Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

VOLUME XXIII  FALL 1965  NUMBER 4

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The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

VOLUME XXIII  FALL 1965  NUMBER 4

PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

By MRS. ORVAL AGEE
Milwaukee, Oregon

As one travels to different shows these days they may see many unusual Primulas. The different members have done so much hybridizing, we have wonderful colors and sturdier plants, with more doubles in both auriculas and acaulis. The Julianas are very attractive with more variety and color. The candelabra hybrids have also improved in form and color, but usually bloom too late for our shows. One does see many different species, particularly in Washington, mainly due to a fine seed exchange.

Perhaps the many different types of Primulas are what make them such a fascinating hobby; one may grow so many species and branch out into a vast field of hybridizing. More displays or Primrose shows are always a help to the Society, giving people a chance to see these lovely plants. Even a small group may put on a nice showing of Primulas and create an interest which will bring new members into the Society and give them a hobby that will always be a pleasure.

The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society is owned solely by the Society, which is incorporated under the copyrighted name.

AMERICAN PRIMROSE, PRIMULA AND AURICULA SOCIETY

Subscription price (including membership): $3.50 per year, $10.00 for three years paid in advance. Old Quarterly issues are available at Treasurer's Office — see Index with Winter 1959 issue. Treasurer, Mrs. L. G. Tait, 14015 84th Ave. N.E., Bothell, Washington 98011

(Free cultural chart and Seed Exchange privileges with new memberships.)

The editor is Mrs. Lucien B. Alexander, 11848 S.E. Rhone St., Portland, Oregon 97266

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Dear Florence:

So you are to be free at last! Your long, hard service to the cause of primroses, to satisfying the demands of your many customers — the hard physical work and the long hours of desk work will soon be over.

I am glad for you but sorry for us — your customers and your friends. I think it must be 20 years or thereabouts that I've been buying Barnhaven seeds. I see the myriad blossoms in all their lovely colors and forms that will be blooming before so very long.

You, with your love of hybridizing, and with your sensitive feeling for the true beauty of primroses, have seldom gone wrong. Plants from seeds supplied by you have rarely, if ever, been blatantly large or coarse, but have kept their fair proportions. We have to thank you, too, for producing so many beautiful colors, the pastels as well as the intense and satisfying warmer, richer tones. And we owe you a debt for bringing back into circulation some of the old-fashioned forms: the laced polyanthus, hose-in-hose, Jack-in-the-Green. I love the really old hose-in-hose that my neighbor gives me, the little orange and red originals. I've never cared so much for the new ones with big flowers, but in recent years from seeds procured from you I have had little stemmed hose-in-hose Julianus — a pure white — a pale yellow — and nothing could be sweeter. The superimposed flowers give a richness to the appearance of the clump, so that as you walk by it calls for your attention.

Now, suddenly, I find myself looking at some of your creations as on rare jewels that I must hoard and guard with care, for perhaps they can never be replaced.

I'm sure I speak for a crowd of people when I say, thank you, Florence, for all the pleasure you have given us, for the warm friendly words (if only on postcards!) and for what you have done for the cause of primroses.

Now you will have time to write about them, and then the primrose world will again be enriched by your experience.

With love and gratitude,
Doretta Klaber

**APOLOGIES TO MR. JELITTO AND MR. LUSCHER!!**

Concrite apologies are due Mr. Leo Jelitto and Mr. Robert Luscher — the article on *Primula Spectabilis*, which ran in the summer issue, should have had this introductory page:

"(1) The story was originally published in a special printing from the reports of the German Botanical Society, the book of 1937, V. LV, #1, Feb. 25, 1937.


"These notes were graciously loaned to me by Mr. Leo Jelitto in Stuttgart for translation. I think we have here a rather unusual piece of information concerning one of our most beautiful alpine primulas. The bibliography is complete, and for publication unnecessary. On the other hand, I regard the text with the bibliography as an entity indispensable for future reference, should someone be tempted to study the subject minutely."

Mr. Robert Luscher

**Editor in Charge of Translations**

Anyone who desires the lengthy bibliography may obtain it by sending their address and one dollar to Mrs. Alexander. The fee is necessary to cover reproduction costs.

**Fall and Winter Care for Primula**

... is an article originally published in the Oregon Journal and was part of the series that created enough interest in primroses to launch the organization of our Society, 25 years ago, in Portland.

By FLORENCE BELLIS

Barnhaven, Gresham, Oregon

Rest Period

One of nature's most gracious laws is that everything rests; everything, that is, but the gardener. The rest period of a plant is naturally determined by the blooming period in relationship to the season that precedes and follows its flowering.

With English primroses, the *Julianas* and some of the *Asiatic* species, which spring into action at the first hint of late winter thaw, it is obvious there is no time to first gather the necessary energy for flowering as the later blooming perennials require. This lack of time preceding the blooming period is the reason for the new growth immediately after flowering, the period of rejuvenation which is followed by a late fall and winter dormancy, complete or almost complete, depending upon the species. The signal for the dormant period is given by the first frost intense enough to halt the sap flow and stop cell structure, suspending leaf growth in the evergreen types and destroying the leaves of the herbaceous species.

**Safeguards Needed**

There are several safeguarding measures a gardener should give his primroses during this rest period and the period just preceding it.

It is hard to believe that moles mean no harm in their foraging around the roots for food. The damage is done in the tunneling of drying leaves and roots in the summer and allowing free passage for *mice* in winter, when roots, crowns, in fact everything but the last few leaves that can't be reached even on tip toe are found to be most palatable and made to disappear in their entirety. If the moles have eluded your most astute efforts, wads of red *squid* slipped into the hole where once a primrose grew will probably exter-
minate the mouse population using that particular run.
A final fall baiting with metaldehyde bait for cutworms and slugs will result in wholesale casualties, especially among the new generation.

Whether your primroses come from England's woodsy pastures, from 12,000-foot boggy Tibetan meadows, or from the moraines and rock crevices of the Swiss and Austrian Alps, they all make the same demand for perfect drainage. In the East, where the cold is dry, leaves are used to mulch over all plants including primroses. The dry snow follows, and plant life rests under a warm, dry covering. But in the Pacific Northwest, where the cold, if any, is moist, a covering of leaves on primroses is not a mulch but a soggy, wet blanket. So, when autumn gets into her stride and really begins piling leaves around your primroses, occasionally rake them off and onto your compost heap. Mice and insects do not like this activity, for much eating and drilling goes on under an undisturbed blanket of wet leaves.

Although most Asiatic primulas are herbaceous their leaves, as well as tree leaves, should be kept from forming a soggy mat on their crowns. In their native lands, winter follows swiftly on the heels of fall, and their leaves have barely folded over their heads, and the grasses over the leaves, when snow buries them until spring swiftly warms them into new and lush leafage. During the winter and early spring, care should be taken, if you are given to poking about your garden, not to injure the bare, sensitive crowns. Not all of them have ample measurements, and it might be quite late in the spring before some of them begin reaching for the sun.

Since only a very few are fortunate enough to possess any of the American primulas and would sit up all night with them should danger threaten, there remain only the European primulas, for whom last minute rites will result in wholesale casualties, especially among the new generation.

A renewed top dressing of rock chips or oyster shell around their necks on boulders or rock chips. Auriculas, debris, with their crowns resting either deep down in rock crevices or glacial snow buries them until spring swiftly warms them into new and lush leafage. During the winter and early spring, care should be taken, if you are given to poking about your garden, not to injure the bare, sensitive crowns. Not all of them have ample measurements, and it might be quite late in the spring before some of them begin reaching for the sun.

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Corrections and Additions to
The Starry-Eyed Days
By FLORENCE BELLIS
Barnhaven, Gresham, Oregon

After reading my articles published in this summer's Quarterly for the first time since publication in the Oregon Journal some twenty-five years ago, I was surprised that anyone with that many stars in their eyes could ever safely float down to earth. Since then I have learned many things, one of them being that bonemeal is a waste of time and money as far as primroses are concerned, in addition to which it muddies the colors, as do all additives that are pro-alkaline. The quickest way I know to ruin a good blue is to put it in limey soil where the most beautiful azure will turn lavender and a cobalt will go purple. (This often happens to blues during their false bloom in the fall, but they clear to true colors in the spring. If they do not clear to true blues in the spring, then the trouble is either lime in the soil or poor seed.) I have not tried lime on pinks, and perhaps for pinks limey leavings would produce even more startling results. Everyone knows the acid-for-blue and lime-for-pink reactions of hydrangeas. Then, too, there is the fact that primroses are rapid growers and bonemeal is slow to break down — maybe it hasn't broken down for forty years by the time a primrose is ready to be lifted and divided. Another thing, a primrose likes to set its teeth into a lot of good humus and there is nothing humic about bone-meal.

So, when I was advised that another of these early articles, this time on winter care, was to be reprinted in word. Drainage is still wonderful, but enough to ask to see it before it was meal. If taken seriously, might lose people other of these early articles, this time there is nothing humic about bone-teeth into a lot of good humus and other thing, a primrose likes to get its for availability by the time a primrose down — maybe it hasn't broken down — but for a long spell which has stirred the dormant ones such as P. lata and P. pulverulenta it is not a matter of cold, but exposure. All of these primroses are hardy in Quebec where it really gets cold, but in Quebec the snows come early and stay late. It must be remembered that hardiness is a relative thing. Herbaceous primroses will stand more cold without snow or artificial protection than the evergreens — Polyanthus, Acaulis, and the like. But when a sudden freeze, without snow, follows a long warm spell which has stirred the dormant ones such as P. denticulata and P. pulverulenta into activity, then they, too, will go. The cold temperature seals the buds or short stalks, rot sets in and spreads throughout the crown. Strange as it seems, a young plant — say a Polyanthus — is less susceptible to cold than a large plant. A large plant is too anxious to bud up and stalk while it is still unsafe to do so. Being soft, it is struck, rot sets in and spreads throughout the crown. Or the leaves will rot and spread the rot to the crown. If only the majority of primroses bloomed in the summer instead of late winter and early spring, they would not be troubled by activity in the danger season and the possibility of being caught without snow.

Farther along in this early article I see something about oyster shell and rock chips. It was in my oyster shell days that I learned what limey additions do to color. Rock chips — "... minus is used here — are easily purchased. Some like to go out and collect a sack or two from the country. I can't remember if a note of caution has ever been sounded regarding holding plants, large or small, in flats or pots over the winter. Flat or pots even when pleased, are top killers. Plants will die in a plunged pot, outdoors, when those planted directly to the soil will be safe. I don't know why. I just know it is so, as I have learned many things are so, or not so, in my thirty-year love affair with primroses. I can see that this love affair began as all love affairs do — with stars in the eyes — and it has followed the pattern all love affairs do that last a long time. Sooner or later we find that the affectionate understanding of age far surpasses the pedestalled conceptions of youth.

Dust for Cut Worm Aphid Control
Mix 4 parts industrial talc (available from drug firms, about $4.50 for 50 lbs.) with one part Ortho Botano or similar product. The chemical is a combination insecticide and fungicide containing methoxychlor 5%, captan 5%, ziram 3%, and lindane 1%. Add the talc, four to one, and mix until the dust is fine. Then apply a thorough dusting where the symptoms are noticed. This mixture late in the evening, every ten days through summer and fall.

Dorothy Dickson will conduct judging schools again in January and through March.
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Single membership — 15
Secretary Lawrence Hochheimer
Ridge Farms Road
Norwalk, Conn. 06850

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The twice yearly JOURNALS—illustrated in colour and black and white—are musts for the primula enthusiast. They are spoken of in the highest terms by alpinists and rock gardeners all over the world.
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Annual subscription for full membership is £1 ($3)
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JESSAMINE 37 KIRKILL ROAD
PENICUIK MIDLOTHIAN, SCOTLAND
HONORARY TREASURER

SELECTED GARDEN AURICULA seed, $1.00 per pkg. — DICKSON'S PERENNIAL GARDENS, 13347 56th Ave. S., Seattle, Wn. 98168.

WILL AIRMAIL bare root plants of new color, full double auricula, $3.50 and up. Garden and Semi-doubles, 75c thru $3.00 OFFSETS of NANCY FORD'S prize winning edged Show Auriculas, $2.00 thru $5.00. Hand pollinated SEEDS: edged show, 10c ea; Exhibition alpine: selfs and double Auricula, 5c ea.
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CY HAPPY offers seed from prize-winning show stock: Edged show auricula and selfs, 10c each or the equivalent in foreign paper currency. Alpine auricula 5c each. CY HAPPY 4 Country Club Drive, Tacoma, Wn.

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41 Lynn Shore Drive
Lynn, Massachusetts
Specialist in New and Out of Print Garden Books
I have a few mint copies of Geoffrey Taylor's SOME 19th CENTURY GARDENERS, London, 1915. (J. C. & Jane Loudon, Reginald Farrer, Wm. Robinson) Scarce and fascinating. — $4.00 postpaid.
Use the JOHN BULL PRECISION WEEDER around fine and delicate plants. Forged for me in England. Eight inches long, weighs only two ounces. Over 600 in use. — $1.60 postpaid.
Primroses—From Seed to Flower

By ESTHER HASKO
Central Islip, Long Island, New York

Raising primroses from seed should not be too difficult if you consider five prime factors. They are Good Seed, Good Soil, Good Drainage, Good Ventilation, and Goodly Patience. Primroses are more exacting in their requirements than are annuals. I no longer trust my seeds to the vagaries of eastern winters. "House care" reduces spring loss from slugs, cutworms, and scratching birds, because the seedlings have grown to transplants by then.

I start mine as soon as I obtain seed, usually in late summer for the acaulis and polyanthus, and fall or winter for the candelabras.

The best size for flats or seed boxes is about 12 x 16 inches — small enough to set on a tray for watering. Sterilize old flats before you fill them — turn to set on a tray for watering. Sterilize is about 12 x 16 inches — small enough.

While the seeds are starting to show, lightly sprinkle a mixture of perlite and sphagnum over the sprouting seeds. They will send roots of the box or flat. Cover with a layer of pebbles or grit for drainage. If you do not want to mix and sterilize your own soil, you could use the ready-mixed African Violet soil. Thin this out with perlite or vermiculite, and sphagnum — one third of each.

Fill the flat nearly to the top. Free circulation of air is essential, all around the top, sides, and bottom of the flat. Flats should not be partially filled nor touch each other, nor rest on a flat surface. I set my seed flats on a strip of wood on the sides of the flat. When moisture rises to the top, sides, and bottom of the flat. Cover with a layer of perlite or vermiculite, and sphagnum — one third of each.

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Seed Exchange

By ELMER C. BALDWIN — Seed Exchange Editor
400 Tecumseh Rd., Syracuse 10, N. Y.

SEED EXCHANGE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1965

Cash on hand July 1, 1964 ........................................ $240.38
Disbursements:
Office supplies .................................................. 26.02
Postage ............................................................... 89.26
Seeds purchased ................................................... 350.12
Sponsored memberships .......................................... 47.20
Printing ............................................................... 40.39

552.99

Income:
Seed distribution .................................................. 434.28

118.71

Cash on hand June 1, 1965 ................................. 118.71

Respectfully submitted
Elmer C. Baldwin (s)
Seed Chairman
June 1, 1965

SEED EXCHANGE ACTIVITY — 1965

Number of items in list ........................................ 691
Number of contributors ....................................... 55
Number of Primulas ............................................. 153
Requests for seeds ............................................... 264
Packets prepared and mailed .............................. 9613
Items in the list which were not requested .......... 10
Item sent out in greatest number (#520) ........... 161
Number of Primula packets prepared and mailed .... 5576

Members are asked to please note
Mr. Baldwin's request for early delivery or word of seed, by October 31.
Contributors have first choice, so, if you want seed, and have quality seed
to send, a prompt response will be better for everyone.

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