Primroses Have A Bright New Future

Whether you grow Primroses to sell or just to admire, there is inspiration and a culture hint or two here.

BY MARY E. HENRICKE AND SAM HENRICKE, M.D.

Of course the brightest future the primroses could have would be to grace more gardens and homes in the increasingly more gorgeous colors, sizes, and fragrance, which the hybridizers of today are bringing into being.

The abysmal ignorance about the primrose is appalling. Just ask your friends what they know about them.

Sometime we may be able to tell you how our present day establishment of three greenhouses and over 10,000 hybrids became a reality in a comparatively few years. We have done all the work ourselves. But what for the moment might be of interest to you is how, through unique methods of merchandising, we have brought primroses into homes and gardens where there had been none before.

Much of what we can tell you can be adapted to your own plants and blooms for gifts at little expense whether you be a commercial grower or just a primrose lover.

We got in touch with the representatives of a chain of supermarkets who were delighted with our plants but especially our methods of packaging in cellulose containers to make them easily transported by the shopper. They have sold so well that each year people have wanted more and more.

These same containers decorated with colored foil, ribbons, and bows have become extremely popular for Easter. (See Plate 1 below)

We imported baskets from Japan in nests of three sizes which we sprayed with Latex paint in suitable colors and decorated with foil, ribbons, bows, chicks, and butterflies for Easter gifts.

They proved extremely popular in the markets and our chief problem has been to supply the demand. Plates numbers 2 and 3 (page 119, 120) illustrate the use of polyanthus, aculis, and Juliana depending upon the size of plant and basket. With the proper choice of colors, several hundred of these baskets are a sight to behold.

One of the outstanding florists in Portland used many aculis and polyanthus blooms in bridal bouquets and gifts for the mothers of new-born babies.

Because of last winter's unusual mildness, we were able to provide Dr. Henricke's office with arrangements of cut polyanthus blooms throughout the entire winter. The picture on the cover shows an arrangement made in late November and photographed by the Oregon Journal. These blooms have an amazing lasting quality, particularly if kept in a cool place at night. Many have lasted as long as ten days.

Surprisingly, after this unusually hot summer, again we are able to arrange bouquets of the naturally smaller, but very vivid blooms of this year's seedlings. Their lasting qualities are equally good.

So you see, with imagination and a little effort you can work wonders with the primrose. A coffee can, or other ordinary container, some foil and ribbon, and a good primrose plant and you can make a gift comparable to one produced by a professional.

There is a bright future for the primrose.

Editor's Note: The letter that Mrs. Henricke wrote to enclose the foregoing article expresses so much of the interest and determination she and Dr. Henricke have devoted to the primrose, that excerpts follow:

"May I give you a bit of background as to our interest and experience with primroses.

"Our property in Portland is 150 x 100 feet, well shaded. When we re-
Primroses In Rhode Island
Mrs. Alcott demonstrates that, given a smart gardener, Primroses are versatile, adaptable, and so satisfying.

By Marian Bishop Alcott

Rhode Island, the smallest state in the Union, seems to have at the moment a comparatively small membership in the American Primrose Society. One person only—who will try to explain a little of the fun and frustrations of growing primroses in this part of New England.

There is considerable variation in climate in Rhode Island for such a small area, because of the miles of coastline. My garden in Cumberland County is away from the ocean. Near the boundary of Massachusetts, it has more rugged weather and the last frost in spring may be about April 15 to April 25, or even later. There is always a possibility of a killing frost in September, although the average date is around the middle of October.

Our growing period is about seven months, but long after most other plants have deteriorated in the fall, primroses seem to make a renewed green growth that is a real delight to see in a waning year.

Although primroses are not as well known here as they should be, the polyanthus and acaulis are very adaptable if a few rules are followed. Location and soil preparation are of great importance if the ample moisture cannot be provided that is always recommended.

We have had occasionally some very dry summers, but the drought of the summer of 1957, when we did not have a good penetrating rain for four months, was beyond the memory of man. Our shallow well, dug by an ancestor in 1721, has a family tradition of never having gone dry, but it cannot be tested by using it for supplementary watering. In spite of this, the primroses survived—helped by the fact that most of these plants were in the shade. However, a nearby small commercial grower, whose choice stock plants were planted in full sun, was able to save them by watering.

The soil must be made soft and spongy so it absorbs moisture, but drains well. No amount of after-care can make up for a poor soil. Mine was originally of a clay-like consistency, ever hardpan, so it is mixed with half partially decayed compost to a depth of a foot. Peat moss, that has been saturated with water, and manure can be used also. Superphosphate in the bottom of the hole when planting is good. In the spring a little complete fertilizer gives the primroses a boost, and then they are mulched with rough compost or manure. No soil is ever allowed to settle on the leaves.

In summer, in anticipation of dry weather, the pine woods around us provide a perfect mulch. The top layer of pine needles is put under the leaves. If there is extreme drought or hot drying wind, pine boughs can be cut and laid over the plants to keep the leaves from losing so much moisture. Mrs. Levy wrote, as a suggestion for eastern drought conditions, of experimenting with a very thin fluff of wood excelsior over the plants, watering right through to the plants.

Occasionally here in the summer some plants, particularly those in the sun, will lose all their large outer leaves. Great care should be taken then that cultivation does not injure the...
crown because new leaves will appear in the fall.

If primroses are not planted in a depression where water can collect, and the soil is of a proper spongy consistency, they can come through the winter in New England with much less care than many other more commonly grown plants. When growers have had winter losses, it could be because of water standing around the plants or a suffocating mulch rather than any extreme cold.

Primulas that are a year or more old are hardy, able to withstand temperatures down to -20°F. Many of my plants receive no other covering than nature may provide, yet they come through. All that get winter sun, however, will start the spring in much better condition if they are covered with pine needles or evergreen boughs. Salt hay is used a great deal around here by many long-experienced growers, but occasionally, after a very severe winter or heavy snow, they have had some losses. Forking it over lightly, after a heavy snow, is advisable to loosen it, but this is not necessary with pine needles.

When fresh seed is planted in the summer, the plants may still be very small by fall, and it is advised by some to carry them over in a cold frame, but mine have survived in the open ground. I have planted tiny seedlings, so small they had only four leaves, in their permanent places in the fall and immediately mulched them under the leaves with the second layer of pine needles that is partially broken down, and then covered the whole plant with a top layer of pine needles. This was done at the time of the planting, so as to keep them growing as long as possible, instead of waiting until the ground has frozen, as is common practice. Chicken wire was placed over all to keep the rabbits away as they are a problem in the winter and early spring.

One year, as an experiment, I divided a few plants the day before Thanksgiving, and gave them the same kind of mulch. They all lived — although they did not bloom the next spring. The end of winter finds the primroses making a very early start, and you can push aside the snow and the mulch and find crisp new leaves that are a welcome prelude to the anticipated beauties of spring bloom.

IN MEMORIAM

Friends all over the Northwest were saddened by the passing, early in July, of Orrin Hale, for many years editor and publisher of the Northwest Gardens & Home Magazine. A man of many talents, Orrin got great enjoyment from his own garden, where he tried out new vegetable improvements for the benefit of the readers. Although he attended many meetings of the local Primrose Society and grew companion plants and much beautiful rock garden material, his strongest interest remained with the stately evergreens and conifers.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to "Aunt Emmy" who is left with wonderful memories of "the Boss" at Penny Creek Farm.

The Fragrant Belled Primroses

Although the belled Primroses cannot be handled with the same impunity as Polyanthus, they are very rewarding to grow. Not only are they our most fragrant of the Primrose family but they extend the Primrose season another month to six weeks. Grown in the right spot, it's like having a bit of Asia in your garden.

By Alice Hillis Baylor

After the height of the Primula season has passed; when Rosea is in seed pod and the Vernales group have finished blooming but their lush foliage edges our paths; and when the auriculas have shed their velvet colorful petals, our hearts are again lifted for the Nivales group in color bud. These are the fragrant bells.

Most of us have read the following description of Farrer, "And the flower! . . . of a loveliness singular and phantasmal in the family unfold above the leaves, half hanging in a bundle of half a dozen or so . . ." Most of us also have read, "the belled primroses are not amenable to cultivation."

I have discovered there are certain members of every family that are amenable. (The species Homo sapiens as well as vegetable!) After much experimenting with planting locations, I have finally found one that is most satisfactory. At first I did "what the book said" and almost lost P. Wattii.

It lived on the margin of my woodland brook from 1953 to this spring. The narrow toothed foliage looked handsome but none of the plants bloomed.

In May of this year (1958), I moved them to my terraced primrose garden to an area that is extra moist and with sharp drainage. On June fourth the purple bells opened on a ten to twelve inch stem. The base of this garden is ashes from perhaps generations of accumulation, as our house is the oldest dwelling in our Vermont village that is still standing. It is said to be between 184 and 186 years old. Not only drainage but a lime reaction from the old ashes may account for making the primulas lush, deep-rooted, and happy. So, another member of the belled or Vernales group has been added to our success story.

The smallest member that has flourished for me is the dainty P. Elwesiana. The entire rosette of narrow dark green leaves is three to five inches across and the individual blades are
about one inch wide and three inches long. During the first week in June, the pale china blue bells opened, a single bell to a stem. The seed was germinated in 1954 but the plants waited until 1956 to bloom.

_P. sinopurpurea_ is next on the list in stature as the flower stem was measured as fifteen inches high when it bloomed in June. Twelve to fourteen nodding purple flowers topped the stem. The leaves are narrow and toothed one half to two inches across and from three to four inches long. The flowers are a solid color, rich blue purple. Some authorities place _P. sinopurpurea_ as the purple form of the exquisite white _P. chionantha_ from western China. Among the purple _P. sinopurpurea_ in my garden, appeared one of clear butter-yellow, the nodding flowers nine to twelve to a stem in exact replica of the purple. Dr. Blasdale has separated the yellow form into the species _P. Stuartii_, as does the A.P.S. Pictorial Dictionary. Both plants came from the same packet of seed from Jack Drake's nursery and are treasures. The warning is — transplanting of seedlings is the crucial period. My seedlings were pricked out of the germinating pan when in first leaf, and put in a small flat. When husky little plants were formed, they were set out in the seedling bed in open ground (with a collar of stones around each plant) in a rather heavy soil enriched with a spot of well-rotted cow manure at the base of each planting site.

_P. secundiflora_ has been in my garden for five years. In 1952 one lone seed germinated and flourished. The then-single nodding rosy bell was a joy to behold. This year the fifty-five odd plants descended from that single plant gave a wonderful flowering display as the rosy one-sided umbles of eight to ten flowers bloomed against a background of the candelabra _P. pulverulenta_ “Shell Pink”, with _P. alpicola_ violacea as a next door neighbor. _P. secundiflora_ is a handsome plant with neat lush crown of five to seven inch finely serrate leaf blades. The stem rises fifteen to twenty inches high, is firm and unbranching, holding its rosy crown with pride. That one seedling has given much pleasure and beauty to my garden.

_P. alpicola_, variety Luna, a soft yellow, and variety violacea, lilac, intense blue, and a smoky blue are of easy culture as any garden perennial. The tube is short, the limb almost flat and white, — giving a wide-eyed effect.

The yellow form was given the charming name of _Moonlight sikkimensis_ by its discoverer, Ward, when he found it growing in a valley of southeast Tibet. The dew of the early morning and evening brings out the exquisite perfume and many tourists in my garden thought I must be growing a special type of heliotrope. The foliage is light green, rugose, or crinkled, and most attractive in all seasons. The stem rises eighteen to twenty inches from which a spray of from twenty to twenty-five large flowers appear in June. The corollas are heavily powdered with white farina. The white form is lovely and, for me, grows low, not exceeding twelve inches high. Ward found the _alpicolas_ in the gorge of the Tsangpo River with _luna_ growing at lower levels and replaced on higher elevations by Joseph's _Sikkimensis_, variety _violacea_. These, as do _P. secundiflora_, set seed readily, while no seed has been formed on _P. sinopurpurea_ nor _P. Wattii_. These last two are propagated vegetatively.

And now, the first week in August, the _P. Florindae_ are in bloom. The stem rises from the most beautiful of primula foliage, glossy, dark green, red tinged. I would grow _P. Florindae_ for the foliage alone. The umbels contain forty to sixty sulphur colored flowers, dangling in exotic perfume. Last summer I saw my first baby humming bird, no larger than a bumble bee, drinking nectar at _P. Florindae_ with its ruby-throated parents. The seed of _P. Florindae_ germinated easily in 1952 and the plants were set out in the upper garden where they seemed happy. Then I read where Ward had made a note that they choked the streams as the plants waded into the water on both sides of the Tsango. So, I uprooted them and planted them in the running spring-fed brook which connects the three pools in my water garden. I would make them feel more at home. They did not like Vermont running water and many disappeared. I then came to the conclusion they were short-lived and did not recommend them too highly. This, the summer of 1958, the seeds left behind in the upper garden have germinated and the plants are thick with those typical glossy leaved seedlings. I noticed a few last summer and now those small ones are sporting a single yellow bell from odd crevices in the paths. So, _P. Florindae_ enjoys the company of the upper garden in place of the conditions of its indigenous stream-side environment of its Asiatic home grounds. We are both happy for I like to have it near me.

I write one epitaph for the garnet flowered primrose, _P. Waltonii_, which Walton found in the hills above Lhasa in Tibet. It was germinated in 1951, transplanted to the garden in 1952, bloomed in 1953, and succumbed. I have not been able to obtain more seed. If anyone has it and has had success, I should like to know of it.

I shall continue to grow the bells for their nodding grace, their handsome foliage, their dewy fragrance, and for their gift of flowers in the early summer months. Now I have but three seedlings of _P. Cavalaria_, another of Ward's finds in Tibet. I shall cherish those little ones for they, as did _P. secundiflora_ five years ago, may in turn give me great joy and beauty as time marches on.

My advice to those who enjoy the members of the Primula family is to add a few of the bells to their list and thus extend the period of bloom with summer fragrance.
Primroses In The Gardens Of Today

Truly versatile, Primroses are appropriate in the woodland garden; but when used as Sallie Cole suggests, as early spring ground color, they are modern as tomorrow.

BY SALLIE F. COLE

Present day gardeners are seeking attractive plantings with low maintenance. Mass plantings have given way to fewer trees and shrubs, each carefully chosen to strengthen the design. As this trend gains acceptance, and good design with less work becomes the first consideration, we find perennials and annuals being used only when they serve some specific need.

One specific need in shrub plantings is color on the ground in early spring, and primroses, in many cases, are the answer. The leaf size, color, and texture are compatible with many of the broadleaf evergreen shrubs. PLanted in drifts, primroses are heavy enough to be a contrast to coniferous foliage. They add a beauty to any spring picture, because of their wide color range and long blooming period.

The challenge, we who love them must accept, is to seek ways to use them more effectively so that they will continue to be a cherished resident in the modern garden.

Primroses in the yellow, orange, and rust tones complement those broadleaf evergreens whose new spring leaves are bronze in color, such as Pieris japonica, Evergreen Huckleberry, and so on. The Mahonias (Oregon Grapes) with their bronze leaves and clear yellow flowers are lovely with a planting of yellow, rust, and orange primroses.

Other combinations might be Rhododendron racemosum underplanted with a carpet of Wandas, or some other more pink Juliana hybrid.

Rhododendron mucronulatum, purple — Corylopsis pauciflora — yellow with yellow and orange primroses. Daphne mezereum, Bergeinia cordifolia, blue and pink primroses. Helleborus orientalis — flowers pink through maroon — acaulis primroses of the same colors and companion colors.

Helleborus corsicus with yellow and orange polyanthus primroses.

One could go on endlessly, there are so many possible combinations waiting to be tried.

Primroses are beautiful used as a mass planting on a slope, with deciduous trees or shrubs, possibly Vine Maple. Use different shades of one color. Light shades near at hand in greater number — more intense shades as they work away. As the intensity of the color increases, the number of plants used decreases.

Drifts of one color, several shades of one color, or carefully selected complementary colors always create a restful effect no matter where planted.

When many of the flowering trees are in bloom, primroses are also at their best. To plant color under the trees splits the interest. If, however, a beautiful drift of primroses, in like or complementary color, is placed away from the tree, there is no competition for attention. Each shows off to the best advantage, the primroses being as important to the design as the tree.

The auriculas — “the aristocrats” are dramatic plants, with heavy foliage and stately stiff blossoms. They demand a place in the garden free from competition — a bay in the shrub border in a room of their own. To take these plants out of their present role as collector’s items, and find a place for them in the average garden is a task still to be accomplished.

The same might be said of the candelabra group. They are not too well known, or too often grown in the average garden. But we must seek new uses and attractive combinations for all the primrose family to ensure them a continued place in the modern garden. Attitudes toward gardening have changed, but we feel the primrose will still hold its popularity if we who grow them do some creative thinking as to their use. Let’s make this beautiful flower family indispensable by our example.
The American - P. Parryi

The glossy smooth leaves and rich color of bloom make P. Parryi well worth a little study to give it the correct treatment.

BY Herbert H. Dickson

I have been asked to write about my success with the species Primula Parryi. It would be more appropriate to call this my failure with Parryi. It is my belief that by recording and sharing our experiences with difficult plants we can develop practical treatments for their easy management.

To begin with, I planted seed of Primula Parryi in 1955 and 1956 with absolutely no results. Not a seed sprouted. In 1957 I got a packet of P. Parryi seed through the APS seed exchange and tried again. For small seeds I always use sterilized soil so if anything comes up I know it is what I planted. I must have had fresh seed because from that one little package planted in a 4-inch pot and covered with a round piece of cloth, I transplanted over 600 plants of P. Parryi.

The plants survived almost 100% when transplanted into flats. I tried several soil mixtures in my flats and the plants did equally well in all. I watered the plants with a fog nozzle at least once a day. In late summer I set some of the plants in four different types of locations in the garden. One group in the shade of a big cherry tree, another group with some polyanthus in the sun, and one group in half shade alongside a walk. These three were in my regular garden soil that is river bottom sandy soil without very much humus. This soil dries quickly and gets hard when dry. These all survived the winter except some next to the walk where a mole had undermined them; but along comes our hot and dry summer (the hottest and driest we have ever had in the Puget Sound area) and, in spite of frequent waterings, they all died except a few of the ones in the shade of the cherry tree.

The other group of twenty plants I put in a raised bed constructed by making a frame of 2x8 inch board on the ground and filling it with a mixture of my garden soil plus compost, manure, and some pumice sand I got over by Mt. Adams. Of those twenty plants, I still have nine at this time, August 14, 1958. Six or seven of them bloomed this year. One is in bloom now.

I left four flats of the plants in the flats over the winter. One flat I left exposed to our wet winter without any protection, and the other three were transplanted in a cold frame with overhead protection from the rain. They all survived the winter. P. Parryi goes dormant for the winter to a large bullet-shaped bud with heavy radial roots attached to its base.

Early in the spring, while the plants were still in their dormant stage, I set out a bed of about two hundred in the shade of the big cherry tree. These plants grew well and many of them bloomed in May and June. In the latter part of June when the hot, dry weather set in, the plants began dying. Now I have only six left in that bed.

One flat I did not get around to planting out. It is still in the cold frame where I water it regularly every day by squirting water on it from the hose. All of these plants are still alive and in a vigorous healthy state of growth. Many of them have bloomed. Three are in bloom now.

About the middle of February I potted eighteen of the healthiest looking dormant buds I could find and put them in the greenhouse where at night and on cold days I provide a little heat with an electric fan heater. I had hoped to have some in bloom for the Tacoma, the Kirkland, and the National Show at the Chehalis-Centralia fairgrounds. I did get one in bloom for the National Show and this plant won a trophy in the species class.

I tried pollinating Primula Parryi with garden and alpine auricula, P. Involucrata, P. Chlorantha, P. Glaucesens (Calycina), and P. Juliae - with no luck. I thought for a while I was going to be successful because a few seed pods developed from my crosses, but they had only fine powdery brown undeveloped seeds — not the full hard black seeds of the self pollinated flowers.

CONCLUSIONS:

Fresh seed will germinate very well.

Seedlings will transplant and handle easily. The dormant plant does not have to be protected from winter wet. The plants need a very loose, humous soil with some coarse sand and plenty of water in the growing season. They can stand sun or shade. Any time a plant gets dry enough for the leaves to flag, it is finished; no amount of water will revive it. In potting, use a large pot to accommodate the large root system and serve as a reservoir of water to keep the plant going. The plants I had in six-inch pots are all dead. The four I put in eight-inch pots are thriving with increased crowns and a second period of bloom.

New York Flower Show

"A GARDEN COMMUNITY" will be the theme of the forty-second International Flower Show to be held in the New York Coliseum, March 7th to 14th, 1959. Opening Saturday at 2 p.m. and continuing through the following Saturday, the show has been extended to eight days for the first time in its history. The show is sponsored by the Horticultural Society of New York, Inc., and the New York Florists' Club, Inc.

A descriptive schedule is available on request from the International Flower Show, 157 W. 58th St., N.Y.
Notes On Garryard Primroses

These few notes are part of a letter from Mrs. Emmerson from her North Ireland home to Herb Dickson.

BY GLADYS EMMERSON

The Garryard Primrose was known in Ireland — and in other countries, I expect, long before *P. juliae* was introduced from the Caucasus.

The Garryards were raised by Mr. Whiteside Dane of Garryard, near Naas in County Kildare, in the early '90's. I have a friend who saw these primroses at Garryard, near Naas, as a little girl — she thinks about 1898.

"Cross between *Juliaca* and *Garryard"  
Courtesy Dale Worthington

1900. Mr. Whiteside Dane was not a professional horticulturist but a government employee, a surveyor. The primroses were named *Garryard* after his house. ("Garry" is the Irish word for "garden" and "ard" is the Irish word for "high"). He grew the primroses in a quarry.

*Garryard* should really be spelled so, without the "e". But the other spelling is more usual and I have it so in my catalogue.

Now — the only primrose that I know (or honestly believe) to be his original raising is "Guinevere". Of course the true *Guinevere* has no *Juliaca* characteristics. It has obovate leaves, almost the shape of the leaves of the British wild primrose (*prunula vulgaris*). You will know, I feel sure, that the characteristics of all the Juliaca hybrids are the cordate leaf and the wiry stem (flower stalk). All the real *Garryard* hybrids have bronze foliage. I am not sure whether or not the other two well-known British varieties of the *Garryard* are originals of Mr. Whiteside's. These are the *Garryard Grail* (dark purple) and the *Garryard Victory* (a pleasing bluish violet).

There is a point one must note — there are now all sorts of primroses on the market which are hybrids between *Garryards* and *Juliaca*. These doubtless are often natural hybrids which appear in private gardens by chance — and someone says "Oh yes, this is our new *Garryard*; we call it *Garryard Towzer* after the dog (or words to that effect — I am letting my imagination take a little flight of course!).

New and Reinstated Members

- Atwell, Mathilde 3841 "D" Street, Eureka, California
- Crawford, Tom 1 Belgrade Ave., Balwyn, Melbourne, Australia
- Edgley, Mr. Farris Box 1269, Pocatello, Idaho
- Jezik, Mrs. Joseph F. 5136 Raymond, Seattle 18, Washington
- Kechekian, Mrs. George R. Library of the Royal Agricultural College of Sweden, Uppsala 7, Sweden
- Marken, Mrs. Russell Turnpike Rd., Sommert, Cayuga Co., New York
- Pearce, Percy L. 11 East 52nd Ave., Vancouver 15, B.C., Canada
- Stein, Mr. H. 602 Poplar N.W., Canton, Ohio
- Stewart, Mrs. Frederick 51 Groton Road, North Chelmsford, Mass.
- Urschel, Mrs. George C. R.R. No. 2, Box 317A, Holland, Ohio
- Wagner, Mrs. William M. 285 Newbury Street, Boston 15, Mass.
- Wallis, Mrs. L. B. 10 North Sycamore Knolls, South Hadley, Mass.
- Walsh, Mrs. F. W. 1229 Tyler Street, Port Townsend, Wash.

Thank You, Dr. Blasdale

Dr. Walter C. Blasdale has given his wealth of material on Primula to the Society and this spokesman for the American Primrose Society is finding it very difficult to find words with which to adequately thank Dr. Blasdale for his generous gift. These materials include Smith & Fletcher monographs as well as material on primula and other plants that Dr. Blasdale has written for different publications.

Plans are being made to establish a comprehensive A.P.S. Library and no more authoritative works could be found as a base than the Smith & Fletcher monographs. The Society will be forever in debt to Dr. Blasdale for this generous donation.
The New Seed Exchange Editor
Elmer C. Baldwin

The American Primrose Society is very fortunate in having our regional editor in Syracuse, New York, Elmer C. Baldwin, consent to taking over the Seed Exchange. In case you hadn't realized it, managing the Seed Exchange is quite a chore and the Seed Exchange Director must be someone who takes pleasure in the work. We have wracked our brain as to the best way to present Mr. Baldwin, and then realized that Mr. Baldwin's letter to us being so beautifully lucid, he was well able to speak for himself. He writes:

"Our chief interests are music, photography, and—horticulturally speaking—seed collecting. The latter, originally from garden subjects, but more recently, the collecting of native flower seeds. For the past several years, Hilda and I have combined our annual seed exploration trips with our vacation holidays, as in this way we were able to go farther afield. While doing so has, in effect, shortened our holiday, it has been a pleasant, interesting, and healthful change; even, now and then, quite exciting when we happen to find a new and strange plant in seed.

"We have always had—and admired—in our garden, Daphne mezereum, the one daphne that will stay with us. It is said to be indigenous to this general locality and I have searched and searched for it in the wild but without success. Last year, on our way home, Hilda called attention to color at the edge of a wooded area bordering the road. We drove back and after a bit of hiking, located it; our first Daphne mezereum in the wild! Breathtaking! So it splendor. A three-foot plant with soft green foliage and generously highlighted with nearly round, shining, crimson fruit about three-eighths inch long. I would say about a pint of berries. Truly a picture to behold. We hope to see it again if we return the same way another time.

"Seed lists always make for good reading, especially Exchange Seed Lists. Seeds that someone has taken the time and trouble to collect and— it is hoped—clean, and send to the proper place, person, or committee for redistribution according to the fancy and choice of the remaining membership. Absorbing reading and exciting, too, as there are sure to be some included that are not too readily found in the catalogs.

"We have said 'time and trouble.' This is not descriptive, for with many gardeners, the action is automatic. It provides a means or avenue whereby he can share with another something he considers good, perhaps something he wishes to brag about or something worthy of sharing, that he has grown or, on a field trip, has collected and has some to spare for another.

"In the writer's contact with seed exchange enterprises, it has been noted that among the membership are commercial growers and that some are contributors and others are not in favor of the project. Both viewpoints are understandable. We acknowledge with thanks the contributions and we respect the position of the other school of thought. It is our personal feeling that the field is large and we feel that the Exchange idea promotes an understanding of gardening, of growing things; of the club or Society and its members on a personal basis that is difficult to equal by any other one means.

"Our own contribution consists largely of collected seeds from nearby sources and from our field trips that my wife and I make while on our all too few and short holidays during August. We return to the same base each year and it is our experience that each year we find something new. The question comes to mind so often when something is found in an unusual or hard-to-reach location and we ask ourselves: Does the person reading over this list ever give a thought, or is he ever curious, where this or that seed may have been grown? On one particularly hot afternoon we chose to climb (?) a ski-tow to, like the bear that went over the mountain, see what we could see. The cables had been heavily smeared with a black lubricant which had dripped and splashed over the ground and vegetation being, in the main, blackberry canes. We were convinced, before going very far, that to make it worth while there must be something really good somewhere along the way or at the top. And there was, for we had not before seen the plant. Growing just over the edge and down a few feet almost out of reach was a large patch of Chimaphila. We have since found it in more accessible places but our first find made the climb worth while.

"One very strong force that brings us back each year is the ever-fresh wonder at the coloring of the fruits or seed-caps of the plants; the half inch, Chinese-blue berries of Clintonia, the scarlet of Mitchella, the rose-crimson of Gaultheria, the glossy, blue-black of Medeola, the green-blue of Polygonatum, the shining scarlet and crimson-maroon of Trilliums, the cold, hard blue of Caulophyllum, the yellow of Podophyllum, the glossy-red and the yellow of Daphne mezereum, or the bright red, the purple, or the black-eyed white of Actaea. And if you look closely, you may see the tiny, brown chandeliers of Coptis, the little spires of crimson Maianthemum, and what is more striking than a good patch of Cornus canadensis with its bunches of scarlet berries, growing with Gentians in flower? The larger bunches of red Smilacina and the blue-black globes of Smilax herbacea, the seeds of which when washed are reminders of garnets, and for a real eye-catching sight, come upon a good two to three-foot plant of Arisaema with its huge scarlet, raspberry-like fruit, or to mention just two small trees, Lindera and Ilex verticillata with their branches thickly studded with glossy, red berries.

"Yes, we wonder if, in reading over such a list, a forgotten scene is recalled; if an interest is aroused, or imagination stirred to a point where the plant is pictured in the minds eye to where one wishes to re-create in one's own little niche, shaded corner, garden, or wooded retreat, a suggestion of the real thing; to help take us a little farther from the hurry, the problems, and tensions of everyday, as we work or play or just contemplate, in our miniature forest?

"The plants named are in large part woodland natives. One may ask, quite properly, what do these have to do with a Primrose Seed Exchange List? Our best answer, after giving considerable thought, seriously to the query, is that someone may want one or more of them and, in most instances, the plants may be considered companions or plants for background or nearby planting.

"In coming to Primulas, these have no spectacular seed caps. They need none. Their show has been—and will be—in their blossoms. We hope that the members having primula species may be generous in their contributions to the Exchange, to make as wide
a variety and choice as we had last season. Seed of companion plants will also be welcome.

"Please send clean seed if possible and, if not possible, as clean as can be made, as it will present an extra problem if the seed must be cleaned upon arrival. Seed must be received not later than November 15th. If this cannot be done, then a list of seed to be sent should be received by November 15th. The earlier the seed is received, the less the burden on the Seed Committee. Your consideration will be deeply appreciated." As announced, all seed should be sent to the Seed Director, Elmer C. Baldwin, 400 Tecumseh Road, Syracuse 10, New York.

Pedemontana Hybrid

A cross using *Primula pedemontana* as seed parent with pollen from *P. pubescens alba*. Very few seeds were formed, some lost in the very small seedling stage. The one plant grew quite speedily, blooming the following spring. This was a good rose pink, as floriferous as *P. pubescens alba* but having the larger bloom of *P. pedemontana*. Meal seems to have been inherited from *P. pubescens alba* as neither parent had powdered leaves and it is not characteristic of *P. pedemontana*. Altogether, this we plant sent up seven stalks, giving it a long blooming period. One will notice a cluster of buds just emerging from the lower left of the plant, while the top umbel is dropping blossoms. I regret to say the plant was lost this summer—careless over-watering—but perhaps a similar plant might come from this same cross.

Photo Courtesy Orval Agee

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**ANNUAL MEETING of the AMERICAN PRIMROSE SOCIETY**

President Cyrus Happy III has designated November 8, 8 p.m., as the time, and the Jade Room at the Hotel Olympian, Olympia, Washington, as the place, for the 1958 annual meeting. It is hoped that this will be a memorable meeting. Plans call for a dinner in the Jade Room at 7 p.m. preceding the meeting, at $2.50 a plate. Payment can be made at the meeting, but reservations should be sent, as soon as possible, to Dorothy Stredicke, 2611 S. 192nd, Seattle 88, Washington. (Phone CH 2-6096)

Considerable thought was given to the place of the meeting and Olympia was chosen as being the most conveniently located for the largest number of members. Members from other parts of the United States and Canada will find this is a good opportunity to visit the Pacific Northwest and the beautiful city of Olympia.

The nominating committee has submitted the following panel of officers for 1959. Members in good standing who cannot attend the meeting may send their votes to Mrs. P. B. Charles, Corresponding Secretary, 1013 84th N.E., Bellevue, Washington.

- President — Anne Siepmann (Mrs. John)
- Vice President — Herbert Dickson
- Recording Secretary — Connie Babbitt (Mrs. O. Miller)
- Treasurer — Ivanel Agee (Mrs. Orval)
- Corresponding Secretary — Lucile Charles (Mrs. P. B.)
- Director — Douglas W. Duncan
- Director — Dale Worthington

(The two outgoing directors are Florence Levy and R. M. Bellis)

Also on the agenda will be a vote on the proposed changes to the APS Constitution as printed on pages 59 and 60 of the Spring 1958 Quarterly.

Editor's Note: For those who will find it more convenient to stay overnight or longer in Olympia, the following information is given: The Olympian Hotel and the Governor Hotel (under the same management) have indicated they will be glad to receive reservations. Since Olympia is a busy city this time of year, it is suggested that requests for reservations be made as soon as possible and that mention be made that you are attending the American Primrose Society meeting. Rates for single occupancy range from $4.50 to $5.50 with bath; double bed, $6.00 to $8.50. Slightly lower prices for rooms without bath; slightly higher for rooms with twin beds or for "parlor suites". The hotel will be glad to send information on request. (General Manager, Governor Hotel Corporation, Olympia, Wash.)

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Seasonal Notes From Barnhaven

By Florence Levy

It is a gentle, unassuming flower, the Cowslip. Yet its hold on the hearts of men is as sure today as it was centuries ago when its sweetness and its virtues were sung in poetry and literature; when it was the wanderer's solace, living and being loved in whatever land it was transplanted. But this has to do not with its legends and lore, nor with its practical virtues, rather with its sweet ministrations to the hearts and nerves of those who would find an oasis of tranquility in restless times. This is about its tea, its wines, its fragrant uses — and about the nightingale whose silver y notes throb so sweetly from the thickets that skirt the meadows where it blooms.

England, to be sure, is most closely linked with Cowslips and nightingales, but how odd it is that the two should persist together throughout Europe, North Africa, and parts of Asia. For the nightingale flies from North Africa and makes its spring and summer home in the countries of the Mediterranean, central and northern Europe as far east as the valley of the Vistula. Its arrival in England would seem timed to the Cowslips, for mid-April hears the first vanguard of males singing in the woods and tangles as they await their mates. Could it be that France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Bohemia, and the Balkans, the Caucasus, yes, even North Africa, could it be that the nightingale returns to each when their Cowslips bloom?

Certainly, it is fanciful, but consider the beauty, the delight that falls upon the senses; those first warm spring nights washed in liquid melody, moonlight, and the heady fragrance of Cowslips released by the fallen dew. Let him who can put springtime, romance, and melody into words capture the fragrance of Cowslips and transfer it to paper. A heavy scent yet delicate; rich and full, it is the flower-laden spring wind; it calms while it stimulates and remains a riddle which needs no answer.

They knew full well, in olden times, how to enjoy the Cowslip, and it might profit to bring some of these pleasures to light again. From its petals essential oil could once more be distilled and used as a perfume possessing the very essence of spring. A potpourri jar with dried Cowslips in liberal proportion, or sweet bags for linens would endow a household with the distinction that only heirlooms bring. The old herbalist, Culpeper, says to "have a special eye over them" to make sure that the flowers are thoroughly dried and kept in a "warm place". That "if you let them see the sun once a month, it will do neither the sun nor them harm."

Culpeper also says about Cowslips, or Peagles (Paigles, from the Scottish paigled — drooping with fatigue) that "Venus lays claim to this herb as her own and is under the sign of Aries," and that "our city dames know well enough the ointment or distilled water of it adds to beauty." So universally is Venus thought of as goddess of love it has almost been forgotten that originally she was the Latin goddess of Spring who would choose for her flower spring's incarnation, the Cowslip. And judging from the assembled wine recipes, the interests of Dionysos were not entirely overlooked when she laid down her claim. Every old herbal and cook book carries at least one recipe for Cowslip wine and each recipe seems to differ in the proportions of Cowslips, water, and sugar. But all use lemons, some add oranges and either brandy or Rhenish wine. The barm (yeast) is usually spread on something that will float, either a wooden spoon or well-browned toast. In "Gardening With Herbs" Helen M. Fox quotes the statement that Cowslip wine resembles the muscatel wines of southern France, and MacWatt has included a line from Pope which again brings forward the theme of tranquility... For want of rest Lettuce and Cowslip wine — probatun est." The wine must have been a high ranking favorite in England, not only because of the wealth of recipes but old illustrations picturing bottled wine are often labeled "Cowslip".

Recipes for mead which is, of course, made with honey are common and, with the flowers in such abundance in the fields, the honey that flavored the mead must have carried quantities of Cowslip nectar. That Cowslips were considered a culinary delicacy is further borne out by the fact that so many of the recipes are offered by cooks and confectioners to the kings and queens. In Eleanor Sinclair Rohde's "A Garden of Herbs" are dishes of Cowslip cream, Cowslip puddling, tarts, conserve, candied Cowslips, pickled, syrup of Cowslips, and their use in salads, contributed by one Joseph Cooper, cook to Charles I in 1654, Mrs. Mary Eales, confectioner to Queen Anne, 1719, and Patrick Lamb who was head cook successively to Charles II, James II, William and Mary, and Queen Anne, and who compiled his Recipe Book in 1716.

For those who take delight in tea drinking, in the fragrant, aromatic cup, permit the old suggestion of Cowslip tea to allay a troubled spirit and induce sleep. Also, in reading Mrs. Leyel's "The Gentle Art of Cookery" and taking great pleasure there from the Chinese flower-scented teas — orange blossom, jasmine, oleander, gardenia, peony, rose — the thought of Cowslips for such use persisted. The Cantonese method of flavoring tea as given is a simple process, about one half as much fresh flowers are mingled with the dry tea and allowed to remain for a day and a night before winnowing out. Any of the heavily scented flowers could be used, but it would seem that the quality of lively sweetness inherent in the Cowslip would add a piquancy, a mild zest to the feeling of quiet well-being that tea imparts to those who love it.

The Chinese, too, know the nightingale. A different species than the European bird, the eastern nightingale — the bulbul, nearly black instead of russet brown — is said to sing with even a longer, more drawn out sweetness. Read again "The Nightingale" in Andersen's Fairy Tales to catch the charm and whimsy missed as a child. In the Chinese Emperor's wood, extending to the sea so deep and blue, there lived a nightingale which sang so deliciously, that even the poor fisherman who had plenty of other things to do, lay still to listen to it, when he was out at night drawing in his nets. "Heavens, how beautiful it is!" he said, but then he had to attend to his business and forget it. The next night when he heard it again he would again exclaim, "Heavens, how beautiful it is!" And so it is with all who have heard it, the actual songs can no more be described than can the fragrance of Cowslips.

All efforts to find the songs of the nightingale failed until the celebrated English baritone, John Goss, recalled that "its characteristic theme is a short, high trill, or shake, varied at moments by a single dove-like note in a lower
key. Sometimes the trill is continued, and, as if in ecstasy, cascades down like a falling star." Mr. Goss was visiting an English cellist friend at the time the Victor people made a recording of the nightingale's singing in accompaniment to the cello. Those evening recitals are well remembered by all who listened to the nightly broadcasts from the cellist's cottage garden. The poignantly mellow tones of the cello pulsating through the calm night would start the chorus of nightingales singing in full tune with the instrument.

So many and such varied songs—a limpid, ecstatic outpouring says one; of great purity and brilliance recalls another; like crystal bells say the Chinese. With throat throbbing, feathers quivering from the strong vibration going on within, he is as nearly master of his instrument as any of the song birds. Night and day they sing while courting and nesting, ceasing in June when the Hedgings must be fed. Not all of England hears the nightingale. It tends more to the southern counties, does not reach all of the western or northern, although it is to be found in Yorkshire. There it is comparatively rare and, not too long ago, local newspapers would announce the place and time of singing. Around midnight a crowd would gather and stand enthralled and silent for several hours until the bird wearyed.

The nightingale, like the Cowslip, has no outstanding physical beauty to recommend it, yet it, too, has been the subject of plastic poetry since medieval times. It is a plain plumaged bird, the male being the same rust brown as the female, and, although of the thrush family, looks more like a warbler. Its shy habits are in keeping with its modest appearance, and it returns year after year with the children to the same thickets, coppice, hedge, or grove, seldom showing itself, content with singing, bathing, and rearing its brood before returning south in early autumn.

So he departs, leaving to the north countries the memory of his song interwoven with other joys of spring. We do not have the silver voiced nightingale in our country but our own thrushes are sweet-toned. And we can again have Cowslips as we had them in colonial times when, in the mid-seventeenth century, hardly a garden large or small had not its Cowslip walks, its Cowslip floral ribbons that tied the flower-knots together. In the course of those three hundred years much of the old has been crowded out for the new, which is as it should be. But some of the gracious past might well be revived, and for those who thing likewise, consider the Cowslips, so sweetly burdened with traditions and uses, giving long and freely, and asking no more than a bit of space for a foothold.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following list of books consulted is given for the convenience of those who wish to delve more deeply into the information and pleasures, both pictorial and printed, contained therein:

COWSLIPS

Gardening with Herbs, Helen M. Fox.
A Garden of Herbs, Eleanor Sinclair Rohde.
The Gentle Art of Cookery, Mrs. C. F. Level.
Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management.
Leaves from Gerard's Herbal, arranged by Marcus Woodward (1597).
Culpeper's Complete Herbal.

NIGHTINGALES

British Birds, Archibald Thorburn.
Allen's Naturalists' Library, R. Bowdler Sharpe.
Summer Studies of Birds and Books, W. Warde Fowler.

(Reprinted from APS Quarterly, October 1944, entitled "Nocturne")

Just Holly

Holly has almost become synonomous with Christmas. The dictionary tells us that Holly is the common name for the genus Ilex, a group of shrubs and small trees found mostly in the North Temperate Zone. They are nearly all evergreen with prickly and leathery dark green leaves. All produce berries and the color ranges from white through yellow, orange, red, and purple, to black. All are dioecious so that isolated trees seldom have any fruit. Like Perennit and Aucuba, it is necessary to have both male and female plants in order to have a crop of berries.

There are many species of holly of which only the European and the native American of the East Coast are cut for Holiday decorations. Some of the Asiatic varieties are very attractive shrubs and are used extensively as yard plants. The English varieties are quite prickly and the texture heavy and leathery. The Dutch varieties have waxy green leaves, fewer spines, and are softer. They seldom keep more than two years' leaves in comparison to three for other varieties. These make fine yard specimens.

Have you ever wondered how the holly that one sees in the flower shops got there? I never had, although I had seen holly trees in yards and parks in the Puget Sound area where I had spent most of my life and I knew how it grew, but not how it got from tree to shop. In 1931 we moved to our present locality and found ourselves in a holly growing center. Mr. F. K. Perrin lived in this vicinity and he is credited with being the first person to plant a commercial holly orchard in the United States. Many of the women that I met "worked in the holly" but it was a closed group and outsiders had little chance to get into it. At last my chance came when one of the growers decided to market some of his "unsaleable" holly in wreaths — and I became a holly worker by sneaking in the back door as a wreath maker. As manpower was getting scarce a few years later, I was asked to cut. This was NEW. Women packed, sorted, and made wreaths. Men cut. That year I cut and I was the only woman in the field. I carried my own basket and ladder and I kept up with the men hour after hour in rain and snow. It was a rough three weeks but I rather enjoyed it. Next year there were many women cutters and there still are.

I was in the top of a holly tree when the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor but the holly got harvested as best it could without me for the next five years. I was in the Navy Yard helping to win the war!

After the war I had several years experience in various jobs in holly groves but missed the wreath making and now have my own wreath making business with our own field crew and our own gift business. I know how holly gets into the flower shops now!

The holly year begins in the spring with the spraying and fertilizing of the trees. The sprays are for leaf curar, leaf miner, and bud moth. All of these damage foliage. Sometimes there is fungus causing spots, rust, and mildew so material to combat these is added to the insecticide. If aphids and other such insects show up in numbers, a second spray may be required.

The harvest begins around the middle of November and lasts for three or four weeks. The cutting is done with dippers and pruners, and the holly is carried in specially-made wire baskets. The cut holly is brought to the packing shed where it is dipped into a solution of hormone material to slow leaf drop and browning. After the holly drains, it is carried to tables where it is sorted.
and packed. There is to be ten pounds net on arrival so an extra pound is put in. We weigh every carton. Gift boxes are all sizes; from plain to fancy. Usually the holly is combined with other greens. Most gift packages contain an assortment of lengths for different uses; as corsage, package trim, and bouquets. Holly is a living plant material; should be treated as a cut flower and placed in water.

Wreaths are made of holly without berries. This makes the best looking wreaths although it is unsuitable in other ways. Over the plain holly wreaths, berries are placed in regular intervals and wired so that they show and do not hide in the leaves. The workers wear rubber gloves. Our standard wreath calls for a ten-inch ring, five bunches of berries, not less than eighteen inches across, a nice opening in the center, with weight of not less than one and a half pounds or over two pounds. The sprays that we use vary from three to ten inches. We have found that wreaths last longer if they are given a good soaking once a day. Wreaths hung out of doors last longer and freezing does not hurt them too badly if they stay frozen, although the leaves take on a darker and transparent look.

Just to relieve the monotony we make wreaths using native greens; cedar, fir, and pine with cones for decoration. We also make swags and door charms!

Well, anyway, MERRY CHRISTMAS to all.

Ruth S. Bartlett
(Paid Advertisement)

Winter Care of the Auricula

In the fall, as we start having frosts or damp chilly weather, the Auricula requires less water. In nature these plants are sleeping under a blanket of snow and even our lovely hybrid auricula need their winter rest.

Gradually start withholding water in the fall. During the winter months, while the plants are dormant, just enough moisture is needed to keep them from becoming dust dry. When you do water them, try to keep moisture off the plant itself; particularly the heart, as rot starts easily this time of the year.

Auriculas need all the air circulation possible, but the windows are usually closed at night and partially closed during the cold drying East Wind, such as we have along the Columbia River.

Check your plants fairly often, removing dead leaves, as the leaves mold and might start rot on the plant. Dust for aphids if any are noticed; also watch for small slugs. Later one may possibly see signs of root aphids which is known by white tufts around the carrot or main stem near the soil,—like tiny clusters of cotton. This must be treated immediately. I use Isotop® of which one may safely use four teaspoons to a gallon of water, watering carefully to be sure it gets around the plant well, but not on the leaves.

*See ad inside back cover, Spring 1958.

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The Secretary, Northern Horticultural Society
HARLOW CAR, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England

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Florence Levy, Barnhaven, Gresham Oregon
Plants of the new Arendsi "Multiflora", advertised in the Summer Quarterly, are as yet limited in number so, of necessity, seeds are in very short supply. Mr. Arends is swamped with orders for European delivery alone. Consequently, a halt must be made on orders for seed of this new Primula hybrid from the U.S. and Canada until further notice. Mr. Robert Luscher, North American representative for the Arends nursery, has agreed to let us know when seeds are available.

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The annual meeting is the time of get-together, where we make sure the Society is in the right hands and running smoothly. We hope that we will see each and every one of you there. (See Page 135).

CHARLES E. GILMAN, Editor.
The most perfect handbook we have yet seen for the mushroom hunter has recently arrived. It is by Alexander H. Smith, entitled "THE MUSHROOM HUNTER’S FIELD GUIDE," $4.95, published by the University of Michigan. Keys enable the reader to identify a common mushroom in a matter of minutes.

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