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On the cover
Cover illustration is a selection of botanical drawings by Jarmila Hal-
dova of Honach, Czechoslovakia. (See story on page 51)

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   Quarterly: Thea Foster requests articles or letters to the editor from members. Cultural information is particularly useful. She would also appreciate the scripts from good Chapter programs. Show reports will be included in the Summer issue.

   A motion that "all efforts should be made to mail the Quarterlies by 15th of January, April, July and October" was seconded and passed.

   Picnic: The July picnic and Board meeting will be held at Herb Dickson's home in Chehalis, on July 14th, 1990.

Note from the Annual Meeting: The proposed slate of officers was elected. (See list of current officers on the back page of this issue.)

   Thelma Genheimer was presented with the Dorothy Dickson Award for service to the American Primrose Society. Congratulations, Thelma!

   Respectfully submitted,

   Ann Lunn, Secretary.
BOOK REVIEW

by Richard Critz

An unusual item has come across my desk which many of you will be pleased to know about. Remember the article in the Quarterly Primroses, the Winter and Spring Issues of 1986, called "Florists' Societies and Feasts?" These absorbing little pieces by Dr. Ruth Duthie of England, told a very interesting story about the early primula growers and hybridizers in Great Britain, their meetings and shows.

Now this material along with additional chapters about the other English 'florist flowers' - hyacinths, anemones, ranunculus, tulips, pinks (dianthus) and carnations - have been incorporated in a small but lavishly illustrated little booklet by Dr. Duthie entitled, "Florists' Flowers and Societies", a Shire Garden History volume, put out by Thomas and Sons Ltd., Press Buildings, Merlin's Bridge, Havenford West, Dyfed, SA61 1XF, England, price 3.50 Sterling.

If you have an interest in the historical aspects of our favourite flower's culture, you should get this little volume - it is a steal at its price! Nearly every page is packed with information you will find valuable and entertaining. For instance, on page 38 appears a reproduction of the 'Portrait of Martha Rodes' painted by one C. Steele in 1750. A prominent feature of this charming portrait is a large edged auricula - but this portrait was completed years before we have any written record of this most fascinating of primula anomalies. Speculation about this portrait and about the flower it portrays is found on page 42, in the midst of a lengthy discussion about the early edged and striped auriculas. To my mind this bit alone is worth the price of the book, and it is only one fascinating detail amongst many. The illustrations throughout are excellent - just excellent!

If you have an interest in things historical - and who does not - this little booklet will be a welcome addition to your library on primulas. And I can assure you, you will not find another with just this kind of information.

Very good reading indeed!

Richard Critz.

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THE GENUS PRIMULA

by Josef Halda — Honach, Czechoslovakia

111. subgenus Primula

Syn: subgenus Primulastrum Duby, section Euprimula Schott, sect. Verinales Pax. These Primroses are most often plants of light forests or moister mountain meadows. In gardens, they are among the most undemanding plants, growing in nearly any spot, if they have enough moisture in spring. Even in winter they are not particularly sensitive to water, and thus they can often grow even on wet sites. Some of them bloom right up to Christmas, and in long periods of winter thaw they show some new flowers. Their minus in gardens is that, with the exception of Primula renifolia and megaseifolia, they cross spontaneously with each other. If not separated at blooming time one obtains seeds that produce nice but essentially mongrel hybrids.


1. section Primula.

P. amoena M. Bieb. comes from alpine meadows, rocks, and stony or snowy fields of the Caucasus. When out of flower the plants resemble P. elatior. Leaves are elongate, with a thick middle vein, rounded at apex and irregular dentate. The stem can be to 40cm high, with 1 to 12 flowers. These flowers, by their shape close to those of P. elatior, show corolla colours varying from pale violet through pure rose to lilac blue, always with a yellow eye in the throat. Amoena produces a lot of seed, which are of short viability and thus must be sown as soon as possible and never left to dry out. Seed germinate in early spring and the seedlings often show first flowers in the first year. This is an easy species, easily propagated by dividing, or by cuttings of the rootstock. These 0.5cm root cuttings, taken off an older plant, if put...
though a small part of its range runs
over into Austria.
Ssp. lothhousei/H. Harrison / W.W. Smith et Fletcher. is very close to ssp.
intricata, from which it is distinguished
by a funnel-shaped corolla. (In ssp.
intricata the limb is flat). Lofthousei
crosses freely with PP. amoenae, juliæ
and vulgaris. From these combinations,
and further crossing between hybrids,
comes numerous very nicely-coloured
cultivars. Ssp. lothhousei comes from
the mountain and subalpine zones of the Sierra Nevada in Spain.

P. komarovi / A. Los. grows in forests
of the Crimea, in submountain areas
below the Caucasus, and in the West
Caucasus. Some authors consider it to
be a hybrid between P. vulgaris and
P. sibthorpii. And surely it is akin to
P. sibthorpii, but it differs in its sweetly-
scented flowers, its large and dentate
calyx and its deeply divided corolla.
In gardens it is appreciated for its
fragrance and very early flowering. It has
no special requirements and grows
well with other members of this
section.

P. kunetzovii/Fedtsch. of the W.
Caucasus and its promontories is a
smaller, but large-flowered purple
Primrose closely akin to P. amoenae.
P. legionensis/Willmott. from Spain
is not, to the best of my knowledge,
in cultivation.

P. meyeri/Rupr. from several places
in the W.Caucasus, is like a somewhat
diminutive P. amoenae, and is especially
suitable for placing among the dwarf
alpines. It is a moisture loving plant.

P. pallasi/Lehm. comes from E.
Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
Its leaves are oblong to elongately el-
liptic, with a dentate margin, 5-18cm
long and 2-7cm wide, narrowing to
wingy petioles, which take a third of
the entire leaf length. The blade is
glabrous above, pubescent on the
reverse. The stem is 10-30cm high,
sometimes glabrous, more often
pubescent. Flowers number 2 to 15.
The corolla is pale yellow, with limb
to 2cm in diameter, and cylindrical
tube. It inhabits alpine meadows on
the margins of glaciers.

P. pseudoelatior/Kusnezov. grows
near Adzharia in the Caucasus and in
Asia Minor. Its leaves are long ovate,
blunt on the apex, sometimes cordate
at the base. The margin is dentate, the
blade 2-4cm long, as is the petiole.
Leaves are glabrous above and
glandulose-hairy on the reverse.
The rusty, hairy stem is only a little higher
than the leaves, and carries 1 to 6
flowers. The corolla is yellow, 1.5 to
2cm in diameter, with lobes emargin-
ate. It is found on subalpine and
alpine meadows.

P. ruprechtii/Kusnezov. is a dwarf,
high alpine species from the Big Cau-
casus - very close to P. elatior - growing
near snow fields, and a moisture lover.

P. sibthorpii/Hoffmgg. in its habit
resembles P. vulgaris, forming the same
irregular, flat rosettes of coarse, rough
short obovate leaves. Its flowers are
solitary on relatively long pedicels -
rose, lilac or white - with corolla up
to 2cm in diameter. It hails from the
Caucasus where it is an easy, very
early-flowering alpine.

P. veris/L. grows in abundance in
forests and on moister meadows
throughout Europe. From the short
root-stock rises a rosette of long elliptic
leaves. The blade is blunt at the apex,
dentately crenulate; the petiole is short,
with wings. The entire plant is covered
with short, silver hairlets which give the
plant a velvet appearance. The stem
is to 20cm high, with 3 to 15 pale yellow
to orange-yellow flowers, very fragrant.
The corolla is up to 15mm in diameter,
whose rounded lobes are only slightly
emarginate. The leaves about 10cm
long stretch to twice that at the time of
ripening seeds. (This description is
The range is very broad, from Europe to W. Siberia. Unlike P. elatior, its flowers of P. versicolor are sweet-scented.

P. versicolor/Huds. has its home in all Europe and its range runs eastward over Asia Minor into Turkestan. Taxonomists divide this species into numerous subspecies and varieties, for example: ssp. vulgaris: The plant forms a tufted rosette of elongate to obvate wrinkled leaves with blunt apex and short petiole, most often glabrous and mildly toothed. From its centre rise separate flower stems to 5cm long. The corolla is most often yellow, rarely white or blue, and can be to 5cm in diameter. Its shape is very variable. Thus in the Big Tatra Mountains on the same locality grow plants with rounded corolla lobes and others with deeply emarginate and even (rarely) deeply fringed ones. vulgaris requires a moist spot in partial shade.

ssp. balearica/Willk.W.W.Sm. et Forr. from Mallorca differs by its white flowers with yellow eye.

ssp. ingwerseniana / H. Harrison. from Thessali Olympus in Greece has white flowers too, and allegedly a different shape and considerable pubescence on the leaves. It is a dubious subspecies.

var. atlantic/Maire et Wilczek. from Algeria has white flowers with a yellow throat.

var. hypoleuca from Greece has a densely hairy leaf reverse.

var. purpurea/Maulny. from England forms colonies of purple flowered specimens.

2. Section Megaseifolia Balfour

P. megaseifolia/Boiss. comes from Asia Minor and the Caucasus. A well-developed specimen reminds us at first sight more of P. obconica than a member of subgenus Primula. Its rounded, leathery leaves on red petioles form to 20cm high semi-spherical dense tufts, from which peep out not much longer stems of carmine colour, with saturate dark purple flowers about 2cm in diameter. In gardens it puts out only a very few seeds, but in the wild it produces abundant seeds. This is due to pollination there by night butterflies (moths), which seldom find it in the garden. Sometimes it is grown as a pot plant in cooler rooms. In the wild it inhabits cool ravines, often under rhododendrons. It rarely grows on sunny spots and when it does it is always on brooksides, its roots waving in the cold running water. I have placed it beside the pool in full sun, where its leaves seldom exceed 5cm in diameter. These compact plants are much more decorative than the larger specimens planted in shade.

P. reifolius/Volgunov. of the Caucasus is a dwarf plant with short (to 8cm long) leaves, the blade of which is obcordate. The petiole is short (to 3m long). Flowers are on 1 to 5cm long stems; the corolla blue-violet with a yellow eye. It grows near the upper limit of deciduous and mixed forests, in crevices of rocks at elevations of 1000 to 2000m. It is more hardy than P. megaseifolia - a lovely plant.

3. section Julia/Fed. et A. Los.

P. Julia/kusn. forms wide carpets of prostrate root-stocks spreading along the surface of the soil. During the greater part of the year the mat is covered with loose toothed and reddish bracts, the surface of which are smooth and glossy. In spring the plant is completely covered by an abundance of violet or rose-violet flowers. In blooming time the leaves develop fully. They are rounded, with a heart-shaped base. The blade is to 6cm long as well as the petiole. Margins of the leaves are finely dentate. The corolla is up to 4cm in diameter, with mildly emarginate lobes. Under good conditions P. julia flowers repeatedly from summer to late fall. It is easily divided, and it grows well from seed too. It dislikes a scorching sun at noon or too dry a place. On a spot where its roots can reach water it remains green all year round, even in winter, and forms carpets of saturate green, glossy leaves. On a moist spot with a good supply of humus it can serve as a substitute lawn, but flowers poorly in these conditions. It comes from the E. Caucasus, where it was found in the Spring, 1900, by an enthusiastic globetrotter and naturalist, Mrs. Julia Miknishewitsch, near Lagodechi. In a short time it became one of the most widely grown Primrose of the genus. Numerous hybrids and cultivars have been raised - many very beautiful - by now perhaps all the colours of Primula we know are found among the juliae, as these hybrids are known.

My predecessor, Richard Critz, deserves much credit for securing permission to print Josef Halda's fine series of articles on the Primula family. The time consuming task of doing the editing will have demanded great devotion to detail. Josef Halda is a well known plant hunter who has written of his adventures throughout Western and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Russia. Many members will recall his many interesting articles in A.G.S. and the A.R.G.S. journals.

Primula growers must have gained both knowledge and pleasure from Jarmila Haldova's very beautiful and finely detailed botanical drawings which often accompany her husband's writings. Works of this high calibre are the best means of identification of the various species and sub species, and coupled with her husband's equally precise descriptions, our members have no doubt been able to give the proper names to many plants in their collections. Thanks to Richard, Josef and Jarmila we should now come closer to this ideal of precise and correct labelling. Jarmila Haldova has been an inspiration to botanical illustrators for twenty years. In the 1970's, I enjoyed a small but comprehensive book on Primulas that was published by the Czecho-Slovakian Alpine Garden Society 'SKALNICKY'. (Klub Skalnick-aru Praha). Though I was unable to appreciate the text Jarmila's drawings stood on their own!
by Dennis Oakley

My first introduction to the Primula family takes me back to just after World War II, when my wife and I used to go down to the open market in Bolton, Lancashire, England, where a young couple displayed in one of the stalls a colourful array of Polyanthus, Primula wanda, P.denticulata and garden Auriculas. We were fortunate to live in a rented prefabricated bungalow, courtesy of the local town council, which carried with it a small garden at the front and a little larger one at the back. A friendly neighbour mentioned a patch of vacant land near by which people used as a dumping ground for surplus plants. Imagine my joy when I found several clumps with the by now familiar primula leaves. These augmented the small collection we had purchased and rewarded us the following spring with a glorious display of colour. They were mostly P. vulgaris to be sure, but none the less welcome.

Little did we know until many years later and living in Canada, when we found in the back issues of the A.P.S. Quarterlies in the library of the Alpine Garden Club of B.C., that I had worked for 20 years in Manchester, the scene of intense competition by expert growers of primulas and auriculas. What a chance we had missed, and all unknowingly.

We had maintained our interest in primulas in Canada - haunting our local garden shops in Richmond, B.C., purchasing many gorgeous Polyanthus and the occasional P. denticulata. At an Alpine Garden Club meeting we were admiring some of Thea Foster's garden auriculas which she had introduced in "Show & Tell"; recognizing another couple of devotees, she quickly whisked us over to meet Dr. John Kerridge, who convinced us we should join the A.P.S.

The excellent seed exchange of the Alpine Garden Club of B.C. enabled us to try our hands at starting several (new to us) kinds of primulas. We soon had flats and flats of seedlings, thanks to my wife's expertise - PP. halleri, cortusoides, denticulata, bulleyiana and others, which were coming along famously until they were struck by a prolonged, severe cold spell, followed by a period of heavy rain which flooded the flats. A few hardy plants survived, but the majority were lost.

The following summer we made a holiday trip to Oregon and on the way down called in at Chehalis and made the acquaintance of Herb Dickson ("Mr. Primrose", we think of him). It was raining, but he courteously showed us around his propagating benches where a few late blossoms were still in evidence. Since we could not take any plants back with us to Canada because of border restrictions, we had to satisfy ourselves with a few packets of his most desirable seed.

Our interest was further stimulated the following Spring, when we attended the National Show and Banquet in Tacoma, where we were made royally welcome. Our fridge is now stocked with seeds from Barnhaven and the A.P.S. and the Alpine Garden Club of B.C. seed exchanges, which we will soon be germinating. Then we will be looking forward with eager anticipation to see the results of our efforts.

Dennis Oakley
10060 Dennis Place
Richmond, B.C. V7A 3G8

Calendar Art - 1730

This illustration for the month of March is from a full-colour catalogue put out by Robert Furber, nurseryman of Kensington, dated 1730, and entitled Twelve Months of Flowers. My mother cut this and another print out of either the London Illustrated Magazine or the Sphere, or perhaps one of the very excellent Gardening Publications available in the 1920's and 30's. Properly mounted and framed you almost had the real thing. (Note the Auriculas at bottom right and above on left. PF.
MINDING MY P’s & Q’s.

by: Thea Service Foster

The 1990 A.P.S. National Show in Beaverton, Oregon, was full of colour, but this year most Show Auriculas were not yet out in full bloom. However, Orval Agee’s vivid green-edge Auricula seedling on the Trophy Table was pounced upon with cries of wonderment and delight by club members as well as the visiting public! It was a pleasure to see their vital interest - some viewed the display plant for plant, asked many questions, and shopped most enthusiastically at the fine sale tables!

Old Friend:

It pleased me to see numerous plants of my old friend P. juliae hybrid ‘Butterball’ with its cheerful yellow clusters of golden-centred flowers. ‘Butterball’ is a very good form which increases very well. Susan (Worthington) Watson, of A.P.S. Editing and Dictionary fame, bred ‘Butterball’ after she settled in Vancouver.

Early in the 1980s I took several plants to the A.P.S. Picnic Auction. By 1985, there were quite a number on the show tables at the Tacoma National Show, plus a whopper of a plant (what had it been fed?) which had been given Best Polyanthus Trophy. ‘Butterball’ is not a tiny P. juliae hybrid nor is it anywhere near Polyanthus size. Cy Happy remarked on the surprising win in his Diary of a Primroser.

Hobby Horses:

In the September, 1989, Quarterly Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society two of my major interests were discussed. The first was on the blooming habits of Primula marginata. The author remarked that many clones flower best every second year. It has been my very good fortune to have acquired two free blooming forms: P. marginata ‘Agee’ and P. marginata hybrid ‘Lou Roberts’. It is disappointing to have plants that put in a poor performance in alternate years. We would like to hear from our readers if you have other reliable bloomers. Not just P. marginata forms but other named clones of choice primulas that perform well. This information would be helpful to hybridizers as we should try to pass on other desirable genetic traits, as well as the unusual ones of good colour and form.

The second short item is on the sometimes extreme variability of seedlings coming from a single seed packet. Within a species, colour may vary widely and size may differ greatly. Quite often the plants’ form and flowers are most inferior to the photographs seen in our books and journals. I have not yet raised a good plant of P. algida or P. involucrata, although Herb Dickson had a very nice P. involucrata in a show years ago.

I suspect that the problem of poor quality seedlings stems from growers harvesting seed from their inferior forms as well as their better ones.

The A.G.S. writer wrote these words of wisdom:

“Curiously enough, people often seem content to tolerate shyness in flowering or undistinguished specimens, based on the reputation of more worthy representatives of the species, instead of assessing the individual performance of the plant they own.”

Let us all aim to improve the quality of our plants, and thus the quality of the seed we give to the Seed Exchange.

An Old Recipe for a Primula Bed:

Well over 15 years ago a short article in an old Gardening Illustrated Magazine describing the building of a primula bed, inspired me to create a similar one.

I chose a very sheltered south-facing area with young mountain ashes and vine maples to the North, and light shade to the South and the West. It sloped up to the North about 2.5 feet in 12 feet of width. At the lowest level, for drainage, baseball-sized rocks were used, with smaller ones closer to the front. Where the edge met the path a 6 inch header was made by the use of logs. Good loam with a large percentage of coarse leaf mold, plus some grit was used as a growing medium.

The Gardening Illustrated author suggested the laying of porous pipe in the bed, which could be topped off daily with water during dry spells. This would be helpful where long hot periods of drought are common. In our humid North West area it seemed not necessary. In warm spells a soaker hose sufficed to keep the soil moist.

This area proved ideal for the smaller primulas. Drifts of tight-knit farinose species thrived. Regular seedlings provided new plants to fill any gaps that occurred over the years. Neater sized species Auriculas and P. juliae hybrids, such as ‘Schneekissen’, made up the front ranks. To my surprise, for four or five years, P. nutans (=P. llacoida) did quite well, as this species seems not at all easy to maintain.

Have You Paid Your Dues?

1990 Spring Quarterly

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No artificial fertilizers were ever used—leaf mulch from the small trees was augmented by applications of leaf mold and grit tucked around the crowns in the Fall and Spring. The farinose primulas had flat stones placed around their crowns to prevent the shallow root systems from heaving from frost or eroding from rainfall.

The gentle south slope allowed the bed to absorb more warmth from the sun so that the primulas bloomed a week or two earlier than the same species in flat beds elsewhere. The slope also showed-cased the small primulas well, and the slightly raised edge brought the small juliae hybrids into much better view and out of harms way.

Companion plants also thrived—solidanellas, erythroniums, epimediums and smaller trilliums grew remarkably well. In the upper area of the bed, clumps of larger trilliums and other woodland flowers proved a lush leafy backdrop.

It was only a year ago that the bed really seemed to be in need of renewal—mostly due to root invasion from the surrounding trees. Over 15 years of lovely display was a more than adequate reward for my labour of love!

A DOUBLE WINNER!

Congratulations to Dr. John Kerridge, Vancouver's 'Cowichan', Show Auricula and Gold-Laced Polyanthus enthusiast, who has just managed a nice double-header! In Beaverton, at the A.P.S. National, he gathered up four trophies, including the Aggregate and a fistful of Blue Ribbons. His 'Cowichan' and Gold-Laced Polyanthus are of his own breeding—making his wins especially impressive.

After doing so well at the National, John didn't rest on his laurels. Four days later his Gold Laced Polyanthus x Polyanthus took Best in Show at the Alpine Garden Club of B.C. Pot Show. The May Show was a fairly large monthly exhibition with just under 100 entries. Our members in Britain who are familiar with Alpine Garden Society Shows will know what a rarity it is for a Polyanthus, even if it is Gold Laced, to take top honours. There were the usual choice cushion plants, alpines and bulbous plants, plus named Show Auriculas, several Primula marginata forms and Primula species. The judge was well known A.R.C.S. and A.G.C. of B.C. member, Bob Woodward, who has been widely published in the Alpine Garden Club journals, and has been a speaker at Garden Conferences over this past 15 years or more. Scarcely your ordinary neighbourhood grower judge!

John's plant was a multi-trussed beauty and deserving of its win.

BANTYS and PRIMULAS

by: Karen Schellinger

I live in Central Minnesota, with its long winters, frozen ground for almost five months and temperatures of -25 F. or more, (or should that read less?) which really makes me appreciate the arrival of Spring and the first primula blooms.

I have always grown the usual perennial flowers in my borders and we enjoy a large vegetable garden which fills the freezer and canning jars every year. But the day I discovered Primulas, gardening took a whole new direction for me, and an obsession was born!

Actually, my patient husband has named the resulting new planting areas, "unmade beds", "undone laundry", and the worst of all "late meals"! I admit to some of these shortcomings, but with the growing season so short, I appeal to you, surely my priorities are right!

With the discovery of an American Primrose Society's Primroses at our State Arboretum, I joined the A.P.S. and inhaled each arriving Quarterly. When the first seed list came I was lost, what were all those primula names? Taking a few wild guesses, I soon had some healthy seedlings flying everywhere! Neighbours were used to seeing me come flying out of our house, yelling and waving a broom, which was a very temporary solution. Now I use 18" garden fencing around new plantings, until the plants are well enough established that they can fend for themselves. And each Fall I make lots and lots of chicken soup!

I must admit the bantys are also beneficial. One year we kept them penned up for a month. The insects and slugs went wild in the woodland! Overnight they mowed down stalks of blooming candelabra primulas, so now the bantys roam free again patrolling the grounds, but somehow I must convince them to let the leaf mulch stay put!

My seed-starting method, after some trial and error, works satisfactorily for me, but I am still learning. My seeding and seedling mix is: 1/3 perlite, 1/3 peat, and 1/3 leaf mold. The leaf mold is gathered from our woods in the Fall and stored in bags until needed in about January, when I start planting. After pushing the leaf mold through a wire screen, I sterilize it by pouring boiling water through it while holding it in a mesh strainer. After cooling, I...
mix it with the other ingredients and place the mix in a container at least 3" deep, with drainage holes in the bottom. For those requiring more drainage, I add 1/3 more perlite or sharp chick grit.

I sprinkle the seeds over the top of the soil in the pot, and a very fine layer of perlite or grit over them. I set the pot in water and when the top is well moistened I remove the pot to allow it to drain. Sealing the pot up in a clear plastic baggie with a twist-tie, I leave it in the house for 12 to 24 hours and then place it outside in the shade to have Mother Nature germinate it in her own time, usually April or May. When the seeds are germinating well, I loosen the plastic bag top to let in some air but still giving some protection to the seedlings by leaving the bag around them for a day or so. This is especially important if it is very windy, although, if it is rainy or damp and overcast I remove the whole bag from the pot.

Be sure to keep these pots out of the way of sons driving snowmobiles, husbands cutting down large trees and eight month old golden retrievers, who love to play toss and catch with pots in plastic bags, especially ones containing seed from the Himalayas!

I keep a few pots in my small greenhouse after I have seeded them, but do give them two weeks cold treatment in our unheated garage first. The greenhouse is usually too full of things I hesitate to put out until their second year - those I don't want to chance loosing, and of course the vegetable plants I have started from seed for next summer's garden. Having a few pots to play with makes the winter go faster, and I can keep a closer eye on the more touchy things.

This year I received seed from the A.P.S. Exchange of two forms of Primula sonchifolia and P. tanneri - I now have healthy seedlings of each! We are planning a two week vacation this summer, they may have to go with us. I transplant the seedlings when they have their first true leaves, (except for gentians, then I wait until next spring.) I grow the primula seedlings on in a pot for a bit, until I see they are showing growth and then I put them in the garden, checking first on their growing conditions in the wild. This sometimes is very important for the success in growing them, but most will grow in spite of you!

In Minnesota transplanting is best done in the Spring, this means May and June, and this is also true of dividing, as it will give the plants five months to make good root systems before the arrival of Winter. I cannot say often enough how important sufficient water is to primulas in the summer months, and also in the Fall. Primulas, other perennials, shrubs and trees must not be lacking in moisture when the ground freezes in Minnesota.

Frequent watering, especially on hills or on a slope, can wash soil away from primula crowns, so I always check them before winter freeze-up, and add soil or rock mulch where needed. Summer watering is best done early in the morning so the foliage can dry before the hot sun hits it, or the hot muggy evening temperatures we can spread disease.

Even though the soil in the woodland is very rich from years of leaves being broken down by night-crawlers, I have found the addition of peat to it helps moisture retention. I also add generous amounts of bone meal whenever I plant, and liquid fertilizer once a month using a syphonex and a hose, stopping only at the end of August.

I plant primulas in locations where they receive the morning sun up to 11 o'clock, if possible; the afternoon sun is much too hot for them in our climate with daytime temperatures rising into the 90's F. Shade is the only protection we can give them from the heat, plus the sufficiency of moisture. However, I have found the trimming off of the lower tree branches improves the primula bloom, as well as the looks of the woodland.

The majority of my primulas are grown under large maples, not the easiest to garden under because of their shallow roots. But there is good in everything, if you look hard enough. We have been having a terrible drought here for the last three years and so I have had to do a lot of watering in the primula areas. Where I have watered the primulas the maples are fine, on the other side of the house where we did not do much watering, we have had to cut down 17 trees, lost to the drought.

The maple leaves drop to the ground in the Fall and protect the primulas throughout the Winter in case there is a poor snow cover. They also make a perfect moisture retaining mulch...
through the Summer, with the night-
crawlers turning them into rich soil by
the end of it. The leaf cover, as it falls
naturally, has never been too deep. The
primulas poke their noses out at just
the right time in the Spring, the snow
having settled the leaves lower over the
Winter with its weight and moisture.
There is a high hill to the north of
my woodland providing a natural
buffer against the strong winter winds.
The snow blows below the hill into
nice protective drifts, creating deeper
areas for more touchy plants that may
need the lingering snow for added late
winter protection here. The perfect
place to plant my newest interest ari-
saemas, from different parts of the
world! So many plants go well with
primulas. I have helped with the
A.R.G.S. seed exchange the last two
years and was able to get the seed of
some, and have nice seedlings coming
along. They will grow in the green-
house for a few years, to tide them over
the Winters. After working on the
Exchange, I will never be impatient for
my seed orders again! What a lot of
work goes into seed exchanges, thank
you to all the other ones I belong to!
The leaf cover and/or snow cover
is very necessary in Minnesota to keep
the plants dormant, and to keep the
sun off the frozen winter foliage which
can burn to a crispy brown clump very
quickly. The winds can also do burning
damage. The plants have no access to
water with their roots in frozen soil,
so they really freeze-dry. During mid-
March to mid-April, daytime temper-
atures can reach 60 degrees F. or
higher, and falling that night to 10
degrees, or lower. This severe fluctu-
atation is great for the maple syrup
producers but very hard on primulas
that are exposed, especially the
shallow-rooted ones, heaving them out
of the partially thawed one or two
inches of soil. The cover is not so much
to protect from the severe cold, but
rather to prevent premature thawing
and growth before it is safe. In Min-
nesota, anything can happen weather-
wise, and cover really isn't safely
removed until the first or second week
of April.
A friend located 25 miles from me,
on the banks of the Mississippi River,
where strong winter winds blow off
every bit of cover she puts on her beds,
(with the possible exception of con-
mcrete!) So, many of the things I can
grow will not come through the winter
for her. She is able to grow any primula
which is not evergreen over the winter
months, providing they have had
enough water through the summer
months. Some of the primulas she
grows are: Pps. denticulata, farinosa,
frondosa, sieboldii, elatior, veris, juli-
ana, "Wanda", an unknown pink juli-
ana, japonica and an old dark rose
polyanthus found by a friend sixty years
ago on an old abandoned farm site.
(Garden Auriculas and P. auricula ssp.
bauhinii have also proven hardy.)
Another friend, A.P.S. member Georgie
Burt, gardens in Fargo, North Dakota.
The winters there are as severe or
worse than ours. Since losing all her
daffodils one year, due to a winter with
no snow cover, she now covers all her
flower beds with 5 - 6 inches of
excelsior late in the Fall. She hasn't lost
a bulb or primula since doing this. The
only drawback would be the storage
every year if you wanted to re-use the
excelsior. Georgie stores hers in the
second stall of her attached two-car
garage. I am ready to install one on my hill. Can't you hear
my husband groaning? I wonder what
he'll name this new area?
In spite of all I've read, I am really
surprised to see how many primulas
have proven hardy for me here, and
will never stop trying new ones. The
following list of primulas are my most
successful doers, given our harsh grow-
ing conditions. I give the origin of the
seed, and in some cases a hint as to
how I cope with the hostile climate
and soil conditions.
Polyanthus and *P. acaulis* - both from Barnhaven Seed from the firm in England. I've had their polyanthus seed come through a winter of -20 degrees F. with no snow or leaf cover.

Primula Acaulis


'Cowichan' Hybrid

Also Rosetta Jones' double *P. acaulis* seed plants. *(See below)*

Julianas - 'Barnhaven' seed plants, 'Wanda', 'E.R.Janes', 'Jay Jay', 'Snow-white' (= 'Schneekissen'). Julian Bi-Colours from Sakata seed with very good cover.

Elatior, Veris (species A.P.S. seed) - greenhouse veris from Stokes seeds not hardy.

Juliae - the species - in soil that doesn't parch.

Abchasica - plant originally from Daystar Nurseries and labeled as such, (vulgars ssp. sibthorpii?) Bloom quite dark purple-rose - not 'Wanda' - single stems so not amoena?

Faranosae - darianica, farinosa, frondosa, halleri, (not long lived) mistissinica from Lake Superior shore, modesta - pink and alba. All of this section very prone to the dirt being washed from roots.

Cortusoides - polyneura, saxatilis, sieboldii, kisoana, pink and white, loeseneri. I have tried seed as heucherifolia, time and time again, always to end up with polyneura. Maybe with this year's great Exchange I finally have it! Ceranifolia likes me until I try to put it in the garden.

Denticulata - great plants, plant them in drifts. Mix peat in the soil and keep moist.

Alpicola - hardy but even with peat mixed in the soil would prefer a bog I think.
Believe me, my favourite time of year is Spring, because of the primulas, and the spring bulbs and all the other plants that brighten up my little corner of the woodland world. But our on-going drought is a nightmare from which I keep hoping to wake up, but no such luck - even this past winter has given us very little snow! And now little seedlings are calling me - and my husband is demanding a lemon meringue pie! Good Grief! Come visit us, if you dare!

Karen Schellinger.

Karen Schellinger rather casually mentions her Petiolarid Primula plants - scarcely plants to be casual about in most of the primula specialists' communities. We would appreciate further information from her on the source of the Pps. bhutanica, gracilipes and scapigera. Seed or plants? From where? As seed only germinates 'right out of the pod', does she have a pen-pal who has surplus seed to airmail to her? Herb Dickson is our Pacific North-West's only plant supplier, and is usually the only exhibitor of the Petiolares Group. In the past ten years the only Petiolares shown in the A.G.C. of B.C. pot shows have been a short-live P. gracilipes of mine, and P. edgeworthii exhibited by Vera Peck (the Club's Seed Chairperson.)

Other A.P.S. members could be very helpful to primula growers if they would follow Karen Shellinberger's fine example. Articles and shorter pieces about their regional experiences would surely prove as valuable and as exciting! Members from the United States, Great Britain and the Pacific North-West have been well represented in PRIMROSES — now we would enjoy hearing from our many members from Scandinavia, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Japan for example. (More notes from Great Britain, the U.S.A. and the Pac. N.W. are obviously desired as well). But notes from far-away places on your methods of cultivation and hybridization would be especially interesting and useful. This could bring together individuals who are working away in isolation on improving their plants through breeding programs of a great variety of species and hybrids.
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