

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Aberdeen Show

16th May 2016

One of the reasons to travel to an SRGC show held out-with your own area is appreciate the drive, listen to the radio and soak up the views, as well as to see a wider range of plants flowering throughout the seasons. The drive to Aberdeen for me takes me over the River Earn, along Strathearn to Perth. From the A9, A 90 and M90 Perth Bypass, the Lomond Hills, in whose shadow I was raised, sit on the southern horizon. Two extinct volcanoes towering above the rest of Fife, visible from far south of Edinburgh and well north of Dundee. We drive over the River Tay on the Friarton Bridge, soaring high above the fair city of Perth, where my parents took me to see Pantomimes and the Summer Variety Shows. Viva Arthur Spink on the accordion! Harry Gordon, Chic Murray, Jimmy Logan and whole host of Scottish talent which changed each Thursday. I suppose that Aberdeen had similar summer variety shows. Now it is flower shows!

On to Dundee, where I was a student and dentist for 6 years. The counties of Angus and Grampian encompass high mountain areas and wide fertile farms on the low-land, as well high cliffs and long golden beaches. From Dundee you have a choice of route, either coastal [slower] or inland. Being a reluctant early morning riser I must choose the inland route. Near Laurencekirk and over to Edzell, local farms grow fields of daffodils. The rich yellow of the King Alfred types and soft yellow of Mary Copeland, contrast with the vicious chrome of rape flowers. Every now and then white flowered gean trees interrupt the fresh green of the beeches. there are a lot of beech trees and hedges in Angus! Perhaps there is a new motto for the region? Instead of 'Scotland's birthplace' we could have 'Beeches and Beaches'.



Once I get near Stonehaven my heart always takes a wee jump when I glimpse the sea. Flat or stormy , it makes no difference to me. I have no wish to live beside the sea but I love to visit. In this part of Scotland the mountains are within an hour's drive of the coast and consequently there is a wide range of wild flowers to see. Bluebells and red campion vie with Whin bushes for attention. Is that an oil rig or a supply ship? keep your eyes on the road, maybe slow down for a better glance. The lay-byes are rarely where you need them.

At 7.00 am the roads are quiet. The car sits nicely at a steady speed thanks to Cruise Control and the drive in sunshine could be an advert for VisitScotland.com. Over the years Aberdeen has come southwards as new housing estates , retail parks and industrial units sprawl over former agricultural land. Charlestown? That looks o be an interesting place. New houses built in an old Scottish style with crow-stepped gables, steep red tiled roofs and 12 pane windows. Apparently no



granite though! Daffodils are still blooming in Aberdeen, shimmering and dancing in the breeze. Even the Shell filling station looked attractive. 'SELECT' of course I would.

Two hours driving and it is time to cross the River Dee. Do I follow the show secretary's instructions? No. I take my own convoluted to the Duthie Park. Aberdeen knows how to do parks and the Duthie is near perfect. Who was Duthie? Lady Elizabeth Duthie of Ruthrieston gave the park to Aberdeen Council in 1881. From the moment you enter via sturdy Victorian like gates you are in an enchanted world, tended by some of the best local authority horticulturalists in the world.

Once again the show was held in one of the lean-to greenhouses in the David Welch Winter Gardens. these are the one of the largest indoor gardens in Europe and Scotland's third most visited garden. These greenhouses were first built in 1899 and had to be rebuilt after a storm in in 1969. The roofs are high and the whole area is fabulously bright. Consequently the plants are shown to best advantage.

Admittedly it got a bit hot at times, so the top windows had to be opened, to give us a through draught. Still after a wet cold winter and spring who were we to complain about warm sunshine. Any one who did must be to blame for the cold front which came in in early afternoon!



Class 500

36 pans of one species, identical



Cyril Lafong took the Forrest Medal with his *Saxifraga pubescens* 'Snowcap'. Stan da Prato had the Best Rhododendron — the American raised hybrid, Rh. Dora Amateis' and won the Simpson Salver.

Bob Maxwell showed he is still master of Trilliums with superb plants of *Trillium luteum* and *Trillium grandiflorum* flora plena. His *Trillium luteum* lost points in the final countdown just because there was a bit of leaf damage. Ironic isn't it? Leave the damaged leaf on and you lose marks; cut the stem off and you don't.

Mike Dale took a first with his *Salix reticulata*. It has bigger leaves and redder stems than mine.

Salix nakamura yezoalpina is a fine small shrub. It looks like a cross between *S. reticulata* and *S. lanata*! I know it isn't. They are Scottish and this one is Japanese



Trillium erectum



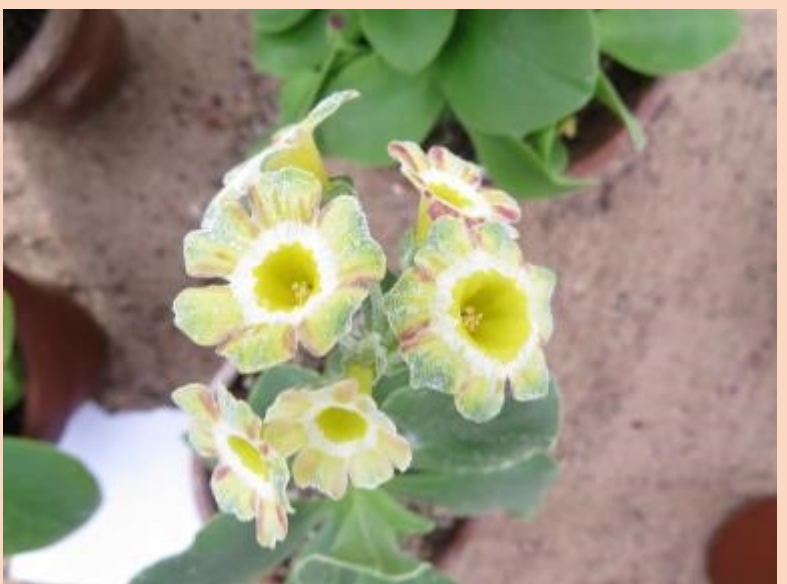
The Three Amigos



Standing room only!

Hothouse flowers





May is the month to appreciate the beauty and seemingly endless variation in Auriculas



The SRGC answer to the CIA! Is PP Ian merely taking a picture or is it a Video? Can he listen to and record conversations? If he was listening and recording me, he would have heard nothing but praise and obsequious comments! Coming out of the shadows like this makes him look a bit shady, but then so do the shades!

A TRIBUTE

Mike Hopkins' well colour-coordinated entry of *Lewisia cotyledon* 'Joyce Halley' and *Armeria caespitosa*.

The *Armeria* [thrift] is a common wild flower of Scottish sea-sides, though this one has lovely pale flowers. *Lewisia cotyledon* 'Joyce Halley' must be propagated by cuttings, making it quite a difficult plant to acquire. The flowers are similar in colour to the larger flowered hybrid 'George Henley'.

Miss Joyce Halley herself was for many years in the '60s and 70's the SRGC Seed Manager. In her day, the title meant that she [like Jean Wyllie who followed her in the post] was responsible for all parts of the Seed Exchange, from collecting and collating seeds in packets sent in by club members from all over the world. She and her small team would then send the seed out to other members who would make up the required number of packets of each species or variety. Once these were returned to Joyce in Broughty Ferry, she would gather her devotees together and send them out to fulfil orders from members. This task has now been split between three club officers. Each job is still big and time consuming. I would like to thank those in the Seed Exchange who for over 80 years, have given up so many hours of their precious time, so that all members can share seed and grow new and exciting plants. By saving and sharing seeds of thousands of species the SRGC helps to reduce pressure on wild resources would be from collectors. We all should be mindful of laws governing the collection of plant material. *"Take only photographs, Save the images and Save the wild flowers."*

Many plants in the show have been grown from SRGC seed, it is interesting that Joyce's name has been linked to this *Lewisia*. In her time Joyce worked hard to separate seed of *Lewisia nevadensis* from the more desirable *Lewisia brachycalyx*.





Stan's 6 pan entry comprised 6 different rhododendrons. Most of us would have had room for little else in the car but Stan's TARDIS coped with these and many more winning treasures. They were, from left to right

Rh Chikor, Rh Ginny Gee, Rh Ramapo, Rh Wee Bee, Rh Swift, Rh. calostrotum 'Gigha'

Left below, Yellow flower with no markings 'Chikor'

Right Below, Deeper yellow flower with red dots 'Swift'



Ledum groenlandicum is now included in the genus Rhododendron
Cassiope wardii an ericaceous gem,
grown by Roma Fiddes

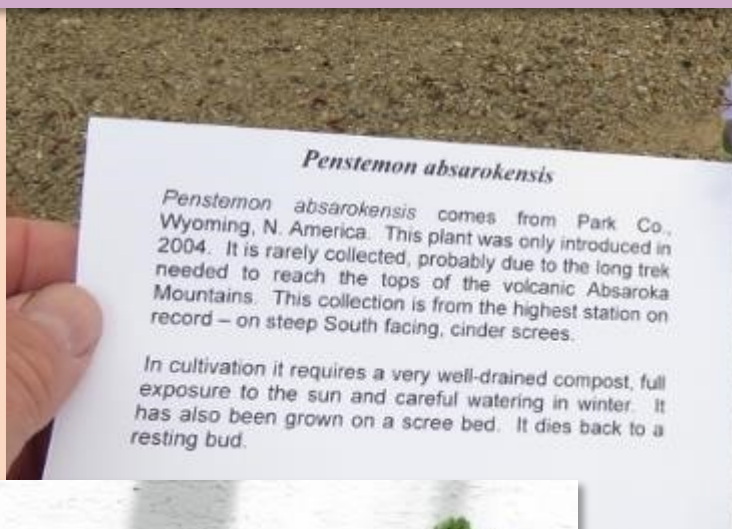


Stan's 6 pan entry

The white Saxifrage in front is named very aptly 'White Star'. It is a new hybrid Mossy Saxifrage [x arendsii]. Take care in ordering because there is apparently another Sax with this name but it is in the fortunei section. The yellow Brassicaceous plant at back right is *Biscutella leavigata*. The Primula is *P. yuparensis* which looks very much like the first plant I showed, *P. farinosa*. I always like gentians and the double Auricula looks just like a well decorated fairy cake.



Cyril's fabulous *Penstemon absarokensis*. Read his notes. Only mountaineering cowboys would have seen this plant in the wild





ARISAEMA aff. AURICULATUM
 Grown from seed collected in Yunnan by
 Hejira Holubec. This is close to *A. auriculatum*
 and *A. maculatum*.
 Grown on limestone rock in a cold house; it
 comes from sowing to flower in about four
 days. First flowered 2014.
 Fully hardy. *auriculatum* = with ears!
 GARDEN

TRISTACHIA NUNATA
 Dwarf bulb from central Tibetania, growing
 in high alpine slopes. Can be found in
 all sizes from green-gold to black.
 Grown in J.E. 2014 - in the alpine house.
 First flower Aug 2014



OLSYNIUM NARCISSIFLORUM
 A very large Paigowia bulb - longer
 by some 5 to 10 centimeters of *O. fuchsianum*.
 Grows in alpine lake in gully side -
 it said it lives in dry mountain
 slopes.



Fabiana foliosa
 Fabiana is a genus of flowering plants in the nightshade
 family (Solanaceae), native to dry slopes in South
 America. They are evergreen shrubs, with needle-like
 leaves and profuse tiny tubular flowers in late spring to
 early summer.
 Fabiana foliosa is perhaps the most compact species.
 Grown in a very gritty compost in a sunny position in the
 alpine house.



x Juncocnemis HJ-23
 This is a hybrid between *Juncocnemis heidreichii* and
Ranunculus nathaliae also originally made by Harry Jans
 in 2000.
 In its native home *Juncocnemis heidreichii* and *Ranunculus*
nathaliae enjoy cool moist conditions. In cultivation x
Juncocnemis needs similar growing conditions. A
 shaded place suits it best in the summer months. It is
 said to be easier to grow than the *Juncocnemis* but still not
 common in cultivation.





Paederota lutea



Leptinella dendyi



Daphne petraea
'Flamingo'



Daphne petraea
'Tremalzo'





Rhododendron [Ledum] diversipilosum 'Milky Way' above
Rhododendron [Ledum] groenlandicum [below]





Wherever you live, with a membership in the Scottish Rock Garden Club your horizons will be widened. Our membership comprises new novice and recognised experts. What they have in common is their love of plants and gardens and they are willing to share this with everyone else who loves plants. Join now and share our delight.

