



Scottish Rock Garden Club/AGS Forrest Memorial Medal Hexham, Northumberland 2012



**Plant name *Saxifraga x edithae* 'Bridget'
shown by Chris Lilley**

Every now and then a spectacular and exceptionally well grown and presented example of a well known 'ordinary' garden plant turns up at a show and scoops the Forrest Medal. What a delight it is when that happens! This year at Hexham Chris Lilley was the man to produce just such a plant. *Saxifraga x edithae* 'Bridget' is the Sunday name of our old



garden favourite, *Saxifraga* 'Bridget', which used to be offered by many nurseries. I have grown it in a trough for many years where it flowers reliably for many weeks in April each year. My plant may be starved or restricted because it has not yet shown signs of outgrowing its corner of a trough in a part of the garden shaded from early morning sun.

Chris tells me he has grown it for 15 years, no doubt re-potting it as necessary.

It is a wonderful *Saxifraga* in or out of flower. Out of flower it has wonderful silver rosettes.

The history of *Saxifraga* introductions, those who introduced them to cultivation and the cultivars subsequently produced makes it one of the most interesting of alpine genera to study. Even the most hybridised plant still shares many aspects of its appearance with wild plants. Luckily for breeders, plants from all over the northern hemisphere can be crossed to give innumerable hybrids. 'Bridget' is a *Saxifraga x edithae* cross. It is an old hybrid [pre 1915 according to Malcolm McGregor in his tome on *Saxifragas* - a fantastic book!] It is a cross between *Saxifraga marginata* and *Saxifraga sribryni*.

Saxifraga marginata is a white flowered *Kabschia* species from Italy and Greece. It has between 1 and 5 flowers per stem. *S. sribryni*, also European, is an *Engleria* species with pinky flowers which hardly open out.

'Bridget' combines features of both parents, resulting in several pale pink, dark eyed, small flowers per stem. The rosettes are silvered like those of *sribryni*.

