

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Aberdeen Show

18 5 19

A DATE WITH DESTINY?

I find dates are interesting, especially when the day and month numbers add up to the year number or are symmetrical. This 'dates back' to when I was a dentist in practice and could see each patient's date of birth as well as the current day's date. The Aberdeen show dates for this year and last year are interesting in another way; they contain the same numbers in a reversed order.

Last year the show was held on 19 5 18 this year 18 5 19. These numbers may be lucky for Dave Millward as his *Ramonda nathaliae* won the Forrest medal in both years. P.S. I was especially kind to anyone who had the same birthday as me.



Ian & Maggi Young were Aberdeen show secretaries for many years.



The Aberdeen show has an important place in my annual calendar. It is the last of the SRGC spring shows and therefore marks the beginning of summer. It is held on the Saturday before the Chelsea Flower Show which I often attend, though I have missed it for a couple of years. It is held on the Saturday nearest my daughter's birthday, indeed when she was only a few days old I had to attend the Aberdeen show in the city's Cowdray Hall, so that a joint Rock meeting could be quorate! Last year my daughter decided to get married on the day of the Aberdeen show. Usually I drive up from Dunblane on the morning of the enjoying bright sunshine and wonderful views first of the hills on the edge of the Grampians and then glimpses of the sea. My experience of Aberdeen is that the weather is good, with sunshine but perhaps a wee bit of coastal har. Not this time.

For one day only the sun disappeared. As part of a Cairngorms and Aberdeenshire holiday, we stayed in a wonderful hotel at Kingswells, 'The Village'. This is a big modern, glass fronted building with excellent food and comfortable rooms. It is conveniently sited near the new Aberdeen By-Pass. Fully expecting sunshine, we intended to go to see the porpoises and dolphins in Aberdeen harbour. On the Saturday, when we had plenty time in Aberdeen, the weather was, to put it mildly, 'inclement'. Visitors to the Duthie park where the show is held quickly sought shelter in the winter gardens and restaurant, leaving the big park otherwise deserted. The citizens of the granite city must have been delighted that the SRGC had added to their pleasure by staging its flower show there. Once inside we were able to enjoy a feast of good plants, while the rain bounced off the roof. For a time as the noise increased and I thought that the rain had become torrential but it was the only the sound of running water in fountains and wee waterfalls inside the greenhouses. Whatever the weather the Duthie Park should be on everyone's list of places to visit in Aberdeen.





Stan da Prato won both 6 pan classes with summery entries. In the large class he had 5 rhododendrons and an Ajuga. I think the Ajuga was there to blow its trumpet for the Rhodies. My favourite was Rhododendron 'Glendoick Starburst'. It is what used to be called a 'Japanese azalea' with deeply dissected petals. Glendoick describe it as 'the best strap petalled azalea so far'. It is a hybrid of 'Koroko Shikibu x Violetta'. The starlike petals are produced in prodigious number.



Rh. 'Glendoick Starburst'



Rh. 'Snow'



Rh. 'Panda'



Rh. 'Rosalind'



Ajuga 'Princess Nadine'



Rh. 'Anouk'



Naturally I wondered who was '**Princess Nadine**'. I could only find one. Princess Nadine Romanovskaya, [1908—2000], second wife of Andrei Aleksandrovich Romanov, Prince of Russia and son of Grand Duchess Xenia and Grand Duke Alexander, brother-in-law of murdered Czar Nicholas II. G.D. Alexander had an alpine connection. He was born in the Caucasus. They married on 21 9 1942. His first wife was killed when a bomb landed on Hampton Court during a German air-raid. His mother was a first cousin to King George V. Princess Nadine was born Nadine Sylvia Ada MacDougall, daughter of Lt Colonel Herbert MacDougall. Their wedding was officiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was followed by a Russian orthodox wedding.

I bet they had bugles at their weddings.

CONFUSING NAMES

The Primula does not come from the Bernina pass, it is a florists' auricula. The Saxifrage is not a Cymbalaria, the purple plant found on walls and the Viola is not a Buttercup!



Primula auricula 'Berninae'



Saxifraga cymbalaria



Viola 'Buttercup'



Barry and Cathy Caudwell won the Scottish Native Class with *Rhodiola rosea*, a plant found on Scottish mountains and northern cliffs. I associate it with Auchtermuchty as my grandad grew it in his front garden. One of my earliest horticultural memories!



Saxifraga magellanica

Two Saxifrages from Nick Boss won him the 2 pan raised from seed class



A Holistic Approach to the Cultivation of *Saxifraga magellanica*

The main objective here is to grow a healthy plant. Priority has therefore been given to studying the plant's requirements, those that enable it to function well generally, remain healthy & in character. The traditional methods of cultivation required for show perfection to suit an ordinary garden or greenhouse were not considered, neither was the plant's garden 'value'.

Essential requirements:-

- (i) Growth: about March/April, watering from below only. Pot is left outside with drip clay until Autumn. Exposure to UVL is very important.
- (ii) Summer: this species can tolerate showers of rain, it must not be allowed to dry out.
- (iii) Compost: acid, granite gravel & sediment.
- (iv) Winter: beginning of Oct. plants need slight moisture at the roots, they remain outside where ever coldest, but with over-head protection.

Misc. natural regeneration - 6/15.

A Holistic Approach to the Cultivation of *Saxifraga caespitosa*

The main objective here is to grow a healthy plant. Priority has therefore been given to studying the plant's requirements, those that enable it to function well generally, remain healthy & in character. The traditional methods of cultivation required for show perfection to suit an ordinary garden or greenhouse were not considered, neither was the plant's garden 'value'.

Essential requirements:-

- (i) Growth: starts about March, therefore normal watering commences. Pots are left outside with drip clay until Autumn. Exposure to UVL is important.
- (ii) Summer: plants can tolerate 80% less moisture than in the spring, therefore do not over water.
- (iii) Compost: acid, no less than 4pts. granite gravel to 1pt. loam.
- (iv) Winter: beginning of Oct. plants need slight moisture at the roots, they remain outside where ever coldest, but with over-head protection.

Misc. These plants are the result of natural regeneration from an original sowing in 1995.

Saxifraga caespitosa





SAXIFRAGA
BRONCHIALIS
ssp. AUGUSTOMONTANA
ECOLOGY + DIST: DAMP
COLD HABITATS-TALUS
SLOPES.
ALT: 2646-3048m.
HIGHER MTS. OF THE N.
CASCADE RANGE, WASH.
NW. AMERICA.

Artemisia schmidtii nana won in the silver or grey class. On first sight it seems to be green with silver tips on the leaves but depending on your viewpoint, each leaf reflects silvery light from all the surfaces. Helichrysum 'County Park silver' was paired with it. I remember it won a Forrest medal for Harold McBride one year, at Stirling. It is not often that a foliage plant takes the top award.



Nick showed the plant with the longest name, another saxifrage. This time an American species:- Saxifraga bronchialis ssp. augustomontana. As usual he gives a lot of description with his entries. I commend him for his patience and diligence.

Ledbouriana socialis is a south American bulbous plant with mottled leaves which are 'evergreen'. It has wee Scilla like purple flowers. It is pretty hardy under cold glass

David Millward won the 2 pan native to Australasia with Raoulia x petrimia and Ozothamnus [Helichrysum] coralloides.



Stan's Microcachrys tetragona, was in flower and had wee cones as well. It is a western Tasmanian plant from mountain thickets and boulder fields, with the colloquial name, 'Creeping Strawberry Pine'. It is the only species in its genus and is in the Podocarpus family. It can grow to 1m tall in Tasmania. The genus once had a very wide distribution over Gondwanaland [the southern continents before they split], its pollen having been found in South Africa, South America, and Antarctica, even on sunken islands in the Indian Ocean. It may be reduced in distribution but is must be one of the oldest species exhibited.



Roma Fiddes' *Trillium erectum* in the seed class was of an exotic mixture of colours. The sepals were almost brown, rather than maroon and the cream petals were edged with purple.

Ian Christie told me the secret of flowering *Cornus suecica*, the arctic *Cornus*. It is a tiny circumpolar plant, much smaller than *Cornus canadensis*. I didn't realise just how small until I trod on it in Arctic Norway. The secret of flowering it in a pot? Keep it pot-bound; it won't flower till it fills its pot.

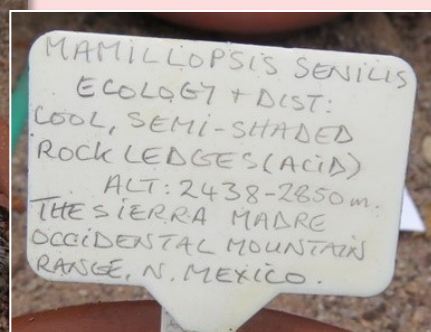


Aruncus aesthusifolius



Selaginella kraussiana

***It's not just
flowers!***



MAMILLOPSIS SENILIS
ECOLOGY + DIST:
COOL, SEMI-SHADED
ROCK LEDGES (ACID)
ALT: 2438-2850m.
THE SIERRA MADRE
OCCIDENTAL MOUNTAIN
RANGE, N. MEXICO.



Zaluzianskya ovata [left] is a member of the Scrophulariaceae. It is endemic to southern Africa. How did it get a name which is almost unspellable and unpronounceable? It was named for Zaluziansky von Zaluzian, 1558—1613, a physician and botanist who lived in Prague which was then in Bohemia. Wikipedia hints that he must have been deservedly prominent in his time. He studied 'simple' forms of flowerless plants and animal life:- ferns, lichens, mosses and algae.

Tulbaghia natalensis [above right] from the Drakensberg and Kwazulu-Natal where it grows in rocky or marshy ground. These would appear to be opposite conditions unless the rocks provide a cool, damp root run and the marshy areas dry up a bit in summer.



Leiophyllum buxifolium



Salix nakamurae yezoalpina



Trochocarpa thymifolia



Daphne aurantiaca



Oxalis 'Seven Bells'



Primula luteola



Primula sieboldii



Iris cycloglossa



Cypripedium x 'Sabine'



Rhodohypoxis baurii



Trillium erectum selection
from Roma



Trillium grandiflorum
from Ian



Rhododendron 'Sarled'



Rhododendron 'Arctic Tern'









MAKE A WEEKEND OF IT

Now that you have seen the pictures I am sure you wish that you too had been to Aberdeen's wonderful Duthie Park to visit the SRGC's excellent show.

The bright daylight, even in rain, shows the rock plants to their full advantage and when it is wet, you can have a family stroll through the linked greenhouses.

I want to thank the Aberdeen members for the warm welcome, hot coffee and hot crispy-bacon roll. It was delicious. We even went to the famous Ashvale fish and chip restaurant for a family meal.

On Sunday we went north along the coast through wonderful countryside and stood at the edge of photogenic cliffs.

On Monday it was Cullen skink in Stonehaven.

