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Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

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A Quaint form of the polyanthus popular since Elizabethan days. This is the Jack-in-the-Green form known as Jackanapes-On-Horseback.

Photo by Cyrus Happy

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Dear Fellow Members,

I would like to direct this message especially to the older or more experienced members.

Too often in the past years I have heard people complain that the society doesn’t do anything for them. And most of the time it was an older member. A person that has been in the society for a long period of time has seen most of the available primroses. In fact has most likely raised most of them. To a person like this it might seem like we don’t have too much to offer them. If this is your thought you would be right. You can’t expect to find something new to you very often. Hopefully some new seed to grow. Maybe a new method and on rare occasions a new break. These don’t happen very often, do they? When you first started out there was always something new. Instead of giving up on your society go to work for it. Articles for the Quarterly are desperately needed. If our editor had more articles they would be printed. This would make for the larger and more interesting magazine that you have been wanting. I really believe you would enjoy serving the society in this manner. Instead of just a few members writing most of the articles, have many people write a few. All these different parties should have hundreds of new ideas.

For instance a person living in the south could write an article. Now most of the members in that area probably know most of the angles needed to raise primroses there. But people in other areas don’t and would be interested in reading about it.

The seed exchange is doing a very good job. With all these articles you are going to write the Quarterly with imaginative and informative articles. Sound good? I think so.

You could also step up your quest for new members. The price of everything as you know has gone up. And if we don’t get new members to help pay the bills?? We also need these new members to teach, so that they can continue the good works of the society.

Please see what you can do.

Dick Charlton
The Elizabethan Primroses
By Dorothy Springer

Mutations found in the Vernales section of the Primula family were known and recorded by Parkinson, Gerard and Rea, among others as early as the 1600's.

A mutation must be abnormal in form, and it must be hereditary in character; it must be acceptable aesthetically or have an outstanding interest in some form. When crossed with a normal form the abnormal character of the mutant is usually the recessive character.

The anomalous primroses were highly valued during Elizabethan times and have since been dubbed "Elizabethan Primroses". They have remained popular thru the years with serious collectors of Primula.

Best known of the mutants were the double forms of the primrose. The Tudors also greatly admired the form known as Jack-in-the-Green or Jack-in-the Pulpit. Here each blossom is surrounded by a ruff of small green leaves instead of a calyx, giving the bloom the appearance of a miniature nosegay. As with the other quaint forms there are both the true primrose and the polyanthus forms.

Another variation of Jack is called Jackanapes. Here the calyx is only partly replaced by petals and the ruff of leaves is striped with the color of the flower.

The form called Jackanapes-On-Horseback carries another ruff of leaves at the junction of the pedicel with the polyanthus stalk.

Another popular form is that of the Hose-in-Hose, or Two-in-Hose or Duplex or Cup and Saucer. These are also of true primrose or polyanthus habit. In this mutant the calyx is replaced by another flower. Another variant of the Hose-in-Hose is called Pantaloon. Here the calyx of the lower flower is striped with green, red or yellow. All the Hose-in-Hose types seem to carry the same perfume as that of the wild yellow primrose, endearing it all the more to collectors.

Still another mutant is known as the Galligaskins. A 17th century writer described these as primroses whose flowers are folded or crumpled at the edges and the husks of the flowers bigger than any of the former, more swelling out in the middle, as it were ribs, and crumpled on the sides of the husks'. Deduct from this then that the Galligaskins is a single primrose with a large distorted calyx.

Renewed interest in those old quaint forms of the primrose has resulted in modern versions bearing larger flowers, and in the case of the Jacks, much larger ruffs. A wide range of colors is now available in many of the forms and more are yet to come. Double Hose-in-Hose have been recently raised by several growers.

HELEN CLARKE's hose in hose aculis-polyanthus Juliana hybrid. Photo by Cyrus Happy.

and Hose-in-Hose forms of various Juliana hybrids are available. Even the gold lace is in existence in the Hose-in-Hose form. Reading the descriptions of the old forms in various horticultural writings makes fascinating reading, and seeing the modern versions in shows and gardens takes one back to the May Day revels of the Morris-dancers.

Seed and plants of these quaint forms are available thru private growers as well as commercial sources.

Primroses need a little added tender loving care in the fall. The vernal primroses may bloom all winter, so remove decaying old leaves to prevent crown rot. Tuck some organic material up under the leaves (never on the crowns) and bait for slugs after you tidy up the beds for winter.

Cut back the long leaves of the candelabras and denticulas that winter wet doesn't rot those leaves over the crown of the plant causing it to rot also.

The primulas that go dormant during the winter months such as Sieboldii, polyneura, cortusoides, the roseas, the farinosas, etc., need to have their decaying leaves carefully removed also. Those that have surface resting buds must not have a covering over their buds, but those woodland varieties that die down completely need a little extra covering to prevent heaving from frost.

Use evergreen boughs or wood excelsior which is available for the asking in the china departments of department stores to cover your vernal during the winter.

This T.L.C. during the fall months really pays off come spring and blooming time.

1976 DUES ARE NOW DUE!
SEND TO TREASURER
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1975 Fall Quarterly
LUSH PLACES
By Norah Hart
Annaghloy House,
Castlebaldwin, Boyle,
Co. Roscommon, Ireland

For the keen gardener the first excitement of moving into a new house lies in the garden. He has endless scope for admiration, for criticism and improvement, and of course the added exercise in patience while he waits a full year to see all the aspects of his new acquisition. Taking over a garden that is famous for one particular species of plant is more exciting still, especially if it is one that he has tried unsuccessfully to cultivate elsewhere. This is what happened to us, but with one extra ingredient: our new garden was completely overgrown.

It must have been magnificent in those days, a haven of peace and order in the rather wild and predominantly agricultural land that surrounds it. At one stage four or five gardeners were required to look after it; special soil was imported; cars were banned as petrol fumes would be bad for the plants. No expense was spared. However as time went on there was less money and less manpower available and the owners were obliged to abandon some of their more esoteric ideas. Then the house changed hands. The next owner was also a gardener, specializing in primulas. He grew many prize varieties and sent seed to enthusiasts all over the world. Then the house changed hands. The new owner was also a gardener, specializing in primulas. He grew many prize varieties and sent seed to enthusiasts all over the world. But eventually for him too the upkeep of the garden became too much and he had to let it run wild.

It was in this state when we moved in. A thick screen of brambles and nettles covered the entire two acres, with gentle undulations to indicate such details as three ponds, a large rock garden and a greenhouse. At first sight we thought we would never manage to clear even a part of it, we hardly knew where to start. But apart from the excitement of plain destruction, we had the incentives of exploration and discovery to encourage us, and almost before we had settled into the house we found ourselves out in the garden, dressed for action, anointed with various forms of insect repellent and armed with any tool we could find with a sharp edge.

It was autumn when we started this work and so we did not bother to look for the primulas and smaller plants which we did not imagine to have survived under the jungle that suffocated them. Instead we decided to start with the bigger shrubs near the house, which were at least easy to find although woefully overgrown with brambles and ivy. We soon uncovered an enormous bank of rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolia and daphne which seemed visibly to breathe again as we freed them from the weeds that had choked them for so long.

We worked on. We gradually became more expert, learned which were the best clothes to withstand the effects of brambles and nettles and most important of all, had found a method of keeping away the mosquitoes that came off the lake in hordes: by hanging a sprig of mint over each ear. We must have looked decidedly eccentric as we pursued our destructive paths around the garden, draped with mint and occasionally falling into the ponds obscured by brambles.

As more of the garden was cleared we found numbers of beautiful plants. There is an enormous cordyline beside one of the ponds which is very fine — something we could never have grown in the harsher climate of Southern England, and this applied to many of the plants in the garden. There are clumps of bamboo, roses and many others, not forgetting soft fruit and fruit trees. The greenhouse proved to contain three vines, which although they had been exposed to the elements since the night the greenhouse fell down in the big storm, were quite healthy and are now producing a respectable number of grapes.

We spent the winter making plans for the garden, although we could not decide anything until we knew the fate of the smaller flowers. Then at last spring came and the garden seemed to heave itself out of a deep sleep. Now we had no trouble finding the primulas; in every corner of the garden they appeared. They had survived, it seemed little short of a miracle. Of course we cannot know how many did not survive but under such circumstances one can only be grateful that so many did. We found double primroses one day, all different colours. Then Tawny Port and Jack-in-the-Green. Polyanthus Cowichen. A whole collection...
of polyanthus that had seeded themselves and which we transplanted so they would all be together. They were everywhere, in all the least expected places. And not only primulas, but all kinds of other plants too: many bulbs, daffodils, snowdrops and crocus; and surprises like the one we got from the trillium under the rhododendron which turned out to be red. The rhododendrons themselves were spectacular. The garden was filled with colour and our sense of discovery was like that of botanists who discover plants hitherto unknown. We did not have to travel to find ours though, we just waited. Now at last we have ideal conditions for primulas. The greenhouse has been rebuilt and was finished just in time to germinate our first spring sowing of Auriculas. In other places around the garden we also have a variety of Candelabra Primulas and multicoloured cowslips, giving a woodland effect. There are also small clumps of double primroses and various polyanthus — Gold-laced, Julianas and Cowichen.

Now that the first excitement of moving in and clearing the garden is over, we are embarked on the task of keeping the place in the style to which it was accustomed. Although it is not quite as it was in the Thirties, gardeners being harder to come by these days, we feel we have reason to be proud of it and hope that one day it will again be famous for its primulas.

Two years ago I received two pods of seed from the Irish garden of the late Cecil Monson.

This is how he described the origin of the seed he sent.

"I had little hope of seed for you, but did manage to save two pods. One is from the very rare old scarlet Jackanapes On Horseback. Sad to say this is never very viable. The other is from the true Harbinger of Spring. This has been in our family gardens for over 150 years to my certain knowledge. It is a very early flowerer and the sex organs are white, which gives the flowers a sort of double look.

This seed was wind pollinated in the open, so the Lord only knows what will come from it!"

I planted the seed in the spring of 1974. The seedlings were carefully protected during the winter and looked fat and healthy in early spring. By blooming time I had almost lost the entire batch thanks to an undetected infestation of weevil grubs, which almost totally destroyed the root systems. I discovered this just as the plants were almost dead. I immediately dug them, cleaned them up and potted them individually in clean soil. They rallied and some began to show the first bloom late in the spring.

I imagined from Mr. Monson's comments that the entire lot would be offspring from the Harbinger plant. Instead, to my delight just the opposite was true. I had a virtual treasure chest of Elizabethan forms, each one distinct from the other, and of both acaulis and polyanthus form.

As the plants increased in vigor thru the summer they were replanted in a special bed and they began to send up more bloom stalks. Now this fall they are still coming into bloom. Many plants are yet to bloom, but thus far not one seems to have come from the Harbinger pod!

There are Hose-in-Hose, Jack in the Green, Jackanapes and Jackanapes on Horseback, each one a different color. There are reds, rose, pastel pink and apricot, yellows and creams.

My favorite so far is a polyanthus, pale pink in color, with the "ruff" striped in green, cream and pink, much like a coleus leaf in the coloring. Another favorite is a crimson Jackanapes, each petal dotted with a tiny bit of gold.

Cecil Monson collected many of the old anomalous forms of the primrose and I am most grateful for the opportunity to have these delightful offspring growing in my garden.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Answers by Alice Hills Baylor, Corresponding Secretary
Stage Coach Road, Rt. 2, Stowe, Vermont 05672

Q. Last year I bought seed of two primulas without names. Enclosed are the leaves and flower stalk from both. Are you able to identify these for me?

A. The larger specimen is P. Burmanica, in the candelabra group. It was found by Ward in upper Burma at 8000 feet. This is a most attractive garden Primrose. It is robust, the scape shorter than many in the group and the whorls are spaced closer together, and are more densely flowered. It is a pleasing shade of purple and has been used as a parent for several hybrids. The smaller specimen is P. longiflora in the Eu Farinosae section. It is a moist meadow dweller in the Alps, Carpathians and Caucasus. The long corolla tube makes it easy to identify. The umbels are a rose shade and a group of them make a good garden picture.

Q. Can you tell me why I have had poor germination with seed of P. Sieboldii?

A. I have found that a fine sifting of sphagnum moss over the seeds when planted helps greatly. Also the snow and 100 degree water will hasten germination. (Crushed ice as a substitute for snow.) If you have a place in the yard where moss grows try sprinkling some Sieboldii seed over it in fall. In spring you will find the tiny seedlings to lift and transplant in a safe flat.

Q. I have read about P. helodoxa. I have germinated it but have had no bloom.

A. This beautiful yellow candelabra often does not bloom until the second year. Often the first blooming will be in fall. The name means "Glory of the Marsh" and would suggest moisture is needed. I have grown it however under a Mt. Ash in moist, not wet, condition and it grew, bloomed and prospered for me. It blooms a bit earlier than others in this group and is a large plant with often six to eight whorls to a stem.

Q. Where can I buy a guide to identify Primulas?

A. By sending $3.00 to the Treasurer, Mrs. John Genheimer, for a copy of Pictorial Dictionary of the Cultivated Species of the Genus Primula. I have made inquiries at the Post Office and the postage to West Germany is 20 by boat and $1.32 by air.

Q. I am interested in growing other types of Primulas in my greenhouse besides the tender ones, malacoides, sinensis and kewensis. I would like to know what others will do well.

A. You may grow other types of Primulas in your greenhouse besides those you have mentioned if it is possible to keep the daytime temperature from going above 55 degrees. Shading of course is needful. Any of the following groups may do well for you: Auricula: the Vernales which includes P. polyanthus, P. acaulis and the Julianas: the Coptosoides group which will include the lovely P. Sieboldii: the farinosae among which is P. darialica. Of course you may grow some of the more difficult ones, such as P. reiini as I know of those who do. If however it is difficult to keep the daytime temperature down I would suggest you start the seed in when received then pot up when in second leaf. Put the pots in a cold frame which has a screen cover to protect the seedlings from birds and rodents. If a glass cover is used one must ventilate on warm days. Bring the pots into the greenhouse when the weather turns cold, or bring a few in at a time for succession of bloom. Of course one could use the taller Primulas but they do not make as pleasing a group for the greenhouse.

Ed. Note: Alice Hills Baylor has seen need to resign as Questions and Answers editor. Her column has been a steady feature of the Quarterly for many years and she will be missed by all who have read it in the past. She has faithfully contributed her column on time and the Editor has been most grateful.
A National Registry

The Tacoma Primrose Society is in the process of compiling a local listing of all named cultivars of auricula and Juliana hybrids grown currently by the Tacoma members. **A NATIONAL REGISTRY IS ALSO POSSIBLE**

Please send the names of plants in your collection to the Quarterly Office, 7213 South 15th, Tacoma, Washington 98465, so that work can commence on a National Registry of available named primula in the United States.

Many requests are received annually for sources either commercial or private, for these named clones. After the listing has been completed it will be published in the Quarterly, in the hope that most of these will be kept available for future generations to enjoy.

Garden Tragedy Averted

By Gus N. Arneson

I almost did a wrong thing this week but, on second thought, I did the right thing instead. I had good reason to be thankful.

An afternoon delivery had brought several dozen primula seedlings and they were in need of immediate planting. By the time a bed was prepared and the plants set and watered in it was past the dinner hour and I was tired. Since my slug problem in the area seemed fairly under control I had about decided to quit for the day and put out bait in the morning but changed my mind and spread slug bait before knocking off. Next morning three slugs, each big enough to destroy most of the new plants in one night, lay close to my seedlings — all dead in their slime.

Petiolares Section Revision Plans

Dr. A.J. Richards, Department of Plant Biology, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Ne 1 7RU, England, is starting a taxonomic and experimental revision of Primula section Petiolares. He hopes that this will result in a modern account of this important, but confused group. Although a number of species are well known in cultivation, recent introductions have brought new species and forms into cultivation. Dr. Richards would like to correspond with anyone having a good living collection of this group, or who has living material of recent introduction or living material of the rarer species, he does not want: Pp. aureata 'Forma', cunninghamii, drummondiana, edgeworthii, gracilipes, gracilipes 'Nana', griffithii, griffithii hybrids, irregularis, irregularis 'Major', petiolaris, scapigera, scapeosa, sonchifolia, strumosa hybrid or whitei.

OFFICIAL S.A.F.A. REGISTRATION FORM

Mrs. L.G. Talt certify that plant No. seedling has bloomed high standard for at least 10 years, and asked that it be named and registered with the **AMERICAN PRIMROSE AND AURICULA SOCIETY**.

Presented by, Cyrus Happy

Name of Plant: Anna Frances First Bloomed: 1965

Variety: Show Auricula Existing Offsets: 100+

Variety: Existing Offsets:

Original Grower: Beth Talt Cross: Sunflower x Deerleap

DESCRIPTION OF PLANT

Points

TUBE: Absolutely round—clear yellow 10

ANTHERS: Level with surface of pip—closing 10 over the tube

PASTE OR CENTER: Smooth, dense, white, circular 25 clearly defined

BODY COLOR OR COLOR: Clear bright medium yellow, 15 unshaded

PIP: 7 petals, unusually circular outline, flat, no notches. All zones in perfect proportion 20

STEM & FOOTSTALKS: Stem strong, footstalks 10 rigid well proportioned

SIZE, SUBSTANCE, REFINEMENT (PIPS & TRUSS Excellent—1 9 point off because of grooming

DESCRIBE LEAVES: Very white, rather on the small side.

DEFECTS: Specimens could be improved by growing just a little larger.

S.A.F.A. JUDGES Cyrus Happy

Anne Siepman

*This plant won the Bamford Trophy in 1967 (See Fall Quarterly, 1967, pg. 78) and is long over-due in naming.

AMERICAN PRIMROSE SOCIETY
A talk on the florist's Auricula would be incomplete without a few words on the antiquity of the cult. By the courtesy of the Royal Horticultural Society I have been able to collect some interesting facts from works written many years ago by English and continental florists. It is established that continental horticulturalists had some knowledge of the Auricula even before GERARD published his Herbal, for BAUHIN in his Phytotinaux, published in the year 1569, mentions twelve varieties of Auricula ursi, or bear's ears, and in a very interesting work published at Douay in 1616, entitled Jardin d'Hiver, there is a poem in praise of the Auricula, or d'oreilles d'ours as they are called.

MATTHIOLUS, having in view its supposed healing powers and mountain origin, named it Samicula alpina; GESNER called it Lunaria arborescens; PARKINSON in his Paradisus, published in 1629, classified it as a cowslip and says those who have been industrious in sowing seeds of the several sorts, have so succeeded in raising varieties that he would not be able to enumerate them all. He describes, however, twenty-one varieties, and a drawing of one of these, "the greatest faire Bears ears with eyes." This last shows plainly that the florists of the seventeenth century had much improved the flower. Perhaps we might with authority say that the eye or white central disc of paste was at this time developed. If one can form any judgement of the sketches given by both GERARD and LYTE, there was certainly a great improvement in size and form between the years 1597 (GERARD) and 1629 (PARKINSON), for the drawings of GERARD portray small flowers with but four pips to each truss, while PARKINSON illustrates flowers quite treble the size and trusses bearing as many as thirteen blooms. According to GERARD, the Auricula seems to have suffered from neglect of cultivation in the sixteenth century but in 1633, when JOHNSON published his edition of GERARD, he mentions a very great many varieties grown by Mr. TRADESCANT and Mr. Tuggie. TRADESCANT had a "fine garden of rare plants" at Lambeth and at the time JOHNSON wrote was gardener to Charles I. Being a Dutchman, TRADESCANT would doubtless possess that high knowledge of the florist's art for which his countrymen in that day were justly renowned. and there is little doubt that he applied his skill to the hybridizing and improvement of the Auricula. Although at this time the practice of raising Auriculas from seed was common, it was not until later that any attempt was made to fix a standard of excellence. Some such standard appears to have been in existence when JOHN REA published his "Complete Florilege" in the year 1702. After REA's day the popularity of the Auricula increased greatly and various rules were published whereby rival flowers might be compared and their relative merits determined. RICHARD BRADLEY, in his New Improvement of Gardening, published in 1718, lays down "a standard of excellence required to be possessed by skillful florists in the growing of an Auricula"; and in 1757 JAMES THOMPSON published in the town of Newcastle a work entitled "The distinguishing properties of a fine Auricula.

From the earliest years of the eighteenth century the cultivation of the Auricula had been diligently followed out by the Lancahsirz weavers. In the year 1746, at the early age of 15, JAMES FITTON of Middleton began his career as a grower and raiser of show varieties. He died at the good old age of 86, and his son was still cherishing his father's collection at the age of 80 in the year 1831. Auricula-growing must surely have been a pastime conducive to longevity, for another famous grower, JOE PARTINGTON of Middleton, grew and exhibited Auriculas for 71 years, and at the age of 96 was a hale and hearty old man, whose chief delight was to discourse of his victories at the shows of half a century before. When, a lad of 16, he carried off the premier award at Eccles for a variety named "Victory," raised by Colonel TAYLOR in the year 1831, Auricula-growing must surely have been a pastime conducive to longevity, for another famous grower, JOE PARTINGTON of Middleton, grew and exhibited Auriculas for 71 years, and at the age of 96 was a hale and hearty old man, whose chief delight was to discourse of his victories at the shows of half a century before. When, a lad of 16, he carried off the premier award at Eccles for a variety named "Victory," raised by Colonel TAYLOR in the early nineteenth century. It is remarkable that, in spite of the propagated admiration by the large majority of a flower-loving public, so few people seem inclined to venture on the cultivation of the florist's Auricula. THOMAS HOGG, schoolmaster and florist, writing over one hundred years ago, prophesies in these words: "Considering the number of years that the Auricula has been cultivated in this country, the varieties are comparatively few, yet from the increasing establishment of flower societies not only in England but in Scotland and Ireland also we may very fairly expect in the course of time a very considerable accession of new varieties."
gold-centred, cream-centered, and white-centred. The truss or compact flower-cluster at the top of the stem should be carried erect on a stalk long enough to stand well up from the centre of the foliage; but at the same time it must not be attenuated.

All four parts must be in correct proportion one to another. After long and careful experiment, I give you the relative proportions of a perfect flower:

- The Tube: three-sixteenths of an inch across.
- The Eye: nine-sixteenths of an inch across.
- Width over all — that is to say, from edge to edge of a flower: one and three-sixteenths.

It will thus be seen that the eye or paste should be three times the width of the tube, and the edge or border, including the body colour, half the width of the paste, measuring from the outside edge of the eye. I may say that the perfectly proportioned flower is rare indeed.

The tube of a green, grey, white or self Auricula must be yellow. The eye or inner circle of paste should be pure white, heavily and smoothly laid on, without the tendency to encroach on to the body colour.

The body colour should be intense black radiating evenly into the green, grey or white of the border a moderate distance only.

In the case of a green-edged Auricula, the colour of the edge should resemble freshly applied green paint, although few do.

The grey-edged Auricula resembles a green in every respect except that the border or edge has the appearance of having had a thin film of farina spread by Nature over the edge or border, imparting a grey appearance to the flower; and as the green-edged vary in shade, so also do the grey-edged, some being of a white-grey and others of a green-grey tint, no particular hue being insisted on by the standard of quality.

A white-edged Auricula resembles a grey-edged except that the edge or border is so heavily covered in farina by Nature that it has the appearance of flour and is, of course, perfectly white.

A self Auricula should possess a yellow tube and an inner circle of smooth white paste. The edge or border may be of black, maroon, scarlet, blue, red or yellow; the colour must be absolutely clear and devoid of even a suspicion of farina.

The flowers or pips, as they are called, of all four types must be perfectly flat and smooth. The number of segments should be six, although sometimes five and sometimes seven are met with. The pin or pistil of every type should be below the base of the stamens, otherwise it is known as a pin-eyed defect and as such worthless from an exhibitor's point of view. Of late years another has been added to the officially recognized classes, that of the fancy. This non-comer can be best described as any variety distinct from the four whose points I have already dealt with.

The florist's Auricula is as readily responsive to simple common-sense methods of cultivation as any other flower in the garden. The family to which it belongs is of mountain origin; therefore it is not difficult to appreciate the fact that Auriculas love a pure cold air best of all, although they have many years been grown with great success in Shefield, Manchester and the Midland towns, by such well-known men as the Rev. F.D. HORNER of Kirkby Lonsdale, SAMUEL BARLOW, Dr. HARDY and BEN SIMONITE. In London the Auricula has always done well in spite of prevailing fogs. The finest plants I ever saw of that grand old grey-edged variety 'George Lightbody' were grown at Enfield by Mr. W.B. CRANFIELD. They were very much finer than any plants of this variety I have seen grown at Edenside — which is saying quite a lot. And so it will be seen that the florist's Auricula can adapt itself to a diversity of climatic conditions, although I have always found that it resents a damp, confined atmosphere. Very rarely at any time of the year should the ventilators of the house or frame be entirely closed, even in frosty weather. A prolonged spell of frost may be the means of hastening the decay of the lower leaves, but, after all, this is a natural state, merely the hastening of a normal process, for all Auriculas lose three to seven are met with. The pin of every type should be below the base of the stamens, otherwise it is known as a pin-eyed defect and as such worthless from an exhibitor's point of view. Of late years another has been added to the officially recognized classes, that of the fancy. This non-comer can be best described as any variety distinct from the four whose points I have already dealt with.

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after the 1st of September should the sunshine available be withheld. Using a medium fabric, we shade between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. (new time) from the 1st of April to the 1st of September. Little water is needed in the winter months—perhaps once a week. In the spring and summer when growth is continually going on, once a day should be enough—but again, “if they need it.”

I will now pass as quickly as possible to the important question of compost. If any proof of the hardness of the florist’s Auricula were necessary, I should point to the compost used by ISAAC EMMERTON when George the Third was King. EMMERTON was, I believe, a famous florist of Barnet near London, who flourished some hundred and fifty years ago. In his treatise on the cultivation of Auriculas, published in the year 1819, he advocates a compost which he claims, “will cause your Auricula to increase as rapidly as couch grass in the fields!” And here is the remarkable mixture recommended:

1 barrowful of goos dung;
1 do. of sugar baker’s scum;
1 do. of night soil;
1 do. of loam.

When we consider that only one-quarter of this fearsome mixture was really deemed necessary. If the loam used is good enough and rich enough to sustain the plant until the potting season comes round, it hardly seems worth while to disturb and perhaps mutilate any young roots that may be running in the soil within an inch or less of the surface. Certainly in the case of a plant that has been loosely potted, and when one is able to press the soil down with ease, top-dressing is beneficial, in fact necessary. Assuming that potting is done firmly and with good compost, such as I have described, top-dressing is unnecessary. In spring a weak solution of sheep or cow manure and soot can be used once a week.

(To be Continued Next Issue)

Editor Note:
The above lecture was presented some number of years ago by Mr. James Douglas. The Editor has taken the liberty of deleting some of the references to his former nursery and to composts used there, as well as several personal observances. The lecture was given of course in England, and the suggestion has been made that the article be read with the idea of adapting some of the practices to modern day care of the auricula in the United States and its various climates.

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