President's message

The month of April is a busy time for primrose people in the northwest. There were only four weekends in April but there were six weekend primrose shows. It is a little difficult to keep up with all of them.

Because of the cold wet weather in April most of my auriculas waited to put on their display the first half of May. For two weeks it was the best bloom display I have ever seen. I give credit to the layer of volcanic ash they received last spring. I hope your primroses did as well for you as mine did this spring, and I hope you have some of the later flowering species of the candelabra, sikkimensis and soldanellioideae sections to brighten and perfume your garden for a longer period.

Our personal invitation to the primrose people to get together in July our place in Chehalis has continued for ten years. By popular acclaim it has been designated the annual APS picnic and plant auction on the second Saturday of July each year. If you miss it this year, make plans now for next year.

Herb Dickson
Show time: growers stage fine plants

by Cy Happy

Seems as if show time will never arrive. Suddenly it is here and gone.

I remember my reaction to my first primrose show in 1951. I was mainly interested in the plants. The people involved were nice, but I was much more interested in the plant names—until I saw Howard Larkin’s massive and flawlessly groomed acaulis primrose. Here was a name to remember—a person from whom to learn.

Howard's acaulis wasn't at the 1981 show, but Howard was. Looks about the same. Guess you'd have to classify him as a hardy perennial.

National show features species

Interesting plants at the national show in Tacoma included Dicksons' P. bhutanica. This pale blue beauty from the high Himalayas is normally a winter bloomer.

This plant was a few points ahead of a very nice P. rusbyi. The species division was well filled and the competition tough.

I was pleased to see the Clarkes' white cushion juliana hybrid again in top form. They should spread it around to other growers. It is very good.

Ross Willingham has a way with double primroses and polyanthus. His best one was a trophy winner.

The dark-eyed miniature primroses and polyanthus from Japanese seed are beginning to appear at the shows. Vivid colors and overall neatness give them a special quality. Parks and Thompson and Morgan have been offering the seed for several years.

Oregon grower claims trophy

Orval Agee showed a number of good plants and took a trophy with a fine yellow self auricula, formerly Agee #3 and now named for our founding member Mary Zach.
The APS banquet the evening of April 11 brought the primrose growers together for delicious food, programs by Jim Menzies and Herb Dickson and a non-election that put up the same officers for another year.

Tacoma show chairman Lois Nelson kept things running smoothly from beginning to end. Upstairs in the lunchroom Fern Dengis kept the workers fed and refreshed and organized a marvelous luncheon for the judges. Having a place to visit in comfort adds much to the show.

This is the 22nd year First Interstate Bank has had a primrose show in their building. It would be very difficult to find a nicer location.

Shows fill weekend
Easter weekend was busy with shows at both Kent and Kirkland, Wash. The show at the Meeker Mall in Kent brought together plants from many new growers in this rapidly expanding club. Nevertheless, Herb and Dorothy Dickson took home the sweepstakes trophy.

Ross Willingham and Rosetta Jones showed some great double primroses. The auricula division was overflowing with fine garden auriculas.

Larry Bailey showed several very large, healthy edged auriculas—old varieties like Lovebird and Manka. It is most unusual to see such vigor in show auriculas. He claimed his success was due to Ed Hume potting mix and clay pots.

Growers welcome Kirkland show
At the Kirkland show, first one in about ten years, the quality of plants was very good. Beth Tait of Primrose acres took sweepstakes (most blue ribbons), and Mary Baxter was runner-up.

Albert Smith had the old yellow self Deerleap in top condition, as was the gold centered alpine auricula Janice Hill shown by Beth Tait. Evie Douglas took the species trophy with a fine Primula chionantha.

Although the show was a little confusing with show tables among the usual hardware store merchandise and activity, the quality of plants and the dandy trophies make this a show to see and be a part of. Congratulations, Eastside!

Victoria includes fine primulas
The Vancouver Island Rock Garden show May 8-9 in Victoria had a fine primula section. This is a standard show—one blue, one red and one white ribbon awarded in each class. This differs from the American shows, which are merit shows—all blue ribbon plants in a class get a blue ribbon, etc.
Furthermore, in all classes except auricula and hybrid vernales the judging emphasizes rarity, difficulty of culture and growth in character with the wild plants. Among the many judging dilemmas—an exceedingly rare and beautiful plant may be shown frequently and a less rare plant may be rarely shown because of unattractive habit or poor color. So how do you judge for rarity?

For several years Reba Wingert has dominated the primrose classes at Victoria. A truly gifted grower, she has raised the standard of all the classes she enters. Other Victoria growers have come to realize that the real challenge is to beat Reba. It is a healthy situation.

Tiny P. scotia wins

Reba took the best primula trophy with a minute P. scotia. This plant is seldom seen at the shows and even then should be viewed with a magnifying glass. The yellow-eyed, purple flowers are about 1/8 inch across on one to two-inch stems. Plants of P. reidii and P. nutans were also first rate.

The Victoria show combines a wide selection of rockery plants—nicely displayed, a gracious atmosphere, good fellowship and a pleasant tea room.

We could not take in the Oregon shows—Milwaukie, Beaverton and Mt. Angel. Hope they will send in reports.

By the way, all show chairmen should give the editors an announcement of their shows as soon as possible and follow up with the show results immediately after the shows.
Soil secrets were shared by Ross Willingham and Herb Dickson at a recent meeting of Washington State Primrose Society, according to newsletter editor Martha Harrison.

Here is the newsletter account of two ways to mix soil and plant seeds:

Ross uses one-third each of peat garden loam and coarse sand plus a small amount of diazanon dust mixed in for his seed starting mix. He strongly recommends Earl Welch's method of rolling damp seeds in Captan, which helps prevent damp-off and also allows the grower to see the seeds as he plants.

Then, Ross says, don't cover seeds with soil until after they germinate. He plants his seeds in flats on top of the soil, covers with an old sheet and removes the sheet after seeds germinate.

Ross pricks his seedlings out after they have their first pair of true leaves. He suggests soaking old seed for a couple of days to help seed shed their covering easier.

Herb's method is quite a bit different. His soil mixture differs from year to year, depending upon what he has on hand. But it is always sterilized and kept at about a 6 pH.

Herb uses 4-inch pots that are four inches deep. He fills these pots two-thirds full of soil, then adds one-half teaspoon each of 9-month Osmocote (18-6-12) and Agro nursery supplement #3. He stirs this up well and then adds more soil on the top to plant the seeds on. Herb does it this way so the roots of the small seedlings won't get burned by the fertilizer.

He then covers the seed with a layer of vermiculite or ground sphagnum so the seeds won't stick to the cloth he puts on top. Herb says covering the seeds this way allows him to water from the top, hold moisture in and keeps birds from eating the seed. Herb pricks his seedlings out whenever he gets around to it.

As the newsletter editor says, "Both methods seem to work well, according to all the ribbons both Herb and Ross have taken home from shows."

She said both growers noted that the soil mixture must be porous enough so it drains well but will still be able to retain moisture for a reasonable length of time. Damp soil—yes. Soggy soil—no.

Grower offers helpful hints

by Ruth Huston

This is a digest of interesting and valuable facts gleaned from many sources. Perhaps it will be helpful.

- It is good to treat seed, both home saved and purchased, with a seed disinfectant to reduce the risk of seed decay and damping off. This also makes earlier planting possible.
- In filling a flat with soil, throw the soil into the corners first and with some force. Then fill the rest. Level. Now thrust your fingers around the edge of the entire flat to pack the soil there. Level again. Add more soil if necessary. This prevents the water from running off and away. The packed edges remain a bit higher than the center.
- Water newly transplanted seedlings with solution of potassium permanganate. It prevents wilting and damp-off. Use 1 oz. to 5 gallons of water. This is a Peter Klein idea.
- Water flats in the morning and with tepid water if possible. This prevents shock and allows the foliage to be entirely dry by night.
- After fertilizing transplants of any plant, sprinkle lightly with clear water to wash all fertilizer off the leaves.
- If possible, rotate plantings every year. If impossible, change as much of the soil as you can.
- Copper oxide 1 oz. to 3 gallons of water used as a drench is good for damp-off. Dip plants with stem canker or stem rot in it.
- Dust with sulphur for mildew in primula and garden roses.
- Bordeaux mixture kills the fungus that causes rust and leaf spot.
- Use a systemic as an insecticide for weevil or ornamentals, including primulas. It kills both larva and adult of all chewing, sucking and biting insects. I use Cygon 2E as directed. It lasts up to two months.
- Stale beer will get slugs. Put it in a shallow dish near their hiding places. It works.
- Dry egg shells crushed and scattered around most garden auriculas and other lime-loving primulas is appreciated. Recycle!
- Cut the ends out of fruit juice cans and place slug bait in them. This protects pets from the bait and the bait from rain.
- Wash greenhouse benches with solution of formaldehyde. It kills bacteria and some fungus. Spray under the benches with a strong copper sulphate solution for the same reason.
- For plants that are to be used in the house or other dry locations, use double pot. Have one pot larger than the other. Put drainage in the bottom of the larger pot and place the smaller on it. Fill the space between the sand or peatmoss and the inner pot with good soil mixture. Water the outer pot only.

Most primrose enthusiasts know Ruth Huston as a longtime successful grower and dedicated APS worker. She is now chairman of round robins and operates Spring Hill Farm at Gig Harbor, Wash.
In autumn 1979 it was my good fortune to be in Scotland again. I'd taken the train up to Inverness, hired a car and planned to drive back down to London.

Of course, the prime reason for going beyond Edinburgh was the opportunity to visit the nursery that we know as Jack Drakes. In 1974 I'd been privileged to make my first visit to this sanctum of good plants, famous for primulas among so many other things, and that time I brought back a number of the old "standard" cottage plants which we scarcely ever had seen and only heard of: Old Port, Buckland Primrose and Garryard Grail among them.

This time I was tempted by the sound of the candlebra Inverewe. As I write this it is just going past its prime, and it will be an unnecessarily long time until it returns next May.

The little I learned from the catalog was that it was a handsome red with farinose stalk and that it bore the name of the famous garden. The bulletin of the Hardy Plant Society has enlightened us further, and much to my surprise this seems without doubt to be the striking red plant I had seen at Savill Gardens in 1977.

Here is its interesting history. Origin unknown. Came to Jack Drake from Inverewe. Richard Fulcher, presently the head gardener there, says that it came to them from Windsor, where it has been grown a very long time, that in turn it was received there from Muncaster Castle. Beyond that the origin is a mystery. He believes it to be the sterile plant once known as Ravenglass Vermillion and that it likely arose as a result of the chance mating of P. pulverulenta and P. cockburniana, both farinose.

It is a brilliant brick- vermilion, all the more effective with stalks and pedicels very mealy. When it grows vigorously, Mr. Fulcher says it can reach three feet. He advises division once in three years immediately after flowering.

I anticipate a big show of it with Meconopsis Sleive Donard — that red and that blue together ought to stop the sun in its orbit.

Roy Davidson of Seattle, Wash., adds, "Maybe this isn't news to others — as it was to me. The HPS had this article by Mr. Fulcher in 1977, but it's just gotten to me. Mr. Lawson dug me a nice clump which divided into five, and it is in its second year of flower. I may resort to tissue culture. A friend is preparing to go into that aspect of propagation."

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Show auricula honors Mary Zach

A yellow self auricula grown by the late Orval Agee of Milwaukie, Ore., has been named and registered with the American Primrose Society.

Named "Mary Zach" after a founding member of the society, the plant first bloomed in 1965. More than 25 offsets are currently being grown.

The plant scored 94 points on the official registration form when it was first proposed in 1975. That registration was not processed, and a current form gave the plant a score of 93. Judges voting to register the plant included Herbert Dickson, Etha Tate and Cyrus Happy.

The plant is described as having a rich yellow circular tube; dense, inward-closing anthers; smooth, dense white paste on the center; bright, clear yellow body color; round pip with six well-rounded petals, slightly cupped; excellent strong stem; and dark green leaves that are lightly mealed, smooth margin with fine white line around each margin.

Orval Agee continues to grow and exhibit this fine plant. His wife produced the plant by hybridizing seedlings.

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Beginner's Luck

—with Tony

I would like to try saving seed for the seed exchange, but I really don't know the best procedure for gathering it and preparing it for mailing.

Watch those seed pods. As they turn brown don't let them break open and spill the seeds. Many pods split while they are still green, but hold the seed until it dries. You will need to look at your plants every day.

In vernailes the end opens first. In auriculas the sides break open. Some species primula have a nasty habit of dropping their seed while it is still green. If you see this happen with one pod, it will probably happen to the rest. Solution: put a bit of white cloth under the plant to catch the seed. Better weight it down.

When a stem rots off before the seed is ripe, cut it short and put the end in water. With a bit of luck the seed will still ripen.

Some seed pods look full, but inside it is all placenta and no seeds. But make sure there are no seeds lurking on the underside of the placenta.

If the pods have just turned brown and the seed is brown too, pick them and work out the seeds into a bowl or jar. I like to collect seeds in a small white round-bottom bowl, where it can dry for a day or two. It is easy to pick out the larger pieces of pod and other odds and ends and carefully blow away the smaller bits.

I often add a tiny amount of seed protectant (Thiram) made by Science Products Company, Inc., of Chicago. This greatly reduces the risk of seed decay when the seed is being dried, stored or planted. If seed is found to be moldy in the pod, seed protectant may save it from rotting.

Pure strains of seed are nice but difficult for the amateur to achieve unless he practices hand pollinating or the plants are isolated. But don't let that stop you from sending it to the seed exchange.

Mailing is a hazard. Seeds could be crushed by a cancelling machine. Several layers of paper towel could make a lot of difference. I prefer paper packets to plastic or foil. I worry about seeds being sealed in with too much moisture.

If you can't seem to produce any seed yourself, don't let it stop you from ordering from the seed exchange. We all share the desire to grow exquisite treasures from tiny seeds. It seems to be a miracle every time. It's an experience that should not be missed. Perhaps you can do your share later.

Tony Trujillo and his little sister Emily Happy admire dad's Julie hybrid named 'Emily'

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Elections, seeds, slides, trophies, charters and money all were discussed in meetings held April 11 at Tacoma.

Board members and officers who met in the afternoon agreed that an election could not be held because ballots were not mailed to members. Current officers were asked to continue until the 1982 annual meeting.

Trophy care discussed
Care of perpetual national trophies was discussed. Some asked that trophies be kept in a single site, such as the Berry garden's headquarters. Others felt trophies should be kept by the winner until the next annual show.

An editorial committee was approved. Current editor, past editor and two or other members will serve. Mary Speers reported that the current balance in the quarterly advertising account is approximately $600.

Ross Willingham reported that seed exchange expenses were approximately $1000. Sales to date totaled some $2700. Current balance is approximately $1700.

Treasurer sends report
The annual meeting held following the banquet included the treasurer's report mailed from Kris Fenderson. He showed a balance of $4255 as of Mar. 23, 1981. Half of the $1700 in the seed exchange account will be added to the APS treasury.

Chapter charters were awarded to Valley Hi Chapter in Beaverton, Ore., and to Oregon Primrose Society Chapter in Milwaukie, Ore. The society now includes five chapters.

Many use slides
Dorothy Dickson reported a growing use of the society's slide collection. She asked for members to donate slides of primulas in their native habitats and in members' gardens.

Announcements included notice of the annual picnic at Dickson's the second Saturday of July. A judging school is tentatively scheduled for the end of February or first part of March in 1982. Members who are interested in attending should notify Dorothy Dickson.

A motion was approved by members present to ask current officers to continue serving.

Herb Dickson reviewed accomplishments of the society. Mailing of the quarterly now totals 900. Many "invitations to membership" have been distributed. The president stressed the importance of spreading information about primulas, not just belonging to "win ribbons, attend banquets or further individual personalities."

Trophy winners named
Officers and members of the Tacoma Primrose Society were thanked for their efforts in presenting a "fine show." Trophy winners honored included the following:

Fred Clarke, best juliae hybrid, the Ivanel Agee trophy; Ross Willingham, best hose-in-hose, Wesley Bottoms trophy; Jim Menzies, best gold lace, Captain Hawkes trophy; Ivanel Agee, best named show auricula, Frank Michaud trophy; Cy Happy, best alpine auricula, John Schuman trophy; Cy Happy, best show auricula seedling, Bamford trophy; Cy Happy, best double auricula, Ellen Page Hayden trophy; Cy Happy, best alpine seedling, Haddock/Hill trophies; Herb and Dorothy Dickson, best species, Rae Berry trophy.

Primula growers will like 'Rock Gardens'

Rock Gardens appears, in this fifth edition, for the first time in English. It has been a classic for German-speaking central European growers for 25 years. The updated English version has much to interest primula growers.

Although only two pages and eight color pictures are devoted to the genus, other chapters cover such topics as rock garden beds, peat beds, miniature rock gardens, alpine houses, specialty nurseries and societies.

The photographs are unusually good. In each one I can see that Mr. Schacht has overcome a variety of problems and produced an outstanding collection. For example, the blue gentians are each the proper shade. If you have tried to photograph them, you will know how difficult it can be.

The section on miniature gardens in troughs and other containers is of special interest. Most of the shows now have classes for miniature gardens. Schacht gives good information on how to plant and place trough gardens for best results. The information also applies to window boxes and planters.

Gardeners with very limited space will learn how to grow their tiny treasures to perfection in bowls and boxes. Nine excellent photographs help carry the message.

-Cy Happy
From the mailbox

I read with interest your kind letter and got sincerely enthusiastic at your suggestion to exchange information on the genus Primula.

The Main Botanical Garden has a big Primula collection and we are ready to share seeds with you. Thus, I plan to send you newly-collected seeds of Primula woronowii, P. heterochroma, P. vulgaris, P. komarovii in 1981 so that you could have a standard for determination.

However, Primula megaseifolia is a rare sub-tropical plant of the Western Caucasus which doesn’t stand winter and isn’t included in our collection. There is scanty of it in the wild in the suburbs of Batumi. It is inscribed in the Red Book (list of endangered species: ed.) and it is forbidden to pick it up.

In a separate envelope we are sending you the list of plants we can offer you for exchange. In our turn, we are interested in newly-collected decorative species of Primula in the United States.

I beg your pardon for having delayed my answer, for at the end of the year I left Moscow for a long while several times.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Lapin P.I.
Vice Director
Main Botanical Garden
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

I would appreciate it very much if you could tell me where to obtain primrose oil.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Pennington
P.O. Box 982
Louisville, KY 40201

Who knows more about gardening than ORTHO?
Rock gardeners at the study weekend saw it with their own eyes. Dennis Thompson leaped upon the stage with some cardboard boxes, a bit of hardware cloth, some cement, sand a moist peat and—presto—there were instant troughs.

Thompson, an instructor at Edmonds Community College, teaches courses in trough building, rock gardening, native plants and landscape design. He knows not everyone has the time and space to create extensive gardens.

They're easy to build

He said that instant troughs, the "t.v. dinner equivalent of limestone sinks" may be constructed easily from hypertufa mix molded around a solidly constructed hardware cloth cage with two cardboard boxes as forms. Here are the directions he offered in the study weekend program:

First roll aluminum foil plugs in the shape of jiffy pots to provide drainage holes (two plugs per hole). Place the first plug on the bottom of the largest box. Fill box with mix to the upper surface of the plug. Insert cage, making sure there is good clearance of box walls. Place the second plug directly above the first. Fill to the upper surface of the plug with mix. Place small box inside the cage.

Support outer edges

Surround outer box with firm supports, such as cement blocks. Fill inner box with moist sand. Carefully work mix between boxes to completely cover the hardware cloth cage. Remember the outside and upper edge are the exposed areas when the trough is planted.

Allow to cure one week. Remove outer box and finish with stiff brush, scraper, etc. Allow to cure another week. Dump sand and remove inner box. Remove aluminum plugs. Allow to cure a month before planting.

Protect the trough from rain during the first two weeks. Color and colored sand may be added for effect.

Hypertufa recipe

Here is the recipe for the hypertufa mix:

1 part cement
2 parts sand
2 parts moist peat

The peat used should be wet but not dripping when lifted. Mix peat and sand before adding cement and water. Texture of the mix should be that of—Thompson said it—cooling cream-of-wheat. Mix thoroughly! Pack between the boxes with chopstick, dowel, etc.

This is the information published with a drawing. Seeing it all happen is better, of course.

Watch for information about the 1982 rock garden study weekend to be held in Portland, Ore., the end of February.
Editorial . . .

About volunteering

Cy and I are leading workshop groups in a living history project called "All my Somedays." One of the writing exercises invites participants to list "turning points" in their lives.

Any time a person accepts a major responsibility in any organization, that's a turning point. Priorities shift. Life schedules change. Families learn to help and cope.

We watched Dorothy Springer, the former editor, plow through a complicated schedule. She was raising a family, serving in some other organizations and still trying to offer her best efforts to the American Primrose Society in a job she didn't ask for. It was a difficult role she played for five years, and there was very little support offered by the far-flung, worldwide membership of this society.

Which letters got results?

Dorothy earned a rest—and more praise than she got. And we stepped in to provide some new energy. Fortunately, Cy is an avid letter writer. He took turns writing genealogy notes and primrose pleas. Frankly, the genealogy letters brought far better results.

We think an editor's job is to edit. That means that members must assume some responsibility for contributing ideas, notes, questions, short articles, clear black and white snapshots, drawings or whatever they can share.

Many articles have been solicited. Many fine growers and scholars and scientists have responded. We thank them. There are a number of promises that will still produce important articles.

You know what you need

But it is foolish to assume that a cluster of growers in the Pacific Northwest and a few other writers can offer all that is needed to primrose enthusiasts in every part of the nation and in many countries. Some of you—way out there—have to take part in sharing your gardening experiences.

People need to know about your successes and your failures. Unless you tell the editors, we have no way of knowing what plants you grow, what help you need, which articles would be most beneficial to you.

To be quite realistic, there is no such thing as a "late" quarterly. The editorial staff is responsible for publishing four quarterlies a year. We aim for the four seasons, but we think that anyone who has not been a contributor has no right to be a complainer.

Quarterly features new look, color

Many steps have been taken to improve the image of the quarterly. We have a modern format. We have been able to deal and dicker to get color photographs, and generous private contributions have made the use of color more frequent.

Circulation has doubled in the last four years, and contact has been reestablished with important plant scientists in other countries.

Growth has been a blessing and a problem. No longer can we get out a quarterly mailing with the help of the children. Nor can we keep track of editorial contacts, advertising contacts and myriads of address changes.

Handful of heroes/heroines

Mary Speers, an unsung heroine, has been advertising manager since her term as treasurer expired. She is thorough and competent. A new mailing committee of faithful Tacoma workers promises to solve that complicated problem.

The new editor and his helpers know about computers, and that should take our mailing and filing system out of the Dark Ages. Treasurer Kris Fenderson may look up to see the light of day sometime soon.

You see, a handful of members is doing the work. Where is everyone else? Getting involved spreads the work around, promotes appreciation for what others do and offers lifelong associations with interesting people.

New editor starts with pluses

Larry Bailey has the advantages of enthusiasm, intelligence, family support, cooperative print shop staff (and you don't know how much we appreciate our relationship with the people at Star Printing) and a new and eager editorial committee.

All he needs for a productive term as editor is interest and help from each of you. If you garden, send him a note about what grows well for you. If you think you have a problem, outline the trouble.

What can you do?

An editor doesn't need polished articles that you have worried over for six months. Just take a few minutes to jot down your ideas. Try to be accurate in spelling plant names so the printing gremlins don't get a head start. But the editor will double check and polish your material, combine it with what he receives from others and use your photos or his own to display the material.

Volunteer organizations need volunteers. Costs can be kept to a minimum and the final product to a maximum if each member contributes his best efforts and his keenest enthusiasm.

—Rita Happy

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At McDonalds . . .

They do it all for us
by Joe Dupre

I am trying a new idea primrose growers might be interested in. I am using McDonald's (the hamburger folks) ice cream sundae cups as individual seed germinators.

I paid $5 for 100 new tops and bottoms. Used ones can be washed carefully.

Fill with moist media, sprinkle on seed, cover with 1/16 to 1/8 inch coarse sand, spray the sand layer with a hand plastic sprayer of clean water, snap the top on and basically forget it.

Water beads collecting on the inside top or coating the inside quickly tell you if moisture is escaping. It is simple to spray some clean water or even a fertilizer solution by carefully removing the top. Tops do split or crack, but they are still useful.

Two problems are noted so far. One is that the cups must be shaded from sun or they become a pressure cooker, quickly steaming seed or seedlings. But that's a more or less standard problem.

The other problem is that the things are wobbly in a tray, flat or whatever and can be tipped over with predictable results. (Ask me how I know that.)

But I see many advantages. The small size is good to use when only a few seeds are to be grown of many varieties. They are much easier to keep moist if containers are kept for long periods of time. And 5 cents each is certainly cheap enough. One way or another McDonald's places are everywhere primrosers live. So they are cheap, small, available and sterile.

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Diary of a Primroser

by Cy Happy

Gooseberry scale returned!

A woman called Beth Tait during the Kirkland primrose show saying she wished to return something belonging to APS. Later the item was handed to Beth at the show. Turned out to be the long-missing gooseberry scale, which had inadvertently been packed away with show materials from a long-ago primrose event.

What's returned?

You may be asking, "What is a gooseberry scale?"

Many years ago in the north of England there were gooseberry competitions just as there were (or are) special shows for auriculas, gold-laced polyanthus, laced pinks, border carnations, show pansies, English show tulips and so on. The rules were just as complex for gooseberries as they were for the flowers.

Weight, shape, circumference, color and more entered into the judging when the competition was close. I have a plant of Whitesmith that has gooseberries approaching the size of ping pong balls.

New editor takes over soon

Herb Dickson and I spent Saturday, May 30, with Larry Bailey of Edmonds, Wash., who will take over as editor with the summer issue. He looks forward to making many new contacts with growers around the world. He attended the auricula show in London this year and brought back a nice group of show auriculas. I envy his enthusiasm. I also know he will have many difficulties to overcome as long as he pursues the perfect show auricula.

Trouble, for example, comes in the form of the sciarid fly or fungus gnat. It looks like a little black gnat that hops and runs over the surface of the potting soil. At first the gnats are hard to see, but soon they are swarming. The maggots are very tiny, 0.7 mm, with black heads and transparent bodies. The body of the fly is about 3 mm long.

Fly can be controlled

Trouble shows up on warm days

Often the first symptom of a larvae attack on auriculas is wilting on a warm day followed by premature leaf drop. An examination of the roots will reveal many thick roots close to the carrot, but all the fine roots have been nipped off. A really sick plant will have the main carrot tunneled out. A side effect is clusters of nodules on the carrot when new roots had their tips eaten off as they first appeared. Excessive multiplication of crowns can also occur.

The species of sciarid bradyia paupera is attracted to newly steamed soil where it lays its eggs, even if a plant is not present. Apparently its natural predators have been killed by steam sterilizing.

Returned quarterlies cost money!

Important note to all members! Keep addresses current. It now costs us 74 cents — that's right, 74 — for each quarterly that is returned.

A quick look around the greenhouse revealed some pods filling nicely and many that are not. Following Jack Ballard's instructions for producing good red, gold-center alpine auriculas, I used Mrs. Savory pollen on some suitable seed parents. Not one of these pods is filling. As an afterthought, in order to produce a good bright red garden
auricula, I put a bit of Mrs. Savory pollen on one blossom of Dunder’s Red, a bright red self. It set seed. Why wouldn’t it work on the gold center alpines? Too inbred?

Rosetta Jones said she is not getting a heavy setting of seed this year on her double primroses. The only exceptions are crosses on plants of the Goodwin strain, which are not closely related to her plants.

The saga of a French scarf

A nice thing happened at the Tacoma show this year. It started with a silk scarf with primulas—hand painted by Christin Sirdey, a member in France. The scarf was to be a trophy at the national show.

Chapter two has Waldron Island member Margaret Blethen trying to get out of the San Juan Islands with a selection of plants and missing boat connections. Chapter three has Margaret winning the best novice trophy, the hand painted scarf.

We have had high praise for the illustration of Primula dickieana on page 16 of the fall 1980 quarterly. The artist, Nelson Sears, worked from the plant description, a simple line drawing and a very bad black and white photo (mostly black). Many days of stippling produced the lovely picture. Each detail was done with great care. Mr. Sears, a graduate of the Art Students League of New York, is now living in retirement in Seattle.

Try a “want” list

I suggest you send the editor your wants—plants, seeds, books, information. A line or two in the quarterly would reach a lot of fine growers.

Florence Bellis, the great lady of primroses, retired from the Oregon Barnhaven Nursery 16 springs ago. From her present home at Lincoln City on the Oregon coast she continues to produce double primrose seed for the Barnhaven outlets and incidently keep an eye on the progress of the APS. She gave a high tone to the early quarterlies. Florence and a few others, all highly creative, made APS a vibrant organization in just a few years back in the 40s.

Plants have summer needs

Summer is a most important time for care of double primroses and all choice primroses. They will need some shade, regular watering. If they have not been divided and planted in replenished soil, they should be treated to a mulch of old manure or leaf mold. Don’t let them expose their roots. A nitrogen feeding is a must, and dried blood is the best incorporated with the top dressing. Beware of yellowing leaves. Spider mite and aphids are probably lurking on the leaves’ undersides.

One grower invented his own treatment for black, green and white fly and to some extent the wooly root aphids. He put a cork in the tube of his vacuum cleaner and a plastic tube in a hole in the cork. Now he sucks all the critters into the household vacuum. He keeps the pests in his potted plants under control — if not entirely eliminated.

Success with hybridizing

A weekend in Victoria, B.C., in early May included a visit with C. C. Heimburer. A project he has kept at for many years is a perpetually blooming poppy. For years he has searched for an Oriental poppy that would accept the pollen of a perpetually blooming species.

He was at last successful. Several large plants were covered with soft orange blossoms and would continue that way until frost. Meanwhile he carries on with his Juliana hybrids and hybrids of the eastern range of vernales.

Did you get a defective quarterly?

If your last quarterly was missing pages 15-16 and 25-26 and had duplicates of other pages, please let us know so we can send you a good one in the next mailing. We are trying to send all the copies at one time under the bulk permit. Individual mailing has become very expensive.

Please don’t return the defective book. Just send a postcard or note.
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Publications
Back issues of the Quarterly are available. Order from the secretary.
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.
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