

THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB

EDINBURGH SHOW

6 4 24

We have had a long wet winter and spring but as usual the sun shone on Fairmilehead Church Hall for our Edinburgh show. A couple of days before the show, central Scotland was blanketed in snow and I wondered if we would even get to Edinburgh at all. [below is a picture of my garden the day before the show] TV and Radio weather forecasts were full of doom and gloom but just as quickly as it came, the snow melted away. At the show weather watchers and those who just had to step carefully did not dwell on the beautiful sunshine. Their focus was on the gale force winds which were pretty strong in the morning but became much more violent in the afternoon. I didn't envy the nursery van drivers' job in their large mainly white vans. The wind must have caught them much more than it did me in my car. The weather did not deter visitors. As soon as the trade stands were opened they were swamped by gardeners keen to find new treasures to take home.

While judging was continuing no one could enter the show hall, so after grabbing their new plants it was off to the tea room for a mid morning roll or perhaps as it was Edinburgh for a nice cup of tea and a scone. I saved my appetite for lunch! Excellent filled rolls and a wide selection of cakes and gateaux. Home baking is alive and well in the kitchens of our capital. All day long our SRGC caterers kept us well fed and watered. Thank you all you for your hard work.



Since Edinburgh has so many trophies this year I will base my report on the plants and winners of the trophies. Some trophies were not awarded.

The George Forrest Memorial Medal for Best Plant in Show was awarded to Cyril Lafong's *Trillium rivale*

Trillium rivale is a plant native to the Siskiyou mountains of southern Oregon and Northern California. Both areas can be cold and wet. Indeed this *Trillium* is often found growing near water, hence its colloquial name of 'Brook Wake Robin'

Several distinct clones are in cultivation, the most common has white flowers making these purple marked flowers extra special

Nowadays botanists want to put it into its own genus *Pseudotrillium*, I don't know why!

On the opposite show bench David Millward showed his magnificent pan of the smallest growing *Trillium*, *T. hibbersonii* [below

right]. It has much smaller and narrower petaled flowers. Its flowers can be in shades of pink. I grew it many years ago but it succumbed in a cold frame which became too hot one summer. Grown outside it can be almost sessile. It was first found on Vancouver Island by the English surveyor John Arthur Hibberson in 1938, it was propagated and introduced to cultivation by his son

Below left is a pan of a white flowered *Trillium rivale*



The R.E. Cooper Bhutan Drinking Cup for Best Asiatic Primula was awarded to Jane & Alan Thomson's *Primula forbesii*



Native to Yunnan across to Burma, *Primula forbesii* is related to *P. malacoides* which used to be widely cultivated as a house plant. My recollection of it is that many people were a 'allergic' to its leaves. Jane and Alan's plant is a wonderful sight with the morning sun shining through its petals. I always think plants on this side of the hall are given an extra something with the sunshine highlighting their beauty. It reminds me of a delicate version of *Primula sieboldii* which comes from Japan.

The AGS Ulster Group Quaich for Best Foliage Plant was awarded to Carole & Ian Bainbridge's *Hepatica nobilis* "Stained Glass"



WHAT A FANTASTIC PLANT!

John Massey's Ashwood nursery, source of so many great plants, describes this cultivar as "Simply the best marbled leaf cultivar of *H. nobilis* we have seen" it has pale blue flowers and "Comes true from seed"

Who could ask for more? Hopefully it will spawn some other spectacular seedlings as well. Most people are captivated by *Hepatica* flowers, especially those of *H. japonica*. Here is the reason to grow some whose foliage rivals that of *Cyclamen graecum*.

The Henry Todd Carnethy Quaich for best Bulb or tuber in Section 1 was awarded to David Millward's *Narcissus obesus* 'Lee Martin'

The Kilbryde Cup for best plant in a pan up to 17.5mm external diameter was awarded to David Millward's *Narcissus obesus* 'Lee Martin'

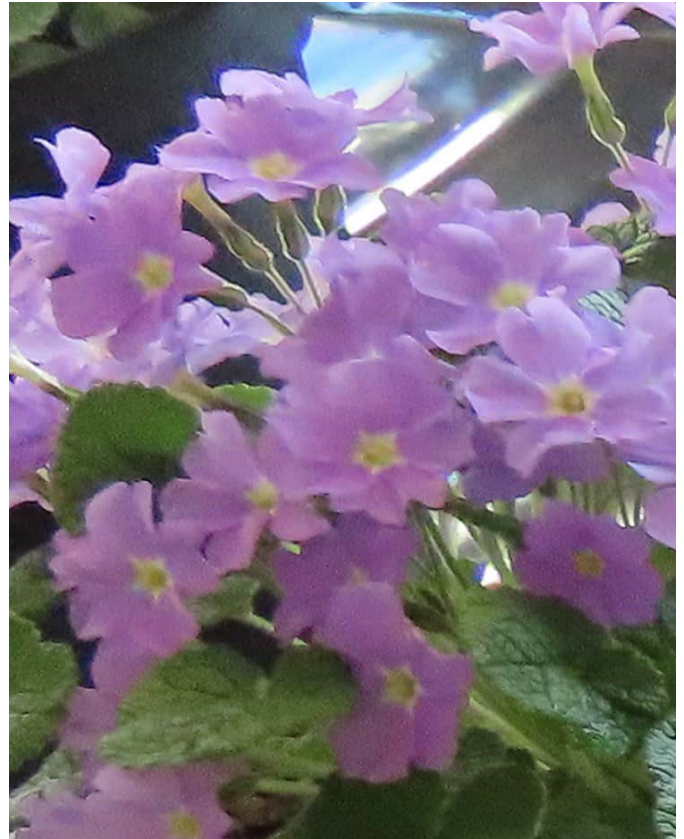


One plant two trophies!

Dave grows this clone spectacularly well. A couple of years ago it won the Forrest Medal. It was introduced to Scottish growers by the late Bill Robinson and grown for a time under the name "Marion Robinson". It is probably one of the best dwarf narcissi for pot culture. Dave says it multiplies well. I am not sure if it is commercially available.



The K.C. Corsar Challenge Trophy was won for Best American or European Primula was won by Cyril Lafong's *Primula renifolia*



A beautiful plant from the Caucasus doing well in Fife grown by a doctor from Mauritius and shown in Edinburgh. Attention to detail is the hallmark of Cyril's entries. He has the knowledge, contacts, patience and experience to source and grow a wide range of plants. He takes great care to remove any dead or dying flowers or leaves. The pots are immaculate and the top dressing appropriate. He leads and others strive to follow his examples. He has probably won more Forrest medals than everyone else put together At a show where he does not win the medal you can be sure that his plants were in contention. Below are two more of Cyril's, entered as a pair in the 2 pan Primulaceae class:- *Androsace muscoidea* and *Soldanella montana*.



The Reid Rose Bowl for most points in Section I went to David & Stella Rankin of Lasswade.

Primula enthusiasts look forward to the Rankin's entries because they usually stage some rare and unusual species. Among their entries were *Primula bullata bracteata*. I think this is one of the species which was once lumped under the name of *P. forrestii*. David has spent a lot of time sorting the different species from one another. [see last year's Glasgow show report]



Primula auricula *Primula subpyrenaica*
Primula auricula x subpyrenaica?
 The plant on the left is *Primula auricula*, as seen in the north and west of the Alps.
 The plant on the right is *Primula subpyrenaica*, a species described as recently as 2014, from the foothills of the Pyrenees, not far from Barcelona.
 The plant in front may be a hybrid between the two species, or a variant of *Primula subpyrenaica*.

The Midlothian bowl for Best Plant in Section II went to Kris Kelner's
Primula auricula 'Late Frost'



It is always good to see a 'new plant', one which I Haven't seen before. This super Primula was new to me. It reminds me of the clone 'White Linda Pope' which the late Fred Hunt regularly showed and won with. It is described as *Primula auricula* but close examination of the leaves shows there is a lot of *Primula marginata* in the plant. It is a worthy winner.

Chris also showed the white flowered Primula below, to me it looks more like *Primula auricula*. Might the labels be mixed up? Both excellent well presented.



The special prize for the best plant shown by a new exhibitor went to
Coreen Connel's *Ranunculus alpestris*.



This wee white wonder is joy to behold. Although it is widespread throughout the European mountains, except those of Scandinavia, it is not commonly seen on our benches.

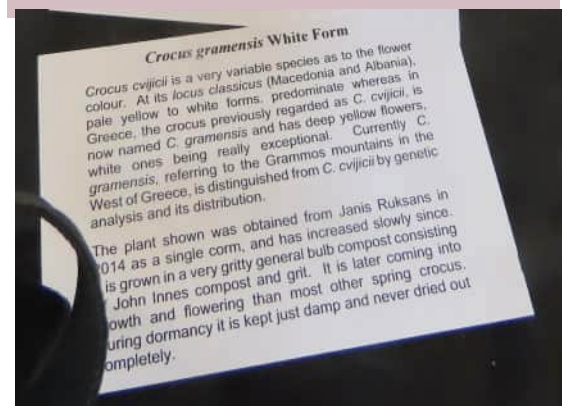
Many of our gardens are enlivened in Spring by members of the Ranunculaceae, especially wood Anemones. I would love one of these in my raised bed. With its combination of dark green leaves and pure white yellow centred flowers you can visualise it on a sunny mountain slope or cliff face. This is the kind of plant I love.

A Certificate of Merit was awarded to
Crocus gramensis 'Pure White' shown by Cyril Lafong



I thought that I had never heard of this species. Have you?

I have printed out Cyril's notes on this fabulous crocus. Interestingly the famed Crocus cvijicii is now recognised as coming from Macedonia and what was regarded as a Greek form is now named Crocus gramensis. That must be relief to Greek botanists as it is much easier to pronounce. Cyril has excelled in increasing one corm in 2014 to this panful ten years later



Notable other plants which caught my eye or took my fancy



Primula scotica

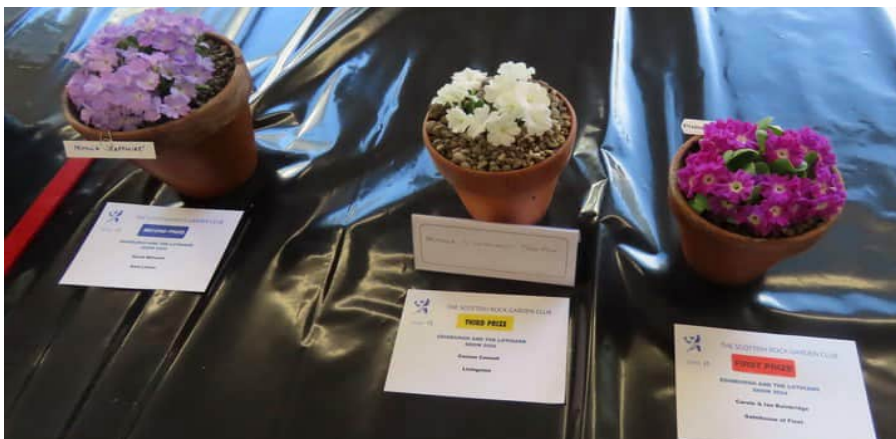
Our tiny wee native Primula was shown and grown by former SRGC Presidents Ian & Carole Bainbridge was delight to see. Mind you, you saw the container before its inhabitants. Several plant, well spaced out in a shallow pan, Quite a triumph! When I have seen it growing in Orkney and Caithness it was much more difficult to find as it grew in short turf beside the sea.



The display of plants from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh was awarded a Gold Medal



Primula marginata 'Linda Pope' and perhaps 'White Linda Pope' on the left from Jane and Alan Thomson



Even a wee plant has a story. This young Primula hybrid was raised by the late Ian MacNaughton. Ian loved Primulas and gentians and spent much of his retirement making his own hybrids. He named only the best. This one 'Betty Craig' was named for a member of the Edinburgh Group. I fancy that Betty would have loved the frilly edges on the petals as well as the distinctive white eye

A there is always a wide variety of leaf shapes and colour combinations in the foliage class. New to me was the Pelargonium endlicherianum. Don't you think that plants should only be named after people or places with short names? Having written that, I do think the Petrocosma is marvellous.



Dicentra cucularia & Corydalis wilsonii







Jean Wyllie has been a mainstay of SRGC shows, exhibiting for 40 plus years. On a visit to her home Richard Green our treasurer spied this magnificent Hepatica 'Millstream Merlin' in her alpine house. He brought it to the show for us all to enjoy. Jean will be delighted with her first prize.

