

The Scottish Rock Garden Club & The Alpine Garden Society Kendal Show 15 3 20 part 2



EARLY SHRUBS *Pieris japonica* variegata 'Ralto' won the class for best dwarf shrub for John Savage. It confounds our usual expectations of *Pieris* in that it has pink flowers and variegated foliage. Another *Pieris japonica* variegata, with white flowers sat beside it in adjoining class for ericaceous plants where it was second to Stan da Prato's *Rhododendron* 'White Lady'. I have gowned this for 40 years but recently is has begun to die back. I wonder why. *Prunus incisa* is on the right above and a nice *Arcterica nana*



Shrubs & Trees



For some reason I tend to under-report conifers and shrubs in the shows. This is unforgivable as they provide the base or background for successful shows while flowering plants have their brief moment of glory. Norman Davies won the 3 pan conifer class in the large pan section with nice selections of *Tsuga canadensis*, *Abies koreana* and *Picea abies*. I particularly



like his low-growing *Abies koreana* also shown below. Diane Clement came second with 3 wonderfully bushy pines.

Stan's trio were third. Stan has a knack of finding the right class for every plant. He shows and wins with more conifers in the SRGC shows!





Stan's trio of wee trees sat on the bench demanding attention. They were bright and glowing but were pipped at the post by Brenda Nickels in the 3 pan foliage class. I particularly liked the *Pinus mugo* 'Carsten's Wintergold'. Brenda's trio were much cooler looking plants. *Leptinella cortusa atrata* var *dendyi*, *Ophiopogon planiscapus nigrescens* [one of my all time favourite plants] and a Japanese 'grass' *Ficinia truncata* 'Ice crystals', well named Frosty sedge!

Kendal has a class for 3 plants foliage and 3 plants in flower. Stan had 3 great foliage plants. *Haquetia epipactis* 'Thor', [one of the favourites of the late Alf Evans], *Impatiens osmiensis*, a hardy 'Bizzie Lizzie' from Sichuan and the wire netting plant and the Australian *Calocephalus* [*Leucophylla*] *brownii*. Stan searches the world for his plants.



Shrubs come in all shapes and sizes. One of the most beautiful comes from Japan. It is *Shortia uniflora*, in the Diapensasiaceae family, here shown by Cliff Booker who last year, won the Farrer medal at the Hexham show with this or a very similar plant. Wouldn't it be nice to have two like this! Last year it had greener leaves. I suspect he has left the old leaves, which turn red in autumn, on the plant as it is flowering about a month earlier. It won the Class for 'Rock Plant Native to Asia'.

Out of flower you can admire its well marked leaves which turn rich red in autumn. *Shortia uniflora* grows in low hilly woodlands in Japan. Its Japanese name reflects the shape of its leaves and its home. It is 'crag-fan'. Crag...rocks. Fan... the shape of the Japanese non-folding fans. I wrote that last bit last year in my Hexham report but I have just realised the significance of the Japanese meaning. A 'crag' is a cliff and Cliff grows it and grows it very well.

Below is a picture of Cliff with the *Shortia* at Hexham in 2019.



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Another very special shrub is the American *Kelseya uniflora*. It was beautifully presented with a top dressing of chunks of pale creamy rock, exactly the colour of the limestone cliffs at Steamboat Point in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming where it grows with *Telesonix* [*Boykinia*] *jamesii* and *Petrophyum caespitosum*. All 3 are rock plants 'par excellence'. It is also found in Montana and Idaho. Although cushions in the wild can reach a couple of feet wide, in cultivation you would do very well indeed to equal Peter Hood's prize-winning plant. Note the tiny rosettes!





Clockwise from left to right starting above
Ian Instone's *Arenaria alfacensis*
George Young's *Ozothamnus coralloides* & *Celmisia spedenii*
Rachel Lever's *Skimmia reevesiana* 'Little Ruby' & *Rhodothamnus chamaecistus*
Don Peace' *Rhododendron* 'Cream Crest'



Stan da Prato's winning 6 pan entry in Class 37: 3 pans in flower 3 pans foliage



David Millward's *Helichrysum coralloides*, in the centre, won the Kirby Cup for Best Foliage Plant



CURTAIN CALL ON TREES & SHRUBS WITH CONIFERS

