

The Scottish Rock Garden Club 'Stirling' Show in Kincardine 22nd February 2015

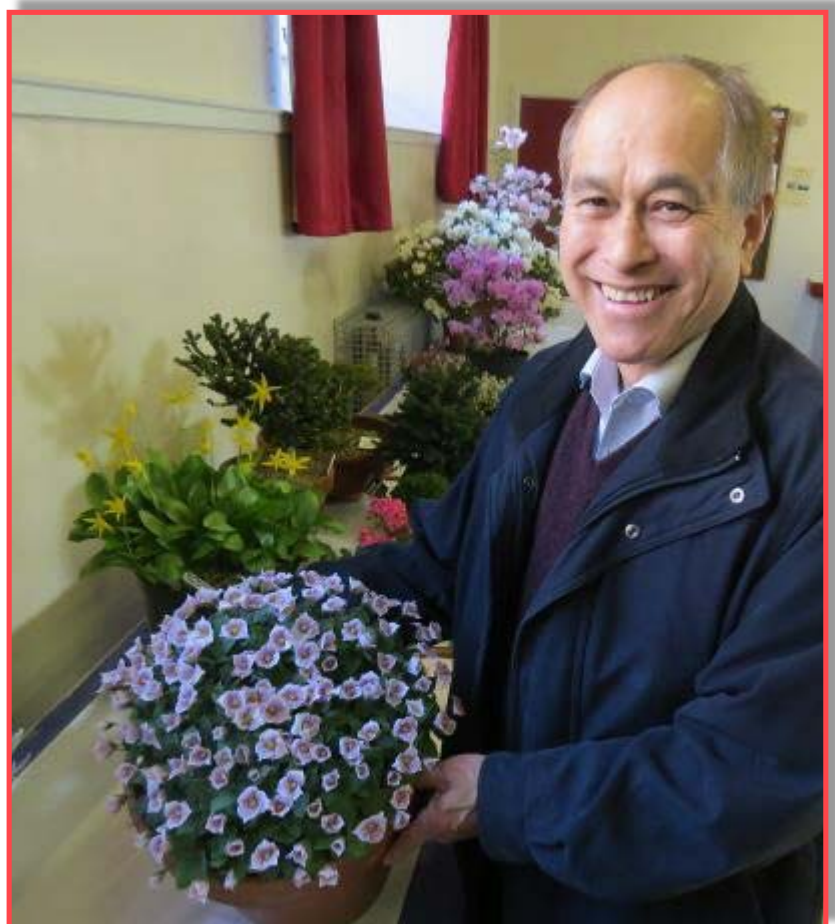
A MILESTONE IN ROCK GARDENING

Cyril Lafong has been our top exhibitor for many years now. His plants are always seen as the plants to beat. He regularly challenges the top growers in the whole of the UK. This George Forrest Memorial Medal is the 50th Forrest which Cyril has won. Testament to his modesty is the fact that he did not immediately tell everyone. [but he did tell George Anderson on the Beechgrove Garden TV programme. That is why I kept his secret till after the broadcast.]

I am sure when he went home, he told his wife.
I only found out after I had posted his win on the Forrest MedalWinners page of the web site.

It gives me great pleasure to write here that -

Cyril Lafong won his 50th George Forrest Memorial Medal at the Stirling Show of the Scottish Rock Garden Club, held in Kincardine Community Centre on Saturday 22nd February 2015 with Trillium rivale 'Purple Heart'. At the SRGC/ AGS show in Hexham one week later the same plant won the Farrer Memorial Medal [the AGS award for Best Plant]



The heart of Industrial Scotland



A bright sunny Saturday welcomed SRGC exhibitors to the Kincardine Community Centre for the third time since the show moved from Dunblane. Show secretary Sam had worked hard to set up the hall for the show. Unless you have been a show secretary it is difficult to imagine just how many things have to be done to ensure that the show runs properly. The tables in the show hall were covered in royal blue and white covers, traditional SRGC colours. The Stirling show is the first competitive show which the SRGC holds in Scotland and as such it is where members from all over the country come to greet old friends who have been hibernating over winter. 'Competitive' is kind of an emotive word. While the exhibits are judged and 1st, 2nd and 3rd awards are made, the competition is gentle and good hearted. The SRGC encourages members to bring along their plants to show them off to fellow members of the club and general public. Our shows are the Club's window to the world. This is a window like a shop window for looking in, to admire the exhibits and encourage others to grow rock garden plants.

To show the wide diversity of plants suitable for cultivation in Scotland we encourage members to bring along all and any plants which they love and grow. That is why the show schedule is long and the classes so wide ranging. If we just wanted to find the best plant in bloom at any time we could run a 'Miss World' type competition where after each round of judging 50% of exhibits are eliminated and so on until only one remains.

You don't have to be an expert to start showing. All you need is enthusiasm.



The schedule also allows for different weather conditions in different years. As well as classes for specific genera there are 'catch all' classes such as for 3 or 6 pan rock plants or bulbs; plants from specified continents ; foliage plants etc. The resulting show is a medley of interesting and beautiful, plants from all over the world, grown in all Parts of Scotland and northern England by many enthusiastic SRGC members.

If you have not tried showing your plants I commend the hobby to you. You will be part of group of wonderful people who will share their experience and perhaps even their plants. You don't have to be an expert to start. All it need is enthusiasm and some plants. For those who have hobbies associated to growing plants there is Section IV for non competitive exhibits. You can bring along a display of photographs. At this show, the Discussion Weekend and at the AGM there are photographic competitions.

The Beechgrove Garden at the SRGC Kincardine



There was much excitement during set-up for the show as soon as members realised that the man with the big camera, the man with the long pole and the lady telling them what to do were from Tern television. They were accompanied by the one of the stars of the well loved show, George Anderson. They filmed everything from members unloading plants from their cars to setting plants up on the benches. They asked questions about techniques of growing and showing. They really were genuinely interested in the plants. Often at this time of year they film outside and have to deal with cold, wet, inclement weather, strong winds and damaged plants. They said it was much nicer to work indoors for a change, even on a sunny day. One thing which did concern me was that while I pulled my trolley of plants over the car park, the cameraman was crouched down filming me from behind. I had to ask, 'Does my bum look big in that shot?' luckily that shot was cut!



During the day, George talked to members about the plants and the Club. Having worked at the RBG Edinburgh, George is already an expert on rock garden plants. I hope when the programme is broadcast again on Sunday 5th April that it will attract more gardeners to our style of gardening and hopefully some will become members of the SRGC.

Photo of George from RHS





A Jubilee Class A & B were set up at each SRGC show to celebrate the SRGC Jubilee in 1993. Before then there were few 6 pan classes at our shows. The restriction on pan size allows members of all experience to enter. The class allows members to show their own favourite plant groups. Here some entries were of small bulbs, another of cushion plants, a set of Primula allionii and a Cyril's winning set of assorted plants, whose uniting feature was that each one was highly desirable and perfectly presented.

In my opinion, the best plant of the 24 was Cyril Lafong's Fritillaria gibbosa which won the new Glassford Sprunt Trophy for Best Bulb in a pan of up to 19cm.



Winner of the George Forrest Memorial Medal and also the institute of Quarrying Quaich for The Best non-European Plant in the show was Cyril Lafong's *Trillium rivale* 'Purple Heart'. As I wrote at the beginning this is Cyril's 50th Forrest Medal.

Best European Plant and winner of the Ben Ledi Trophy was Tom Green's *Corydalis solida*. It is difficult to prevent *solida* elongating and becoming untidy, Tom has done well to get his plant in such great show-worthy condition. It is also a very good colour form.

The other 3 pics are of Cyril's winning entry in Class 1.

Pulsatilla vernalis

***Dionysia aretioides* &**

Tecophilaea cyanocrocus





I like this plant of *Synthyris missurica stellata*. Lovely blue, muscari-like flowers and old penny-shaped dark green shiny leaves. This formed a super combination which I could not capture in one picture because of the plant's neighbours on the bench. But here it is in two views.

Synthyris missurica stellata is a woodland member of Scrophulariaceae, with nice colloquial [ie confusing] American names :- Tailed Kittentails or Mountain Kittentails. It grows on shaded cliffs, [shaded probably by bushes] on the Columbia River Gorge, between Oregon and Washington States.



Galanthus 'Federkleid' above, is a fine form with green patches on the outer petals, close examination shows that the patches are really lines running parallel to one another.

One of several excellent hepaticas in this year's show. More and more members are growing them. Even the basic [I mean cheaper] ones are beautiful. Several colour forms are easily obtained and once obtained you can grow your own from the seed your plant produces, as long as you sow it fresh. Enthusiasts look out for those with larger, smaller and different coloured petals, coloured anthers as well as double forms. Diane Clement covered many of the forms and species in her excellent talk at last year's Early Bulb Day. The truly dedicated hepaticophile will have Japanese connections to source some of the really unusual ones. For many years I grew a nice deep cherry red small double flowered Hepatica which I bought from Jim Jermyn when he owned Edrom Nursery. Today Edrom list many excellent Japanese cultivars. Take a look and you will be hooked.

At this time of year the Reticulata Irises are coming to the end of their season, depending where you live. They give good value for money and repay a bit of care and feeding. *Iris rosenbachiana* needs more care than some but rewards the grower with these wonderfully marked regal flowers.

Iris aucheri [above] is a super Juno iris and at this year's bulb day Kit Strange from Kew told us how to care for Irises.





Narcissus 'Tinkerbell' looks like it has *N. moschatus* in its parentage. A delicate wee daffodil which can be appreciated by comparing it to *N. 'Tete a tete'* in the background.

N. 'Betty Mae' has expanded from a single bulb when I started writing these reports into a large panful. It is a hybrid raised in New Zealand and cared for by Jean Wyllie. Jean has raised some nice seedlings from Betty Mae.

Tulipa 'Scarlet Baby' is quite startling and just demands to be admired. Now that Abellio have taken over the ScotRail franchise perhaps we all should grow more tulips. You can have big showy flowers like Scarlet Baby or more refined ones like the small yellow flowered species *T. neustruevae*.



Even smaller flowered is *T. bogdiana*. With tiny caramel white flowers. It is one of the biflora group of tulips.

I like to see tulips growing semi-naturally like this like we see them at our flower shows, rather than being displayed as upstanding citizens holding up their heads with pride and their stems in Oasis or cut and presented in vases. At other flower shows blooms like Daffodils, Gladioli, Dahlias and chrysanthemums are grown and shown to different specifications and judged under different rules.





Fritillaria aurea. A big pan like this reminds me of the days when Fred Hunt was the master of *Fritillaria* growing. This year there were fewer Frits than in the past. Is the fashion for Frits passing?

Ipheion 'Rolf Fiedler' is neater growing than some other selections.

Narcissus 'Ballet Girl' is a hybrid between *N. cyclamineus* and *alpestris*, raised by Margaret & Henry Taylor. The hybrid was made in 1992: this clump was dug from their garden.

Anemone caucasica is a smaller relative of the popular garden plant *A. blanda*. It is a great blue for spring time.





All these are members of the Primulaceae

Dionysia trio

***D aretioides* 'Gerben'**

***D. curviflora* hybrid**

D x 'Tess'

A fine Gold Lace Polyanthus

***Primula allionii* 'Mary Berry'**

***Primula allionii* 'Pink Lace'**

White flowered *Cyclamen persicum* with striking leaves





Saxifrages

- 1. S. Tenerife
- 2. S. Mary Goulds
- 3. S Your Smile

- 4. S. Winifred
- 5. S. anglica
'Cranbourne'
- 6. S. Frank Sinatra

- 7. S. Karel Capek
- 8. S. Allendale Ghost
- 9. S. pulchra



Hepaticas in all colours singles and doubles





**YOU DON'T NEED FLOWERS
TO GET A WONDERFUL
PLANT**





Frazer Henderson's fascinating collection of Hyacinth vases. Actually this is only part of his collection. A hobby which delves into the history of one aspect of horticulture. Most of us must have grown hyacinths like this when we were children.





Nick from Vail visits Kincardine

