



Edinburgh Show, 5 April 2025
New Venue, Familiar Faces & Fabulous Flora



Emerging from the long dark days of winter, it was a welcome sight to see sunshine grace Edinburgh once more, just in time to welcome the SRGC back to the city, this time to a new venue at the Liberton Kirk Centre. The move brought a breath of fresh air and space to the show, with generous areas for nurseries, a bright café room with additional seating, and a spacious hall that proved to be a stunning backdrop for the stars of the day — the plants.

Despite a blustery morning and a few confused satnavs, members and visitors alike arrived eager to explore. It didn't take long before the nursery stands were thrumming with excitement, as the dedicated open-plan nursery layout allowed visitors to browse easily without the usual show-day crush. The added café space was a popular retreat too, offering not only a selection of delicious home baking, but also a chance to rest, catch up with old friends, and compare plant hauls over a scone and a cup of tea.

This year's *Best in Show* was awarded to none other than Cyril Lafong, whose pristine *Trillium rivale* drew unanimous admiration. Its beautifully marked petals and immaculate presentation showcased not just the inherent charm of this species, but also Cyril's unwavering attention to detail and horticultural mastery. He also received the Henry Tod Carnethy quail for *Narcissus obesus*, and a certificate of merit for a perfectly staged *Pleione* x Shantung 'Ducat', further cementing his reputation as one of the most consistent and skilled growers in the society.





Trillium rivale

The K C Corsar Challenge trophy, awarded for the best American or European primula, was won by Jane & Allan Thomson for their showstopping *Primula* 'Wharfedale', a cultivar of strong form and cheerful hue that was also awarded the Kilbryde cup, underlining its popularity with both judges and spectators. Their *Rhododendron* 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' was similarly lauded, earning the Midlothian vase for its poise and colour.

Green gems: *Salix serpyllifolia* and (inset) *Petrocosmea cryptica* 'Yumebutai'



Primula auricula 'Chloe'

The R E Cooper Bhutan drinking cup was deservedly awarded to David & Stella Rankin for *Primula bullata* var. *bracteata*, a choice species with delicate charm. Always thoughtful exhibitors, the Rankins once again demonstrated their deep expertise with Asian primula species.

It was a pleasure to see Chris Kelnar take home the Midlothian rose bowl for his *Primula* 'Buttercup', and to shine in Class 80, where his trio of *Primula hirsuta* 'Lockey's Red', *Primula* 'Coy', and *Primula auricula* 'Buttercup' formed a lively and well-balanced display.

Tom Green was another standout exhibitor this year, earning the Bill Mackie quach for *Saxifraga poluniniana*, and the Reid rose bowl for a still-to-be-identified specimen that piqued interest throughout the day. He also led Class 1 with a carefully curated group that included *Primula* 'Linden Sweet Chanty', *Douglasia laevigata*, *Draba ossetica*, and *Saxifraga* 'Nancye', a display full of texture and contrast, showing his flair for both selection and staging.

The Henry Archibald rose bowl went to David Millward, who presented a refined and seasonal collection of *Rhododendron* 'Glendoick Gem', *Fritillaria meleagris*, and *Trillium hibbersonii*, a delightfully subtle spring palette. We were especially delighted to see Hector Connell take home the Special Prize for *Pulsatilla vulgaris* 'Röde Klokke', a striking cultivar with deep magenta tones and strong upright stems. A clear favourite of many visitors, it hinted at exciting things to come from this first time exhibitor. The A O Curle memorial trophy went to Peter Semple, whose combination of *Narcissus bulbocodium*, *Ranunculus calandrinoides*, and *Fritillaria hermonis* ssp. *amana* impressed with both rarity and refinement.

Graham Cotton was awarded the Boonslie cup and a certificate of merit for *Salix serpyllifolia*, a modest but beautifully proportioned plant, and a reminder that excellence can come in small packages.



Among the many horticultural highlights of the day, a few plants stood out for me personally. *Pleione* × Shantung 'Ducat' was especially eye catching, its dramatic form and luminous colour drawing a steady stream of admirers throughout the morning. I was equally struck by the fine foliage of *Hepatica japonica*, whose marbled leaves rivalled some of the flowers for attention and reminded me just how captivating foliage can be in its own right. The pretty charm of *Ranunculus calandrinoides* also made a lasting impression. And for sheer, joyous impact, it's hard to beat a well filled pot of *Narcissus bulbocodium*, which brought a burst of cheerful yellow to the benches and lit up its corner of the hall.

As always, the show was more than just a display of plants; it was a celebration of growers, collectors, curators, and friends, all sharing in the joy of alpine and woodland flora. The new venue received much praise for its airy bright hall, easy access, and spacious layout. Many remarked on how well the café and nursery areas worked, and there's no doubt that several attendees went home with both a tray full of plants and a tin full of cakes.

Sincere thanks must go to all the exhibitors, nursery traders, volunteers, and behind-the-scenes helpers who made the day a success. The SRGC *Edinburgh Alpine Show* remains a highlight of the spring calendar, and this year's edition at Liberton Kirk Centre was one to remember.

We look forward to next year's show, wherever it may be, for we know it will bring with it beauty, inspiration, and a shared passion for the plants we all cherish.

Sarah Powell

Dionysia bryoides

