

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Perth Show

20 4 19

Exhibitors, judges, nursery people and the general public are always assured of a warm welcome at the SRGC Perth Show. Gardens on the

way to the hall were filled with Cherry Blossom making the Fair City feel like Tokyo on Tay. The wee trough at the front door of the hall encapsulated the essence of a Scottish gardener's spring; daffodils and primroses with some grape hyacinths. Inside, the huge sports hall has no windows but the artificial lighting had been greatly improved since last year, showing the plants on the benches to their best advantage.

Judges. Anne Chambers, Sam Sutherland, Jim Jermyn, SRGC President Julia Corden, David Millward & former President Peter Semple



Six nurseries each had three tables full of plants to tempt us all and on the Club 50:50 stand Alan Weepers was doing a roaring trade. Members' generosity in gifting plants for the Club Plant stand is much appreciated as it brings in money to help pay for the hall. I would encourage everyone who cares about our shows to

contribute to this by gifting plants or

just as importantly, buying them. There is always some new plant for your garden. I fear that, inside the gardener who is not tempted by the new plants offered for sale, something important has shrivelled up. A quick march round the show benches should sort this problem. Nurseries and the Club have a symbiotic relationship. We need each other. Our shows need both.

Two other aspects of shows are most important; nourishment & refreshment. At Perth there is a fine selection of filled rolls, scones and cakes. All the food is lovingly prepared by the hard working catering team, some of whom are pictured below, as they strike their

'Tiller Girls pose'.





Alan Weeper's pan of *Muscari armeniacum* 'Siberian Tiger' [left] won the Bulb Trophy for Best Pan of Bulbs in the show. As you can see it has large white flower heads held on strong stalks. The muted blue green leaves compliment the flowers.



I am delighted that year on year daffodil breeders are listing more and more dwarf Narcissi to add to the number we already have. Not everyone likes double flowers. I do. N. 'Pencrebar' [right] is about 20cm tall and has solitary, large, double flowers. It was introduced 90 years ago and is still a wonderful plant for pot culture..



Narcissus 'Minnow' [above left], also an old hybrid [100 years plus] and N. 'Pacific Coast' [above right] are in the Tazetta section of Narcissus; they have multiple flowers per stem. N. 'Pacific Coast' seems to be a wee mystery. The hybrid was raised by Grant Mitsch and won the William G. Pennel Award for the outstanding show flowers in 2000. The plant illustrated has flowers like those above except the description includes a crisp orange red rim to the cup. Several web sites list 'Pacific Coast' with no orange red rim. Another hybrid 'Pacific Coast Tops' looks like the show plant. Interesting! Both of these were in Stan da Prato's winning six pan entry which won the Alexander Caird Trophy [below].





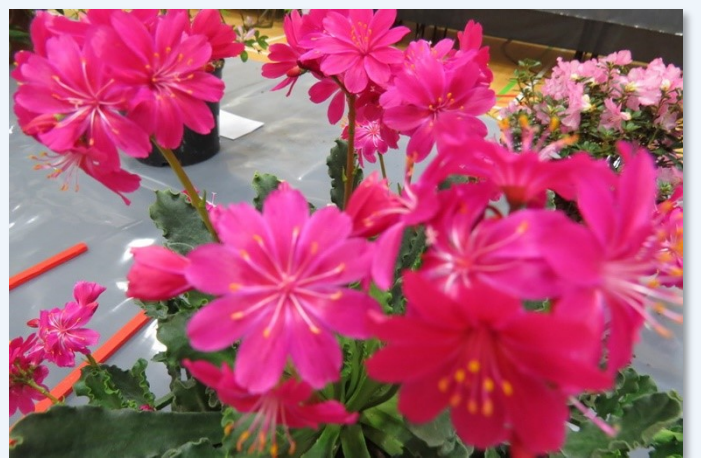
For the second week running Ian & Carole Bainbridge won the small 6 pan class. Their entry was naturally similar to their Edinburgh entry. The Anemonella, Ranunculus and Lewisia were the substitutes. The Ramonda and Petrocosmea looked better than ever.

Petrocosmea martinii is a Chinese plant. [not Italian as vermouth aficionados might suppose]. Like Ramonda, Petrocosmea is a Gesneriad. Both have 5 petaled flowers but whereas Ramonda flowers are symmetrical, Petrocosmea has two small upper and three larger lower petals. It grows in Yunnan at 1000m on rocky shaded cliffs. It is one of the huge number of Chinese plants collected by French Missionaries in China, who had access to parts of the country forbidden to other foreigners. They sent their herbarium specimens to Paris. There, the botanist Augustin Abel Lévillé described it as well as about 2000 others. Lévillé did not travel to China but did work in India. On his death his herbarium was acquired by our Scottish botanist George Forrest, who collected in Yunnan. Hector Lévillé was born in Le Mans in 1864, and died there in 1918. He might be described as a Top Gear botanist!

Ramonda serbica comes from the Balkans.



Lewisia tweedyi rosea



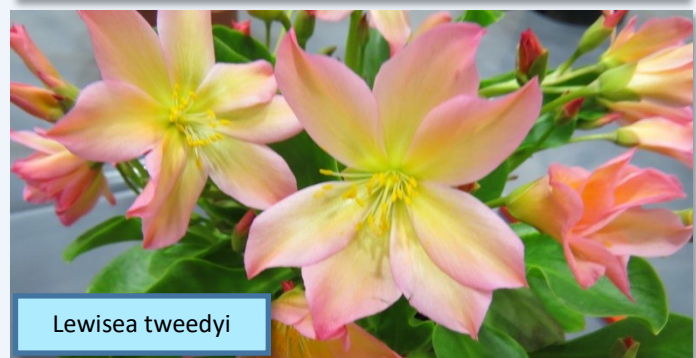
THREE LEWISAS

I always associate Lewisias with the Perth Show. Miss Blackwood, herself from Perth, exhibited them 30 years ago. Fred Hunt regularly showed his plant of *L. cotyledon* 'John's Special', a clone with bright magenta flowers [top right], named for John Lawson, late owner of the fabled Inschriach nursery which was founded by Jack Drake. There, many great plantsmen trained, where they cultivated lots of wonderful garden plants. I remember as a young registrar dentist at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness taking trips to Aviemore to visit the nursery.

Lewisia cotyledon grows in the Siskiyou mountains of Southern Oregon and northern California.

The *Lewisia tweedyi* on the benches had pink flowers but in the past we have seen marvellous plants with yellow or white flowers. It is found in rock crevices in drier parts of Washington State and British Columbia. It seems to have changed its name to the monotypic genus *Lewisiopsis*!

Lewisia brachycalyx from south West USA and Baja California grows in moist meadows.



Lewisia tweedyi

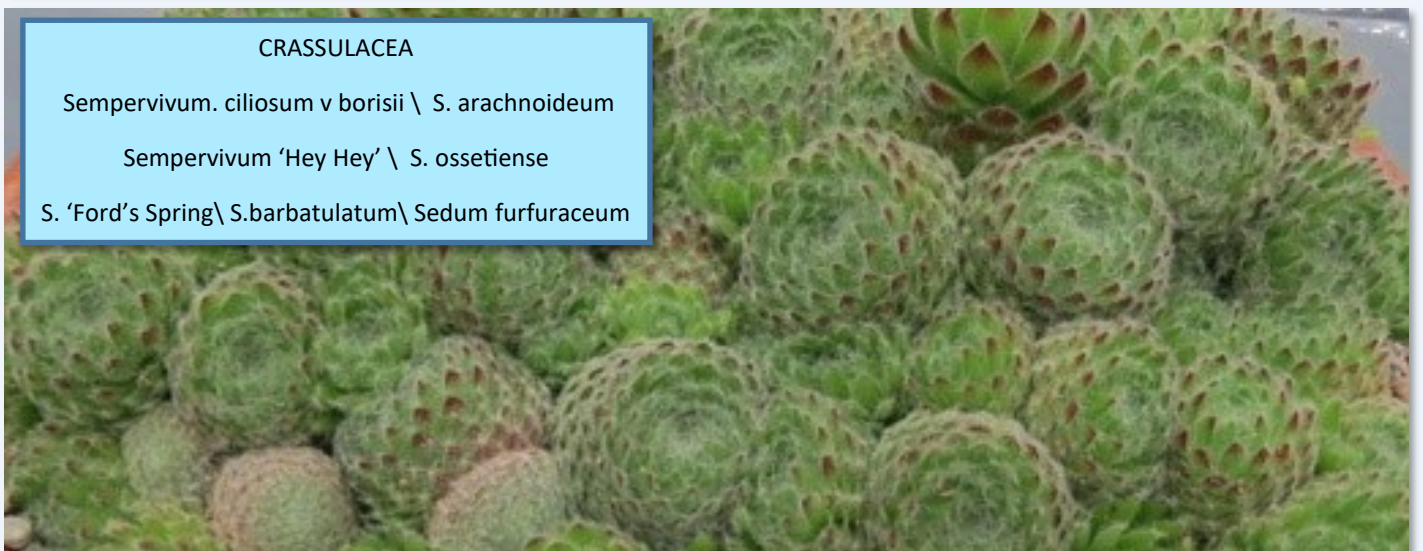


CRASSULACEA

Sempervivum. ciliosum v borisii \ S. arachnoideum

Sempervivum 'Hey Hey' \ S. ossetiense

S. 'Ford's Spring' \ S. barbatulatum \ Sedum furfuraceum





A whole world of PRIMULAS in Perth
Linda Pope \ White Lady
George Harrison \ Moonbeam
Wharfdale Bluebell \ rosea
maximowizii \ denticulata 'Incredibly Claret



Primula denticulata
 'Incredibly Claret'
 Incredible label!

Raffanaldia primuloides which, as its label says, comes from Morocco and Algeria, where it grows in the well drained, lean soils found in screes and rocky areas. If grown in a lean mix its form can resemble a *Draba*, also in the Brassicaceae, [Cruciferae]. In Morocco it grows almost flat against the ground, where the sunlight is intense. I fear the plant in the show is a bit luxuriant. I bet it tastes OK in a salad. It is good to see a new plant.



The Gold Lace Polyanthus are remarkable plants. They hardly look real. Who but an artist could contrive the perfection of their flowers? Each maroon or sometimes black petal is neatly edged in gold. Every big central golden disk shines out like a miniature sun. They are a triumph of the skill of plant breeders.

One of our modern *Primula* plant breeders is Graham Butler of Rumbling Bridge Nursery, whose hybrids are much sought after. His 'Celtic Maiden' was much admired. I am not sure whether the maiden hails from the western fringes of Scotland, Wales and Ireland or if she is the proud wearer of green and white hooped football tops.

Graham is President of the Scottish Branch of the Auricula & *Primula* Society.

Primula
 'Celtic Maiden'
 Parentage - *P. auricula* (Border)
 x *P. pubescens* (Yellow hybrid).
 A seedling was chosen from
 the above cross and pollinated
 by a white *P. marginata* hybrid,
 resulting in this
 "Yellow marginata"
 in 2010.



Dwarf conifers are important plants in the rock garden and in troughs. Here are some excellent plants for you to choose from.

[Top to Bottom] Chamaecyparis obtusa nana lutea, Chamaecyparis pisifera nana aurea, Cryptomeria japonica spiralis, Abies koreana 'Oberon', Pinus mugo 'Mops Midget', Cryptomeria japonica 'Yokohama'



Tasmania lanceolata 'Mount Wellington'. I wrote about it in the Edinburgh show report. I was lucky enough to buy a plant of this at Perth from Cally Gardens Nursery from Gatehouse of Fleet. It is hardy there so I hope it will be in Dunblane.



Wikstreomia (Daphne) gemmata from Sichuan and Yunnan. Here is a fascinating quote from the German web site Siedelbast.net. ***"It is said that Daphne gemmata grows on sunny cliffs. In my experience is a half-shadowed place more convenient for this species. Prefers a neutral soil with less lime. The flower colour of Daphne gemmata changes from intensive yellow into pale yellow on an inflorescence during flowering"***. Do British bumble bees behave in the same way?





The Forrest Medal winning bowl of *Pleione* 'Tongariro'



Lathyrus vernus and *Tropaeolum tricolor*



Ranunculus alpestris



Paraquilegia anemonoides



Calochortus tolmei from the Cascade mountains of Western America



Anemonella thalictroides



A garden favourite from eastern North America, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, 'The Blood Root'. Its colloquial name sounds appropriate for a wrestler. These magnificent double flowers last for a very short time before the petals fall away. It is quite an achievement to get such a big panful in perfect condition. The single form is the one most often found in the wild.





A fine selection of plants from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Our congratulations go to Scott and Petra who staged the plants in the beautifully balanced display, which was awarded a Gold Medal.