) Photo—H. Tod  
(George Forrest Medal, Dumfries 1960)



Fig. 22—*Pleione limprichtii* (see page 150)  
(George Forrest Medal, Edinburgh 1960)

*Photo—H. Tod*

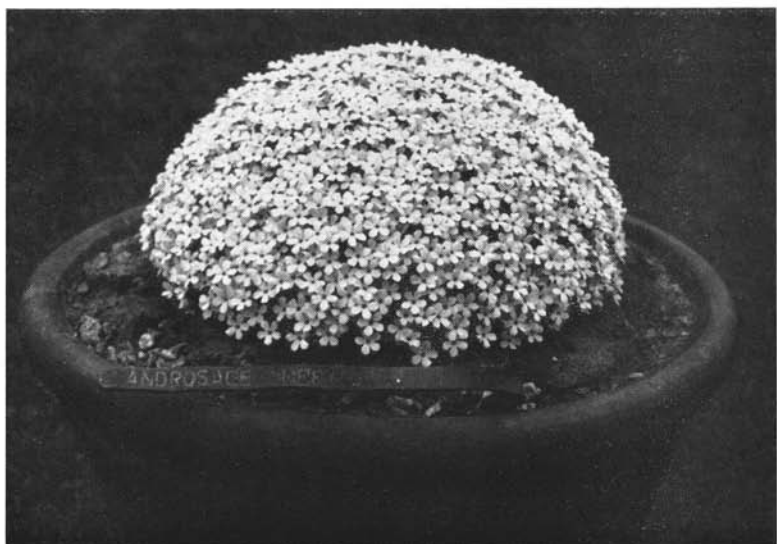


Fig. 23—*Androsace imbricata* in tufa (see page 152) *Photo—H. Esslemont*



Fig. 24—*Primula reptans* (see page 158)

and Mrs. Tweedie, while Jack Drake had very good pans of two forms of *Cassiope selaginoides*. *Rhododendron ludlowii*, exhibited by Mr. Esslemont, was of interest, as this is probably the first time it has been exhibited in flower at an S.R.G.C. Show. The other major awards were : the "Walker of Portlethen" trophy to Mr. Esslemont for the most points in Section I, the Aberdeen Bronze Medal for the three pan class to Mr. J. D. Crossland, and the Bronze Medal for Section II to Dr. Robertson.

It is always interesting to note how plants difficult to cultivate tend to be taken for granted if they are exhibited for a year or two by someone who has acquired the skill to grow them successfully. A year or two ago *Eritrichium nanum* in full flower would have been considered an outstanding plant ; this year the two plants shown by Mr. Esslemont and Mr. Crossland were accepted without comment as good plants in their class.

Dr. G. A. Garton can always be relied upon to produce a well-flowered pan of *Gentiana acaulis* and this year was no exception. A well-flowered plant of *Veronica tetrasticha* shown by Mr. J. N. Aitken attracted a good deal of attention, as although this plant is easy enough to grow, it does not flower readily. The hot summer of the previous year may have been partly responsible for this.

In the novice classes there were many well-grown plants such as *Daphne petraea*, *Primula wattii*, *Phyllodoce nipponica*, *Rhodohypoxis* "Betys Crimson," and a magnificent pan of *Lewisia howellii* exhibited by Mrs. C. G. Morison. A particularly good pan of *Dryas octopetala* grown from S.R.G.C. seed attracted the attention of the judges in this section.

The display of plants from the Cruickshank Botanical Gardens was outstanding and Mr. Sutherland should be congratulated on the Certificate of Merit awarded to this exhibit.

The Trade was represented by Jack Drake of Aviemore, Edrom Nurseries, Coldingham, and Ponton of Kirknewton, all of whom had many interesting and well-grown plants on their stands.

HAMISH ROBERTSON

## GLASGOW

THIS SHOW was held in the McLellan Galleries on 17th and 18th May 1960, when there was a colourful display in both the rock garden and rhododendron sections. The latter did not appear to have been unduly affected by the fact that the National Trust for Scotland had transferred its support to an earlier show organised by another society. The Forrest Medal for the most meritorious plant in the Show was awarded to *Anemone obtusiloba patula*, exhibited by Jack Drake. It was a very fine specimen with flowers of a good shade of blue. The runners-up were *Androsace imbricata*, shown by Mr. Harold Esslemont, Aberdeen, which was very well flowered but a little past its best, and *Cassiope*

*selaginoides*, also exhibited by Jack Drake. It too was well flowered, but was a little lop-sided.

The Dr. William Buchanan Rose Bowl for 6 pans of rock plants was won by Mr. William Urie, Turnberry, with a good set of plants, the two outstanding being *Ledum palustre* and *Rhodohypoxis*, white tinged pink, which was not named but which I thought to be *Pictus*. Competition for the Henry Archibald Rose Bowl was very good indeed, there being seven entries of merit. The winner in this class for 3 pans of rock plants was Mr. Harold Esslemont, Aberdeen, who had two exceptionally good plants, beautifully flowered, in the difficult *Androsace imbricata* and *Lewisia x trevosiana*. Mr. William Urie was a close second and his outstanding plants were *Rhodohypoxis baurei* and *Leiophyllum buxifolium prostratum*. The classes for Rare, New or Difficult plants produced a number of species rarely seen on the show bench and the exhibitors are to be congratulated on their skill in bringing them forward in such good condition. Mr. Harold Esslemont was showing a particularly good plant of the rare and difficult European alpine, *Eritrichium nanum*, with beautiful blue forget-me-not like flowers. Mr. J. D. Crossland, Torphins, also showed a good plant of this species and in addition he had the very rare and much coveted white orchid, *Pleione formosana alba*. I look forward to seeing this plant again when it has grown a bit bigger. Mr. Crossland also exhibited in good flower *Phlox nana ensifolia*, which I knew long ago as *Phlox mesaleuca* and which is seldom seen these days. This is no doubt due to the fact that it can only be raised from root cuttings and that not very easily. There were on this occasion no very outstanding primulas, possibly owing to the lateness of the Show, but Mr. William Gilchrist, Carluke, won the Asiatic and European one pan classes with good plants of *P. forrestii* and *P. pubescens* "Rufus" respectively. In the class for one pan Asiatic Primula, Mr. John Archibald, Wishaw, a son of the late Mr. Henry Archibald, took second place with the late flowering Petiolarid, *P. aureata*. Mr. Archibald also exhibited a very fine specimen of *Chamaecyparis obtusa caespitosa* in Class 55. I should like to think that Mr. Archibald will soon be showing on the same scale as his father did and with the same measure of success. The Club would certainly benefit by a substantial increase in the number of exhibitors at all our Shows.

The James A. Wilson Trophy and Bronze Medal for most points in Section 2 were won by Mr. William Crichton, Bearsden. One of his best plants was a well-grown *Draba polytricha*. The standard in this section in which one finds new exhibitors was commendable and I hope that we shall find at least some of them in the years to come competing in the senior section. Mr. J. Stead was successful with two fine flowering shrubs, *Rhododendron obtusum amoenum* and *Rhododendron camtschaticum*. The latter has fine rose-coloured flowers and is not often seen at Shows. Perhaps its undeserved reputation for being difficult is to blame. It is in my experience reasonably easy to grow and, like a number of the small rhododendrons suitable for

the rock garden or for pot culture will flower when only three or four years old from seed. Mrs. Cathie Todd, Bearsden, showed a fine pan of the African bulbous plant *Rhodohypoxis platypetala* covered with white flowers. This species and the many coloured varieties now obtainable are very well worth growing because they give a display over a long period. Mr. Walter MacGregor gained a meritorious first prize with three well balanced plants in Class 67. They were *Potentilla aurea*, *Cornus canadensis* and *Anemone magellanica*.

It is not possible in a report of this kind to mention the names of all the prize-winning members or their plants, but I should like to include a few of the other plants in the competitive sections which caught my eye. Two plants from far off Patagonia were shown in tip-top condition, *Calceolaria darwinii* with its quaint pouches with a white band across the tip and the recent newcomer to our show benches, *Oxalis laciniata*, which is variable in colour but which in this instance was a deep blue. The silver saxifrage *S. lingulata lantoscana* which, like all its brethren, is decorative both in and out of flower, was here in full bloom, its sprays of white flowers covered with little red dots being most attractive. *Globularia bellidifolia* "Horts Variety" covered with little blue powder-puff flowers drew admiring comments. This variety flowers much more freely than the type which I found on a recent holiday in Switzerland. There it was growing well on rock faces and in short grass, but only here and there were there a few odd flowers. Two plants, well flowered and in excellent condition, were *Ramonda myconi* and *Haberlea rhodopensis v. virginalis*. They are a great asset in a rock garden as they thrive best in a north or north-west situation or one where they are shaded from strong sun.

The Show was well supported by the Trade and all the stands were attractively laid out with fine selections of flowering plants, shrubs, and in some cases conifers. Jack Drake was awarded a Large Gold Medal for his display of rock garden plants in pots.

In addition to the plants already mentioned he had a fine selection of the rarer primulas which test the skill of the cultivator. These were *Pp. cawdoriana*, *reidii*, *reidii williamsii*, and *wattii*, all of which belong to the beautiful Soldanelloides section. *Lewisia* in variety made a colourful display on this stand. This American genus which, if given sharp drainage around the neck, is, with the possible exception of *L. tweedyi*, comparatively easy to grow and gives a fine show of flowers. Most of them come readily from seed and can be increased by offsets pulled carefully away in summer. Other plants of note on Jack Drake's stand were *Gentiana alpina*, dwarf and neat in growth with dark blue flowers, *Gentiana acaulis v. caelestina*, a light form, and *Clematis alpina*.

Colonel Stitt was awarded a Gold Medal for his stand of rock garden plants in pots. Here again there was a fine exhibit of plants well up to the standard we have come to expect from this firm. There were in variety primulas, rhododendrons, gentians, lewisias and conifers. Two plants which caught my eye particularly in this fine group

were the Asiatic primula *P. chungensis* and *Cedrus libani pendula sargentii*.

Edrom Nurseries too had a good selection of plants in pots. I much admired the small red *Tulipa linifolia*, which is so useful in the small rock garden, particularly when planted in conjunction with the small yellow *Tulipa batalini*. Other attractive plants here were *Aquilegia flabellata*, the dwarf broom *Cytisus ardoinii* covered with yellow blossom, and the still rare Patagonian *Oxalis laciniata*.

A Large Gold Medal was awarded to W. B. Boyd, Barrhead, for a built up rock garden which, besides being well laid out, contained many attractive plants of easy culture. Skilful use was made of shrubby plants such as azaleas and dwarf roses. Among the latter was the beautiful *Rosa* "Coralina." Rock phloxes gave a bright touch of colour and an indication of their usefulness in the rock garden. *P. subulata* "Temiscaming" and *P. douglasii rosea* were conspicuous. Other plants of note were the two dwarf aquilegias, *Aa. flabellata nana alba* and *akitensis*, both of which are easily increased from seed.

Kennishead Nursery, Thornliebank, were awarded a Gold Medal for their built up rock garden, which they chose to place on the floor rather than on a raised stand. This undoubtedly gives the opportunity to simulate a garden more closely and right well was it done in this case. Maples, conifers, azaleas and brooms had been used to full advantage to give height, character and colour. Aubrietia, phlox and sedums were skilfully used among the rocks, producing the effect that they had all been growing there for quite some time.

J. R. Ponton, Kirknewton, also had an attractive built up rock garden, but suffered in comparison with the other two because a sense of height had not been fully achieved. He had, however, a fine collection of well-grown plants. Among these were phloxes in variety, *Potentilla verna nana*, *Primula japonica*, *Anemone multiflora* and the beautiful golden shrub, *Thuya occidentalis* "Rheingold." He also showed in first class order the white hybrid narcissus, *N. triandrus* "Silver Chimes."

As indicated earlier in this report, the Rhododendron section was reasonably well supported despite factors outwith the control of the Club and our thanks are due to those who brought their blooms in such fine condition over quite long distances in some cases. The Earl of Stair won the William Urie Challenge Cup for the most points in the Section. His trusses of flowers were outstandingly good and he well deserved the trophy. Other prominent exhibitors of rhododendrons, and worthy prize winners were Mrs. Naomi Mitchison, Carradale, Mrs. K. L. Kennet and Mr. A. G. Kennet, Ardrishaig.

Messrs. John Smith & Son had a wonderful display of gardening books to suit the taste of everyone. Garden furniture—seats, summer-houses and so on—beautifully made and sturdy besides, was shown by Finavon Estate Saw Mill.

Thanks are due to all the Nurserymen and to Messrs. John Smith & Son and Finavon Estate Saw Mill for supporting the Show. Without



the aid of these business people at our Shows it would be difficult to continue to hold exhibitions.

The Glasgow Show Committee is to be congratulated on arranging another successful Show and on the arrangements for the creature comforts of the judges !

D. LIVINGSTONE

### DUNFERMLINE

THIS SHOW, held as usual in the Music Pavilion, Pittencrieff Park, was declared open on Friday 3rd June in an exceedingly able and apt speech by Mrs. Ormiston, wife of the Secretary of Carnegie Dunfermline Trust and herself founder and present President of the Floral Art Club of Dunfermline.

The premier award, the George Forrest Medal, went to *Phlox triovulata*,\* a beautiful but somewhat difficult species from New Mexico which was at one time sometimes seen in cultivation under the names of *Ph. nana ensifolia* or *Ph. mesoleuca*, but later seemed to become lost to cultivation. This plant was shown by Mr. H. Esslemont of Aberdeen and was one of 3 pans, along with *Verbascum dumulosum* and *Syringa palibiniana*, in Class 1, which gained for him the Robertson Challenge Cup. Runner-up in this class was Mrs. L. C. Boyd-Harvey with fine pans of *Oxalis laciniata*, *Phlox adsurgens*, and *Saponaria ocymoides rubra compacta*, while the third entry consisted of *Oxalis laciniata*, *Omphalodes luciliae*, and *Ramonda myconi rosea*.

In Class 4 (1 pan *Dianthus*) all five entries were good, 1st and 2nd prizes going to J. D. Crossland and J. Y. Carstairs, each for *Dianthus subacaulis*. Mrs. Tweedie was first in Class 7 with a magnificent specimen of a seedling saxifrage, and in Class 13 were some wonderful specimens of campanulas and phyteumas. Mr. Carstairs was first in the 'silver-grey' class with a handsome plant of *Salvia argentea alpina*, closely followed by Mrs. Tweedie with *Senecio candicans* (which later received a Cultural Certificate), and in Class 22 Mrs. Boyd-Harvey showed that handsome *Veronica macrantha*. First place in Class 28 went to Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Burrows for a delightful miniature garden of plants well established on a limestone rock crystal from a Derbyshire pothole.

In Section II it was good to see so many new names and such keen competition with good quality plants and a high standard of presentation. The Bronze Medal for most points went to Mrs. A. Niven of Aberdour—who also gained the Special Prize for the best plant (*Lewisia* hybrid), but other names featuring prominently on prize cards included those of Mrs. J. Murray, Crail, Mrs. C. S. Brown, Dunfermline, and Mr. John Driscoll, Guardbridge. The two last named were incidentally first and second of four very fine entries in Class 42.

Class 45 had six entries, and Mr. C. G. Halley gained first place with a very good *Sax. cochlearis major*, closely followed by Mr. Gordon

\*(See fig. 19).

Hill with a good plant of *Iris tenax*; Mr. Halley also had three fine saxifrages in Class 48, and one in Class 49 which later in the day gained an Award of Merit—*Sax. cotyledon norvegica*. Out of fifteen pans, all excellent, shown in Class 50, Mr. J. Y. Carstairs was first with three superb sempervivums; he was also first of eight entries in Class 51, followed by Mr. J. P. Moir and Mrs. A. Buchanan. Mrs. Buchanan was first in Class 54 with her wonderful plant of *Dianthus arvernensis*, and in Class 58 with a plant of *Campanula aucheri* which was later awarded a Preliminary Commendation. The second in this class, Mr. Carstairs' *Wahlenbergia pumilio*, gained a Cultural Commendation. The Institute of Quarrying Quaich for most points in Section IV was most worthily won by Mr. C. Gordon Hill.

Maryfield Nurseries, Leslie, were awarded a Large Gold Medal for their built-up stand and a Gold Medal went to Messrs. Delaney & Lyle of Alloa. Mrs. A. W. Wilson and all her helpers are to be congratulated on a most satisfactory and colourful show, and the Club's thanks are also due to the many others who in their several ways helped to contribute to such a successful show.

J. M.

### DUNDEE

THE SHOW was opened by the Countess of Airlie on 8th June, and entries were about average for previous Dundee Shows. There were some interesting plants exhibited, both in the competitive sections and on the Trade stands. Section II was outstandingly good, which bodes well for future Shows in the area.

The Forrest Medal was awarded to *Primula reptans* (Fig. 24), exhibited by Jack Drake. This was a six-inch pan full of this lovely small-leaved creeping primula, with a very large quota of its big short-stemmed purple flowers, a very rare sight indeed.

In the class for three pans of different genera, the Dundas Quaich was won by Harold Esslemont, Aberdeen, with *Phlox ensifolia nana*, *Jasminum parkeri*, and *Saxifraga cochlearis minor*, a fine exhibit in perfect condition. *Saxifraga* x Southside Seedling in one of the other entries in this class also attracted attention.

For rare, new, or difficult plants, J. K. H. Rorie's *Tsusiophyllum tanakae* took first place before Mr. Esslemont's *Weldenia candida*, oth unusual exhibits.

Natives to Scotland were well represented by *Drosera rotundifolia* and *Salix reticulata* in the two pan class, and *Orchis ericorum* in the single pan class, both exhibited by Mr. Rorie.

First for silver-grey foliage was excellently presented by J. Christie's *Chrysanthemum haradjanii*, although Mr. Crosland's *Celmisia* x *linearis* in second place was very choice and well grown.

A very large plume of blossom of *Saxifraga cotyledon norvegica* shown by Charles Halley was a good first in the saxifrage class.

Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Stuart were first for Primulas with *P. waltoni*, with Miss Joyce Halley's *P. helodoxa* a good second.

Amongst several good pans of Aquilegia, J. Christie's *A. bertolini* was first.

Iris were not so abundant as at previous June Shows, and were only represented by *I. gracilipes* and *I. innominata*.

Liliaceae were also short in numbers, and it was good to see J. B. Russell's fine form of *Lilium nanum*. He also took first place with *Nomocharis pardanthinum farreri* and *Allium narcissiflorum* in the two pan class for any bulbs, corms or tubers, and first in the one pan class with another of the same *Nomocharis*.

For two pans Compositae, David G. Dorward was first with *Anacyclus depressus* and *Erigeron trifidus*, and in the one pan class his *Celmisia coriacea* was very fine.

Dianthus were not at their best, many being still in bud. Mr. Russell's *D. "La bourbrille"* was full of flowers, and first.

In the Caryophyllaceae class *Silene alpestris fl. pl.* was interesting.

An exceptionally well-grown and flowered plant of *Lewisia pygmaea* was to me an outstanding exhibit by Mr. Crosland. With its red buds and red striped pink flowers it was a splendid first.

Boraginaceae had only two entries, *Eritrichium nanum* by Mr. Crosland, and *Lithospermum diffusum* by Mr. Dorward. Here the Judges took the unusual course of awarding first equal to each. Perhaps they considered the *Eritrichium* rather long in the flower stems, or that the digging up and potting of the *Lithospermum* was also a considerable exhibition of skill.

Campanulas were not so numerous either, but Mr. and Mrs. Stuart's two pan exhibit of *Phyteuma comosum* and *Edraianthus dalmaticus* would have been difficult to beat anywhere, as was Mr. Crosland's *Phyteuma* in the one pan class.

An exceptionally rich orange-red *Papaver alpinum* took first in its class for Mr. Dorward, and was also awarded a Certificate of Merit.

A good first in the Scrophulariaceae two pan class was Mr. Dorward's *Mimulus "Whitecroft Scarlet"* and *Pentstemon pinifolius*.

Miss Joyce Halley's 9-inch pan of *Erodium chamaedryoides fl. pl.* in full flower was outstanding in the Geraniaceae class.

Sempervivums were not so good as usual, but Mr. Ritchie's 3 pan exhibit was a very good first. *Semp. erythraeum*, not seen so often, was first in the one pan class.

Two fine pans of *Cotyledon simplicifolia* took 1st and 2nd prizes for Mrs. K. R. Pattullo and James McKay respectively.

Mr. McKay's two pans of ferns were outstanding, *Cryptogramma crispa* and *Polystichum lonchitis*. *Blechnum penna marina* was 1st in the one pan class.

Dwarf Rhododendrons were short in numbers too, but Mr. Crossland showed a lovely pink form of *R. campylogynum*. *Erica* "Mrs. Pat" was first in Ericaceae.

Charles Halley was first for 3 pans dwarf conifers with *Picea nana compacta*, *Pinus beauvronensis*, and *Abies balsamae hudsonica*. He was also first in the one pan class with *Cedrus sargentii pendula*, with Mr. Esslemont's *Chamaecyparis obtusa minima* a good second.

The Dwarf Shrubs were variously represented by *Rosemarinus officinalis prostratus*, *Syringa palibiniana*, and *Escallonia rubra compacta*.

The classes for plants not eligible in the rest of the schedule brought forth *Centaurium scilloides* and two *Heucherae*, *H. micrantha* and *H. hirsuta*.

Three good entries in the container various rock plant class should all be noted as fine exhibits, and were placed: 1st Mrs. Christie, 2nd Mr. Dorward, and 3rd Mr. Rorie.

Mr. Rorie won the L. C. Middleton Challenge Trophy for most points gained by an exhibitor in Section I.

In Section II (confined to members who have not won a Bronze Medal or more than six First Prizes at a Club Show up to a date 14 days before this Show), Mrs. Susan G. Dow, Perth, won the Bronze Medal for the highest aggregate of points. This Section was well supported and many plants shown would have been well placed if they had been exhibited in Section I.

Mrs. Dow showed a fine *Pentstemon pinifolius* in Class 64, *Campanula muralis* shown by J. Strachan was 1st in Class 65, with Miss J. Stirling's *Aster forrestii* 2nd. These being for plants of easy cultivation grown in the open ground.

Miss Stirling's silver-grey foliage plant, *Achillea umbellata*, was a good first in its class.

Cushion plants always attract and James Robertson's *Draba imbricata* was 1st, with Major-General T. Menzies' *Pygmaea thompsonii* as 2nd.

J. Strachan's *Saxifraga* x "Snowflake" with several lovely plumes was an outstanding first in its class.

*Papaver alpinum*, of very good colour, took 1st for Miss Stirling in Papaveraceae.

In the class for two pans any corms, etc., Mrs. Dow showed the interesting *Muscari plumosum* with *Allium moly*. In the one pan class *Rhodohypoxis baurii* shown by Miss Stirling 1st, with *Iris versicolor* shown by Mrs. I. S. Anderson as 2nd.

Mrs. Anderson's *Anacyclus depressus* was 1st in Compositae.

In Lewisias, Allan S. Watson was first with a very good plant of *L. x trevosiana*.

Dianthus were a good entry, but only Mr. Robertson's *D. arvensis* was in full bloom.

A very large pan of *Campanula poscharskyana*, about a yard in diameter, looked very well, and took 1st in its class for Mrs. R. A. Taylor. Mrs. Dow exhibited a very good plant of *Edraianthus graminifolius* in the class for Campanulaceae, excluding Campanula.

*Veronica rupestris nana* was a good first in Scrophulariaceae.

Some good Sedums were shown, Mr. Robertson's *Sedum spathulifolium aureum* being first, as was his *Sempervivum arachnoideum* var. *stansfeldii* in its class, also with good competition.

In Ericaceae, excluding Rhododendron, Mr. Robertson showed *Gaultheria adenostrix*—a particularly well-flowered and tidy plant of this delightful Japanese species.

Amongst the Dwarf Shrubs another choice entry was shown by Major-General T. Menzies, in *Cyathodes ericoides*.

In the class for plants not eligible elsewhere, Miss Stirling took first place with *Ramonda pyrenaica*, which the schedule apparently did not expect a novice to produce.

In Section IV there were two very good entries of bowls of cut flowers of Rock Plants exhibited by Mrs. A. T. Millar and Miss E. M. Rogers. One has always the feeling that this class could be better supported, even by members unable to enter plants.

The Cactus classes were exceptionally good, with several entries from as far away as Dumfries. P. A. Thomson, Dumfries, took first in the three-pan class with *Aporocactus flagelliformis*, *Mammillaria clochida*, and *Notocactus ottonis*. David Dorward was first in the single pan class with a well-flowered pan of *Cereus silvestrii*.

The Trade supported the Show very well, and a few of the plants of interest should be mentioned. Maryfield Nurseries had very good forms of well known plants, *Leontopodium alpinum* and *Saponaria ocymoides*, *Primula reptans*, *Primula pusilla*, *Celmisia argentea*, and *Euryops evansii* on Jack Drake's stand. *Linnaea borealis americana*, *Azalea rosaeiflora* and *Iris gracilipes* shown by Lt.-Colonel Stitt. Laurie of Dundee had *Rosa* "Nevada" and *Viburnum tomentosum plicatum grandiflora*—really worthy of its name. A good blue *Campanula allionii*, *Anacyclus moroccanus*, and *Primula reidii* var. *williamsii* were exhibited by Edrom Nurseries. These amongst many other choice and rare plants.

All were agreed that Miss Joyce A. Halley must be congratulated on the success of her first Show as Show Secretary.

## Dunoon Week-end, 1960

THE DUNOON WEEK-END forecast in September's *Journal* took place in May and though a combination of circumstances completely outside the control of the organisers threatened more than once to cause its cancellation, the original syllabus was conformed with almost exactly and, indeed, there was included an additional feature of some importance not in the original programme. Some 20 members took part, a creditable number in the circumstances, and there is little doubt that the venture was a successful one.

The proceedings opened on the Friday evening, when Mr. H. H. Davidian of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, gave a talk illustrated by some splendid slides. In this he gave a brief description of the genus *Rhododendron*, its scope, its fads and foibles, and then proceeded to give us an introduction to some, at least, of the species we were to see in the next two days. This was a very appropriate commencement, as Mr. Davidian was to be our guide and mentor during our garden visits.

The Saturday, morning and afternoon, was devoted to a visit to the Younger Botanic Garden, Benmore, where we had the pleasure and advantage of the company of Mr. Shaw, the Assistant Curator. The morning was spent largely among the large-leaved species such as *Rr. hodgsonii*, *mollyanum* and *sino-grande*, and though not all were still in flower, Mr. Davidian taught us to look for other beauties in the texture and colouring of the undersides of the leaves. Here also we were shown the differences between those two excellent yellow-flowered species, *Rr. wardii* and *campylocarpum*.

Due to the courtesy of Mr. Gough of the Forestry Commission, the party was able to partake of its sandwiches among the baronial splendours of Benmore House. Thus refreshed, we made our way to the recently erected Memorial Hut which commemorates the connection of the late Sir William Wright-Smith with the garden. On the way we noted a fine specimen of *Rh. davidsonianum* just behind the house. This fine form had heavy compact trusses and was smothered with delicately marked pale pink flowers. The *Loderi* hybrids, pink "King George V" and white "Polar Bear" with huge though rather formless blooms, looked well with ample room to show off their flaunting beauties. Notable also were the *neriiflorum* species and sub-species with their waxy scarlet bells, though it must be admitted that not everyone could observe the very fine diagnostic features which differentiate some of the sub-species.

On the Saturday evening Dr. Henry Tod gave an illustrated talk in which he outlined the latest results of his researches into the effect of various elements on the growth of *Rhododendrons*. It is not possible to report this interesting and stimulating paper here, but it is understood that a full version will eventually appear in the R.H.S. *Rhodo-*

dendron and Camellia Yearbook. After the lecture Mrs. Turberville and Mr. and Mrs. Loam showed slides of their gardens. Though we were able to see Mrs. Turberville's garden the next day, it was unfortunately not possible to see that of Mr. and Mrs. Loam.

The Sunday morning was spent at Eckford, where we were welcomed by Mr. J. W. and Lady Younger. This is a much smaller garden than Benmore, but contains within its compass many magnificent specimens only a few of which it is possible to name here. *Rh. Kyawi*, a very rare, large-leaved species, was represented by a fine sample about 12 ft. high and as much across, unfortunately not still in flower. Close by, we were able to admire a plant of *Rh. meddianum atrokermesinum*, which Mr. Davidian declared to be possibly the finest in cultivation; certainly it was a wonderful specimen and even with no bloom remaining its pale brownish-pink flaking bark made it an arresting sight.

Perhaps the most sensational plant to be seen was *Rh. lindleyi*: this specimen was about 10 ft. high, which made Mr. Davidian's assertion that in nature this species is commonly epiphytic somewhat surprising, and was amply covered with large lily-like and lily-white flowers which gave off an exquisite vanilla-like perfume. Cameras and noses were kept employed for fully 15 minutes in admiration of this wonderful plant. Two plants of the *neriiflorum* alliance were particularly noteworthy; each formed a low rounded spreading but eminently tidy mound, the one, *Rh. haemaleum*, covered with very dark almost black-red flowers, and the other, *Rh. aperantum*, with similarly shaped flowers of a warm pinkish apricot.

The weekend came to its close with the afternoon visit to Mrs. Turberville's garden at Duncreggan. This house and garden are magnificently situated on the shores of the Firth of Clyde, and though the weather during the visit was somewhat hazy, we were able to gain some impression of the splendour of the situation. Mrs. Turberville is not a specialist gardener but is eclectic in her tastes. We saw rock plants, begonias, herbaceous borders, roses and a *Cotula* lawn, the whole framing a charming house and forming a perfect setting for gracious living. After the ardours of the two days it was a relaxation of both mind and body to take our ease in such a charming setting: a fitting conclusion to a memorable weekend.

F. C. B.

## County Activities

### ANGUS

SIX MEETINGS were held in the Mathematics Lecture Room, Queen's College, Dundee, when a varied programme arranged by Miss Joyce A. Halley was much appreciated by Angus members, and several from Fife and Perthshire.

The Opening Meeting was called "Photographic Threesome," and consisted of short talks illustrated with their own slides by David Dorward, A. T. Millar and J. H. K. Rorie.

On 2nd November we were privileged to see Major George Sheriff's films of "Plant Collecting in the Himalayas and Tibet." Some of us had seen these wonderful films before, but were equally thrilled along with those seeing them for the first time.

The Members' Transparency Night, a regular feature now, was even more successful than before; more members produced their own slides, and there was less reluctance to speak about them.

The subject of Dr. Henry Tod's lecture as advertised for our January meeting was altered to "Colour early and late in the Rock Garden," and proved a very good choice, being presented in the usual efficient way we have learned to expect from Dr. Tod.

A promise to the C.R. by Harold Esslemont, Aberdeen, brought him on 1st February to show his slides and speak about "The A.G.S. Tour, 1959." Besides giving a fine show of mountain scenery and the plants which grow there, Mr. Esslemont showed how collected plants were packed, and more important still, how they are successfully grown in captivity, making a very complete and satisfying lecture, illustrated by the most perfect photography.

With the Club Show for this area being held in Dundee in 1960, we were fortunate to have, in addition to our small members' show in April, a practical demonstration of how to prepare for Shows, by Charles McDermott, St. Andrews. Mr. McDermott brought a number of plants, pots, and potting material with him and showed exactly how to do it, giving a commentary all the while his skilful fingers did the various jobs. We feel that such meetings do produce the new exhibitors at our Shows.

The session closed with our usual "Local Members' Show," fortunately, also as usual, with J. L. Mowat, St. Andrews, taking charge as Judge and giving a detailed explanation of why he had placed the prize-winners. A Judging Competition is also a regular part of this meeting, which is always our best attended, and must surely encourage and make less formidable the thought of entering a plant at a Show.

The C.R., in particular this session, must thank all the members who so willingly help in various ways at these meetings, including those who provide a constant supply of plants for the regular raffles.

S. M.



### DUMFRIESSHIRE

ANOTHER successful season of Winter activities has been completed and a full series of talks held, as usual in the Municipal Chambers, Buccleuch Street, Dumfries. In the earlier part of the season the weather was not too kind to us, and attendances suffered accordingly, being as we are a rather scattered group. However, in the latter part of the season members turned out very well indeed.

Our November talk was given by our friend Dr. Henry Tod, who took as his subject "Early and late Colour in the Rock Garden," and covered it in his usual thorough manner. Lists of plants featured by Dr. Tod in his talk were made available to members and very much appreciated.

The December meeting was taken by myself, when the results of the 1959 Season in my own garden were shown to members.

In January we had a first visit from our neighbouring C.R., Miss King, and members heard a grand lecture on "Propagation" from one who has obviously mastered the art.

In preparation for our Show, Mr. Cameron, Marchbank, took as his subject for our February talk "Preparation of Plants for Show," and the subject was well received by members.

In March we had another visit from Dr. James Davidson, this time talking on "Heathers," and judging from the discussion and questions this proved a very popular subject and was very ably presented by our visitor.

This concluded our indoor activities, and the season ended with a visit to Miss Dickson's garden at Woodhouse, Dunscore, and a fair number of members again took the opportunity to see this lovely natural garden.

Our grateful thanks to our lecturers, and to our lady members who provided the teas for us, and my apology to the "provider" who was charged for her own "provisions."

NORMAN M. BROWN, C.R.

### DUMBARTON, GLASGOW and RENFREWSHIRE

THE 1959-60 SESSION meetings were again well attended, and there were times when seating capacity was taxed to the limit.

The syllabus provided a series of seven most interesting and instructive lectures covering a wide variety of subjects, and we take this opportunity to again thank the various Club members responsible. Dates and talks were as follows :—

Monday 5th October 1959 : Dr. D. M. Morison, F.R.C.S. : "Native Plants in Assynt."

Monday 2nd November 1959 : David Livingstone, Esq. : "My Favourite Rock Garden Plants."

Monday 7th December 1959 : A. B. Duguid, Esq. : "Various aspects of Sphagnum Propagation—illustrated with pictures of plants raised by this method."

Monday 11th January 1960 : Alfred Evans, Esq. : "Shrubs in the Rock Garden."

Monday 1st February 1960 : Professor G. Pontecorvo, F.R.C.S. : "Likes and Dislikes of Plants in their Alpine Habitats."

Monday 7th March 1960 : Mrs. David Tweedie, West Linton : "Some Patagonian Plants."

Monday 4th April 1960 : William Urie, Esq., Turnberry : "The Garden at Northcote."

This summer we had two outings and the weather favoured us. On Saturday 28th May we visited in the morning the garden of the Misses Stephen, Alloway Cottage, Alloway. There we had the pleasure of inspecting a most exclusive collection of alpiners, herbaceous plants, and shrubs, all growing under ideal conditions.

Lunch was had at Bellisle Hotel, and from there our party travelled on to Turnberry, where we were welcomed to the garden at Northcote by Mr. William Urie. What a lovely garden ! Mr. Urie has spent thirty years of his life creating and perfecting an area of many acres, and has developed to the full features made possible with the old mill and stream. The trees and shrubs in particular are outstanding features, together with the vast collection of alpiners planted and flourishing in well chosen natural positions. Our host and hostess kindly provided our party with a most welcome cup of tea to help us on our way.

The second outing on Saturday 11th June was to gardens of two of our local members in Dunbartonshire, namely, Mrs. Archie Allan, Strathblane, and Captain and Mrs. W. Collis Brown, Birkenbog, Milngavie.

At Strathblane the Allans have created a most charming garden, which includes a large scree and well designed rock works to contain their comprehensive collection of well-grown plants. Suitable conditions exist in a large scree frame for the more difficult specimens. The garden is in a most beautiful setting with Dumgoyne towering up close by, and the tall meconopses in the well-filled herbaceous borders made the perfect picture.

Birkenbog, with its one hundred yards of gorge and stream suitably planted with primulas and other moisture-loving plants, made a great show, as did the rock plants and flowering shrubs on the higher ground. Captain and Mrs. Brown deserve much credit for the hard work they have expended in creating such a wonderful garden in a comparatively short period of years.

Our special thanks go to the Bearsden and Milngavie lady members for providing such an abundance of home baking, and to Miss Davidson who made it possible to have the tea served in Athol School.

To the owners of all the gardens visited we are greatly indebted for their invitations, and in particular for all the kindly welcomes extended.

Arrangements for next winter's activities are well advanced. Meetings will be held this session at Miss Rombach Tea Rooms, 5 Waterloo Street, Glasgow, C.2., on the first Monday of each month, except in January, when the meeting will be on the second Monday, and time 7.30 p.m. Members and friends are welcome to all meetings.

### EAST LoTHIAN

THE WINTER season began at North Berwick with a lecture by Dr. Henry Tod on "Nature's Soil Production." This showed how the cultivation of rock garden plants begins literally at rock bottom. Dr. Tod, by means of photographs taken all over the country, showed how the disintegration of rocks by past glacial action and by more recent variations of temperature and climate have brought about the processes of soil formation. The effects of vegetation and the activities of animals—particularly rabbits and man—have all assisted in making or marring the soil which now overlies the living rock. He also showed photographs of natural soils which had deteriorated to the point where they could no longer support plant life.

In November Mr. Harold Esslemont showed his coloured slides of the Dolomites and of some of the beautiful plants which thrive on those strange rocks. Besides giving us an idea of the spectacular skyline of the region, Mr. Esslemont described how he managed to obtain close-up pictures of plants growing on the sheer cliff face. Finally, we were shown how his collected plants were safely packed for the journey home. Some of us may have noticed that those same plants have reappeared on the show benches during the past season.

In December Mr. Grant Roger of the Nature Conservancy gave an illustrated lecture on Scottish native plants, and told us how the public conscience is becoming educated to protect those plants which are rare or have in the past been threatened with extinction. Among his beautiful slides were native *Saxifraga* species, many native ferns, and the very rare *Diapensia lapponica*, which has only recently been known to occur in Scotland.

Following the county A.G.M. a number of those members who are photographers gave us the pleasure of seeing all the flowers of Spring, Summer and Autumn on a bleak and colourless February day.

One of the most satisfactory county occasions is the coffee morning and bring-and-buy sale. Again this took place in March at Grainfoot, Longniddry, by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Baillie. Its objective is to raise money for the running expenses of meetings and of the Autumn Show, but it is also fun for the helpers and much appreciated by those who acquire a basketful of good plants. Non-members are invited and a number have thus been converted to the pleasures of rock-gardening and the benefits of Club membership.

Outings to gardens were arranged for early summer and were well attended.

The first was on 26th April to two gardens in the County : Birnie-knowes (Mr. Sanderson) and Skateraw (Mrs. Bowe). Both gardens were full of interest and members were entertained to tea.

On 10th May two Roxburghshire gardens were visited : Mainhouse where Mrs. Douglas received the party, and Old Graden, where Mrs. Short showed members round and provided tea. Old Graden contains a little of everything from scree to water garden, which gives scope for a great variety of plants.

On 31st May members met at Branklyn, Perth, where Mr. and Mrs. Renton showed the party round and entertained them to tea. This wonderful garden was a wealth of colour with shrubs flowering in profusion, drifts of meconopsis and primulas, trilliums, scree plants and many more both rare and beautiful.

It was a privilege to visit these gardens and thanks are due to all the owners who made this possible.

*Lectures for 1960 :*

October—Details to be arranged.

Tuesday 1st November, at Hope Rooms, North Berwick. Illustrated Lecture : "Plant Hunting in the Assynt Area," by Dr. Morison.

Tuesday 6th December, at County Buildings, Haddington : Illustrated Lecture by Mr. A. Evans, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh : "Dwarf Shrubs."

C. NISBET, C.R.

### FIFE—EAST

THE WINTER meetings of the Fife-East group were on the whole well attended by good numbers of enthusiasts—even when the weather was sometimes far from being good. All our speakers were greatly appreciated and their lectures keenly followed, and our grateful thanks go to them for the trouble and inconvenience of winter travelling they incurred in our instruction and entertainment.

The opening meeting in St. Andrews on 12th November was by Mr. J. R. Aitken of Perth, who with his wonderful colour slides took us on a tour of the hills and plants of the West Highlands. A packed audience followed every word and slide with keen interest and enjoyment.

On 17th December, in Cupar, another good attendance actively engaged in question and discussion with a Brains Trust consisting of Messrs. N. Lyle, C. McDermott and R. Lyle. It was agreed by all present that the meeting had been most helpful and instructive as well as enjoyable.

"Members' Night" in St. Andrews on 15th January proved as usual most successful, with a number of members showing their slides.

One very interesting collection was of plants photographed by the son of Mr. and Mrs. Playfair while on service in Somaliland. Unfortunately many of the dwarf shrubs and plants shown, though so very interesting, had members beaten so far as names went.

The meeting of 12th February—again in St. Andrews—was another highlight in our winter programme, with a visit from Mr. A. Evans of R.B.G. Edinburgh. His talk on “Dwarf Shrubs for the Rock Garden,” with the fine selection of beautiful accompanying slides, thoroughly spurred on members to new ideas in this part of rock gardening.

“Judging Competition” Night on 17th March—at Cupar this year for the first time—proved itself popular as ever, and Cupar and district members are to be congratulated on the fine display of plants put up. It proved a most happy and instructive evening.

On 15th April Mr. J. Wilson of R.B.G. Edinburgh gave members a talk on the modern methods of propagation of rock plants now in use in the R.B.G., illustrating the main points of his talk with a number of appropriate slides. Questions regarding the treatment required for particular plants were ably dealt with before, all too soon, Mr. Wilson had to leave to catch his train back to Edinburgh.

Coffee Morning, on 21st May, seemed if such were possible an even greater success than usual, with a large number of members and friends obviously enjoying the occasion as they chatted over coffee or milled over the plants, etc., brought in for sale. Thanks are due to all the lady members who handle the arrangements and do all the actual work on this enjoyable annual event.

As an outcome of requests by members, a visit to the University Botanic Gardens, St. Andrews, was arranged for the evening of 24th May. The evening was fine and quite a large turn-out of members roamed the garden from early evening till the air began to get a bit chilly and the light began to fail. As is usual when Club members get together, questions, arguments and discussion were common as groups formed and reformed as they went round the garden.

No definite arrangements have been fixed up for next season's meetings, but members will all be informed as soon as the full programme is made up.

J. L. M., C.R.

### FIFE—WEST

WE WERE unfortunate not to have any lecture for January and that Dr. A. M. Morison's illustrated lecture on “Plant Hunting in N.W. Sutherland” for 18th February had to be cancelled owing to a very severe snow storm. We hope that his lecture is only postponed as we had been looking forward to it so very much.

*Thursday 17th March* was a red letter evening for us when Mrs. Ruth Tweedie gave us one of the most delightful talks on “Some

Patagonian Plants," and we were able to see slides of some of the rare plants growing in large masses that we had only seen in the specialists' corner of the Show benches, such as *Calceolaria darwinii* with its peering gnome-like faces and *Oxalis laciniata's* dainty fragile flowers. The evening ended with Mrs. Tweedie answering the many questions we put to her and we were very loth to let her go.

*Thursday 21st April*, "Members' Night," could have been an International Night, and a great success again with slides from Mrs. Smart on Switzerland, Mrs. Barlow with some of Africa, Mrs. Malcolm of her Perthshire garden, Miss Somerville of her Fife garden and surroundings, and Mrs. Wilson on some New Zealand gardens. We hope that many more will take part in this "Members' Night."

E. D. W., *Assistant C.R.*

### PERTSHIRE

THREE meetings were held in Fisher's Hotel, Pitlochry, last winter, the attendance being most rewarding. Dr. D. M. Morison, White Lodge, Edinburgh, gave a most interesting talk on "Alpines in their Native Habitat," which was illustrated with wonderful colour slides. In December a Members' Night was held; all members who had 35 m.m. colour slides of their plants and gardens showed these. Mrs. Boyd-Harvey, Boonslie, Dirleton, came to us in April; she told us how to make Raised Beds, also—what was very important—all the different plants that could be grown successfully in them.

Three meetings have been arranged for members and their friends in Fisher's Hotel, Pitlochry, at 7.30 p.m. on the following dates:—

Wednesday 30th November 1960 : Illustrated talk by John C. Lawson, Esq., Inshriach Alpine Plant Nursery, Aviemore.

Wednesday 1st February 1961 : Members' Night. Would members who have 35 m.m. colour slides of garden interest please bring them to the meeting.

Wednesday 8th March 1961 : Lecture to be arranged and will be notified in the *S.R.G.C. Year Book*.

Members who can bring any plant or cut flower from their garden to the meeting for the interest of others, please do.

M. R. STUART

### STIRLINGSHIRE

IN THE 1959-60 season we held two autumn meetings, one in Stirling and one in Falkirk, and two spring meetings, divided likewise between the two burghs. Members were most generous at all meetings in bringing—and buying—plants to help increase the funds of the Branch. We were also very pleased to have from the Seed Distribution Centre some of the surplus seed packets for the benefit of the Branch funds.

The October meeting in Stirling took the form of a Members' Colour Transparency Night, an innovation which was extremely successful. The slides shown were of great variety and interest, and we feel that this is a programme feature worth repeating.

The second autumn meeting, in November, was held in Falkirk jointly with the local Horticultural Society. Mr. Alfred Evans very kindly came through from Edinburgh to talk on "Easily Grown Alpines," and showed us, with his very attractive slides, the colour and beauty which even the youngest novice can achieve in the rock garden.

The first spring meeting was held in March in Stirling, when Mr. A. Duguid, of Edrom Nurseries, came up from the snow-bound Border to talk to us on "Miniature Gardens and Troughs." There was a good turn-out of enthusiasts for Mr. Duguid, who in spite of the inclement weather had brought with him a very attractive demonstration miniature garden in full flower. This fine lecture, illustrated by many decorative slides, has opened up a new and fascinating field of experiment to us all.

At the second spring meeting held in Falkirk in early May, we were happy to have Dr. Tod to lecture to us on "Plants and Shows." Dr. Tod gave us generous and excellent advice on the preparation of plants for Shows and warned would-be exhibitors of various errors in presentation. Excellent slides illustrated the points of this enlightening talk, which was enjoyed by all.

The garden visit for the season was a very happy one. We had been invited by Major-General and Mrs. Murray-Lyon to see over the garden at Ardcuil on the 11th June and after an initial shower the weather was kind. Ardcuil is superbly situated on a ridge with a plunging view to Loch Faskally, a situation which is an irresistible challenge to a rock gardener. How magnificently the challenge has been met was evident to us all as we lingered round the raised beds and the creviced rock-walls with their happily-thriving rarities. It was indeed a pleasure to see a garden so imaginatively planned. Mrs. Murray-Lyon's very generous hospitality made a most delightful finish to this memorable visit.

The first meeting for the 1960-61 season has been arranged to take place in the Temperance Cafe, Falkirk, at 7.30 p.m. on 12th October. Mr. J. G. Collee will give a lecture illustrated with slides on "Bulbs in the Rock Garden."

The Stirling autumn meeting will be held on Monday 21st November. The lecture will be given by Mr. J. A. Stainton.

J. MCEWAN, C.R.

### NORTH-EAST ENGLAND

THOUGH NO previous reports of its doings have appeared in the *Journal*, the North-East England Group, until recently operative as a sub-group of the present North Northumberland Group, has now completed its sixth full season of activity, which it shares with the Northumberland & Durham Branch of the Alpine Garden Society.

As usual a full monthly programme of meetings was arranged, opening with, as is customary, a Members' Slide Night. Though this year no member had brought slides from the Continent, their holidays had ranged widely in Britain and we saw some pictures of Glasnevin Botanic Garden in Dublin, some excellent shots of the geology and flora of Sutherland, and a magnificent portrait taken at the Severn Bird Sanctuary of a Ruddy Duck ! The November meeting was filled in by the C.R., who tried (and succeeded) in provoking a lively discussion on the principles of Rock Garden construction. In December a Symposium on seed-sowing was notable for the fact that no fewer than 17 members spoke on one aspect or another of the problems involved.

For the first three meetings of 1960 we were glad to welcome guest speakers from over the Border : Mr. Alfred Evans, who spoke on 'Meconopses,' Mr. W. R. M. Adams, who took as his subject 'Architecture of the Rock Garden,' and Mr. David Livingstone, who talked about his favourite Primulas. Mr. Evans made the interesting point that the finely-rosetted monocarpic species should, in spite of the fact that at flowering time they might reach six or seven feet in height, be planted near the front of the border where they could be admired throughout their life of four or five years. Mr. Adams took for his theme an unusual aspect of rock-gardening and by means of well-chosen slides illustrated how, by careful positioning of key-plants, effects could be obtained which were greater than the sum of their parts. Mr. Livingstone talked delightfully about a very representative selection of Primulas and incidentally cleared up a confusion which had bothered some of us by his discovery that there were two distinct pubescens type primulas named "Mrs. G. H. Wilson" and "Mrs. J. H. Wilson" respectively !

Meetings will be held at 7 p.m. in Room 5 at the Y.M.C.A. Club, Saville Place (off Northumberland Street), Newcastle, as follows :—

*Friday September 9th* : Members' Night. Members are requested to bring 2 in. × 2 in. slides of horticultural interest. There will also be a sale of Spring Bulbs in aid of Club funds.

*Friday October 14th* : Brains Trust. Members are requested to come prepared with questions which are likely to lead to interesting discussions.

*Friday November 11th* : Mr. H. H. Davidian of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, will give an illustrated talk on "Rhododendrons for the Rock Garden."



*Friday December 9th* : Mr. J. T. Aitken of Edinburgh will give an illustrated talk entitled "Beginning the Rock Garden" which, whilst primarily addressed to the novice, will be of interest to more experienced members.

S.R.G.C. Members are reminded that their subscriptions became due on September 1st and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. D. Elder, Jessamine, Kirkhill, Penicuik, Midlothian.

With a view to providing points for discussion it is requested that members should bring plants and other exhibits for inspection and be prepared to take part in the ensuing discussion.

Friends and prospective members will be most welcome.

In April our local member, Mr. J. Jefferson-Brown, gave us a very full and erudite talk on "Dwarf Narcissi," during which we were fortunate in seeing photographs of almost all known species and sub-species.

The season concluded with a Plant Sale which was exceedingly successful both as a social occasion and as a money-raising venture.

The programme for 1960-61 is at present in preparation and details will be sent to members shortly. Amongst the guest lecturers we hope to welcome are Mr. H. H. Davidian of the R.B.G. Edinburgh, and Mr. J. L. Mowat of St. Andrews. May I, in conclusion, express the hope that those few local members who have not yet done so will find an early opportunity of attending our meetings, where they will find a friendly and helpful atmosphere awaiting them.

F. CYRIL BARNES, C.R.

### NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND has enjoyed a very varied programme during the past Spring and Summer and was favoured with reasonably fine weather for almost all the visits.

On Wednesday 27th April a very large gathering visited the garden of H. S. Thorne, Esq., at Woodlands, Spindlestone. Here the party saw a newly-made garden in a lovely natural woodland setting with a stream. It was not easy to believe that Mr. Thorne had accomplished so much in such a short space of time and it was hoped that he would invite the members again when the gardens were mature. The party then passed on to our member, Mrs. M. N. Fenwick's interesting garden at Waren House, Belford. Mrs. Fenwick had very kindly invited the members to tea and this was most welcome as it was a fine but cold day.

On Saturday 7th May a Bring and Buy Sale was held in the forecourt of the Blue Bell Hotel, Belford. A substantial sum was raised for the local funds, but it was not as great as at former sales, as it was not so well attended. Unhappily, the date clashed with another County fixture and, as it seemed impossible to arrange the Sale on a free

Saturday in Spring, it was agreed that a week day should be tried on the next occasion.

On Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th May an informal visit was made to gardens in South-west Scotland. Only six local members attended and, as these meetings involving nights spent away, only interest such a limited number, no expense is involved for printing and the visit is just announced in the syllabus and all arrangements made by letter. The gardens at Lochinch, Knockdolian, Logan (not forgetting the fish pond), Culderry, were visited and most welcome hospitality extended at Torhousemuir. The splendid collection of rhododendrons at Lochinch was greatly admired and the Earl of Stair later won the rhododendron cup at Glasgow Show. Lady Stair extended a very kindly welcome to the small party. General and Mrs. McConnel made the members very welcome at Knockdolian, where the rhodohypoxis were the great point of interest on a very fine day. Unhappily the second day was not so favoured by the weather and the interesting garden at Logan was viewed on a cold day in a very high wind, but this spoilt little of our pleasure. There were many fine rhododendrons, and among the shrubs *Ceanothus gloriosus* was outstanding, as was a display of *Camassia leichtlinii*.

The wind then turned to rain and, unhappily, Culderry was seen under very adverse conditions, but Major and Mrs. Walmsley made the members very welcome and, with so many good plants to see, the weather was forgotten. Interesting plants noted were *Cytisus purpureus*, *Genista januensis*, *Rhododendron microlepis*, *Vaccinium mortinia*, *Tulipa persica*, *Cyclamen repandum*, *Rhododendron davidsonianum* and *Fritillaria lanceolata*.

The party passed on to Torhousemuir and, being by then thoroughly damp, the members were very grateful for the hospitality extended by Sir Anthony and Lady White.

On Tuesday 31st May, again a very small party met at Langdon Beck, Middleton-in-Teesdale, to see the alpine plants grown on the fells. The season was a very early one and, unhappily, only a few plants of *Gentiana verna* were still in flower, but there was still a good quantity of *Primula farinosa*, even at the side of the main road. The party walked to Cauldron Snout, a waterfall on the Tees, and *Arenaria verna* was very showy on the way. Returning to the main road, the members entered a wonderful field of *Trollius europaeus*, the finest display of this flower that any present had seen ; among them were many plants of viola with very large mauve flowers. Earlier this field must have been a mass of wood anemone. It was a great pity that more members did not attend on that day as it was so much enjoyed by those that made the effort.

On Thursday 16th June there was a good turn-out of members to visit the gardens of our members, Miss J. M. Wilcox, Dundonald, Rothbury, and Mrs. H. Richardson at The Wilderness, Harbottle. Miss Wilcox's prowess as a builder of dry stone terracing was much ad-

mired and she showed great skill in growing many difficult plants. There were many fine trees in the garden, among which a large *Abies pungens glauca* was a focal point of interest.

Mrs. Richardson's garden is less established but she showed that she is a fine cultivator. The rock border in front of the house was already full of interest and a large plant of *Penstemon pinifolius* was very striking. The bed of dwarf rhododendrons will be very fine in a few years. The beautiful situation and fine view of the hills made it a most attractive spot. Mrs. Richardson very kindly entertained the members to tea. Later an informal visit was made to the walled garden at Harbottle Castle, by invitation of Mrs. Fenwick-Clenell. This delightful herbaceous and shrub garden was planted by Mrs. O. M. Athill, now a member of the Wigtonshire Group.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Blue Bell Hotel, Belford, on Friday 24th June.

Lectures have been arranged for the 1960-61 season as follows:—  
 Tuesday 11th October : Miss M. Scarlett—"A Garden Walk."  
 Tuesday 15th November : Mrs. C. Boyd-Harvey—"Demonstration and Discussion of some Propagation Methods."  
 Friday 2nd December : Mr. J. Grant Roger—"Scottish Native Alpines and Problems of their Conservation."  
 Friday 17th March 1961 : Mr. Alfred Evans—"Meconopsis."

As an innovation a garden is being visited to see autumn colour. On Thursday 22nd September the gardens at Eglington Hall will be seen by kind permission of Colonel Milvain.

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## Book Review

“**BONSAI JAPANESE MINIATURE TREES, THEIR STYLE, CULTIVATION AND TRAINING.**” By Kan Yashiroda. Pp. 166. 117 illustrations. Faber, London, 30/-

Mr. Yashiroda's book has much to commend it. The technique is explained in much detail and with very many illustrations. In places he is repetitive and appears to over-stress the formalities of the cult like nomenclature. But he is easy to understand and introduces his reader to a fascinating art.

But it is difficult not to feel that all this is an unnatural practise. But quite evidently it is not unnatural to its enthusiasts. Obviously it all depends what you mean by 'natural.'

Words mean what you want them to mean.

Naturalism is the great objective of British gardening and especially of rock gardening. You plant in clumps and not in lines because clumps are 'natural' whereas the lines are not. The stones have to be set in the ground to resemble stratified rock because that is what is 'natural.'

Yet of course our gardens are phoney. They are not natural. They are contrived and schemed, simulated and imitated. You could probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of members of this very large Club who have real natural rock gardens.

At least we would probably justify ourselves by the defence that we don't monkey about with the plants themselves. We try so far as we can to give them the conditions as near as possible to their home environment and we judge our degree of success by how close we can grow the plant to its healthy condition in the wild.

The opposite to most of us—the unnatural gardening *in excelcis*—is the Japanese Bonsai craft of stunting trees into grotesque effects. Yet the Japanese enthusiast justifies his love of this quaint art by appealing to our love of nature. Bonsai provides the refreshment, quiet, and colourfulness of natural scenery, so he says.

Whatever the means he employs the Bonsai artist (or fiend—it depends how you view it !) aims at making his subjects resemble beautiful natural trees. He would condemn any end product which was merely grotesque or stunted. He aims artificially to produce the gnarled old weather-beaten specimens which do, indeed, have charm, attraction, or at least interest.

The technique is fascinating. The requirements, in addition to the patience and cultural skill which everyone who grows plants needs in some degree, are the sort of manual dexterity which the artist in precious metals must have and the eye for line which the sculptor requires.

There are two popular misconceptions. You do not start with dwarf trees. The rock garden sort specifically just won't do. You start with ordinary trees—forest trees if you are working with the much used conifers. Nor is it all done by tying funny knots in the roots. You do indeed work on the roots. But the plant is neither allowed to pot-bind itself nor is it starved.

Each two or three years the plant is re-potted into the same size of container. The root is pruned by eliminating some thicker and longer roots to encourage fine growth. The plant is not starved ; on the contrary, during the growing season from spring to autumn liquid manure is applied every ten days.

You come almost to think this is humane—all done by kindness.

But if you aim to adopt this pastime get acquainted with your nearest ironmonger, for wire is needed, in various gauges, and both copper and



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We understand that this difficulty is not insuperable. Permission has to be obtained from the Exchange Control in the first place and evidence has to be supplied of the existence of the Society and its membership fees. Having secured sanction, the member obtains a draft from his Bank and forwards it to the Society. In practice it would probably be best first to consult one's Bank, which could supply advice and the appropriate forms.

The annual subscription is 3½ dollars, or 10 dollars for three years if paid in advance, and the Secretary, who will send further particulars, is Edgar L. Totten, 238 Sheridan Avenue, Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J., U.S.A.

In addition to its Quarterly Bulletin, the American Society has a Seed Exchange in operation.

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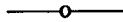
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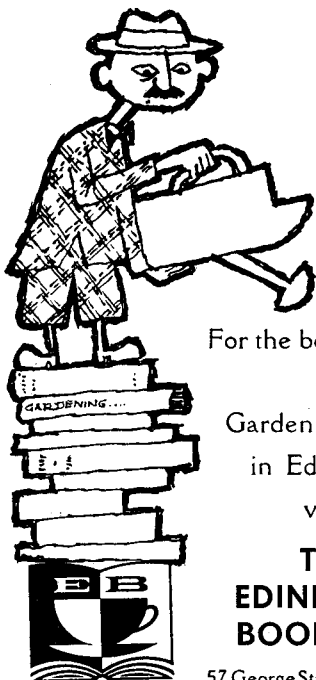
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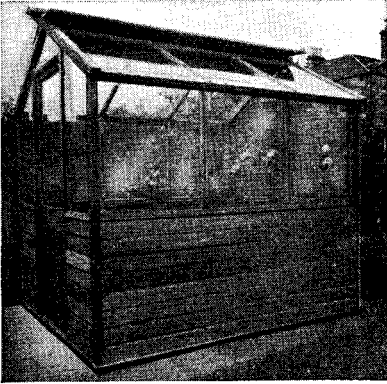
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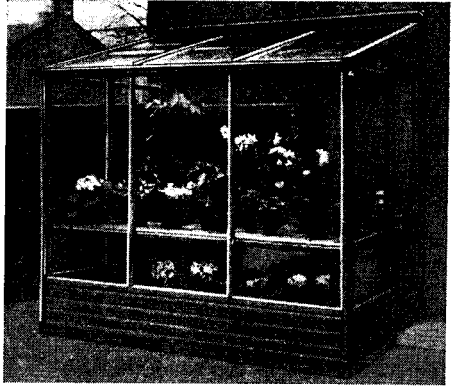
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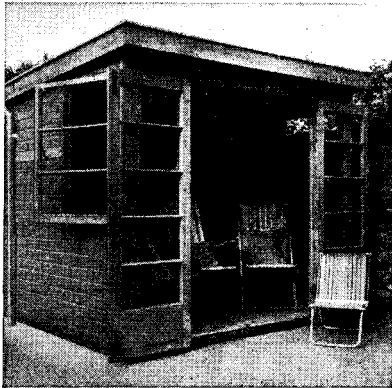
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