President's message

The "centerfold" of this issue of the quarterly consists of a uniform primrose show schedule and a set of rules for exhibiting primroses at primrose shows. It is put there so that it can be easily removed and photocopied anytime a supply is needed for use at a show. The schedule of divisions and classes and the standard rules have been developed by the American Primrose Society for use at national shows, but we hope it will be used by local clubs and chapters for their shows as well.

An annual primrose show should be one of the main attractions in the program of any local division of the APS. There is no better way to learn about the different kinds of species of primula or to spread the joy of growing primroses in the garden. If any club needs help in getting started in show business, drop me a line and I'll get you some help.

Recently I visited with our seed exchange chairman, Ross Willingham, and his wife Helen to learn how this exchange works. These two dedicated people are doing a tremendous job for APS in assembling, packaging and mailing out the hundreds of packets of primrose seed ordered by our members each year. They spend hours and days each winter putting together these packets, and I am sure they have little time for anything else in January and February.

Ross tells me there are far fewer members that are now growing and donating seed than there were a few years ago. He has to go to commercial sources for enough seed to fill the orders — and even they do not offer the selection of pure colors in polyanthus or the needed range of species.

Here is an opportunity for anyone who wants to develop an absorbing and useful hobby — growing Ross some seed. All it takes are the right parent plants, a knowledge of hand pollination and a willingness to be extremely careful to prevent accidental cross-pollination or mislabeling. Get a primrose "oldtimer" to help you get started. Our seed exchange is going to become more and more vital to the preservation of authentic primula lines and species, particularly since the professional breeders cannot afford to maintain stocks of seed lines that are not commercially in demand.

The last issue of the quarterly contained the current membership list with addresses. We seem to have well over 500 individual members as well as many institutional or commercial members interested in subscribing to the quarterly and the seed exchange. I notice, however, that each year we lose too many members who joined the previous year. Perhaps this could be reduced if we follow up on the editors' suggestions at the beginning of the list that we study the list to find members in our own locality and get acquainted.

Getting new people into our local clubs or organizing new clubs or study groups should help build their interest and enthusiasm. It looks like our membership is growing again. Perhaps people are tapering off on the house-plant binge of the last few years and are thinking of adding flower sparkle to our outdoor gardens that have been featuring little but rocks, bark and junipers!

James Menzies
Ivanel Agee

by Cyrus Happy

Ivanel Agee, a longtime primrose grower from Milwaukie, Ore., died Oct. 16, 1978. She was 71.

For more than 23 years Ivy Agee was a hard working and concerned member of APS. We joined the society about the same time. When I became president in 1957, she was the new treasurer; and a warm friendship followed.

Ivy's "loans"

I am looking at her first treasurer's report. The society was going through a difficult period. Tucked into the receipts column is an entry head "loan." Ivy's dedication included keeping the society's bills paid—with her own funds, the "loan," if necessary. The Agees were both life members, but they regularly paid dues for several interested growers—and Orval continues this practice.

In 1964 Ivy was vice president, and she became president in 1965. In the following years Ivy and Orv have served steadily as board members, a veritable backbone of APS.

Expert cultivator

Ivy was an expert cultivator and breeder of primula. She raised some excellent show auriculas, winning the Bamford Trophy in 1960, 1968 and 1969. Her good green-edge plants were mostly developed from her crosses with var. Donald Haysom. She named one "Etha Tate" for her longtime friend. Her yellow selfs are exceptionally good.

In recent years Ivy experimented with crosses on P. allionii. P. allionii x marginata and x carniolica were especially nice. She successfully bloomed P. cusickiana from collected plants and was busily trying to civilize this Oregon wildling. Last spring she showed a semidouble P. marginata, a first.

Spring will not be quite the same this year without this personable, dedicated and capable friend.

Primula allionii Loisel comes from a very limited area in the Maritime Alps between Nice and Guneo. There it inhabits sunless limestone crevices at 700-1900 meters elevation, completely rain-sheltered by overhanging rocks. It also occurs in sheltered crevices which are exposed to the full force of the sun.

Tight clumps

In nature the plants form tight clumps or cushions with trailing woody rootstalks clad with the remnants of withered dried foliage. In this condition individual plants appear to attain great age.

Some growers have achieved success with this handsome tiny plant in the open garden when it is grown in a vertical, completely overhung crevice. Most of those fortunate enough to possess this delightful plant consign it to the relatively greater safety of the alpine house or cold frame where it can be kept dry more easily during its critical dormant period and where the perfection of its tiny grey rosettes and round soft pink or white stemless blooms may be more easily admired.

Early bloomer

Its extremely early season of bloom, which would easily be despoiled by adverse weather, is another reason for its culture under glass.

In the alpine house or cold frame P. allionii should be planted in pots or rich gritty compost, to which most growers add a generous amount of limestone chips. Perfect pot drainage is essential, and a layer of coarse stone chips will keep the crown well ventilated and out of direct contact with the soil surface.

The growing medium should be allowed

Primula allionii is not only supremely beautiful, but it also rewards the grower with a surprisingly long period of bloom, far exceeding the fleeting beauty of many of the other species from the mountains of Europe.
to become slightly dry between thorough waterings, which should be done by submerging the base of the post or by carefully watering around the edge of the container well away from the foliage. P. allionii responds well to a regular feeding with a weak soluble fertilizer applied during periods of active growth.

In late autumn some of the lower leaves will yellow; many recommend removing them if it is possible to do so without damaging the remaining healthy foliage. The removal of old foliage should be undertaken with care because the yellowed leaves remain firmly attached to the plant. Forceful removal can dislodge the crown, bruise the brittle healthy leaves or strip healthy tissue from the stalk, allowing entry for disease. All accounts of its culture suggest the prompt removal of faded blooms for reasons of sanitation.

Winter rest

P. allionii should be allowed to dry gradually in autumn and rest in that state throughout the winter. Watering and feeding should be resumed with the renewal of active growth in early spring. Many expert growers suggest a repotting every third season, and one even suggested the incorporation of a chunk of very well decomposed manure above the drainage material.

P. allionii may be grown from the rarely available seed, which is sown in a gritty mixture with excellent surface drainage and frozen. Resulting seedlings must be watered and ventilated with extreme care. Far easier is the propagation of single rosettes, which after their careful and clean removal from the parent plant are stripped of their lower leaves and inserted in slightly damp sand in a shaded, well ventilated enclosure until rooting occurs.

Proper care

The prime cultural requirements of P. allionii are stringent attention to watering, ventilation and sanitation and use of a well-drained potting mixture fertile enough to keep the plant vigorous and healthy. A location with insufficient light will cause the plant to lose its attractive congested habit of growth.

New rosettes of foliage of P. allionii are reproduced at the ends of trailing woody rhizomes, which in nature retain the withered leaves of many prior seasons. The leaves are small, 1.4-5.5 cm long and .5-to 1 cm broad, thick, grey-green. They are covered with very sticky colorless glands. There is no membrane or cartilage at the margin. The blunt tipped blades, which sometimes are slightly toothed, taper to narrow petioles.

Shows color early

The scape is so reduced that it appears absent and carries from one to seven flowers, the buds of which may be evident even to showing color in the previous autumn. The bracts are scalym, 2 mm long, oval and slightly pointed or blunt.

The somewhat saucer shaped corolla is in shades of deep to palest pink or white, the darker shades having a white eye zone. The limb is 1.5-2 cm in diameter, and the base of the heart-shaped lobes may be slightly glandular. There is no raised ring at the throat of the sometimes yellowish tube and both long and short styled forms are known to occur. The seed capsule of P. allionii is exceeded by or equal to the calyx.

Other forms

P. allionii exists in a number of selected horticultural forms, which could probably be duplicated from wild populations. P. A. alba is a white form which gained an award of merit in 1926. P.A. 'Avalanche' is a full round-petaled white form which received an award of merit from the Alpine Garden Society in 1974. P.A. 'Celia' is a fine form with many seven or eight-petaled flowers. P.A. 'Crowsley's Variety' was a chance collection by Bevan in 1928 of a deep crimson form.

More variety

P. A. 'Fairy Rose' has large rose-pink flowers with a tendency to produce a double row of petals. P. A. 'Mary Berry' is a variety with bright reddish-purple flowers over 3 cm in diameter. It gained an award of merit in 1952. P.A. 'Purple Emperor' is a rich bluish-purple with a minute white center; it is said to be very low and slow growing.

P.A. 'Supurba' is described as a plant with broad overlapping purplish-rose petals with a white eye. It gained an award of merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1936.

P. A. 'Praecox' is an early flowering form, useful for the alpine house. P. A. 'Viscountess Byng' is a fine plant with full rounded rose-pink flowers. It was given an award of merit by the Alpine Garden Society in 1937. P. A. 'Snowflake' has white flowers over 3 cm in diameter, which are very full and rounded. It received an award of merit in 1967.

Auricula hybrids

In addition to the selected forms of P. allionii a number of small attractive hybrids have been produced with other primulas of the auricula section. An assumed cross of P. allionii with P. marginata was collected in the Col di Tenda by Denham in the 1930s. It is described as having purple-mauve flowers in stalked umbels. It was described in 1936, at which time there was a proposal to grant it the cultivar name 'Beatrice Lascaris.'
P. allionii features saw-toothed leaf tips

P. 'Beatrice Wooster' is an attractive plant resulting from a cross of P. x 'Linda Pope' with P. allionii. It received an award of merit from the Alpine Garden Society in 1969.

P. 'Ethel Barker' is a cross of P. allionii and P. hirsuta made by Elliot and described in 1936. It supposedly has long petiolar downy leaves and freely carries a short stemmed umbel of 3-5 bright carmine flowers with a white eye.

Pedemontana crosses

P. allionii has also produced seedlings when crossed with P. pedemontana, but little has been published describing them in detail. P. carniolica also was used in a cross with P. allionii resulting in some handsome seedlings.

P. x 'Violet Chambers' appears to be a cross of the same parentage as 'Beatrice Lascaris.' The result is a more compact edition of P. marginata which has inherited some of P. allionii's glandularity and temperament.

Kris Fenderson, a devout APS supporter and landscape gardener at Grout Hill, South Acworth, N.H., is preparing a book on primulas. This article will be included.

In our woods we have several sandy or gravel areas, acidic in reaction, that tend to be very dry from mid-summer to late fall.

Tree roots from oaks and dogwoods also dry out the soil. The problem is complicated by the distance from a water supply and the high cost of water.

Ideal triumverate

Ideal plants for these areas are P. sieboldii, epimedium and marginal wood fern.

P. sieboldii features many beautiful flower colors and flower forms. These plants grow and bloom in spring and early summer when the ground is usually moist. They die down before the midsummer drought, about the end of July.

When the plants die down, I mulch with one inch of organic mulch—leaf mold, pine needles or compost.

I would advise that the sieboldii be planted as divisions of mature plants in this poor soil. In these areas seedlings take too long to mature and flower. Grow the seedlings the first year under better conditions.

After growing sieboldii from seed to seedling inside in the winter to spring period, we are ready to set the plants about eight inches apart in a well prepared bed. The first summer we give good care, weeding and watering if it is dry.

Survival of the fittest

If the plants are well cared for the first year, they stay green longer than when the plants are mature. After dying down in late August, plants should be covered with a half-inch of leaf mold or some other light organic mulch.

The next spring about one-half of the plants will bloom. Pull out the poor ones.

The next year the rest will bloom. Again remove the poor ones. When the rest finish blooming, we move the plants to their permanent place.

They are now large and strong and will live even in poor dry soil if they are mulched each year after dying down. The leaf fall in autumn also takes them

Plant

P. sieboldii

in dry spots

by Dr. Ralph Benedict

through the winters. If leaf fall is very heavy, remove it in the spring, leaving only the yearly mulch on.

The sieboldii will need watering only if there is a severe spring dry period while they are in active growth.

Using epimediums

To make the area beautiful after the primroses have finished blooming, I interplant with epimediums, a hardy herbaceous perennial with green leaves that are margined with coppery bronze.

I use several species of these. Some will remain evergreen all winter. Some spread; some do not. None is aggressive.

I have about 15 varieties of epimediums. The plants feature a wide range of colors. Blossoms are very dainty.

Early in the spring before new growth starts I cut the old stems off. This makes the new growth and blossoms more beautiful.
The third plant I use for the difficult dry areas is marginal wood fern, Dryopteris marginalis. This is a large evergreen wood fern that grows and increases in beauty year after year in the driest acid conditions. This fern does not spread.

Native wildflowers can be used also. However, these bloom and die down about the time P. sieboldii does.

Year around beauty
I find that P. sieboldii, epimediums and marginal wood ferns make a beautiful planting under the oaks and dogwoods the year around. They require no extra watering after they are established, and they will remain for many years if they are mulched in mid-summer and covered with the natural leaf fall.

Dr. Ralph Benedict, 14 Alpine Ct., Wilson Lake, Hillsdale, Mich. 49242, reports, "We had a beautiful wet fall up to Christmas and now have sub-zero weather." He has 1500 seedling primulas growing for spring and is working toward a good crop of double Jack-in-the-Greens. He is also completing a 10-year program to get good strains of double jalianas, Jack-in-the-Green Julianas and hose-in-hose Julianas.

Washington shows set times
Tacoma Primrose Society will enter plants from 7 to 10 p.m. on March 30 and from 7:30 to 10 a.m. on March 31. The show and plant sale will be open Saturday afternoon (March 31) and Sunday (April 1) at Villa Plaza banking center of Pacific National Bank of Washington, south of Tacoma.

Washington State Primrose Society of Seattle has selected April 28 and 29 for its show and sale at Lutheran Church of Atonement, 740 S. 128th St., Seattle. Entry times are Friday from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8 to 10 a.m. The show is open from 2 to 8 p.m. Saturday and from 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday.
According to the dictates of the Japanese, one is not supposed to appreciate Nature without employing all five senses. Or was it the Chinese?

At any rate, perhaps we should look at our primulas in the light of an unaccustomed sense. Taste.

Shocking taste

Now I do not mean Good Taste, as in dressing tastefully or decorating one's home Tastefully, I mean using one's tastebuds. As in Eating.

This, of course, has shocked and horrified you into imagining your rarest and most coddled Himalayan gems ending up on the hors d'oeuvre tray at next Saturday's party. Do not panic.

What I wish to write about is nothing more than a bit of primrose history. I wish to write of Primula veris, the cowslip, and Primula vulgaris, the primrose, and their role in medicine and cooking during the English Renaissance.

Still-room books

Along with the great English herbals which were printed between, roughly, 1500 and 1700 and dealt mainly with plants in a medical way, there exist small household or cookery books compiled by housewives or ladies in charge of large country houses. They were usually handwritten and passed down from mother to daughter and are called still-room books, taking their name from the room in which the distillation of flowers waters and medicines went on.

These books recorded the housewives' favored recipes for medicines, cosmetics and foods. Many of these receipts, as they were called, have as their ingredients cowslips and primroses.

"Take 2 primroses . . ."

Medicinally, the cowslip and primrose date on the Middle Ages. They were mentioned as being used to treat the "megrim" or migraine headache.

After the advent of the printed herbals, quite a few more uses of the cowslip and primrose are documented. In his Herbal of 1597 John Gerard describes the cowslip as being used to combat "the paine of the joyntes, called the Gout," and for "the Palsy" (epilepsy).

Pleasant cure

In Parkinson's "Garden of Pleasant Flowers" published in 1629 cowslip is listed as a cure for disorders of the head, gout and the palsy. An early Latin name for the cowslip was herba paralysis, or Paralysis, derived from its use in treating epilepsy.

Parkinson also speaks of P. veris as a cosmetic, saying that "the juice of the flowers is commended to cleanse spots or marks from the face, whereof some Gentlewomen have found good experience." In 1551, 79 years previous, William Turner in his herbal criticized these "Gentlewomen" for their vanity in using just such a cowslip water!

Please pass the primroses

Vegetables as we know them did not appear commonly in gardens until the 1700s, many being considered "outlandish" (such as a potato). The common person supplemented the fare of his kitchen garden with native herbs, either gathered or "tamed" in his herb plot. Among these were the leaves and flowers of the two primulas.

Salads then consisted of more diverse — and I think healthier — ingredients
than our present lettuce and artificially
ripened tomato version. John Evelyn in his
book "Acetaria" (1699) wrote on the art
of growing, gathering and preparing
"sallet herbs."

Sallet recipe
A sample recipe begins— "TO MAKE A
GRAND SALLET FOR THE SPRING. Your
Gardener, or those that serve you with
herbs, must supply you with all manner of
Spring-Sallets, as buds of Cowslips,
Violets, Strawberries, Primroses . . ."

Not only the fresh buds and leaves were
used, however, plants often were pickled
for winter enjoyment, and a cowslip
flavoured vinegar was used in dressing.

For your sweet tooth
Primroses also were included in
desserts, confectionary and wine making.
They are used minced in a pudding recipe
from 1587 and were fried in fritters.

The Elizabethans had notoriously sweet
teeth, and one of their favorite confection-
ations was primrose, rose petals or violet
flowers candied by dipping in sugar
syrup. A recipe of 1655 by the cook in ser-
vice to Queen Henrietta Maria, for a
marbled flower "paste" or candy, says to
take "every sort of pleasing flower, as
Violets, Cowslips, Gillyflowers . . . and
beat them in . . . sugar."

Cowslips on the rocks
Cowslips were also the ingredient of a
delicate wine. Sometimes they were stop-
ppered in bottles of brandy to make a light-
ly flavored cordial.

So then, Primulas have a culinary and
medicinal history on top of their horti-
cultural past. Though I may not have in-
spired you to use them in salads, why not
try a hand at the old recipes? A bottle of
primrose vinegar is a pleasant thing, and
you needn't deflower everything in sight!

Spinach days aren't over
Mr. Panayoti Peter Callas — in his ar-
icle in the winter 1978 bulletin — said the
spinach days are over. Are over?

On the contrary, they are just begin-
ing. Now one can have his primroses and
eat them too!

Kevyn-Michael Nicolay, age 22, has been gardening
since age four and is now an "avid primrose lover"
and involved with herb gardening, the old herbas
and the plants and practices of the Tudor and Stuart
reigns. Our author has great desire to grow
Elizabethan gold-laced and double forms but needs
to know where to find them. Kevyn's address is
8330 Sunnydale Dr., Brecksville, Ohio 44141. Kevyn
has offered to share tried and true "receipts" using
primroses. (It would be generous to send a self-
addressed stamped envelope.)

Excerpt from 1526 herbal

Looking westward from Britain toward
America, one could sometimes marvel
greatly at the actions and motives of the
inhabitants of the vast and generous land.
It is just possible, although no doubt
highly unlikely, that the same process
takes place in the reverse direction.

To many of us in Britain who grow the
auricula, the main cause for wonderment
is why, on the far side of the Atlantic, this
most ennobling of all the flowers seems
to be looked upon merely as a mild
curiosity, a plant for the vaguely eccen-
tric, to be shunned by the primula purist.

It is true, of course, that the illustrious

Pink alpine auricula seedling

Auriculas: preserving
the past
by Allan Hawkes
Journal "Primroses" carries an occasional article on the subject and even an occasional picture, but the indications are that these evangelistic endeavours fall mainly upon wantonly pagan ears and are disregarded utterly.

**Ho-hum announcements**

Even those few who do abide by the gospel seem often to find their actions go largely unheeded, presumably lest they should stain the principles of those faithful to the accepted primula ways. Thus one would see, in the "APS Quarterly," as it then was called, a three-line announcement to the effect that at the Such-and-such Primula Show the prize for auricula had been won by Mrs. So-and-so. Any elaboration was considered, apparently, completely superfluous.

There would appear to be several possible reasons for this seeming shunning of what is, to put it at its lowest, undoubted-ly a flower of antiquity and great fascination. The first is that would-be growers in the USA just cannot obtain plants of good named varieties.

**Never a surplus**

There may be some truth in this, but it must be faced that nowhere — even in Britain, the main home of the auricula — is there ever a great surplus of plants of desirable quality. To accumulate a collection is just one of the several challenges facing the beginner. Auriculas multiply vegetatively at their own pace. Therefore, they must always be plants for the discerning few rather than for the multitude.

Even so, good British varieties of both show and alpine auriculas are known to have crossed the Atlantic. If these have been tended even moderately well, their numbers must now be not insignificant.

Apart from named varieties of plants auriculas can, of course, be raised from seed. Although the percentage of really top-class plants will prove to be very small, a reasonable number will prove of good enough quality to start a collection.

**Other reasons for apathy**

Obviously this scarcity of plants is not the sole reason for this apathy toward the auricula. Let us investigate further.

Although it is rarely said in just so many printed words, show and alpine auriculas are competitive plants in the same way that thoroughbred horses and greyhounds are competitive animals. Owners of animals or auriculas don't always plan to enter them in competition, but in their thoughts they must have considerable empathy with these ends and realize that the competitive element in the background is the reason for their critical appraisal of their charges and the pleasure they gain from them.

'Florists' flowers' perfection

Auriculas are one of a group of what were once termed "florists' flowers." The word "florist" meant in those days not someone who kept a flower-shop but a person who strove to grow a particular flower to its ultimate perfection.

Put in plain terms in 1979 setting this means that the whole purpose of growing even a few auriculas is to produce blooms which are as near as possible to the traditional standard. There can be little pleasure, or little point, in growing just any ragamuffin auriculas which come along.

**Not enough competition**

It is in this respect, perhaps, that the cult of the auricula most differs from that of the primula — far more familiar to American growers, probably — in which the motivating factor may be the challenge of growing a difficult plant or pleasurable vision of rocky landscapes in distant lands. It may be that this lack of mental challenge in competition and the reports of competition has left the American grower lukewarm toward the auricula and blind to the complex attributes needed for perfection.

There is another aspect of auricula growing which, although it becomes obvious by degrees to the practised grower, is seldom if ever stated in just so many words for the guidance of those just peeping into this curious world. This aspect is that the auricula grower is bound entirely by rules which have matured over the last couple of centuries.

**Bound by rules**

In contrast to the grower of many other types of plant his task is not to innovate, to produce novelties the like of which the world has never seen. It is merely to attempt perfection under the existing and arbitrary rules.

In a sense he is in something of the same relationship to the mainstream of horticultural endeavour as is the preserver of old steam locomotives, old cars and old bicycles and horse-drawn vehicles in relation to the modern world of wheeled transport. The parallel is not quite exact for auricula plants are not immortal, and today's grower must occasionally strive to create a new variety. But each must conform to the old rules.

No wild excesses of imagination are allowed in competition. It is as if the preserver of, say, steam traction engines, finding vital parts worn beyond restoration, makes new ones conforming to the original drawing.

**Limits stimulate interest**

Some may think this conformity makes for uninteresting blooms, but this is most certainly not so. It is lying within these defined limits that stimulates interest.

It could also be said that the grower of auriculas is living in the past. If one believes that in horticultural matters only the latest and most exciting novelties are worthy of attention, then this is undoubtedly the case. There are some people, though, who find the endless advertising bombardment for the newest, for
Ivy Agee's green "Etna Tate"

the latest, for the most astonishing
guaranteed-to-amaze-the-neighbors all
rather repugnant. It is, in all probability,
from the ranks of these latter people, that
are recruited the growers of old roses, old
florist tulips, old pinks and carnations
and, of course, the auricula.

Real go-getters
There is still some tendency in Britain
to regard Americans as the world's pro-
gressives and go-getters, interested only
in the latest wonders of technology and
with little patience for anything which
could be called obsolescent, far less ob-
solete. False as this obviously is, it must
be said that this attitude exists, too, on
this side of the Atlantic — the more par-
ticularly so, it seems, in those individuals
who, had they been born a generation or
so earlier, probably would have walked in
the streets with trouser-seats much
patched.

In Britain now there is a quickly grow-
ing realisation of the shallowness of this
attitude; it is very noticable that those
who crowd to traction engine rallies, to
steam locomotives on preserved lines, to
veteran cars and even to auricula and kin-
dred shows are from all walks of life and
of all ages.

Looking backward
That this same realisation is taking
place on the far side of the Atlantic is ob-
vious; on the dust-jacket of a book on the
other side of this room is a coloured pic-
ture of the American Civil War locomotive,
"General," resplendent in paint and
polished metal, magnificently steaming
across a trestle bridge over a swirling
river.

Obviously a steam locomotive is a very
far cry indeed from an auricula, but it is
evident from the one that there is the will
and enthusiasm not only to preserve
something from the past but to ensure its
continued survival for future generations
to enjoy. Perhaps the same kind of people
who can take pride and pleasure in the
"General" may before long begin to in-
terest themselves delightedly in the
preservation of a small flower which was
long-established at the time when the
"General" was first built.

Allan Hawkes, one of our favorite British growers,
specializes in alpine auriculas. A regular prize-
winner, Mr. Hawkes also is working to develop good
strains of striped auriculas. We enjoy his writing in
the National Auricula and Primula Society (southern
section) yearbook and always welcome his wit and
perceptive comments.

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

Write to:
Dorothy Dickson
Slide Chairman
2568 Jackson Highway
Chehalis, WA 98532

Primrose Show
Exhibitors' Schedule and Rules
DIVISION I: ACAULIS
Vernales primulas with flowers on single stem. Plants with no fewer than five florets, except seedlings which must have no fewer than three florets.
Section A—Singles
AA—Large plants with more than five crowns
Section B—Doubles
Section C—Minatures under 4”
Section D—Jack-in-the-greens
Section E—Hose-in-hose
Section F—Garryards
Section G—Any other

DIVISION II: POLYANTHUS
Vernales primulas with flowers in umbels. Same rules and sections as in Div. I, except miniatures are to be under 6” tall.

DIVISION III: ACAULIS-POLYANTHUS
Vernales primulas with flowers both on single stems and in umbels. Same rules and sections as Div. II.

DIVISION IV: JULIANA HYBRIDS
Section A—Cushion form
Section B—Staked form
Section C—Double
Section D—Hose-in-hose
Section E—Jack-in-green
Section F—Large julianas
Section G—Any other

DIVISION V: HYBRIDIZING
First show of plant resulting from a specific cross made by exhibitor and showing new or superior characteristics.
Section A—Single vernales
Class 1—Acaulis
Class 2—Polyanthus
Class 3—Acaulis/polyanthus
Class 4—Juliana
Section B—Double vernales
Same classes as Section A
Section C—Garden and border auriculas
Class 1—Single
Class 2—Double
Class 3—Any other
Section D—Novelties and oddities
Section E—New crosses between species and/or natural hybrids

DIVISION VI: EXHIBITION PLANTS
Section A—Show auricula
Class 1—White edge
Class 2—Green edge
Class 3—Grey edge
Class 4—Selfs
Class 5—Fancy
Section B—Alpine auricula
Class 1—Light center
Class 2—Gold center
Section C—Laced polyantus
(Pin eyes not to be entered in this section but may be shown in Div. II)

DIVISION VII: GARDEN & BORDER AURICULAS
Plants with at least five florets, grown outdoors.
Section A—Double
Class 1—Classic double
Class 2—Garden double
Section B—Semi-double
Section C—Garden auricula
Section D—Border auricula
(Unshaded with meal)

DIVISION VIII: SPECIES
Includes primula species and hybrids between species.
Section A—Auricula
Class 1—marginalta
Class 2—rubra
Class 3—x pubescens
Class 4—Any other
Section B—Candelabra
Class 1—japonica
Class 2—pulverulenta
Class 3—Any other
Section C—Cortusoides
Class 1—saxatilis
Class 2—sebaldii
Class 3—Any other
Section D—Denticulata
Section E—Farinosae
Class 1—farinosa
Class 2—frondosa
Class 3—involuta
Class 4—clarkei
Class 5—rosea
Class 6—Any other
Section F—Nivalis
Class 1—nivalis
Class 2—nivalis
Class 3—Any other

DIVISION IX: ODDITIES AND RARITIES
Rarities are primulas that are rare by virtue of limited supply or infrequent occurrence. They include jack-a-napes on horseback, gallygaskins, new novelties or any other primula for which no class is provided.

DIVISION X: DESIGN
All designs in this division must contain primulas. No artificial flowers or artificial foliage are permitted. Emphasis shall be on fresh plant materials. Accessories may be used in all designs. Plant material used in designs need not be grown by exhibitor but should be in condition for the duration of the show or be replaced. Table space will be limited to 18” deep, 24” wide and may be any height. One entry in each class or subclass.

DIVISION XI: GROWERS’ EXHIBITS
Section A—Best display of six plants (one or more) species in a flat. One entry per exhibitor.
Section B—Floor display. Space to be allocated by show chairman. Depicts theme of show, primulas to predominate.
Standard Show Rules

1. All entries must have been grown in the exhibitor's garden or greenhouse for at least three months prior to showing.

2. All plants must be potted in clean clay or plastic pots unless otherwise indicated in the schedule. Normal potting material must be used, and no special cover may be used.

3. Exhibitor's name (or the grower's identification number or label) must be placed on bottom of pot or on identifying label hidden from view under the soil.

4. All plants in competition in a national show will be judged by accredited American Primrose Society judges. If accredited judges cannot be provided at a local show, this fact should be stated clearly to exhibitors.

5. All entries submitted must be classed and benched in appropriate divisions or classes by designated officials. These officials may refuse to bench entries that do not conform to show rules or are clearly of substandard quality, infested or diseased.

6. Staking or wiring of plants is not permitted except in the show auricula and alpine auricula sections. In these cases the flower truss may be supported by an inconspicuous stake or wire.

7. Show chairmen may limit the number of an exhibitor's entries of any one color per class.

8. All divisions and sections are open to both amateur and professional growers, and no differentiation in judging will be made. There are, however, special categories for novices and juniors as defined below.

9. Entries by novices and juniors will be grouped separately in the appropriate divisions. A novice is an exhibitor who has never won a blue ribbon at a primrose show. A junior is an exhibitor under 18 years of age. (See special rules for design division.)

10. A primrose in its first spring bloom may be entered as a seedling and designated with the letter "S" on the show label. Seedlings with more than one crown should be shown as mature plants. Seedlings will be benched as separate groups in their appropriate divisions.

11. It is understood that members of the primrose society will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to persons or property.

12. Local show rules: entry hours, show hours.

Beginner's Luck

Our primroses enjoy good climate and growing conditions. How do gardeners in the east, midwest and south grow primulas?

There are many ways to create the cool summers that most primulas require. Perhaps the first one to try is to plant them on the north and east side of your house.

Shade from deciduous trees is usually successful. However, some tree root systems are shallow and invasive. They can turn your flowerbed into a desert in a few hours.

Too much humidity can bring various rots. Air circulation is necessary. Fungicides, such as Benlate, are only partially effective.

A lath house like Agnes Johnson's (shown in the last issue) may be the best answer. It can be covered with plastic for better winter protection. A fan or even an air conditioner can control the climate in summer.

Where heat, not humidity, is the main problem, automated sprinkling — five minutes every hour when over 80 degrees — can keep plants cool.

Of course, many primulas come from parts of the world where hot dry summers are the rule. They survive by complete dormancy or by keeping their roots cool in skrees, springs and along streams. Study your plants in the wild and try to duplicate the conditions.

A mulching program is usually effective. Leaf mold or old manure can be applied as a top dressing several times a year. Some growers use batts of excelsior or fiberglass on top of their plants for winter protection.

National show will be April 7, 8

Valley Hi Primrose Society will sponsor the national primrose show this year. The APS show will be held April 7 and 8 at Beaverton Mall, 3205 SW Cedar Hills Blvd., Beaverton, Ore. Tables will be set up just south of Payless Drugs.

Hours for the show will be 1 to 6 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Plants may be entered from 7 to 10 p.m. on April 6 and 8 to 10 a.m. on April 7. The public has been invited to enter plants.

Growers entering plants may park in the rear of the mall building to unload their cars. Plants should be shown in clean red clay pots or clean plastic pots. All plants should be well groomed before they are entered.
Primroses at Dungeness

by Elizabeth van Sickle

My introduction to primroses was in southern California where they were treated like annuals. We placed them in the shade garden. Summer heat usually killed them down. Maybe we could save a few polyanthus, never our favorites.

On to Dungeness

Then we moved to Dungeness, Wash., where the primula family is more at home, growing mostly in full sun. We are on the Strait of Juan de Fuca a few hundred feet from the water. Here we get annual rainfall of about 14 inches. We irrigate from April to November most years, using "ditch" water from the Dungeness River.

Shortly after moving here, I visited a friend's garden to learn what grew well in the Pacific Northwest. She showed me her primroses—names I'd never heard before and colors and shapes I'd never seen before. Most were growing in full sun.

Shared plants

I came away with several candelabras, wee plants she had grown from seed. She divided a juliae, Wanda, to show me how easy they are to divide; and she gave me wee plants she had grown from seed. She had much to say about seeds labeled one thing and found when it bloomed that it clearly isn't that plant.

I learned how to start seeds. Now I have nearly 100 per cent germination by putting the seeds into the refrigerator or freezer to chill, making the seed case sprout easily. The seed goes dormant and the seeds into the refrigerator or freezer to chill, making the seed case

Using cheesecloth

I like to make the seed bed outdoors with a base of compost and soil and with coarse sand topping it off. After sprinkling on the seeds, I peg cheesecloth down over the top to keep the birds from dining on rare primrose seed. The cloth also keeps the seeds in place when I water. I've found that when I start the seedlings like this, I can let them develop more before transplanting. I like four true leaves before I move them.

I look forward to each issue of the quarterly. I have had good results from seeds purchased from those who advertise in the quarterly.

The shows in the spring are as keenly awaited as the seed exchange list. These are great ways to enlarge your collection at a reasonable cost. The seed exchange often has seeds that are not available from retail sources. (I have not had good luck with double seeds—only average two doubles to a packet of seeds so far. I'm hoping Cy Happy and Ross Willingham will have better luck with the doubles they are working on.)

What is it?

I have found the pictorial dictionary useful in identifying plants, especially those raised from seed or acquired from someone who has shared without knowing what the plant is. Often I have planted seeds labeled one thing and find when it blooms that it clearly isn't that plant.

That's when a grower becomes detective. First I ask friends. Then I go to the quarterlies and the dictionary and the books. I'm looking forward to the day these will be in color. Many primulas are so much alike that color plays a big role in identifying them.

I'm also looking forward to the planting of primula at the Rhododendron Species Garden in Federal Way, Wash. Plant hunters tell about finding hillsides covered with these two plants growing and blossoming together.

Start study groups

Several years ago a group of like-minded gardeners gathered to study the primula family on Monday afternoons. We asked each person to bring a gardening friend the next time, and we looked up APS members in the quarterly lists to invite them to come.

Meetings were held in homes and gardens. Everyone shared by telling about primroses, and we brought extra plants from our gardens.

In our study group we urged everyone to join the American Primrose Society because we think this is the best way to learn. We encouraged everyone to attend at least one show each spring so he or she could see the results of diligent effort—and the best examples of each species. We also shared information from old quarterlies.

Some of us grow many plants. Others grow only a few. I hope more primrose lovers will start study groups. Numbers of plants aren't important. The interest is there to be shared.

Elizabeth van Sickle is an enthusiastic primrose grower and a board member of APS. She lives at Rt. 3, Box 308, Sequim, Wash. 98382.
It's election time again!

James Menzies, retired soil scientist, has been asked to run for a second term as president of American Primrose Society. The nominating committee, led by Anita Alexander, has presented the following members to round out the slate of candidates: Ethel Balla for another term as vice president; G. K. Fenderson as treasurer; Ann Lunn as secretary and Ruth B. Huston and Loie Benedict as board members.

Menzies is a resident of Fox Island, Wash. His work has taken him to several countries, and a "highlight" of his career was the opportunity to study and report on a sample of moon rocks.

Both Mrs. Balla and Fenderson are members of the Eastern Chapter. Mrs. Balla lives at Greenwich, Ct., and Fenderson is a landscape gardener living at South Acworth, N.H.

Ann Lunn is a grower at Portland, Ore. Mrs. Huston has a nursery at Gig Harbor, Wash., and Mrs. Benedict grows primroses at Auburn, Wash.

Every member of APS is eligible to vote in this election. Ballots are inserted in this issue of the quarterly. Space is provided for write-in candidates.

Members are urged to take an active role in the society by marking the ballot and returning it to Mary Speers, 202 Champion, Steilacoom, Wash., 98388, by April 1. Votes will be tallied and results announced first at the national meeting at Beaverton, Ore., on April 7.

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Propagation of *P. sonchifolia* is by fresh seed—very fresh seed. Seed should be gathered before the pod breaks open—it will be sticky and green—and planted immediately in a normal seedling mixture. Since the plant blooms in January, February and March, seed pods will be ready in March, April and May.

Moisture on the thistle-like leaves is a constant threat. Always water the pot by soaking. By September the seedlings will be ready to transplant. Use a leafy compost. Many of the seedlings will flower the first year.

Best as an alpine house plant, *P. sonchifolia* will prove easy when kept free of winter wetness.

---

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Elected directors
Fred Clarke, Tacoma, Wash. 1976
Helen Clarke, Tacoma, Wash. 1976
Loie Benedict, Auburn, Wash. 1976
Mildred Washburn, Aloha, Ore. 1977
Dr. Ralph Benedict, Hilldale, Mich. 1977
Alice H. Baylor, Stowe, Ver. 1978
Elizabeth Van Sickle, Sequim, Wash. 1978
Presidents of affiliated societies and chapters
Cyrus Happy, Tacoma, Wash., editor, ex officio

Membership
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, $7 a year; library and horticultural societies, $7 a year; second member in family, $1 a year. Overseas members, $7 a year; please send by international money order. Send dues to the treasurer.

Publications
Back issues of the Quarterly are available. Order from the treasurer. 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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From the mailbox

Just received my membership card and your note asking where Palmer is. It is 42 miles northeast of Anchorage in the Matanuska Valley. This is where we grow the 60 and 70-pound cabbages and other large vegetables.

It seems that primroses—other than the native species—have had very little work done on them up here. In the valley our winters run from mid-October to mid-April with a small amount of snow, lots of wind and temperatures averaging 0°F. to -10°F. with occasional dips to -25°F. Summers are cool—60°F. and half sunny—though not a lot of rainfall. This will give you an idea should you have any suggestions as to what species I should try.

I look forward to a long and happy membership.

James H. Fox
P.O. Box 1935
Palmer, AK 99645

I certainly enjoy the new format of the primrose quarterly, with one exception. I do prefer to have the volume number in a good visible place on the cover. It is so helpful when using the index.

I have had a very happy experience with some Barnhaven new Juliana seed purchased in 1976. Most of mine show cowichan ancestry. I had two of the neatest habit with beautiful rich velvety red color. One is eyeless. That one has a very strong growth habit and so far seemingly hasn't been too offended with the deadly heat we have had.

Elizabeth DeFries
Box 77A, Rt. 1
New Paris, IN 46553

A few days ago (8 January 1979) I had some double primroses in bloom but since then have lost the flowers with frost and snow. It has not been too bad—although most years the primroses seem to produce flowers successfully right through the winter months.

Doreen Robinson
Riversdale
Glounthaune, Co. Cork
Ireland

I enjoy the quarterly very much and find many helpful hints. Most primulas do well for us in this part of New Zealand, as do so many of the American natives.

Mrs. Goldie Hamilton
Lora Gorge, 2 RD
Winton, New Zealand

I will tell you what I want to do; then you can steer me in the right direction.

I am the gardener-groundskeeper at Lantern Court, a 20-acre estate which is within the 2600-acre Holden Arboretum. On the informal grounds I have been casually working on a primrose path area for a couple of years. We have nearly a thousand primrose plants, but the area needs diversity. Our plants are mostly P. polyanthus (many have been there for years), P. japonica, P. vulgaris and P. auricula, none of which are named cultivars though we do have several named strains of polyanthus.

My goal is to establish as many species and cultivars as can be grown in our area. I am not in a hurry as my time must be budgeted (no help) between my types of gardening. Within two years I hope to open up a wet area garden which will accommodate some candelabra types.

The Lantern Court area is visited by several hundred people each year but is not open to the public. Garden clubs make up the greater percentage of the groups using the area. Groups are allowed use of the house (no charge, as we are non-profit) for meetings, luncheons, dinners, lectures, etc. We offer tours of the gardens several times each year to arboretum members.

Though we midwesterners can't grow primroses the way they do out your way, I would like to try to expand interest in these gems by providing a primrose area where more than polyanthus Pacific strain is grown.

Thank-you for your help.

Thomas A. Yates
Lantern Ct.-Holden Arboretum
9203 Kirtland-Chardon Rd.
Mentor, OH 44060

We have members of the Rock Garden Society visiting us from England the first week in July this year. We hope to visit and do some botanizing in the Rockies and especially the Big Horns as that will be earlier than our winter wheat harvest. We have had continued cold for weeks here.

Mrs. Lowell Storm
Chugwater, WY 82210

I grow quite a few primroses such as seiboldii, polyanthus, veris, japonica, doubles, etc. I don't guess they grow as big as I read about. One I have tried many times is P. minimia—without success. I grow many from seed, getting them from Far North Gardens.

I cover them carefully with excelsior. In the spring I dry the excelsior and dust it with sulphur to keep the mold down when I store it. Then in the fall when I put it back out on the plants, most are dusted with the sulphur.

Georgie M. Burt, M.D.
1201-14 Ave. N.
Fargo, ND 58102

Cont. on page 38
Market Place

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Ruth Bartlett Huston
Spring Hill Farm - P. O. Box 42
Gig Harbor, Wash. 98335
Diary of a Primroser

by Cy Happy

December 28 brought a lovely addition to our family. Emily arrived at 3:46 p.m. Life at our house now revolves around Emily and her needs.

Had a nice letter from Elinor Clarke and Bear Swamp Gardens, Ashfield, Mass. She enclosed samples of her gardening column from the local paper. She covered auriculas, polyanthus, P. florindae, P. japonica, P. sieboldii and P. denticulata, giving history, cultural requirements and personal experiences with the plants — plus a boost of APS. Other members should volunteer such columns to their local papers. It could increase membership and initiate local groups.

Help for garden writers

Such writers can join Garden Writers Association of America, c/o Gladys Reed Robinson, 680 Third Ave., Troy, NY 12182. It’s dedicated to improving the standards of horticultural journalism and offers good help.

The nice monthly bulletin from Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia reminded me about the study weekend at the Coach House Inn in North Vancouver on Feb. 23-25. Primulas get their hour from 3 to 4 p.m. Saturday with Herb Dickson, Jim Menzies, John Simons, Bob Putnam and me conducting a primula panel discussion. If we don’t see you then, do try to come to the shows.

Show times for your calendar

Tacoma show will be at Pacificbank in Villa Plaza shopping center on Mar. 31 and Apr. 1. The APS national show is at Beaverton, Ore., on Apr. 7 and 8 at Beaverton Mall. Oregon Primrose Society’s 20th annual show will be Apr. 14 at Milwaukee Community Club, 42nd and Jackson Sts., Milwaukee Ore., from 2 to 6 p.m. This show will be dedicated to the memory of Ivanee Agee. Tentative date for the Seattle primrose show is Apr. 20 and 21. The Alpine Garden Club show will be Apr. 19-21, Park Royal Shopping Center, West Vancouver, B.C.

The Pacific Northwest has had —by our standards—a severe winter. A two-week spell of dry, cold weather has taken a toll of some of the vernales. The auriculas came through in good shape. Mine are starved and tough. Many growers are concerned.

Siskiyou changes owners

Small world. A member of the Happy/Colley clan of Mayfield, Ky., Jerry Colley, and his partner B. Mineo have bought Boyd Kline and L. P. Crocker’s Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery at 2825 Cummings Rd., Medford, Ore. 97501. Jerry said he plans to update the primula section of their catalog. Boyd will continue to work with very rare plants. He just returned from an expedition to Kashmir. Boyd knows most of the American primulas intimately.

The Rock Garden, RFD 2, Litchfield, Maine 04350 is looking for starts of juliana hybrids. Will someone share a few?

Primulas contribute to medical research. Jack Semmelman, a Ph.D. at Phytochemical Research Laboratory, 5972 Parkchester Place, Dayton, Ohio 45459 has called for procedures germinating primula seeds. I hope we can learn of medicinal properties of primulas from this research.

Congratulations to Willinghams

The Willinghams are to be congratulated on the 1979 seed exchange list—well organized, interesting sources, good selection, informative. Think I’ll try P. parryi again.

The Primula Pictorial Dictionary is gone. It was published at $3, and the price was raised to $5 a few years ago. Now we must reprint— if not re-edit. This very valuable work probably will cost at least twice as much. If we re-edit, we may need a grant. Any suggestions?

Some seed sources

Far North Gardens, 15621 Auburndale Ave., Livonia, Mich. 48154 is still our best commercial source of primula seed. They distribute Barnhaven seed from England. Thompson & Morgan, P.O. Box 100, Farmingdale, N.J. 07727 offer Fl hybrids julianas at $1.90 a packet with complete color range. Sounds good.

For top quality show and alpine auricula seed try Gordon Douglas, 67 Church Rd., Great Bookham, Surrey, Eng. I’m still impressed with the plants APS member Deane Wood raised from this seed. Our seed exchange has a small quantity for distribution.

A possible source of American primula seed from the southern Rocky Mountains is Sally Walker. Haven’t seen her seed list, but she specializes in plants of the hills and mountains. Sally’s Seedery, 500 East Yavapai, Tucson, AZ 85705.

Cheers for skilled craftsmen

Color work on the last issue was the product of the Tacoma News Tribune, who made the color separations, and our printer, Star Printing. At every stage great care was taken to retain the most subtle colors — a great job. (The original slides were mine.)

Experiences with the soil additive Vitera 2 Hydrogel through the winter enlarge on the previous recommendation. Auriculas frozen in the pots for most of last month did not flag. The water was available with the slightest thaw. The potting mix was workable even when frozen. So far soil in pots has not packed down with the passage of time. I suspect this is the same product sold in small retail packages as Water Lok.

Emily’s first flowers from father were a basket of four acaulis-polyanthus—yellow, pink, salmon and blue—from Gibsons. This Tacoma firm raises 75,000 every year. Always a treat to walk into a preview of spring in their large glasshouses.

Just had a call from Karen Krusinski Smith of Far North Gardens. She said Bob...
Goplerud is seriously ill. While recovering from surgery, he suffered a stroke. On the bright side, they planned to have Karen take over the nursery. So it will be business as usual at Far North. Our good wishes and prayers go with Bob.

A primrose lover in our neighborhood has volunteered to place arrangements of potted primroses and other spring plants on dining room tables of the Tacoma Country and Golf Club. Won’t that be a lovely prelude to spring?

**Letterbox**

Cont. from page 33

In Vol. 36, No. 3 there is a picture of Mary Zach holding a hand-painted plate. I am anxious to paint primroses on china like this. Is there a book on primroses with colored pictures that I could use to study and paint from?

Ann B. Smith
12 Weeks Place
New Rochelle, NY 10801

After reading an article in "Advant Gardener" about the primula Kinlough Beauty, I decided to write you for more information concerning how or who can join the American Primrose Society.

I was raised in England and can well remember the primroses and cowslips growing wild in the woodlands. I have grown my plants from seed and hope to expand my collections, which at present consist only of the Pacific hybrids, auriculas, japonica and, I hope, denticulata.

Your Kinlough Beauty seems to resemble a cultivar my father raised in our rock garden in England, a juliana named Wanda. I have tried in vain to obtain either seeds or plants.

I would be most interested in joining your society.

Mrs. Lee Nelson
8 Peer St. RD 4
Binghamton, NY 13901

Everything here is settling down into its normal winter state of frozen solid as a rock. I’ve found a temporary place for the primrose seedlings—between the storm window and the inner window. It’s just about like it is outside where you are. I have one fluorescent light which I’ll try to set up in January. This will be an experiment.

I just received the yearbook from England. I don’t think we’ll get to see the shows there in the spring. But I’m all organized to come west in time for the shows in your area. See you in March.

Maedythe Martin
1 Wellesley Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4X 1V2

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