The Primrose Society is a quarterly publication that aims to highlight the beauty and diversity of primroses, as well as the people who care for them. The Summer, 1990 issue features articles on Primula Capillaris, Primula 'Orpha Salsman', Seeding My Way, Primula Capillaris the Little Gem of the Ruby Mountains, and includes an obituary for Brian Skidmore. Additionally, there are sections on the National Primrose Show, Tacoma Primrose Show, Oregon Primrose Show, Eastside Primula Show, and articles on growing Julianas and the Barnhaven Cowichans. The society also provides practical advice on using garden sprayers.
Hybridizers, horticulturist, and gardeners have not been using the versatile Woodland group of primulas to any great extent in recent years. With few exceptions (outside of the countless variants of *P. sieboldii*) primulas in the section Cortousoideae are being forgotten by most gardeners. These primulas in the Woodland group, so-styled by Blasdale, Klaber and others, are ideal for areas of the garden subject to shade, drought and neglect.

Early in this century (see A.P.S. Bulletin, v. 16, No.2, p. 43, 1958) the Lemoines of Nancy, France produced several hybrids of *P. sieboldii* and *P. polyneura*. This productive and talented hybridizer and nurseryman team of father and son introduced the popular hybrids 'La Lorraine' and 'Nancy'. These cultivars are presumably extinct; nurseryman, at any rate, no longer list them.

In the 1970's the late Orpha Salsman, who gardened in South Seattle, Washington, crossed *P. sieboldii* and *P. polyneura* to produce seven or eight seedlings. Most, she stated, were given away to friends. The only cultivar from these seedlings that can be traced in the Seattle area is usually grown as "Orpha's sieboldii hybrid."

This plant from Orpha's seedlings is more or less intermediate in leaf shape between the two parents. In common with the Lemoine hybrids, it tends to keep its leaves during summer, rather than disappearing quickly with the advent of summer heat as in *P. sieboldii*. The florets are flat like many of the forms of *P. polyneura* and are of a rosy purple color. Also, like the Lemoine hybrids, this cultivar does not produce seed and is apparently sterile. It often flowers, but shyly unless grown in very rich soil or fertilized several times during the growing season.

Orpha Salsman was a very active member of the American Primrose Society, a fine gardener and a devout lover of primroses and Pacific Coast irises. She was very successful in hybridizing these. Orpha also hybridized several dwarf bearded irises. The name *Primula 'Orpha Salsman'* is proposed for this unusual and beautiful hybrid clone of *P. sieboldii* x *P. polyneura*.
SEEDING MY WAY
by Thea Service Foster
North Vancouver, British Columbia

Until my ventures into hand pollinating got underway most of my primula seed was from club exchanges and seeded when received in the Spring.

The first harvest of my hybridizing produced unexpectedly large quantities of seed. I recalled the advice of the old great auricula growers that sowing seed fresh gave the best results. At the end of July I did the first sowing of seed that was only a week out of the pods. I was almost unable to believe my eyes when there was germination of one yellow border auricula in three days. The rest of the containers sprouted within ten days. This particular batch of seed was all border auriculas.

The small Auriculastrum such as Primula hirsuta (P. rubra) or P. marginata crosses will be slower to germinate. I still find that even they come faster and more reliably than from stored seed.

Rarely does our Vancouver area have more than a few days of summer temperatures exceeding 80°F. It has only recently been brought home to me what a benefit this usually gentle climate has been to my seed raising program. In July 1990 we launched a small flush of seedlings from the old great auricula growers that I recalled the advice of. With fuchsia shading and the other was rose-pink with fuchsia shading.

These Petite Hybrids were crossed in 1988 and have, as might be expected, produced a majority of dark toned offsprings. My desire was to produce small statured pinks. Four very pretty ones bloomed in the Spring, and were used in hand pollinating. The percentage of pinks should rise in their progenies, with the ones with the best centres, colouring and small form selected for future breeding.

Any lover of small auricula forms could have an enjoyable time by trying Petite Hybrid seed. My miniature alpines were most unexpected; others might get delightful surprises too!

Since my first experience of sowing fresh seed, it has become obvious to me that a fortunate combination of temperature, light and humidity must have been in force that particular year. A week to two weeks is a more average time till germination. I always welcome this period because, like many growers, I begin to pay closer attention to containers that have sprouted. This presence of growth is a reminder to take good care to them.

Karen Shellinger mentioned Herb Dickson's Petite Hybrid garden auriculas in her article published in the last issue. Some very attractive plants of Herb's Petite cross came from a sowing of mine. There were two especially interesting seedlings that closely resembled Alpine Exhibition Auriculas, but miniature in size (about one-half to two-thirds the size of standard ones). One was clear ruby-red with deep shading and the other was rose-pink with fuchsia shading.

As early as July of 1942, herbarium specimens of a small unnamed primula were collected from the upper reaches of a small canyon in the Ruby Mountains of northeastern Nevada. Margaret Williams described this "miniature primula" in her presentation to the Fourth International Rock Garden and Plant Conference in April of 1971. The report from this conference was the first published use of Primula capillaris as the tentative name for this plant. Noel H. Holmgren and Arthur H. Holmgren adopted the name P. capillaris when they published a diagnosis in Latin for this species in 1974. They stated "The epithet capillaris alludes to the delicately small, narrow leaves and thin scapes of the most diminutive primrose in the United States."

This primula bears one or rarely two flowers on a leafless flower stalk less than 2 inches in length. Its corolla tube is yellow and the lobes are bluish-purple aging to violet. A plant may have a single rosette of leaves or crowns with multiple rosettes. The rosettes consist of linear or somewhat wider oblanceolate leaves 0.5 to 1.5 inches long. The flower bud begins to show color while it remains tight in the center of the rosette and is fully open when the flower stalk is mature.

The only known published photograph of P. capillaris appeared in the 1979 Spring issue of 'Primroses'. No credit was given to the photographer, but it was a photograph taken by Margaret Williams.
Primula capillaris occurs in only one small site in the Ruby Mountains. Margaret Williams describes this area of less than one quarter acre in size.

During the third week of July, 1989, I traveled to northeastern Nevada in an attempt to find and photograph this little gem of the Primulaceae clan. The final leg of the trip was via a trail that began 2,500 feet below and about three miles from my destination. About two miles from its beginning, the trail ended in a basin with a headwall 1,000 feet high separating me from the subject of my search.

While scrambling up this last barrier I investigated prospective plant sites, photographed Lewisia triphylla and stopped occasionally just to catch my breath. After reaching a gentle north facing slope at the 10,000 foot (3,000 meters) elevation, I found the subject of my endeavor, Primula capillaris. As is often characteristic of our native primulas, P. capillaris was the first plant to bloom of any of its other associates.

Some plants of this primula were growing in humus soil containing small pieces of granite with little competition from other plants at this time of the season. Others were tucked among larger pieces of granite and were growing with other plants that would soon obscure them. I was amazed to find such diverse plants, as what I believe were Lewisia nevadensis and Marchantia polymorpha (liverwort), growing among the primulas. A test of the soil indicated the pH was 6.0.

After making a cursory visual survey of the surrounding area, I started to photograph the primulas just as a light rainfall began. Although traveling alone and knew I would be faced with a wet return route, I remained, through wind and rain delays, long enough to take the photographs I desired.

The rain caused the descent back to my vehicle to be hazardous at times. Fortunately, it only took an hour and a quarter, as compared with over three hours for the ascent. Once back at the trailhead a change from hiking boots to casual shoes, dry pants and socks, was a welcome relief.

Driving into the valley adjacent to the Ruby Mountains, I could see in my rearview mirror the sun lighting up the peaks surrounding the canyon from where I came. However, I did not drive over 40 miles before being confronted with violent thunder storms (flash flood warnings had been issued that afternoon for the nearby Elko, Nevada area). Trying to keep my Volkswagen bus in its proper lane of the highway was then the task at hand!

Primula capillaris is not known to grow well in cultivation; however, there are reports it has been successfully grown in a Logan, Utah garden. Logan is in an area with a climate not unlike the primula's home in Nevada.

No signs of Primula capillaris seedlings were observed on this trip. I suspect that individual plants produce very few seeds. I did note some seed capsules eaten by insects or other herbivores.

Although P. capillaris is not listed as either endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, it is very appropriate that it should be classified as endangered; especially if no other sites are found in which it grows naturally.

References

CHEHALIS RARE PLANT NURSERY
2568 Jackson Hwy., Chehalis, WA 98532
Herb Dickson, Prop.

After 30 years of selecting and breeding, I have developed an improved strain of Garden Auricula with a complete palette of color.

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<th>Seeds per Packet</th>
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<td>Mixed Garden</td>
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<td>Blue Garden</td>
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**Exhibition - Alpine**

Petite Hybrids, a strain of small species and hybrids in a wide range of color. The above $1.00 per packet of 50 seeds.

Primula florindae & Mixed Candelabra Generous packet $1.00 each.

Hand pollinated Show Auricula

Red Self | Green Edge $2.00 per packet of 25 seeds.

Yellow Self | Hand pollinated Double Auricula Mix $3.00 per packet of 15 seeds

MINIMUM ORDER $5.00

Post free in U.S. and Canada Overseas orders please add .50 cents
PRIMULAS
AT THE BERRY GARDEN

by Will Simonds
Portland, Oregon

As many remember, Rae Selling Berry was internationally known for her collection of primulas. She subscribed to expeditions into China's plant-rich provinces in hopes of receiving new species of primula. She built her collection in a garden in southwest Portland from the late thirties until her death in 1976. This garden is remembered for having the greatest number of primula species assembled in one garden outside of England. When her garden was purchased from her estate and became a botanic garden in 1979, what remained of the primulas became one of the five major collections of the new non-profit organization. As the years progressed these mercurial, transient, and sometimes just “cranky”, as Mrs. Berry would say, plants came and went, but the commitment to the collection has remained.

Today at the Berry Garden the primula collection bears only some resemblance to the collection of log beds, in which Mrs. Berry grew her plants. The renovation of the beds at the south end of the Garden was the most recent change. A “natural” look with a dry stream made of river gravel snaking through irregular beds was decided on. Asian streamside species look right at home here. Primula florindae and P. wilsonii provided a wonderful display this year. P. pulverulenta and P. involucrata are building up numbers for future displays. This area is one of the focal points in preparations for the 1992 Primula Conference. Other Asian species at the Garden include P. kisoana, and its white form, from Japan, P. muscaroides, P. flaccida, and P. vialii. Most species reseed themselves in place and elsewhere.

P. rosea grew in a bed beside the lawn. The whole population was moved to the creek banks (most subsequently died, being a “cranky” species) and the only plants left were those from seed that fell into the lawn. Although P. rosea now grows elsewhere, the largest population still resides in the lawn, changing the mowing pattern during flowering and seed setting season.

Raised frames or “Alpine Frames” are another recent addition to the Garden. The original model is brick with a redwood cover, but with money tight and time short recent generations have evolved into a treated wood and clear plastic cold frame three and a half feet tall and 12 feet long. All models are filled with sand for pot plunging. The frames raise plants up out of the cold, stagnant air at ground level and foil the less adventuresome slug. With these the Berry Garden has been able to grow and bloom plants previously too difficult.

Because of these new growing conditions the Garden can focus on American species. Several Primula suffrutescens bloomed during their second year from seed. P. Parryi made a small show during the summer’s heat. P. rusbyi and P. ellisiae both bloom well and set seed. Tiny P. angustifolia produced several yellow centered, clear pink flowers at the Garden for the first time in many years.

The Aleuritia group fair successfully, but being biennial in nature means annual reseeding. Species such as P. mistassinica var macropoda (P. lauritiana) come easily from seed and bloom well. The Garden has grown several color variations from various seed lots, although all are shades of lavender. These do better in troughs, where their small stature show to advantage.

Primula specuicola, from the Grand Canyon, will only survive in a trough. It needs winter dry and summer wet (exactly the opposite of our climate) and requires care to flower and set seed (seed heads rot during wet springs). The
The Berry Garden is still working to perfect the culture of \textit{P. cusickiana} and its immediate relatives. The only Oregon native primula, it has eluded the best of gardeners here and elsewhere. 

The Garden is encouraged by the success of \textit{P. domensis}, a new species found in Utah, which flowered for the first time this spring. It is closely related to \textit{P. cusickiana} and has similar requirements. It has been living in the Alpine Frames for at least two years. 

You can still see some of Mrs. Berry’s old auricula varieties here. ‘Snow Lady’ (a grey-edged Show) and ‘Appleblossom’ (an indescribable peach) flower favorably each spring. These and any others with heavy coatings of farina were Mrs. Berry’s favorites of this group. They require protection from rain and her staff used to run to cover the frames when a downpour threatened. Today a greenhouse is used. The staff of the Garden after graduating from Oregon State University. While in the program for horticulture at OSU, Will did his internship at the Berry Garden and felt “in the fields of botany and horticulture, botanic gardens provide a privileged and unequalled place in which to learn and work.”

The Berry Garden does welcome visitors. If a person does not know how to get there, they can call (503) 636-4112 for information and directions.

Will Simonds, Collections Specialist for the Berry Botanic Garden, joined the staff of the Garden after graduating from Oregon State University. While in the program for horticulture at OSU, Will did his internship at the Berry Garden and felt “in the fields of botany and horticulture, botanic gardens provide a privileged and unequalled place in which to learn and work.”

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\textbf{Primula domensis} 
\textit{photo by Will Simonds}
TACOMA PRIMROSE SHOW
March 31st & April 1st
by Shirley and Gordon Lymburn

The Tacoma Chapter returned to the Lakewood area in the old Villa Plaza site this year and staged its 40th Annual Show at the new Lakewood Mall. Over 200 plants were exhibited by 15 growers.

Gray-skirted tables were set up in groups of four almost the entire length of the Mall's main corridor. The white walls and high white ceilings with many skylights offered bright natural lighting to the show plants. Plant-sale tables were placed in the core area of the total display and were flanked by two trophy tables. Because our veteran expert, Ruth Huston, was absent this year due to ill health, the education table was manned by various chapter volunteers. Sample display plants, give-away literature on raising primroses, and a library of texts on primula were available to the public. Master gardeners manned two tables near the centre of the mall.

Three outstanding floor displays added a very professional touch. Rocky Ridge Nursery's pastoral scene featured dwarf maples and masses of brightly colored primroses and azaleas near a stream spanned by a small wooden bridge. Mt. Tahoma Nursery's display of assorted troughs and Pacific Rhododendron Society's exhibit of many colors and varieties of rhodies attracted a great deal of attention.

While there was a very short supply of polyanthus, julies and auricula at this particular time, there was however, a good splash of color of Primula denticulata from white to lavender to reddish-purple. John Kerridge's many Gold-Laced polyanthus from deep red to almost black added a new dimension for the first time in many years. Steve Whitcher had the greatest number of unusual species entries. The number of novice entries, which we haven't seen for a long time, was a pleasant surprise.

Candy Strickland won the Wee Willie Award for the Most Willing Worker.

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BEST IN DIVISION

- Acaulis (Ernest Winter Trophy)
- Polyanthus (Washington Hardware Trophy)
- Acaulis-Poly Large
- Julia Hybrid
- Double Vernales
- Hose-in-Hose
- Jack-in-the-Green (Floyd Keller Trophy)
- Asian Species
- European Species
- Non-hardy Primula

Seedling

- Alpine Seedling
- Gold-Laced
- Rarity
- Oddity
- Novice

Growers (6 in 1)

- Growers (Floor)

Primulaceae

- Decorative A
- Companion

Best Plant in Show

Sweepstakes (Ryan Trophy)

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PLANT

- Reddish purple miniature
- Pale yellow Garryard
- Multi-blossomed red with orange centre
- Deep purple
- Reddish purple with almost invisible white edge
- 'Emily'
- Deep purple

- P. denticula
- P. hirsuta nivea
- Large plant of salmon-colored P. obconia
- Pink P. rosea 'Grandiflora'
- Purple, lavender edge
- Black ground
- Lavender P. allioni
- Yellow Acaulis
- Many blossomed red poly with yellow centre
- Flat of pale lavender Garryard hybrid
- Country scene

- Pink Androsace
- White Rhodohypoxis
- Hose-in-Hose 'Emily'

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GROWER

- Rick Lupp
- Peter Atkinson
- Cy Happy
- Cy Happy
- Rosetta Jones
- Cy Happy
- Flip Fenili
- Darlene Heller
- Thea Oakley
- Thea Oakley
- Thea Oakley
- Thea Oakley
- John Kerridge
- Rick Lupp
- Thea Oakley
- Cliff Rapp
- Cy Happy
- Dolly & Jim
- Krob (Rocky Ridge Nursery)
- Thea Oakley
- Thea Oakley
- Thea Oakley
- Thea Oakley
- Cy Happy
- Thea Oakley
OREGON PRIMROSE SOCIETY  
April 21 - 22 Milwaukie, Oregon

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<td>Orval Agee</td>
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<td>Herb Dickson</td>
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EASTSIDE PRIMULA SHOW  
April 13 - 14 Totem Lake Mall

by Thea Oakley

Severe weather conditions reduced the size of this years show but not the enthusiasm. The Cherry Garden Horticulture Club helped the Eastside Primrose Chapter in preparation of the Standard Flower Show, ‘Around the Sound’, held in conjuction with this years Primrose Show.

The best Show Auricula ‘Anna Francis’, shown by Florence Tibbits, was named many years ago by one of the Eastside’s members Beth Tait. Beth is widely known for her contributions to the American Primrose Society and her articles in the A.P.S. Bulletin.

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American Primrose Society
WASHINGTON STATE PRIMROSE SHOW
April 14th

by Candy Strickland

The Washington State Chapter's Primrose show at the Centre of Urban Horticulture was once again a great success. This year's show was "just like the old times". There was Cy Happy from Tacoma back in the winners' circle, and like a breath of spring there was Beth Tait. Beth was back with our panel of judges. Then there was Rene Smith and her daughter Sandy, familiar figures in the food area, making sure the judges and clerks had their lunch. Gene and Dot Reichle were in their place behind the money box at the sales table. Darlene and Lyle Heller and Rick Lupp were there with others to help at the plant sale.

The show plants and their groomers outdid themselves. Double acaulis were in unusually good supply and color. The display was outstanding. Growers specializing in species primula, Juliae Hybrids and Show Auricula really presented a beautiful part of the show.

Many thanks go to the Show Committee and to Harold Foster, a familiar figure with his camcorder. He took pictures at all the shows this year and hopes to have a tape for all the Societies to show to their members.

There were 268 plants on the display table, and about $2000 received for plants sold from the plant sale.

**Judges:** Al Rapp, Anna Christensen, Beth Tait, Cy Happy, Edna Bailey, Flip Fenili

**Clerks:** Sharon Meredith, Louise Fenili, Gladys Krohn, Elda Beahm
PLASTIC GARDEN SPRAYERS

by Joe Dupree
Anacortes, Washington

Do the new, small plastic pressure sprayers have any advantages over the old metal types?

Plastic garden sprayers have several advantages, beginning with the small size. They are easier to lug around and operate because they weigh less. And, since they are smaller, gardeners are less likely to mix up more spray than they can use at any one time.

A person may have to mix spray more often, but there will be less wastage in the long run. This prevents over-spraying, applying surplus mix to plants that don't need to be sprayed, and the problems of legally dumping the excess mix.

High-impact plastic sprayers allow the level of mix in the tank to be monitored, giving a better idea of how much spray should be used in each operation. This enables the applicator to anticipate how much mix will be needed for different jobs.

Luckily, plastic sprayers have built-in pressure-relief valves that pop open to relieve excess pressure. This valve reduces damage to tank, seals and hoses.

Pesticides can be corrosive and eat away at metal sprayers (unless constructed of stainless steel). Corrosion is not a problem with most plastic containers.

Plastic sprayers also are very easy to clean. Hoses, pickups and pumps detach easily from the tank, allowing them to be cleaned and rinsed with no possibility of small amounts of pesticide remaining in the tank or any parts. However, even with this assurance of complete cleaning, it's best to reserve one sprayer for herbicides.

Save all the instructions and paperwork (owner's manual, etc.) that comes with a new sprayer. For instructions printed on the sides of the packing box, photocopy it for easier filing. (You might also send a note to the manufacturer explaining that it is dumb to print important instructions on throw-away packaging).

Spray for thorough coverage. That means getting the spray on all surfaces if applied to deciduous plants. Fissures and cracks in the bark of trunks, branches, limbs and twigs are especially important. Start from the top so the mix running down will be efficiently utilized. There are no advantages in using additional spray after all surfaces are wet.

If spraying plants with leaves, coat all surfaces. Be sure to spray both the top and the bottom of each leaf, plus the trunk and branches. Select a sprayer that allows you to spray in both up and down directions. This is easy to do with the nozzle at the end of a hand-held sprayer hose or wand.

Know why a particular pesticide is being used. Determine if the pest is an insect, disease or weed and find out if the spray is effective against that pest.

Gardeners also need to know if it is legal to spray on or near the plant they wish to protect. This is assuming they have identified the pest correctly and have selected a pesticide that can in fact control that pest.
POINTERS ON GROWING JULIANAS

by Dr John Kerridge
Vancouver, British Columbia

Gardeners, when growing Julianas, should always remember these little jewels have different features and requirements from the Primrose and Polyanthus primulas. For instance, they can in general take more cold and more direct sunshine, and seem less subject to slug and snail attack.

Why then do we lose them? So often people ask, “Why have my Julianas disappeared again?” “I just can’t grow them.”

It is possible that they are getting too much tender loving care. For example, they prefer a poor, lean soil (but well drained) that induces hardy growth. Adding compost and too much organic matter can induce a sogginess, which leads to rot. On the other hand, peat moss well forked into the beds does improve drainage. A top dressing of your discarded alpine soil mixture, after blooming, helps shield the roots from the strong summer sun.

On no account grow them ‘soft’ during the winter with heat and fertilizer. The open ground and cold fresh air will not trouble them.

In the mid-summer sun the leaves may scorch and shrivel, but they come back in mid-August. A bad mistake many gardeners make is to panic at the browning-off of the leaves in summer and water heavily. This can lead to the vigor of the young side-shoots; but not so for Julianas.

Apart from named Julianas, there are diverse Hybrids with beautiful form and color. Gardeners will find many of them more attractive than the older named varieties. Because of their proven ability to withstand drought, mite attacks, and sever winters, we must never lose the old established favorites. Thank goodness a few enthusiasts are collecting and caring for them.

Now, the larger Wanda Hybrids are on the scene with glorious colors. Because their size has greatly exceeded the usually diminutive ‘Julie’, they have not the favor of everyone. Small is still beautiful!

delabras with irreversible damage. In the morning, after the Julianas have recovered a little from the cooler night air, a light watering can be tolerated.

Once the foliage is dry and brown it will never recover and is best snipped away, for if allowed to sit there it will harbour disease. This arid foliage also prevents water from a sprinkler from penetrating deep down to the roots.

Spider mite attack is also likely on dry and wilting leaves. A good method is to snip around the crown with scissors pointed vertically downward, this tidies up nicely.

Julianas love to clump and division can be much less frequent than with other forms such as Cowichans and Gold-Laced Polyanthus. ‘Vernales’ primulas do well divided annually and freed from their old root stock that holds back the vigor of the young side-shoots; but not so for Julianas.

Garnet COWICHAN Garnet, black garnet and ruby shades.

AMETHYST COWICHAN Amethyst and violet shades, some with intricate little Persian carpets where the eye should be.

BLUE COWICHAN Intense blues, some with black bee centers.

VENETIAN COWICHAN Hot pink-reds, some with black bee centers.

AN UPDATE ON THE BARNHAVEN COWICHANS

by Don Keefe
Redmond, Washington

A grand era of primroses is ending this year with the closing of the famous Barnhaven Nursery. Barnhaven received world acclaim with its distinct hardy strains of double primroses, clear colored polyanthus and the stunning Cowichans. The following report is to document the final chapter of just one of Barnhaven’s achievements.

Historic records indicate that in 1932 an unusual polyanthus seedling was discovered on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, in a Cowichan Valley garden near Victoria. Florence Bellis (Barnhaven Nursery, Gresham, Oregon) obtained an offset of this distinct polyanthus and began a long series of hybridizing efforts to “set” the distinct characteristics. Clones and hybrids of this plant became known as polyanthas (Primula x polyantha, Cowichan).

The Cowichan Florence Bellis acquired was a very frail plant, but through selective breeding, cross hybridizing and a strong determination she would eventually develop the very hardy Barnhaven Cowichan ‘strain’. The first mention of this initial strain was in Barnhaven’s 1949 catalog, i.e.:

“COWICHAN STRAIN — Three generations removed from the named variety ‘Cowichan’ but with the same smouldering luster and almost absent eye. Colors are intense garnet to almost black garnet, oxblood ruby... clusters neat and compact on dark, wiry stems.”

It is not known why the catalog failed to mention Mrs. Bellis’ later statements regarding the bronze-touched leaves, intermediate size and general appearance of the Cowichan strain. The bronze coloring of the leaves is a distinct characteristic and can be easily identified in any garden in which it is growing.

In Barnhaven’s last catalog, No. 8185, (Barnhaven moved from Gresham, Oregon to Kendal England around 1966) the second and final proprietor, Jared Sinclair, stated: “Over the years, other colors maintaining the characteristics of the original plant have been introduced. The Cowichan strains of today are vigorous, robust plants with flowers that are solid pools of color with either no eye at all or a tiny golden eyelet, and petals that have the hot coal smoulder of the bloom from Major Knocker’s garden.”

The list of Cowichans offered by Barnhaven’s nursery was modified and expanded as new strains were developed and introduced. The following listing is from Barnhaven’s final catalog:

GARNET COWICHAN Garnet, black garnet and ruby shades.

AMETHYST COWICHAN Amethyst and violet shades, some with intricate little Persian carpets where the eye should be.

BLUE COWICHAN Intense blues, some with black bee centers.

VENETIAN COWICHAN Hot pink-reds, some with black bee centers.
OTHER AVAILABLE STRAINS

Hybridizers throughout the world have used the original Cowichan strains to produce an abundance of colorful and exciting hardy strains. Many of these have the same characteristic traits as the one found on Vancouver Island. The following are some of the more popular varieties available from selected nurseries and grower.

APRICOT COWICHAN Also listed as the Tangerine Cowichan. It has apricot shades with a touch of red in the dark eye and grown by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Clarke. Two or more flats of seedlings were recently being grown by Herb Dickson.

PINK COWICHAN An acaulis type. Pink shades, grown by the Fred and Hellen Clarke.

BROWN COWICHAN Cy and Rita Happy reported that other growers are developing luxuriant brown Cowichans.

FIRELY COWICHANS Derived from the Barnhaven Juliana Polyanthus ‘Firefly’ strain. Barnhaven seed packets produced Garnet and Venetian Cowichan Juliana hybrids. They are delightful plants.

BIG RED COWICHANS A rich true red Cowichan type developed by Herb Dickson with Juliana traits.

SMOKY DARK GARNET COWICHANS Two similar stalked varieties grown by Mary Baxter. Mary related that Cy Happy pollinated a P. juliae with a Cowichan plant, or vice versa, to produce these plants.

MISCELLANEOUS COWICHANS

Four other varieties of Juliana plants, some stalked and some cushion varieties, with Cowichan type flowers, e.g., an amethyst shade, two deep reds, and one bright red, have acquired through swaps with Jerry Flintoff and Rick Lupp.

SOURCES OF COWICHAN SEED:

Craven's Nursery, Hall Barn Nurseries, Windsor End, Beaconsfield, Bucks. HP9 2SG England

SaltSpring Primroses, 2426 W 47th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6M 2N2

References


References


and exhibits. Even this last February, June and Brain were scurrying all over Seattle the night before the Northwest Flower and Garden Show opening, putting the APS’s exhibit into a proper format and meaningful display. The American Primrose Society is indeed indebted to Brian Skidmore.

Those of us who love our plants and cherish growing them, know that the true enjoyment of gardening is sharing our joy with others. As we get older and past major milestones in our lives, the plants and knowledge that we have shared with others becomes more and more dear to us. There are many areas of my garden where the plants that I have received from my friends are far more important to me than the latest or rarest plants that are finding their way to the market places. Brain’s marginata’s and double auricula seedlings, his polyanthas and primroses, and his obconica that he has shared with me will always be dear; if not the plants, then the wonderful memories. Brian Skidmore will be missed.

* * *

Primula x juliae, grown by Orval Agee

photo by Larry A. Bailey