President's message

Does your primrose club have a special project? It's a great way to build up interest and enthusiasm. It's also a help in building membership, and that spreads the costs so local and national dues don't go up too fast. But the chief concern of any APS club project should be "primroses."

The Tacoma Club has started a project that I think could become a national APS one. They are planting primrose species as companion plants to rhododendrons in the Rhododendron Species Foundation gardens south of Seattle. These gardens are destined to become the leading world center for the preservation and study of the hundreds of rhododendron species. They could also, if we work at it, do the same for primula species.

We need this. Many primula species are rare and in danger of being lost. Many old time types and varieties can no longer be found. They can be "rediscovered" by hybridizing if the parent species (the germ plasm) is preserved.

Germ plasm "banks" are being carefully maintained for our major food crop species. But primroses do not have the economic value of corn or potatoes and will not be saved by government or industry. We have to do it ourselves.

Don't forget—the wise old hands in primula culture are getting older and their gardens in danger of being abandoned. Younger members should be encouraged to start collecting and crossing and experimenting. It takes very little knowledge or land. Genus primula needs your help.

James Menzies

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Quote, Unquote

At The Butchart Gardens in Victoria we grow a considerable quality of P. juliae hybrid Kinlough Beauty. (I saw similar plants at the APS show in Tacoma labeled Kelway Beauty—probably misnamed.)

Our stock was imported from England along with Lavender Cloud some 15 years ago. It makes a very colourful and early show whether used in massed plantings or as a border edging, and that is why we use it.

It thrives on neglect. Our stock gets partially or completely defoliated with red spider every year. In most areas it is neglected and underwatered all summer. It says thank-you by giving us a glorious display each spring.

Barker's selection purchased recently from Lamb's Nursery in Spokane is similar. Our first bloom appears a bit taller and deeper pink. Lavender Cloud is attractive too but less vigorous.

We are looking for other juliae hybrid clones of similar habit. Any information would be most helpful.

W. H. Warren
Garden Consultant
The Butchart Gardens
Box 4010, Station A
Victoria, B.C. V8X 3X4

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At least 15 years ago Ralph Balcom discovered through careful record keeping that D-141 was parent of many of his best double auriculas. Balcom is now in a retirement home and is not working with plants; but Ross Willingham, Earl Welch and Cyrus Happy all use his D-141 in their plant breeding programs. Happy's plant of D-141, shown on the cover, was named best double auricula in this year's national show.
Plant breeding is a rewarding hobby. It requires no specialized equipment and very little space—only interest, patience, a basic knowledge of the reproductive parts of the plant and at least two plants of your chosen species.

There is tremendous personal satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment when you have created a plant that is new, different or better as a direct result of your own efforts in changing the hereditary characteristics of the plant through hand pollinating, a technique used in plant breeding.

Need quick results

For a hobby or avocation it is best to choose a species for breeding that has a short generation cycle of one or two years. You need to see some results of your work soon enough to keep your interest at a high level.

It is a simple matter to transfer pollen from a flower on plant A to a flower on plant B, to pick the seed pod when it is ripe, to plant the seed at the proper time and to grow the plants to flowering.

The real plant breeding starts with this batch of seedlings from your hand-pollinated seed. You must select the one or two that tend most toward the characteristic you are trying to develop—and discard all the others.

Throw them out!

Your ability to recognize desirable changes in your seedlings and the nerve to discard all the others will determine your success as a plant breeder.

Sometimes it takes three or four generations before a desired change will show up. Sometimes you get halfway to your goal and discover all the seedlings are sterile.

To avoid some of these disappointments, you do a lot of research and reading about what other people have done. Soon you will acquire a new vocabulary filled with such terms as dominant, recessive, chromosome, gene, F1 generation, F2 generation, back cross, out cross, line breeding, sibling, tetraploid, diploid.

Ignorance is bliss

But you don’t have to know any of these terms to enjoy pollen dabbing and raising seedlings from your own hand-pollinated seed.

Any plant can be changed through cross pollinating and careful selection of the seedlings, some more easily than others.

The genus primula is one group of plants with unlimited possibilities for change. They are easy to hand pollinate because of the structure of the flower.

The anthers (the male parts of the flower that produce the pollen) are attached to the inner part of the flower petals. (See the illustrated article on hand pollinating primula on page eight of Vol. 26, No. 1 Winter 1968 APS Quarterly.)

Pull flower apart

Merely take hold of the flower petals with both hands, one on each side, and pull the flower apart until the petals come loose from the base. This exposes the pistil (the female part of the flower that is connected to the ovary where the seeds are produced) so you can put pollen on it from the flower of another plant.

This process removes the attraction for the bees. For general purposes you do not need to bag or cover the flower to keep bees away.

How it’s done

Now fold the flower petal you have pulled off so the pollen-laden anthers stick out from the middle. Rub these anthers across the pistil of the flower you want to pollinate.

It is that simple.

This principle applies to all plants; but because flower structure differs, different procedures are necessary.

Keep records

Most failures or dropouts from plant breeding are caused by trying to do too much and not keeping records. Much information on inherited characteristics in special plants has been lost with the death of amateur plant breeders who kept their information stored in their heads and relied on simple code systems to remind them of what crosses they used.

Try plant breeding as a hobby—and record your efforts carefully.

Herb Dickson and his wife, Dorothy, are hard-working APS members and owners of Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery, 2668 Jackson Highway, Chehalis, Wash., 98532. With that many plants to take care of, can it still be a hobby, Herb?
Labeling can be accurate!
by Betty Kronbuegel

Even more fun than raising plants produced by other people is hybridizing your own. But like many people who raise their own seed, I find I have a problem.

Early each spring I cross a few primroses. A few weeks later I pollinate a few more. This continues until there are no more plants in flower.

Lapse of memory
Before the summer is over I've pollinated more plants than I intended. And for the life of me I cannot remember which plants I pollinated with what.

I've tried slips of paper taped to pots, slips of paper pinned to the flower stalk, paper tags tied to the flower stalk. The sun, wind and rain work against me, By the time the seed is ready to gather, my is either destroyed or illegible.

I have concluded that there has to be a better way. This time I believe I have it. Instead of dumping all of the seed from my illegibly marked crosses into a hopeless pile, I am now using a system that works.

Sewing thread loop
After pollinating the flowers, I take a spool of sewing thread and cut a piece of thread less than a foot in length. I fold the thread in half (figure A), take the folded end of the thread and bring it back over the center of the thread (figure B), take the folded end and draw it back through the loop that was formed in the last step (figure C) but do not draw tight the knot that is formed.

I drop the loop over the pollinated flower using a pencil to ease the loop over (figure D). I take the pencil and insert it into the loose knot that was formed at the back of the loop (figure E). With the aid of the pencil I slide the knot to the stem of the flower and draw the knot tight enough so it will not fall off — but not so tight that it will damage the stem (figure F). Next I write on a plastic pot label the cross that has been made and insert the label into the pot. On the label I write the color of thread used for the cross.

Choose good colors
If several crosses are to be made on one plant, I use different colors of sewing thread to identify each cross. Easy-to-identify threads must be used—red, black, bright golden yellow. Light blue or other pale colors will fade so badly from the weather that they will appear to be white by the time the seed is ready to be harvested.

When it is time to gather the seed, all that has to be done is to remove the seed pod, place it in an envelope, match the color of thread to the color written on the label and drop the label into the envelope with the seed.

The label identifies the seed. When it is time to plant, the plastic label can go right into the pot in which the seed is sown so it isn't even necessary to make a new pot label.

Betty Kronbuegel accepted the editor's offer of striped double auricula seeds in exchange for this article for the quarterly! At her garden at 7332 Macleay Rd. SE, Sylva. Ore., 97301, she grows auriculas and species plus sempervivums, cactus, succulents, begonias and orchids. Her father, Henry, grows double primroses and a variety of greenhouse plants.

Editorial . . .
American Primrose Society is staffed by volunteers—people just like you—with gardens, job, families, community responsibilities.

Often their assignments are difficult. Always they are time consuming. The job of treasurer, for example, could be a fulltime one.

There have been some bookkeeping problems in recent months. Some membership requests and checks have not been processed immediately. The patience of members — especially new members — is appreciated. Piles of correspondence are being sorted, and members who have not received cards and quarterlies will not be shortchanged.

APS members could help with the problem if they would send in renewals on time. Bulk mailing rates for a non-profit organization—that’s what we are—are inexpensive. Late membership renewals force us to prepare special mailings, and they are costly.

It would help all of us if we could spend our money on seeds, quarterlies and other benefits instead of postage for delinquent accounts. Fall is renewal time. Let’s mark our calendars so we can be sure we are being helpful members of our own society.

Borrow a slide show on primulas.
No charge to members.

Write to:
Dorothy Dickson
Slide Chairman
2568 Jackson Highway
Chehalls, WA 98532
Primula secundiflora, Franchette, with its tall slender scape, nodding flowers of glowing red-purple and neat rosettes of smooth foliage suggests a plant reminiscent of the nivalis group of primulas, rather than an alliance with the more familiar members of the section Sikimensis.

These distinctions were equally obvious to the botanists who debated its sectional classification — such debate being unusual in this section where most members are instantly recognizable.

Not different
At the time of P. secundiflora's introduction, a plant which was thought to be a close ally was known as P. vittata. Subsequent investigations proved that the two plants were not separable and that any distinctions were likely a matter of growing conditions.

P. secundiflora was first found by the Abbe Delavay in 1884. Plants grown from a collection by Wilson received a well-deserved Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1905. In 1914 P. secundiflora went on to receive a First Class Certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Meadows and thickets
In nature P. secundiflora was found growing in moist meadows and rhododendron thickets at elevations of 3000-4800 meters in southeastern Tibet and western China.

Though not the easiest species of its section, nor the showiest, P. secundiflora has proven reasonably permanent in cultivation in a select pocket of well-drained, humus-rich soil in partial shade. It must not suffer from summer drought.

Easy from seed
P. secundiflora is easily raised from seed sown in late winter. Seedlings are slow to reach a size suitable for planting in permanent positions. They are perhaps best carried over in protected nursery beds the first winter. With care P. secundiflora will develop...
multiple crowns which may be separated and reset in enriched soil after flowering.

**Handsome perennial**

P. secundiflora is a handsome perennial which exhibits a varying degree of farina and arises from a short thickened rootstalk. The leaves, inclusive of the petiole, are 3-30 cm long, the blades 1-4 cm broad and oblong-elliptic to obovate-lanceolate in outline.

They are blunt, pointed or rounded at their tips and usually taper to a short, conspicuously winged petiole. Late in the season the petiole may nearly equal the leaf blade in length.

**Toothed leaf margins**

The leaf margins are finely or sometimes coarsely toothed. When they are young, the lower leaf surfaces are covered with yellow or cream farina which may dissipate at maturity.

The 10-90 cm tall scape has white farina on its upper portion and carries one or two umbels of 5-20 distinctly nodding flowers borne to one side, hence the name secundiflora. The 5-1.0 cm bracts are slender, pointed, green, streaked with purple at the bases, and are farinose on the interior surfaces.

**Farinose pedicels**

The 1-5 cm pedicels are farinose, slender and drooping at first, then erect when in fruit. The .71.0 cm tubular to bell shaped calyx is thickly white farinose on its interior surface and is divided for about half its length into lanceolate-triangular, pointed lobes. The calyx and calyx lobes are distinctly streaked with ten stripes, five of which are smooth and purple and five of which consist of white farina.

The corolla, which occurs in attractive shades of dark reddish-purple to deep rose, is 1.5-2.5 cm long and is without a raised ring at the throat. Both long and short-styled forms of P. secundiflora are known to occur.

**Funnel-shaped corolla**

The corolla is funnel-shaped; the tube flairs above the point at which the stamens are attached. The corolla limb is 1.5-2.5 cm in diameter and is divided into obovate-oblong lobes, rounded or slightly notched at their ends. The seed capsule of P. secundiflora is elliptical to oblong and usually well exceeds the calyx.

P. secundiflora usually blooms with P. japonica and thus somewhat before the bulk of its section. It may prove a slight challenge in cultivation, but it is worthy of all efforts.

There is a refined quality to Delavay's plant which should place it high on any list of the desirable species of primula.

Kris Fenderson, landscape gardener in South Acworth, N.H., is a regular contributor to the quarterly. This article is printed with the cooperation of Theophrastus Press of Rhode Island, who will be publishing Fenderson's work on primulas.
Primroses in Victoria, B.C.
by Maedythe Martin

This spring I visited the gardens of some of the Canadian members of the American Primrose Society. There are four of us as well as some former APS members and all of us are also members of the local society, the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society, where we show our treasures each April.

C. Heimburger's garden and work with hybridizing from P. pallasii you have read about in the last issue of the journal. He has produced some very attractive, low-growing, floriferous primulas. A very knowledgeable man, he is, and I hope to pick his brains when I come to crossing my own second generation plants in a year or so.

Champion alpine grower

Mrs. J.A. Wingert is a champion alpine plant grower, interested mainly in the species primroses. Her P. rotundifolia won the cup for rarest primula in the VIRAGS show this year. I didn't manage to visit her garden; but if the gems she brings into the show are any indication, there must be lots of good things there.

Mystery Cowichans

The Cowichans I have are a mystery. I planted Barnhaven New Julianas seed (obtained from Far North Gardens) in the spring 1976. They bloomed in 1977. Except for five plants all 45 plants show a Cowichan ancestry. Some are small-leaved and of neat habit, and one is an eye-less gem of a dark rich red velvet colour. Could Barnhaven have crossed a juliae hybrid with their Cowichan strain?

In my garden there are some of the P. juliias, some Cowichan strain plants and lots of seedlings planted in flats with high hopes for next year's show. Half are seedlings from my own plants — gold-laced primroses and the Cowichans and half are from APS exchange seed.

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I am also trying to put together a collection of show auriculas. I have two dozen seedlings from Douglas seed, which should give some nice show auriculas of the black self and the fancy sort (grey, yellow ground; green, scarlet ground). When I visited the National Auricula and Primula Society, Southern Section show in London last spring, several of the members were generous with plants.

Primula treasures

Another garden full of primula treasures is Mrs. Marion Espin's. She grows many alpines from seed from the exchanges of the various societies and has a amazing number of the species primulas. The spring blooming ones appeared in the VIRAGS show, where her plant of P. uralensis won the cup for the best polyanthus in the show. When I visited her garden later in the season many members of the Cortusoides family were to be seen.

So as you can see, the interest in primroses in Victoria is still very much alive, though there's work to be done collecting a wider variety of plants and producing some interesting hybrids of our own. Look to hear from us again in the spring of '79 or '80.

Maedythe Martin is a government librarian in Victoria, B.C. She'll spend the next two years in Toronto, where her librarian husband has been assigned a temporary project. Some primroses will try life in the East.
Beginner’s Luck

— with Tony

I had good luck with the primroses, polyanthus and cowslips that I grew from seed exchange seed. How do I get started with auriculas? Where can I get good seed of shows and alpines?

I know of only one consistently good commercial source of seed: Gordon Douglas, 67 Church Rd., Great Bookham, Surrey, England. Choice auricula seed in his main business. He offers seed in considerable variety, breaking down not only gold center and light center alpines but varying shades within those categories.

One of the seedlings from his light center blue alpine seed won the Haddock Trophy for me this year. His dark self seed is very good. He also offers unusual rose and blue selfs.

Unpredictable edged auriculas

The edged auricula seed is always unpredictable. It is smaller than most other auricula seed and germinates if and when it chooses to. If you like to gamble, this is the seed for you. Douglas seed should give you a few acceptable plants.

My records show that using Peter Klein pollen on Copythorn gave 90 per cent green edge seedlings. Peter Klein on Sloden gave 40 per cent green edge seedlings, but the quality was a little better.

A recent cross of edged parents produced nothing but very bad selfs. Those bad selfs are generally stronger and quicker to bloom. The edged types usually are slower.

Hope for the beauty

Unfortunately, the weaker edged seedlings may never come out of it. The stronger ones may develop coarse qualities. But keep hoping for the vigorous full-blown beauty. They do come along occasionally.

Starting auricula seed is not hard. You can use a commercial seed starting mix to which should be added a bit of dolomite and one-third more sponge rock. For containers I like the Styrofoam boxes in which McDonald and others deliver hamburgers. Right size, locking tops, moisture and light requirements about right. And they can be written on.

Starting seeds

I start seed in a mix of one-third milled sphagnum, one-third sponge rock, one-third sand plus a pinch of dolomite.

I find the ideal month for starting seed is February. In summer when seed is ripe is another good time. What does not germinate in two or three weeks will come up the following spring.

Tiny seedlings should be transplanted one inch apart in trays and grown on until ready for small pots. My potting soil contains generous quantities of dolomite, wood ashes and old horse manure—all non-acid materials. The remaining two-thirds is a blend of sandy compost and sponge rock.

Prove ability first

Buying or begging named auricula plants is easier when you have proved your ability by growing seedlings successfully. Stock is usually limited. Choice, scarce varieties will not be released to you unless the grower thinks you will do right by his plants.

Beth Tail at Primrose Acres will ship plants and has a nice selection of good ones. The Dicksons at Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery have some of the popular alpines. Bob Putnam has a few named shows and alpines.

Unless a plant is a known named variety, I would buy it only if I had seen it in bloom.

Get permit for importing

To bring in choice plants from England, a permit is needed. It may be obtained by

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A good folder on the subject is "Shipping Foreign Plants Home, Program Aid 1162." It can be picked up at most airports.

Growers in Britain can be located through the three National Auricula and Primula Societies there.

What to know less?

You say I've told you more than you wanted to know? You just wanted to start with garden and border auriculas?

A local nurseryman grew several thousand this year. He is Deane Wood, 962 104th E., Tacoma, Wash. His plants were picked over when I saw them, but hundreds were just coming into bloom.

Typical of most commercial garden auricula seed, Deane's plants were vigorous. There were a few of exhibition quality.

The only way to get good seed for yourself is to select a few plants—vigorously, strong stems, clear colors, firm petals. Then cross cream to cream, pink to pink, blue to blue. I've got some good blue seed in the refrigerator. Why don't you try it?

16 You can grow winners too!

Herb Dickson has a good yellow garden auricula. Earl Welch had a cream winner at the national show this year. There was a very good dark red at the Victoria show; it came from Germany.

The garden and border auriculas are capable of a full range of colors and have never been developed. There should be a good market for these if anyone cared to develop the strains.

This may not be exactly kosher, but if you want some nice garden auriculas, watch the new seedling double auriculas and ask for my rejects—the singles.

Pore over the articles in this magazine, and try to apply the principles you learn. Ask the experts, and give auricula growing a try.

Dad

Make friends.

Learn about primroses

Join a "round-robin." (That's a letter-writing circle with a few growers who share your interests.)

Write for information:

Ruth Bartlett Huston
Spring Hill Farm - P.O. Box 42
Gig Harbor, Wash. 98335
In 1923 John McWatt offered primula fanciers a history, plant description and cultivation hints in his book "The Primulas of Europe." In his "handbook" he outlined descriptions of primulas native to the European continent. He also shared his experiences as a grower.

McWatt's book is not instantly accessible. Some private and public libraries own it, but many APS readers will never see a copy. In this issue we will extract information from McWatt's chapters on auriculas. We hope you will find his observations interesting and helpful.

Who knew the auricula first?
Nature historians generally agree that ancient Romans, Ovid, Pliny and Columella all knew the wild P. auricula. They mentioned the plants, but they didn't give much information.

Early authors of herbals took information from Dioscorides. Plant descriptions and woodcuts were used from his works. A crude illustration of the wild auricula was published in Matthiolus' "New Kreuterbuch" in 1563.

List of 1583
In 1583 Clusius presented a list of primulas and auriculas in a work published at Antwerp. Included were Primula vera, Primula vera flore rubra, Auricula lutea flora, Auricula vera rubra flora, Auricula flore varie, Auricula ursi carnea colo, fle., Auricula ursi angustifolia, Auricula ursi minima, Auricula ursi minima flore niveo, Lunaria arthritica and Paralytica alpina.

In 1601 Plantin Press of Antwerp published another work by Clusius, "Rariorum Plantarum Historia." It included eight varieties of auricula and further accounts of Primula veris.

Fuchius, who died in 1563, also mentioned the auricula. So did Dodoens in his "History of Plants."

'Auricula ursi'
"History of Plants" was published in Dutch, French and English. Clusium edited the French version, and Lyte edited the English work. In these volumes the auricula was tagged 'Auricula ursi.'

It was a name that stuck. The popular name of "bear's ear" was applied to the plant for many years after publication of the early volumes.
In 1601 Clusius, who was really Charles de L'Ecluse, presented details of the primulas of the Austrian and Styrian Alps, including drawings of *P. auricula*, which he labeled "*Auricula ursi*" and of *Primula pubescens*, which he called "*Auricula ur- si 2."

**Belgian gardens**

Clusius wrote that he had introduced *Auricula ursi* 2 into cultivation. But he stated that *P. auricula* was in cultivation before his time and was widely spread in Belgian gardens.

When did the auricula reach Britain? Historians believe the plant came into the British Isles with the artisans and others who fled from the Netherlands during the "troubles of 1570." The refugees took with them many of their favorite flowers.

By 1597 Gerard described some half-dozen varieties. Johnson's later edition of *Auricula ursi* 2 into cultivation. But he apparently did not cultivate the auricula at all.

In 1629 Parkinson described 20 colored varieties which existed in 1633—those with flowers of white, red, yellow and purple with leaves either green or hoary.

**20 varieties**

In 1629 Parkinson described 20 varieties of "*Auricula ursi, Beares' eares*" in his "Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Ter-restris." His words and drawings offer some idea of the evolution of the florists' auricula. He tells about some plants with a "paste" center. He describes "*Auricula ursi flore tannetto, Tawney Beare's eare*" this way:

"... The flowers are many... each where of is of as deepe murrey or tawnie colour when it is blowe... having a white circle at the bottome of the flower and yellowish in the middle belowe the circle."

**More colors**

He describes colors in the different flowers as yellow, purple, maroon, red, violet and white.

Parkinson also wrote, "Many other varieties are to be found... either naturally growing on the mountains in seuerall places from whence they... have been taken and brought, or else raised from the seede of some of them." By 1640 Parkinson added information in another book to describe 26 plants of "*Beares' eares.*"

By 1665 interest in the auricula had grown, and a community of cultivators was established, exchanging plants. The information came from "*John Rea, gent.*" who published "Flora seu De Florum Cultura."

**Popular purples**

Rea divided auriculas into four classes according to color. Purple auriculas seemed to be the most popular; whites were "of small variety and esteem." Buff-colored varieties were more appreciated than other yellow varieties, and pale apparently was "highly considered."

"Ordinary" plants were thrown away. Rea wrote, "I have done above forty in one year that come of seeds."

**'Leather-Coats'**

Buff-colored varieties appear to have been called "*Leather-Coats.*" Rea wrote that "every Florist had his Leather-Coat, many of which yet remain and retain the names of those that raised them, as Tradescant's Leather-Coat, Lance's, Tuggie's, Turner's, Collin's, Looker's, Hum- phries', Meracow's, Mow's, Mullar's, Randall's and Ricket's Beazar, all several good kinds of Leather-Coats, and I have raised a Leather-Coat myself from seeds."

Rea complimented growers of purple auriculas in his book. The apparent favorite auricula was "*the* fair Downham," which was a "fine bright murrey of reddish-purple colour" of five petals and with a "white circle or eye in the middle."

**Early successes**

He noted that Mr. Good's purple auricula "will not wash yellow with rain." He commented that "*Misstris Buggs her fine purple*" was more erect and of a deeper purple with "broader white eyes."

Deep-colored flowers were real favorites. One was "*The Black Imperial,*" which had "many fair flowers close set together, of so dark a purple colour that without much error it may be called black, with snow-white eyes."

**Striped auriculas**

Rea also described two striped auriculas in this class. One was evidently a sad case with purple flowers striped with white. The other was a better plant with large lemon-colored flowers striped with reddish-purple.

One red or scarlet auricula got special mention. It was "*Mistris Austin's scarlet.*" Others were "redder and some yellower than others, and with white or pale yellow eyes."

"In Rea's days the best plants were grown in pots. The writer said the rich soil in the pots had to be "almost half full with sifted Neats'-dung, the rest with good sandy earth well mixed with such sifted dung.""

**Growing 'secrets'**

Rea also gave detailed instructions about raising auriculas from seed, saying the process was "a secret wherewith few are well acquainted."

Edged auriculas were not recognized or evolved until decades later. Shirley Hibberd wrote that some edged flowers were cultivated by 1750, and he quoted Slater's "*Amateur Florists' Guide,*" which gave a list of edged flowers cultivated in 1776.

By the mid-1770's the properties of a "good" auricula were generally understood. In fact, Richard Bradley gave seven characteristic points of good auricula in a 1718 volume.

**Seven good points**

Another author quoted Bradley in 1778: "The flower stem should be upright, tall, and strong enough to support its cluster of flowers tolerably upright; the cluster or truss of flowers should be large and regular, somewhat of a roundish form, all the florets being arranged on short pedicels, to form the truss close and regular; the florets should be large, and the top spreading flat and regularly around, and the eye of each floret large, circular, and bright;"

During the next century horticultural writers outlined details about the culture of the florists' auricula and reemphasized the qualities of fine auriculas. Points for judging auriculas have been set since 1847.

**Collect Seed Pods!**

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APS Seed Exchange
2248 S. 134th
Seattle, WA 98168
Auricula growers seek perfection

Extracted from John McWatt's "The Primulas of Europe"

Perfect form should be the aim in breeding auriculas. Color can be obtained afterward.

The auricula has been brought to such perfection as a florists' flower in the many years it has been in cultivation that no further improvement seems possible. Yet raisers constantly endeavor to add new varieties which will be superior, or at least equal, to the older ones.

Be careful

Some improvements may be within reach in certain directions, but it is important to be careful. In striving to gain certain points, growers may neglect others of equal or greater importance. The end result may be that the new variety is inferior to the old as a whole, though superior in the details aimed at.

Experienced raisers of new auriculas generally agree that the female parent—the seed bearer—must have special consideration. It must be the best available flower in flatness, roundness, substance, breadth and smoothness.

The male parent—the pollen bearer—ought to have these points as far as possible so the desired characteristics may be obtained in the seedling.

Some weaknesses

Both selves and edged flowers have their points of weakness in form. Selves often have a notch or heart-shaped indentation in the petal. The shortcoming in edged flowers has been pointed petals.

It is desirable to eliminate both failings.

Edged flowers have been greatly improved, and there is no reason why the self-colored auricula should not attain the same standard.

Form = character

It has been remarked, with absolute justice, that a self which has a good form almost invariably has a high character in some of its other points. This is, of course, not without exception.

A self flower which is perfect, or as perfect as possible in its circular form, has generally a paste of equal perfection. That is, the circle of "paste" is practically perfect, not irregular in its outline as often happens with notched flowers.

Watch substance

Selves generally are lacking in substance compared with the edged flowers. Effort should be made to bring them up to the same standard—but this is not as easy as one would imagine.

It has been proved that crossing selves with an edged flower does not necessarily produce a flower with more substance. Seedlings from edged auriculas often prove to be selves, and they can be thin in substance, badly notched and lacking the smoothness which should characterize a good flower.

Improving color

Color improvement is a great object with selves. Good advances in this direction have been made.

Authorities agree that the best plants in the edged class generally are raised by crossing edged flowers with others of the same class. This is due to the importance of form and its corresponding influence on the form of the circle of paste.

Growers get better results in coloring on the edges from using only edged auriculas for breeding than if they introduce color from self auriculas.

5 or 6 petals

The number of petals is another factor in the search for perfection. Some early growers insisted six petals were necessary; others said five were sufficient and were less likely to give a frilled or unevenly formed flower.

Five appears to be the generally accepted number at the present time. But it is not a heinous offense for a flower to have more. Five or six may be considered good.

Requires thought

Breeding for body color as well as for perfection of the edges and the paste and
Allan Hawkes’ striped auricula tube will require some thought. Perfection in green, grey or white edge and well-marked paste will be evident—but beware of a poor, greeny yellow color of the tube.

Body color requires more notice. It must form a good solid band of coloring between the paste and the edge, well defined against the paste, but penciled into the edge in a handsome and pronounced way—not with little notches or pencillings here and there.

Black is favored

The general body color is black, of which depth and a pleasing shade are desired. Other colors are found among the "body colors," but black always has been most sought after and is looked upon with greater favor.

The points for the alpine auricula are more easily attained. Yet the tendency has been to find it more and more difficult to produce flowers better than those previously raised. Inevitably efforts taken with alpine auriculas will set up a still higher standard of beauty.

Word of warning

A warning to the raiser of seedling auriculas: they do not always show their permanent character in the first three years of their flowering.

Sometimes a flower which promises in its first season to be of exceptional merit shows itself to be vastly inferior in the second season. It may revert to its first season’s perfection in the third, or it may remain a disappointment to its raiser.

Perfection?

It is easy to see that the perfect auricula seedling is difficult to obtain. There are so many qualities to consider. Yet what has been achieved before can be performed again. The wonderfully beautiful flowers in this section raised within the past few years show that the mantle of the older florists has fallen upon more than one of the raisers of recent days.

Double auriculas - Double Fun

by Cy Happy

For nearly as long as there have been auricula enthusiasts there have been double auriculas.

Popularity waxed and waned. After World War II there were very few of the old varieties left.

In Bay City, Ore., Denna Snuffer collected garden auriculas with extra petals among thousands of single-flowered plants and crossed them to start her strain of double auriculas. Ralph Balcom of Seattle discovered two or three plants with extra petals and started a breeding program—with written record—that lasted more than 20 years.

Double auriculas are either a lucky break or a mix of garden-type auriculas with a little alpine or self show strains added when extra petals or new color warranted it.

They should be completely hardy. Perhaps not quite all of them are. They enjoy snow protection in winter. In central and north-eastern states they may need protection before the snow covers them.

Double auricula seed will produce a good percentage of doubles of pleasing colors. The singles that grow will be much better than plants grown from ordinary garden auricula seed. They will all benefit from sweet soil and annual dividing and replanting.

Earl Welch, Al Rapp, Cy Happy and Ross Willingham generally have seeds. APS seed exchange offers a limited amount of seeds. Plants are not easy for non-commercial growers to sell mail order.

Choice varieties go for $5 to $10 and up. Beth Tait, who is a commercial grower, has a few of Balcom varieties, including wine double, which is very good.

The uniform APS show schedule has a class for garden double auriculas and another class for classical doubles, which are perfect little clear colored, camellia-like blossoms. The classical is the elite of the group and provides the challenge of attempting to achieve perfect form.

The growers named previously should be able to help beginners to get classical double plants.
Hardy outdoor auriculas

Border and garden auriculas are outdoor plants—hardy and colorful. These spring-blooming perennials should grow anywhere in the United States and southern Canada. They don't like strongly acidic soil nor hard dry frosts, however. In the winter they require cover (snow or evergreen boughs, for example) during a hard freeze.

Differences
Not everyone understands the differences between these two fine garden plants. Border auriculas should have some meal and little or no color shading on their petals. Garden auriculas have little or no meal and may show color shading and centers similar to alpine auriculas.

Both are capable of beautiful colors. The attractive foliage stays green all year. They are perfect for border edging or for rockeries.

Commercial seed is available. Both are listed on the APS seed exchange. Try to get seed of selected colors—unless you are fond of mud tones.

Welcome at shows
Border and garden auriculas are welcome additions to show benches in England and the United States. British growers are now applying stricter rules for classification of border auriculas in their shows.

They give merit points for plant and truss symmetry, fresh appearance, strong stem, distinct and pleasing petal coloring, uncrowded pips, meal on leaves and pips, no extra petals or doubling, thrum eyed flowers.

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I have a question!

Answers by Alice Hills Baylor

Q. Do P. auriculas object to light when they are germinating? I started several kinds—denticulata, geraniifolia, elatior, chionanthus and several others. All except the auriculas came up within 10 days, but nothing from the auriculas nor their kin. I first froze the seeds and then put them under lights. What did I do wrong? Should I freeze them again?
A. Do not freeze them again. In fact, many growers do not freeze seeds. They keep them in a closed glass jar in the refrigerator. My experience is that auriculas are quick to germinate. Seeds under lights do not need to be kept too wet. That may be one reason you had a problem; but since other seeds did come in, I doubt that was the cause.

I have germinated auricula seeds that were three years old. My advice is to be patient and put the flat out in a frame with screen covering as protection from slashing rains and birds. Very likely you will have germinating. Did you water with 100-degree water?

Q. Does one put soil to be sterilized in the oven? If so, for how long and at what temperature?
A. There is an unpleasant odor from sterilizing soil in the oven. The better way is to pour boiling water over the soil after it has been placed in a metal can (or plastic) with a lid. (Such a large can may be obtained from a restaurant.) Have the can about half full. Place lid over and allow to cool. Another method is to use your outdoor fireplace or grill after the coals have burned low. A metal can is necessary for this method. Allow the soil to cool overnight or for many hours.

Q. What would you suggest for summer care of auriculas?
A. They should be fertilized directly after blooming. Bone meal is good. A summer mulch of limestone chips is what I have used for years to conserve moisture. Many of this group grow in limestone crevices. Most are tolerant of any type of Ph. If limestone is not available, use crushed egg shells or sea shells. The late Dr. Carl Worth said P. glaucescens need quantities of lime. I followed his directions and poured lime water around my plants that had not bloomed for four years. The plants then bloomed in profusion.

Q. At what time should one plant the tender types for house bloom? Which are the best?
A. In February I was called to see a collection of P. malacoides which had been planted in July and had begun to bloom in late November. They were all shades of pink and rose, the florets so thick on the slightly hairy stem that they formed a mass not unlike a rounded hyacinth. There were from three to five flowering stems and more crowding to come through the soft green crinkled foliage. Each stem featured from four to six tiers of florets. Not only was there a mass of color, but the fragrance was marked.

These had been raised in a cool (50-55-degree) bedroom in a northwest window. The foliage likes to be sprinkled with a mist. This has proved to be the best winter primrose for house culture—by far.

Obconica, sinensis and kewensis are all good. I would grow kewensis for the lovely yellow flowers and the stunning silver foliage. None of these will do well in a dry, hot atmosphere. The foliage will turn brown on the edges, and the bloom will be dwarfed. The extra care will be rewarded.

Do you have a question? Ask Alice Hills Baylor, corresponding secretary, by writing to her at Stage Coach Road, Rt. 2, Stowe, Vermont, 05672. She will select questions to be discussed in her regular column.

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Dues of $7 a year are payable Nov. 15. Membership includes four issues annually of the Quarterly, cultural chart and seed exchange privileges. Three years for $20. Life membership, $100; garden club affiliated societies.

**Publications**

Back issues of the Quarterly are available. Order from the treasurer. Pictorial dictionaries can be ordered from the treasurer for $5.00 each. Postage included.

Manuscripts for publication in the Quarterly are solicited from members and other gardening experts, although there is no payment. Please send articles and photographs to the editor's office: 11617 Gravelly Lake Dr. S.W., Tacoma, Wash. 98499

Advertising rates per issue: full page, $60; half page, $30; quarter page $15; eighth page and minimum, $10. Submit advertising to the editor.

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Mary Speers • 202 Champion • Stellacoom, WA 98388
Mary Zach, a founder of American Primrose Society, was honored at the banquet during national show time this spring. She was presented a hand-pointed plate.

Exciting show time: plants and people
by Cy Happy

The 1978 show season was a busy one. Washington State club’s first show in Burien drew new people and new interest. Vickey Sauer stole the show with a superb Primula x bileckii (rubra x minima). Rosetta Jones’ double polyanthus and acaulis are becoming outstanding—big flowers, clear colors, stout stems.

High point winner
Ross Willingham won the high-point trophy. He and Helen spent many hours answering newcomers’ questions. Tony Trujillo took the junior trophy with a fine cowslip.

(Primula x bileckii is available at Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery, 522 Franquette S., Medford, Ore., 97501 for $1.70, minimum order $10.)

The national show at Tacoma drew Alice Hills Baylor, Ethel Balla and Chris Fenderson from New England and the Schneiders from St. Louis.

'Stranger’ at national
Saturday morning a little before entries closed a stranger drove up. He came in to ask if he could enter plants. Yes. “Could I enter more than a hundred plants?” he asked. Yes!

That was George Carty, who has a one-man nursery near Kent, Wash. Carty had jumped out of fuchsias and into primroses with a bang.

He took home the sweepstakes trophy and, among others, the editors’ mug for a lovely deep red double polyanthus. He credits Carol Ceremele, hybridist, for many of his best double vernales.

His garden auricula and denticulata seed came from Germany. He also won the Capt. Hawles trophy for best gold laced polyanthus.

Victoria show
Rita and I and the Menzies attended the Victoria show of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society to meet our members there and see what they are growing and showing. The show, held in a good-sized church hall, displayed many primulas.

Mrs. J. Wingert, APS member, took sweepstakes and best primula. A marvelous grower, she turned out beautifully grown orange double primroses and a trophy-winning P. rotundifolia. She does her gardening on a 50-foot lot and a sun porch.

A visit to Mr. and Mrs. Ewart Mastin of Victoria with Marion Espin introduced us to an immaculate Victoria rock garden on natural outcrop, gently shaded by native oak. Mastin grew Mrs. A.C.U. Berry’s old white edged auricula “Snow Lady.” It was superb—large single crowns, big blossoms, full of substance—like it hasn’t been seen in years.

APS winners
Other APS members who were winners included Marion Espin, Joyce Carruthers and Maedythe Martin—a young and enthusiastic group. We also met two outstanding botanical water colorists, Joan Ward-Harris and Emily Sartain.

The Victoria show included a miniature rock garden class, containers to cover an area of four square feet or less. APS shows could include a similar class. It would be a great way to show tiny primulas.

Oregon show
The Oregon State show in Milwaukee drew primula enthusiasts who swamped the sales table. A good range of species primulas were shown.

Scene-stealers were the giant polyanthus plants shown by Mrs. Allen Obersinner of Silverton, Ore. She grew them from Allen Goodwin’s seed from Tasmania.

Milt Gaschka’s prize-winning double acaulis
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by Cy Happy

A few hot days in May prompted setting up a large bench of sawhorses and two x twelves in open shade (sun after 5 p.m. only) and putting all the greenhouse auriculas there for the summer.

The plants love it, put on good firm new leaves and are ready for repotting when I have time. I urge all growers of exhibition auriculas to set up "summer quarters."

Getting rid of aphids

Some plants have the wooly root aphids. Orthene applied every two weeks seems to be getting rid of them. I think I will revert to my old system of soaking the soil of the whole collection with Systox, a liquid systemic insecticide. Stubborn cases and new arrivals will get a pinch of Dexol Systemic Insecticide granules scratched in the soil.

Viterra II, Union Carbide's soil additive, has worked well in potting mix. Plants do not wilt in hot weather. It holds water in tiny blocks that root hairs can use without the soil's being waterlogged. Great for bog primulas in pots or beds. I've used it on auriculas, P. Edgeworthii, P. cockburniana and species vernales. Oh yes, the cats have lost interest in the potting mix.

Photo contest announcement

Get your plants all primped up and take their pictures. Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pa., 19348 has announced a photo contest. Three classes: black and white prints, color prints, and slides. A fee of $3 covers four entries. Photos are to show plants or gardens.

Allan Hawkes, British grower and author of lively articles on auriculas, has been breeding striped auriculas. He says, "It's not too difficult to attain a certain degree of striping, but the trouble is that the other faults come with it and take a great deal of breeding out." Ragged petal edge is a serious problem, acceptable in Dianthus perhaps but a ragamuffin in the staid world of auriculas.

Skilled growers, collectors

A visit to George and Edith Dusek's home in Graham, Wash., revealed rock, woodland and bog gardens maintained by skillful growers and collectors. Their primula collection is largely species and julies. Candelabras were plentiful in boggy areas. They have the true vivid orange P. cockburniana seeding itself in the beds and paths.

The candelabra wonderland of streams and ponds created by John and Clara Skupen of Tacoma was superb again this year. Every hue of P. japonica from deep red to white was followed by silvery mealed P. pulverulenta and P. helodoxa.

Clara spotted a rose helodoxa sport on one plant and has increased it by division. Huge r.

florinda brought the season to a close in July.

Off on collecting trip

A visit to Reuben Hatch's nursery in Vancouver, Wash., was a treat. Their business is wholesale rhododendrons. They were putting thousands of fresh cuttings in mist culture.

Rube and Boyd Kline were about to leave on a collecting trip in Kashmir in northwest India. Rube's business is rhodies; his hobby is alpine plants and primulas. He had P. sherrif-fae in bloom—pale violet-pink flowers on 2-inch tubes—a real treasure. Very special plants included marginata hybrid Linda Pope and a Linda Pope x Marvin hybrid.

Word from Victoria

Butchart Gardens in Victoria, B.C., has been using a lot of juliae "Lady Greer" with great success. W. H. Warren, horticultural consultant for the garden, is looking for primroses that will provide winter and early spring bloom for the off-season visitors.

Ed Lohbrunner, Victoria's great alpine plant expert, has retired from the nursery business but has kept a collection of his favorite plants and more time now for his friends. We'll try to get an article from him.

About finding P. cusickiana

Comments, sotto voce, about the lack of information concerning location of P. cusickiana have reached me. Urban Kubat, 11215 S.E. 31st Ave., Milwaukie, Ore., knows all about it and will sometimes serve as guide.

All I know is that it can be found in Wallowa County in the northeast corner of Oregon. Drive to the county seat, Enterprise, then on to Joseph and hike around Wallowa Lake.

Maybe you'll be lucky and find it in swales of about 6000 feet. It is hidden in grass—lavender blue sometimes very intense—mid-May.

Request from far-away members

A member from The Netherlands, Zelimir K. Tvrtkovic Sahin Uiterweg 34, Aalsmeer 1210, wants seed of species in the obconica section. He is trying to breed out the irritant that gives some people a rash when they handle florist obconicas. He also wants all species of the floribundae group. He has the rare P. gobiana from Iran and wants to try some crosses.
Attention growers around San Francisco, Zelimir wants someone to grow special P. verticillata types—someone with special ability. Zelimir is a large commercial grower of fine acaulis and polyanthus. He sent seed to be grown for the sales tables.

A letter from Lithuania requests an exchange of seed. This grower would like new strains of vernales, auricula, candelabra and other species. He is M. Filewicius, 2354 Sauliai p/d 43, Lithuana, USSR. We need friends in the USSR who have access to the primulas of that country, especially the Caucasus.

Of seeds, friends, publications

Nature's Garden, Rt. 1, Box 488, Beaverton, Ore., 97005 offers a collection of 12 species primula for $14.40 post paid and seeds at 75 cents a packet.

Good grower Maedythe Martin and husband Peter are moving to Toronto for two years. Hope members Wilkins and Dickson will look out for them.

Horticulture Northwest is in its second year. It is a 16-page journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society and features native plants. It is calling for a primula article. Editor is Sallie D. Allen, 18540 26th Ave. NE., Seattle, 98155.

New books, reprints by Theophrastus

Kris Fenderson, a regular quarterly contributor, is doing a book on primulas. The publishing house is Theophrastus, P.O. Box 458, Little Compton, R.I., 02837.


The publisher, Augustus M. Kelley, said he planted P. frondosa seed on damp sphagnan moss in closed plastic refrigerator boxes and they germinated in three weeks on a north window sill.

Bargain geodesic domes

Had a call from Northwest Youth Geodesics, 8923 2nd Ave. NE, Seattle, 98115 (phone LA 4-7055). A father has put his teenagers to work this summer building geodesic dome greenhouses. A 10-foot diameter sells for $150, and a 15-foot for $225—less a 10 per cent discount to horticultural society members. Height at side is 8½ feet. Goes together easily—only 11 bolts.

A member wrote in to try to locate the product Blue Whale as produced by Acme Peat Products, Ltd. of Vancouver, B.C. Alas as the Canadian whaling station is no more, and the same is true of the emulsified whale product. Long live the whales!

Hope for the best

Just noticed two nice little seedlings labeled Marguerite Clark (a tiny yellow julie) x giant salmon acaulis. Oh, what high hopes we have—and how cruel can be reality. With seedlings (and quarterly) the best are yet to come.

An effort has been made to create a uniform APS show schedule. It will be included in the next issue. And so will the membership list.