In This Issue — Saving the Heritage

When you visit my garden, two things are likely to happen. First, when you ask the name of a plant, I'll probably answer "Oh, that's —, it's from June's garden" (or Thea's or John's or Ilse's or from the Arboretum members sale or from my APS chapter's plant exchange). Second, when it's time to leave, I'll probably offer you some of my extra plants that need a good home. I can afford to be generous because so many of my gardening friends have been generous with me.

Gardeners have a tradition of sharing their bounty, whether it feeds the stomach or the spirit. It is this informal sharing that keeps old favorites like "Quaker's Bonnet" around in such abundance after 100 years.

There are other ways of preserving our horticultural heritage. A friend of mine is working to establish a garden conservancy for an elderly couple who have no kinfolk to continue what they've spent the last 40 years creating. This couple has been incredibly generous with their plants and garden in the past, and they have created a wonderful setting for choice alpines, colorful primroses, and precious native plants. A formal conservancy agreement is a complicated path to follow, but if my friend succeeds in jumping all the legal and financial hurdles, she and the couple will have a wonderful gift for future generations of gardeners.

In this issue, Karen Schellinger and Rick Lupp remember some of their gardening friends who've shared with them. John O'Brien tells us about the old-time primroses that have made their way to Alaska. Maedythe Martin tells how some "hand-me-down" primroses helped her hybridize new, exciting striped auriculas. And Geoffrey Charlesworth and Jim Fox help you with the practical side of planting out and keeping those horticultural treasures given you. Happy Sharing!

Evelyn Balcom made sure her husband Ralph's hybridizing efforts weren't lost (see article on page 29). Star

'Denna Doubles' light-pink double auricula seedling.

Photo by Ralph Balcom
Primulas in the Garden - Part 1

by Geoffrey B. Charlesworth, Sandisfield, Massachusetts

What is the difference between plants growing in the wild and plants growing in the garden? Plants in the wild are growing where they belong. Nature is in control. The climate, soil conditions, competition (or lack of it), the light intensity, the light duration, the pollinators are all right. Nevertheless we can go to the mountains with a camera and sometimes come back with only one mediocre shot of a plant we seem to grow much better in our own garden. More often we come back with a photograph of a plant display so exquisite in form and so perfectly proportioned, forming so expansive a colony, with such abundant flowers, that we swear we will never again try to grow that species in our own garden.

With the plants in the garden we are in control — up to a point — we can't control the weather or the climate but we can do our best to extrapolate from Nature those aspects of a plant's needs that we think will make our own plant grow well. Sometimes we devise a totally novel environment for the plant (such as an alpine house or a raised bed). We don't need to be ashamed of losing the competition with Nature — nor do we need to be especially proud if accommodating plants put up with the conditions we impose on them, not even when they flourish. Except for the worst wimps, plants want to live more often than not, assuming we can go even half way to meeting their demands.

Sometimes our conditions are actually superior to the conditions in Nature a plant finds itself in, (perhaps we found a single skinny plant far from the habitat it would have preferred, or we give it an unaccustomed abundance of nutrients and moisture), but mostly the best plants in nature far exceed the results in our own garden. Gardeners can never duplicate exactly the conditions of plants in the wild so we spend a great deal of time stewing over which is the best place available in the garden at the moment we are ready to plant out.

And what is the difference between the botanist's and the gardener's view of the same plant? And what about the nurseryman? And the hybridizer? A taxonomist might be on the lookout for those details of a plant that could be generalized into a description suitable for all the plants in one species, and might then formulate a description of the plant that would be acceptable and useful to another botanist. The habitat would also get a generalized description to include growing conditions and geographic limits. A nurseryman would offer an idealized description that included a popular height, a desirable color, a long period of flowering, with a purple prose passage on form and texture, and a generous range of temperature tolerance, sometimes even a suggestion for successful cultivation.

A hybridizer has a mental image of a different kind of ideal plant which he hopes to create with a number of qualities in a combination that Nature failed to achieve. A gardener would take both the botanist's dry description and the nurseryman's colorful promises and horticultural prescription with a grain of salt, and would look askance at the hybridizer's concoction unless it proved a good garden plant. His hope would be to experiment with the various locations available in his own garden. He would see a plant not only as a beautiful, buyable object or an improvement over nature, not only as a botanical specimen, but as a challenge to grow, in such a way that its potential beauty was revealed. This beauty could easily be overlooked by the botanist (botanists never give us a subjective opinion of a plant), and exaggerated by the salesman (nurserymen never give a negative opinion and never actually say weed), and the hybridizer's sense of beauty may be too sophisticated (they never seem to be satisfied with a species). So while taxonomists in museums and libraries are breathing the dust of crumbling herbarium specimens seeking the glory of publication and thinking up name changes to baffle gardeners, while nurserymen in their plastic tunnels are perfecting propagation methods that are economically viable, looking for wealth and the most profitable time to introduce a new plant, and thinking up new descriptions to sway gardeners into buying weeds, while hybridizers, paintbrush and paper bag in hand, are peering through their magnifying lenses, dreaming of blue ribbons for their latest fantastic creations, named to lure gardeners into wanting to grow them, gardeners themselves remain earthbound and fixated on their own garden in their own zone with their own climate, their own weather, their own pH, their personal rocks and their own tree roots. And a plant a gardener is unable to grow loses its status as 'a challenge' after a few failures, and is downgraded to one of having very little interest. Except of course that polite interest we feel when we are talking to gardeners who can grow the plants we cannot grow.

So here are a few (mostly well-known) ways of growing primulas in gardens, and in particular a few suggestions for growing those species that seem to be possible in various parts of a New England garden, that perhaps will encourage you to make one more trial in your own garden. My own aim is to grow plants in a manner that requires care but not excessive care.

WOODLAND CONDITIONS

In the Northeast, spring is compressed into the month of May. The first week in May, the woodland has a stark, fresh-from-the-winter look. The second week there is an untidy-I-must-get-this-mess-cleaned-up look and by the end of May an it's-summer-already-and-I-haven't-finished-weeding-the-paths look.
Primulas in the Garden continued

But everybody with a woodland garden or at least some shade has almost an obligation to grow vernales types of primula. (The vernales section is now called Subgenus Primula, Section Primula.) The easiest of all are the veris and elatior primulas, the cowslips and the oxslips, that self-sow easily (sometimes into grass). A Czech gardener once told me he would never grow both P. elatior and P. veris together because of the likelihood that they would cross too readily. This should be remembered by anybody whose interest is in growing species or varieties in a pure state. If your aim is a yellow carpet of ‘cowslips’, the subtle distinctions of the various geographical variations are lost in the crowd and even veris and elatior become hard to tell apart. None of the hybrid polyantha primulas are reliable for more than a year in our garden. Either they are ‘annual’ or ‘tender’ or need some special care beyond planting in the open woodland. Perhaps a special place in a protected border would be the best place to enjoy their amazing colors.

Less predictable are the vulgaris types and hybrids that are not such prolific self-sowers for me and some are even tender.

While the APS deals primarily with primulas, I want to approach the theme of plant heritage from another angle. I hold a plant to be special not because it is rare but rather because of the people who gave me the plant, whom I esteem highly or who have touched my life deeply. These people are special because they generously share their horticultural knowledge and plants freely or because they provide an example of courage and unselfish concern for everyone, gardeners or not. We are often unaware of what they have done until after they have passed away. What a shame!

So the plants that I value most for their ‘heritage’ are the ones from dear friends. These plants may not be botanically rare, but they are treasured nonetheless. Each spring the blooms of their friendship greet me and I call them by name — Jay and Ann, Georgie, David, Margaret, Virginia, and others.

The plant gifts and friendship of Jay and Ann are the prime reasons for my being the plant lover I am, with primulas closest to my heart. When I visit Jay and Ann, I always bring an empty suitcase to pack with treasures found at the local nurseries. But much of the suitcase space is taken by primulas from their own garden. One of these days I am going to get Sissy, their black lab, into that suitcase when they’re not looking!

From Georgie I have many Primula sieboldii and memories of our days spent together in her beautiful garden. She was a strong woman, an MD specializing in adolescent medicine, who fought for the rights of children. She was also a sensitive woman, as reflected in the beauty of her garden, which she generously shared. She would suffer no fools, but in a gardener she could see nothing but good! She gave me many primulas and (I hope) a bit of her strength.

David shared his boyish enthusiasm with everyone he met. He and his wife Jeanne were especially interested in plants from different parts of the world. They made many friends through the mail in the USA and around the world. As the many friendships blossomed, gift plants graced their special gardens as well. In the autumn before he was killed in a tragic car accident, David unselfishly handed me a hepatica from a European friend and asked for nothing in return. I particularly treasure this hepatica. David loved to climb in the mountains and while with some friends discovered a rare double form of a plant. I hear his friends are going to name it after him. That would be a fitting tribute, saluting his curiosity and appreciation of the beauty all around him.

Margaret was a genteel English lady who had the most delightful gardens and was always so cordial to this midwest woman who was awed by all Margaret grew very well. “Oh this old thing” was her usual comment when I exclaimed over something particularly beautiful.

Saving the Heritage: Heritage Plants and Gardens

By Karen Schellinger, Avon, Minnesota

proper amount of admiration. I haven’t ever established P. vulgaris from wild collected seed. The subspecies sibthorpii, sometimes called abchasica, is more or less permanent and one of the first to bloom, and there are some easy vulgaris hybrids.

The other commonly grown vernales types are the ‘juliana’ hybrids of P. juliae. These spread without trouble once you get a clone established. The new Japanese julianas seem to be tender but there are many ‘old-fashioned’ clones available. Some of them are hybrids of P. juliae with vulgaris types and have one flower to a stem, some look like miniature polyanthas and have elatior or veris in their make up. Divide them after flowering (or before), but avoid the period in the heat of the summer when they are resting.

Other woodland primulas are in the Cortusoides section. The easiest and most permanent is P. sieboldii, also in this section (Subsection Geranioides) has been easy to establish. This spreads by stolons and can be very effective running around a rock or a log. Watch the woodland primulas after flowering to see that they are not overrun by large vigorous plants such as ferns, actaea, polygonatum, tricyrtis, daphne etc.

P. japonica (Section Proliferae), on the other hand, is not only quite happy in the usual comment when I exclaimed...
S. pulvulenta. I believe all of them any of them if you value purity. Some bulleyana, P. aurantiaca and P. species will be very short lived. P. are worth trying too, especially trodden paths. The colors harmonize well care of itself in very crowded conditions. Other Proliferae. It selfsows vigorously even into well-previous owner is an example to us all. gardener; she has been battling a disease continued from page 6 each time I look at it. The courage of its plant that almost brings tears to my eyes hold up even in stormy weather. Because many avid gardeners would call "just an old stand-by" — Salvia nemorosa 'Superba', with deep purple spikes that hold up even in stormy weather. Because it reminds me of Virginia, it is an elegant plant that almost brings tears to my eyes each time I look at it. The courage of its previous owner is an example to us all. Virginia is a lively, artistic, and loving gardener; she has been battling a disease for more than 35 years and now is in a wheelchair and on oxygen 24 hours a day. She and her husband have unselfishly created a beautiful garden for the city in which they live and provided a financial fund to ensure that the garden will be a heritage for many generations to come. I regard the garden as a gift for Virginia from her husband, as she need only look out her bedroom window to see the roses in all their glory in the part of the garden named for her. The garden is a living bouquet of love for all of us to enjoy.

It is the highest form of complement when a gardener presents you with a plant that you have admired from their garden (let alone a whole garden!). They are giving you a special piece of themselves and it is quite a personal gift, an unselfish form of friendship. You must take good care of such gifts, so as to be able to return the friendship if the giver should ever lose theirs. Thus continues the heritage of plants, friendships, and gardens.

Primulas in the Garden
continued from page 6

woodland conditions, it can easily take care of itself in very crowded conditions. It selfsows vigorously even into well-trodden paths. The colors harmonize well with Phlox divaricata. Other Proliferae are worth trying too, especially Primula bulleyana, P. aurantiaca and P. pulverulenta. I believe all of them hybridize easily so you must segregate any of them if you value purity. Some species will be very short lived. P. burmanica, P. chungensis and P. cockburniana have never lasted more than a season.

Many of the hybrids of P. auricula will do quite well in woodland. Poorly flowering clones are a problem, and the subtle colors of the auricula hybrids are sometimes lost in the vigorous woodland mess. The clear yellow of P. auricula itself looks very good, but I think it grows better elsewhere.

Primulas for Alaska Gardens
by Jim Fox, Anchorage, Alaska

Revised by the author from the Anchorage Botanical Garden Newsletter

Among the smells I associate with spring — from the acrid, fertile smells when farmers clean their barns to the lily of the valley scent of Acer ginnala's tiny greenish flowers — the most evocative scent is the spicy-carnation scent of primula roots. I noticed this unusual scent nearly twenty years ago when I made my first attempt to divide the numerous primroses in my garden that were, after a year or two, big enough to divide. Dividing was a simple matter of digging the clumps out of the thawed ground and shaking the soil off, exposing the small, budding crowns enough to tease and tear them apart. My schedule for dividing back then was to get a shovel into the soil as soon as possible, pry out a plant, and divide — without regard to blooming season. After all, with Alaska's short growing season, the sooner you dig up, divide, and get a plant back in the ground, the better, even if it meant sacrificing the bloom.

I worked first on Primula auricula, the true species with leathery leaves and a rich spicy-carame-scent much like carnations coming from the roots. I checked the other species, and to varying degrees, the carnations-clove scent was there, sometimes thick, sometimes sweeter. Blindfolded, I could identify a plant as a primula simply by breaking a root and breathing in the scent, be it our own tiny P. cuniefolia ssp. saxifragifolia, or the ephemeral, Himalayan P. reidi var. Williamsii.

But I also learned something that year: not all primulas like to be divided in early spring. The early-blooming P. auricula bloomed but then succumbed to cold weather the following autumn. division for the primulas and as I read about their life cycles, I became muy clear why the plants reacted as they did. P. auricula, an evergreen early-spring flowering species, puts its initial energy into flowering and seed production. The short season of the Alps created a plant in which seed production and dispersal has priority over the individual plant. Only after flowering does the plant's energy go into the growth of the plant and its roots, which would be at least a month after flowering. P. frondosa, P. farinosa, P. Scandinavica, and P. denticulata, though not evergreen like P. auricula, grow by the same principles: flower buds emerge before or simultaneously with the leaves, taking advantage of a short growing season. Dividing these plants early in the spring tears off most of the feeder roots.
The larger storage roots that are left direct their reserves to the flowers, leaving little if anything to support the plant until later—which is why my auricula plant sulked for so long.

The fuzzy-leaved _P. saxatilis_, like many herbaceous perennials, must initiate leaf growth to manufacture enough energy, to supplement what little is stored in its thin delicate roots, to push out its flowers. It doesn't have large storage roots, just a large resting bud beneath the soil surface, much like _Dodecatheon_, making it ideal for planting beneath late leafing trees, shrubs, or perennials; but mark its location so you won't accidentally dig it up during fall bulb planting. Spring is the best time to divide this plant, while its root system is in active growth.

The great Tibetan primula, _P. florindae_, and all its relatives in the _Section Sikkimensis_, hail from moist humidus meadows and stream sides. In Alaska, they take their time coming into growth, sending out their large leaves in late May and their three foot tall flower stalks in June or July. _P. florindae_ is one of the last plants to start growth in my garden, as tardy as any hosta. Since it produces leaves long before any flowers, it is capable of putting early energy into roots. Spring is the perfect time to divide it, giving it plenty of time to stretch out its roots and gather nutrients for more growth and bloom.

From this, I developed a simple rule of thumb when dividing primula: spring flowering plants are divided immediately after blooming; the later-simmer bloomers and ones with resting buds are divided as soon as I can get a spade into the soil. Now this isn't an original rule; you'll find it in many books and from many gardeners. (I've taken this rule and applied it to any perennial I want to divide: early flowering _trollius_ is best divided after blooming; late spring and summer flowering _peonies_ sail through an early spring division—regardless of what nurseries say about only moving them in the fall. Mid-spring flowering _delphiniums_ will submit to very early spring division. By observing plants and their patterns of growth, I've been able to make multiple divisions and have good results.)

Of the over sixty species and cultivars of primula I've grown in Alaska, there are a few that have endeared themselves to me, regardless of the "perenniality" in my garden. I've already mentioned _P. auricula_, sold and passed around, some quite beautiful with pink, white, brick-red, or bluish-purple flowers. Occasionally the flowers are washed out or muddy color—not want your time with those. Choose your plants when they are in bloom, unless you're buying a named variety from a reputable nursery.

_P. auricula ssp. bauhini_ is a smaller, more floriferous form of _P. auricula_, even to its scent. Some botanists consider it no different from the type, though it is smaller and comes true from seed. It's worth seeking out. Another alpine _auricula_ relative is _P. pedemontana_, a small plant from the Alps of northern Italy, with reddish-brown margins on its leaves and perfect dime-sized, rose-colored flowers borne in clusters on stems about two inches high. It is one of the first to bloom in the alpine garden. Its cousin _P. hirsuta_ does quite well here, as its hybrids. Aline Strutz has a plant of _P. hirsuta x rubra_ nearly twenty years old and two feet across. The primroses from the _Section Auriculasstrum_ propagate readily from cuttings taken after blooming.

From the _Section Farinosae_, in which many of our native primula are registered, comes the tiny but short-lived jewel, _P. scotica_, endemic to Scotland but much at home in Alaska. It seeds itself in the alpine bed and produces numerous one to two inch wide silvery rosettes that send out two inch stems topped by very deep, regal purple flowers. It will bloom continuously in our cool summers. There are some twenty species of primula from the Americas and Europe in this section, mostly hardy here, but many not very interesting except to the collector or botanist.

The plant I grow under the name _P. 'Dorothy'_, that Rick Lupp of Mt. Tahoma Nursery in Washington state doubts is the true _P. 'Dorothy'_, is a fine little plant for the woodland or semi-shady border, regardless of its identity crisis. Its early-blooming, soft-ivory, tubular based flowers on three to four inch stems create little pools of light in the filtered shade. You'll find great masses of it in gardens in Juneau. Any of the _P. juliae_ group, such as 'Dorothy' or 'Wanda', deserve a place in the garden; their early blooms of ivory or rich purple or bright pink satisfy our need for spring color. They are much better plants than the Pacific Hybrid strains sold by the hundreds in florist shops and discount plant centers. Colorful, but generally not hardy, this strain is too big and overblown for me.

For some reason, I haven't tried the primrose, _P. vulgaris_. [Author's note: I did this year and it's as lovely as I remember.] The specific name _vulgaris_ means common. At one time, this was a common plant in the British and Scottish landscape until picked, grazed, and dug to near extinction in this century. In 1981, I was fortunate to see one of the last wild stands of this plant in Scotland. The cheery clumps of soft green foliage and soft yellow flowers were nestled amongst the short grasses on...
Primulas for Alaska Gardens continued

a hillside, backlit by an early-morning spring sun. The plant is hardy here in Alaska, so I've thought of creating a similar scene on the northeast face of a small hill, topped by a copse of white birch.

From the Section Sikkimensis I'm particularly fond of *P. alpicola* var. *luna*. The few blossoms, on its two foot stems, are a soft yellow, dusted with silvery farina, giving them a ghostly luminescence much like a full spring moon. The blooms are filled with a sweeter version of the carnation-like scent of its roots. *P. alpicola* var. *violacea* differs only in flower color — violet like the name implies.

*P. aurantiaca* and *P. cockburniana*, both members of the Section *Candelabra* that produce tiered whorls of blooms on their stems, weren't long-lived in my garden. But their orange and yellow blossoms, and their form, have stayed in my mind for so long that I must try them again and collect seed to ensure future plants. *P. japonica* is in the same Section as *P. aurantiaca* and *P. cockburniana*, but its orange and yellow blossoms, and their form, have stayed in my mind for so long that I must try them again and collect seed to ensure future plants. *P. japonica* is in the same Section as *P. aurantiaca* and *P. cockburniana*, but its orange and yellow blossoms, and their form, have stayed in my mind for so long that I must try them again and collect seed to ensure future plants. *P. japonica* is in the same Section as *P. aurantiaca* and *P. cockburniana*, but its orange and yellow blossoms, and their form, have stayed in my mind for so long that I must try them again and collect seed to ensure future plants. *P. japonica* is in the same Section as

For sheer decadence (and some guilt, as it is a rare plant in cultivation), I would again grow *P. capitata*. It proved annual for me, but I was seduced by its rich purple, bell-like flowers, the petals as thick as velvet, heavily dusted on the outside with a glistening silver farina, the flowers bunched together in a tight cluster reminiscent of a Mongolian yurt. If that isn't enough enticement, there is its scent: a perfume of sweet spice, thick and exotic, conjuring up images of silk caravans and ancient bazaars.

One of the first primulas I grew was labeled "pink Siberian". It had delicate, fuzzy, wedged-shaped, scalloped leaves and twelve inch scapes topped with flowers of an unbridled magenta color, each petal deeply notched. I eventually identified it as *P. saxatilis*. Some local nurseries sell it and its relatives: the elegant *P. sieboldii* that can have white, heavily fringed flowers, and *P. cortusoides*, somewhat less refined but no less worthy a plant that will gently seed itself in the garden.

If you want to try growing primulas or increase the variety you already grow, I suggest visiting local nurseries that usually have a small but interesting selection of species and cultivars. Many mail-order nurseries offer a wide selection of plants and seed. Seed may also be obtained from the various alpine garden organizations such as the Alpine Garden Society, the Scottish Rock Garden Club, the North American Rock Garden Society, and others, that have yearly seed exchanges listing numerous primula as well as other interesting and rare plants.

Under The Overhang

by Rick Lupp

PRIMULAS FROM THE PAST, MEMORIES FOR THE FUTURE

Recently, while poking about the nursery looking for old primula cultivars to write about for this theme issue of *Primroses*, it occurred to me that for every old primula cultivar that I have grown for any length of time I also have a fond memory growing along as well.

*Primula acaulis* 'Quaker's Bonnet' ([P. Lilacina Plena]) was the first to come to mind. While manning the sales booth at the A.P.S. Tacoma chapter Primrose show about ten years ago, I was approached by an older gentleman who asked if I would be interested in buying and digging some double primula from his property. When my wife and I arrived at his home, he had row after row of *P. 'Quaker's Bonnet'* in full bloom in a field behind his house. A sight my wife and I will never forget as well as the several hours spent in a cold pouring rain in early April digging plants for the nursery! We still chuckle about this as we lift plants from the relative comfort of our raised garden.

Another primula from the past that still stirs memories is *P. auricula* cv. 'Serenity', a vigorous green edge show plant. I still stirs memories is *P. auricula* cv. 'Serenity', a vigorous green edge show plant. I still stirs memories is *P. auricula* cv. 'Serenity', a vigorous green edge show plant. I still stirs memories is *P. auricula* cv. 'Serenity', a vigorous green edge show plant.

Up until six years ago, *Primula veridiflora* was a plant that I had only read about in a few paragraphs here and there in the primrose literature where it was mentioned just enough to make me wonder if the plant was still in cultivation. Then Ruby Glaser came to my nursery. Ruby is a wonderful, vibrant lady who has been gardening in our area for over sixty years. On her first visit she

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Plant Portrait

by Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

PRIMULA CUNEIFOLIA - A BIT OF ALASKA

The setting is Hatcher Pass, about 100 miles north of Anchorage, Alaska. The late afternoon sun illuminates a rocky slope reminiscent of a tundra habitat. Among the grasses and lichens a rosette of bright green, toothed leaves encircles three brilliant pink flowers — Primula cuneifolia.

Section Cuneifolia is small, containing only three species: Primula cuneifolia, P. suffrutescens and P. nipponica. P. suffrutescens is restricted to the Sierra Nevada in California; P. nipponica is endemic to the island of Honshu in Japan. Only P. cuneifolia is widespread in its range. It can be found from northern Japan and northeastern Asia across the Aleutian Island chain to Alaska and south to the coastal mountains of British Columbia.

In this vast area are found four more or less distinct subspecies of P. cuneifolia. The plants on Hatcher Pass are P. c. ssp. saxifragifolia. It is a small plant with flower scapes less than two inches tall. The leaves have a distinctive wedge shape with the broad end of the wedge being sharply toothed. Although the species name, cuneifolia, is descriptive of this wedge shape, there is considerable variation in the leaves. The umbel generally holds one to four flowers with flat-faced corollas. The petal lobes are deep cut in the center to almost form a "Y" shape. Subspecies saxifragifolia is unique from the others in that its flowers are homostylous. The anthers and stigma are adjacent to each other in the upper part of the corolla tube. This may be one reason that this subspecies is fully self-fertile. Primula c. ssp. saxifragifolia is the most widespread of the subspecies, occurring in the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea coast to the interior of Alaska and south to northern Vancouver Island.

Primula c. ssp. cuneifolia is a much larger, more robust plant with flower scapes taller than two inches. The umbels have up to ten pink, rose or white flowers with the same Y-shaped petals. The major taxonomic difference, however, is that this subspecies is distylos (the flowers are either pins or thrums). They are found in damp, rocky meadows from the Aleutian Islands of North America to northern Japan and northeastern Asia.

The final two subspecies are endemic to the Island of Honshu, Japan. Subspecies hakusanensis is characterized by its more shallow leaf dentation. The form indigenous to Mt. Iwaki on Honshu is classified as P. c. ssp. heterodonta and has irregular leaf dentation. Both of these subspecies are distylos.

A common name for P. cuneifolia is "Pixie Eye Primrose". It is appropriate for this diminutive plant with its bright pink or white flowers centered with sparkling yellow eyes. Every alpine house, trough or shady rockery should have at least one!

The habitat found on Hatcher Pass gives a clue to the plant's cultural requirements. The soil should be a well-drained, peaty mix that is not allowed to dry out in the spring or summer. In cool summer areas, they can withstand a lot of light. In warmer summer climates, partial shade is necessary. Misty Haffner, from Juneau, Alaska, grows them in an open, airy spot next to the greenhouse where they get morning and early afternoon sun.

Primula cuneifolia is fully hardy but will survive better if the plants are protected from winter wet. Areas with snow cover and frozen soil have the advantage here. They also do well in troughs or in the alpine house as long as the crowns stay dry during the non-growing season.

Propagation can be accomplished by careful division after flowering or by seed. Germination is improved if the seed is allowed to chill after planting. Misty Haffner sows the seed in January and puts the pots in an unheated greenhouse until April when the heat is turned on. By July, the seedlings should be ready for transplanting to pots, troughs or in the open garden.

Even if you never travel to Hatcher Pass, you can still experience a bit of Alaska in your own garden with Primula cuneifolia.

SOURCES:


This Plant Portrait is submitted by the Oregon Primrose Society in lieu of a chapter activity report.

Under the Overhang

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arrived carrying a pot of the elusive P. veridiflora in full bloom. Ruby has been growing the plant for over thirty years in her garden where she has large stands of this beauty. Whenever I see this plant in bloom; I smile and think of Ruby and her long vigilance in keeping this plant going for other American growers to enjoy. I only wish that the plant grew as well for me as Ruby. I am finding it very slow to increase but then the memories stirred by this plant will be very slow to fade.

I think most of us have similar memories masquerading as primrose plants in our gardens and around our alpine houses. Propagate and share these old cultivars with your friends and other growers. Perhaps these plants will become the memories of these friends and future generations of primrose lovers!
Striped and Double Striped
by Maedythe Martin, Victoria, B.C.

I've always wanted to have striped auriculas, ever since the first time I saw a picture of one. I finally treated myself in 1988 and bought one from Larry Bailey just before he stopped selling plants — bought one at an exorbitant price, it seemed to me, but I was going to have one at last! It was a special treat, I justified it to myself and, indeed, it has given me much pleasure.

My first striped auricula went into the frame with my modest collection of show auriculas and has grown and bloomed with reliable success. Now how to get more?

After at least ten years of growing show auriculas, I finally figured out how to pollinate them to get seed. Such a little trick, but I had somehow overlooked all the literature that says they must be pollinated when the flower is not quite open. This is when the pistil is ready. As I read recently in an article by Cy Happy in the quarterly, Winter, 1959 (v.17, no.1, page 15) in one season, you either get show flowers or seeds from a plant, not both. So now, any flower still blooming in the frame after show time is over, gets pollinated!

Flush with the success of my first crop of seed (but, disaster of disasters, the little seedlings rotted away that very wet June), I began to look for other possible plants to cross. It occurred to me the auriculas with "ancient" genes might result in something interesting. I had two plants that had some history lurking in their make-up.

The first is called 'Old Irish Green' and is a rudimentary, or not very refined, green edged auricula, with a somewhat ragged edge. But it has a very sturdy constitution, a dark ground and a green edge. In a good year, my patch of these plants can reach up to 15 inches across with lots of bloom. Cy Happy gave 'Old Irish Green' to me almost 20 years ago. Cy obtained the original offset in the 1950s from Miss Wynne of Ireland. He used to exchange plants with her at that time. I guess it had survived in gardens there for decades, if not centuries.

'Dusty Double' is an unusual semi-double with a lavender color, shot through with fine red and green stripes that you don't see unless you look closely. Dust all over with silver meal, it produces an attractive but unusual effect. 'Dusty Double' is a descendent of 'Mrs. Dargen', an old striped double auricula. Again, Miss Wynne had sent a couple of blossoms to Cy Happy in an airmail letter in the 1950s and there was a bit of pollen still alive when he got them. Not to let it go to waste, he put the pollen onto a browney-green double that had a pistil. One of the seedlings was 'Dusty Double'.

In 1992, I crossed 'Old Irish Green' and 'Dusty Double' with each other and with the striped auricula from Larry Bailey: Allan Hawkes' 'Macbeth Stripe'. Any show auriculas that were in bloom were also hybridized with others of their kind — white-edged with white-edged and green-edged with green-edged.

With a great deal of luck there was a good crop of seeds and in due course a good number of seedlings — well over 50. And in 1995 they began to bloom in earnest. You'll never guess what appeared among the hodge-podge — striped auriculas! And not only striped ones, but some double striped ones, too!

It appears that there are genes for doubling in both 'Old Irish Green' and 'Dusty Double'. Occasionally you can see the little vestigial petal near the center of the flower that spoils the flower but is good news for the hybridizer, for it tells you there are genes for doubling in the plant.

The mix of seedlings includes many anomalies, such as a black show double, lovely but with a weak stem, and a number of very ancient looking auriculas that don't quite open, but are very like the earliest known colored illustrations of auriculas in a mid-16th century manuscript in Venice. Look at Ruth Duthie's little book Florists' Flowers and Societies in the Shire Garden History series, 1988, p. 34, to see these pictures.

Vestigial petals near the center of the flower indicates genes for doubling.

This book also contains a picture of a 1710 drawing of early auriculas, many of which are striped, (p. 34) and I have some similar to those in my hodge-podge mix. Another curiosity among my striped seedlings is the orange and green striped semi-double which is very ragged and
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British Flower Shows, 1995
By John N. Gibson, Yorkshire, U.K.

There are many shows in the U.K. that can be reached in a few hours drive; I usually exhibit or judge every week from the beginning of March until the middle of May.

The first show that I was involved in this year was at Morcambe. Morcambe is one of two shows that are organized jointly by the Alpine Garden Society (A.G.S.) and the Scottish Rock Garden Club (S.R.G.C.). The societies run the shows in alternate years under their respective rules; this year it was the turn of the S.R.G.C. Their premier award is the Forrest Medal, in honor of George Forrest, the famous plant hunter. Since this was an alpine plant show, there were many well-grown plants of other genera apart from Primula, but it was pleasing to see the Forrest Medal go to a superb twelve inch pan of Primula allionii ‘Mary Berry’. It was a perfect hemisphere and there was not a leaf in sight. Unfortunately, no photograph could do it justice. Another outstanding exhibit was an Asiatic hybrid, ‘Netta Dennis’. It is a petiolarid and I predict that much more will be seen and heard of it in the future. My next port of call was the Middleton A.G.S show. Middleton is well-known as one of the most prolific producers of Florists. Unfortunately, the A.G.S. doesn’t seem too keen on Florist flowers so there are no classes for Auriculas, although European primulas were well represented. Outstanding plants included P. x pubescens ‘Clarence Elliot’ and P. x miniera ‘CCM’ form, that is the only clone ever found in the wild; it was collected in the 1930’s by Mr. C. C. Mountford. P. allionii was well represented and ‘Netta Dennis’ won her class.

The first National Auricula and Primula (N.A.P.S.) show for me is the Northern Section’s Primula show, held in Leeds just around the corner from Headingly, which is the home of Yorkshire cricket. Cricket is to the English what baseball is to North Americans. I am glad that I was brought up in Scotland and don’t have those distractions. The show is held in a hall that was built by a local horticultural society specifically for flower shows. As is usual for this show, there was a good selection of Vernales hybrids ranging from the large blowzy modern forms to the more refined older named varieties. One plant that stood out was an unusual buff colored primrose with brown spots all over the petals. It took a second prize; the exhibitor turned out to be the president, Allan Guest, who told us that he bought the original plant at a garden center from the bargain corner. It had cost only 30 pence! I helped to judge the European section, where there were several interesting P. marginata and P. x pubescens. We eventually gave the Best in Show award to P. ‘Fairy Rose’, a very nice variety but difficult to grow to any size. It is a P. allionii form and much slower than either of its parents.

The following week we were in York. York is one of the few cities that still has its original wall intact and is well worth visiting even without a show. The show was organized by the Ancient Society of York Florists; they have been holding shows for 227 years and
have several shows every year. Their spring show has classes for a wide range of flowers from Auriculas to Tulips. There were two memorable plants, both shown by members of the Northern section of N.A.P.S. Tim Coop had a beautiful fancy Auricula seedling with a purple body color and the form of a top class edged variety, ‘Mr. Skinner’. One of our newer members had a good P. ‘Linda Pope’. A feature of this show was that the best plant in each section was awarded a very nice certificate that would look very well in a frame on the wall.

After another week at work it was back in the car and off to Bristol for the Saltford show of the N.A.P.S. Midland and West Section. Two of the leading lights at this venue are Peter Ward and Bob Archdale. They have been involved with it from the beginning, and as well as being first rate organizers, they know a thing or two about plants. They are both members of the A.P.S. The show is held in mid-season and is therefore in the happy position of always having a large number of plants. Sometime they have a lot of primulas and other times auriculas predominate. This year was very well balanced with all three rows of tables nicely filled and very colorful. The Premier medals went to a gold-centered Alpine ‘Andrea Julie’ shown by Midland stalwart David Tarver, and a gray-edged seedling from Brian Coop, who is the son of Tim and the equally famous Stella. The following week the Midland and West were again the hosts, this time at Knowle just south of Birmingham. Knowle is the American idea of an English village. The show is predominately auriculas and again I helped with the judging. This time in the show section we had many good plants to choose from and eventually we agreed that the Premier plant was the gray edge, ‘Grey Hawk’, raised by the Northern section secretary, David Hayfield, and shown by Bob Taylor, the editor of the Northern Year Book. The Alpine Premier was awarded to a gold center, ‘Piers Telford’, shown in the novice section by John Cattle, another Northern member. The best double was beautiful green and cream creations raised by Ken Wharton, who is the Auditor for the Northern section. He named the plant ‘Cameo Beauty’; we will see more of it in the future.

The Northern show was on its usual first Saturday in May at Cheadle, one of the more affluent suburbs of Manchester. The show was at the end of a week-long unseasonable heat wave when the temperature was higher in the U.K. than in the Mediterranean. The plant sale was held outside under Prunus trees in all their spring glory and there was a carpet of pink petals underfoot. The idyllic conditions helped the public part with their hard-earned cash and the society benefited to the tune of over £400. Inside the serious business of judging was taking place. I was involved in judging the show section and we caused quite a bit of controversy when we gave the Premier medal to a dark self seeding. The Alpine Premier went to the very old gold center, ‘C.F.Hill’, which was in the six pot class with eight other entries. Ken Wharton repeated his success in the Doubles — his entry in the class for three pots was fantastic. ‘Gold Hind’ was the best, supported by ‘Mipsie Miranda’ and ‘Gwen Baker’.

The last show of the season is that of the North East Section of the Northern society. It is the newest Auricula show and is now a fixture. It is held in a working men’s club at Newbottle near Sunderland. The venue is not the best, but the excellent beer is very reasonably priced, even if they will not sell it to a woman. My fellow judge, Penelope Harrison, cannot make up her mind whether to be annoyed that she couldn’t pay, or be pleased that she didn’t have to! 🌼
Old-Fashioned Primroses

By John A. O'Brien, Sr., Juneau, Alaska

Primroses have been thriving in the gardens of Coastal Alaska for so long, that when they first were started here has been lost in the Mists of Time. One reference in a past Quarterly of the American Primrose Society mentions the turn of the century, another reference mentions the 1920's. Actually, all we can do is provide guesswork on when hardy primroses were first brought to the gardens of our area.

Although we hadn't thought of it 'till the Editor asked for an article on what old-fashioned primroses gardeners are growing, on reflection we must be growing several in our Alaska gardens since we've been at it for so long.

One that comes to mind immediately is Primula 'Garryard Guinivere'. This Irish primrose appeared as early as 1895 according to the descendants of the family in whose garden in Ireland it was first discovered, or about 1920 according to other Irish authorities. In spite of the difference of opinion, it is a very old Irish primrose that is happy here in southeast Alaska in our cool, moist climate.

We've had it in our garden for several years, and it increases well here, and look very nice in the same bed. Primula 'Garryard Guinivere' has very pale pink blossoms above deep, dark bronzy leaves. From a distance in bright sunlight, the blooms appear white, but if viewed from a bit of an angle, the light pink can clearly be seen in the flowers. Primula 'Garryard Guinivere' has never been winter-killed in several years of being outdoors year round without any coddling or special treatment, other than a bit of seaweed around the plants each October, followed by a light covering of spruce branches. The plant doesn't seem to have any enemies here, and if I recall correctly it isn't bothered by slugs to the extent some plants are. In fact, I can't remember any slugs pestering either Primula 'Garryard Guinivere' or P. 'J-J'!

Another old-fashioned primrose that does extra well here is P. 'Dorothy' primrose. In fact, P. 'Dorothy' flourishes so strongly, it must be in everyone's garden. We don't know when and where our P. 'Dorothy' originated, but we believe it was in England. Perhaps someone can provide that information.

Sakurasoh in Urawa, Japan

By Gishu Aoki, Japan

Editor's Note: Gishu Aoki is on the staff of the Urawa Municipal Board of Education, and wrote about the primrose population in the Tajimagahara field in Primroses, Vol. 52, No. 3.

PROLOGUE

In Japan, we have a field of wild Primula sieboldii designated by the central government as a special natural monument. The field is named Tajimagahara and is located in the suburbs of Urawa City, near Tokyo. Every spring about one million primroses appear.

Sakurasoh means "Show P. sieboldii" and has been developed as horticulture since the time of the Tokugawa Shogunate. There are many Sakurasoh societies in Japan. One of them, the Saitama Sakurasoh Society, is in Urawa and has more than 300 members. Most of its members live in or around Urawa. Every spring a primrose festival is held in Urawa, and Sakurasoh shows are held at the main festival site, in train stations, and in some official halls.

NATURAL PRIMULA SIEBOLDII

P. sieboldii (E. Morren) is widely distributed throughout the northeast of Asia, that is, in the eastern part of Siberia, in the Dongbei district of China, in Korea, and in Japan. In Japan, the greater part of them grow in the volcanic mountains of Hokkaido, Honshu, and Kyushu. The only exception is a population growing on the lower Arakawa River, including the Tajimagahara field near Urawa City. This area, where summertime temperatures can exceed 30°C, is about five meters above sea level. P. sieboldii was named after Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866), who came to Japan as a physician to the Dutch Factory. He collected plants during his stay in Japan and took specimens home with him. Those specimens are now preserved at the State Herbarium of the University of Leiden, the Netherlands.

JAPANESE INTERESTS IN P. SIEBOLDII IN THE EARLY MODERN AGE

Nanzenji, one of the most famous Zen temples in Kyoto, has a sliding door with an ink drawing of P. sieboldii with one flower and one bud under cherry blossoms. The picture was drawn in the 16th century. I think it is the oldest material we have that demonstrates how long Japanese have been interested in primroses. Many artists drew primroses throughout the Early Modern Age, including famous artists such as Ogata Korin (1658-1716), Maruyama Okyo...
Sakurasoh in Urawa, Japan continued

(1733-1795), and Sakai Hoitsu (1761-1826). In their pictures, of course, primroses were drawn as spring flowers.

Edo, the present-day Tokyo, had more than one million people by the middle 19th century, and was the biggest city in the world at that time. Edo citizens used to go on picnics to the suburbs, to the banks of the Arakawa River that flows to the north of Tokyo, where they admired primroses.

Unfortunately, most of the noted places of wild primroses near Edo except Tajimagahara field were ruined, because the plants were collected and fields were cleared for crops and housing. Only Tajimagahara field, Urawa City, has been handed down as it was. This is why the field has been designated a special natural monument since 1920.

HISTORY OF SAKURASOH IN JAPAN

P. sieboldii is famous for its variation in flower color, shape, and size. This natural diversity was readily noticed in the field and rare forms were collected to plant in pots. We can still see the variation easily at the Tajimagahara field.

After a while, enthusiasts began planting primroses from seed. Then new kinds of Sakurasoh were developed in the Edo period, when very little else was blooming. After my hepaticas, anemoniellas, trilliums, primulas, cypripediums, woodland phlox, shade irises, and other wildflowers have faded, I am left with a very green space. This isn't all bad; the shapes, textures, and various shades of green (accentuated by the lacy fronds of over one hundred varieties of ferns) create a very cool and soothing atmosphere in the hottest part of summer. I have also added tubs and hanging baskets of impatiens for splashes of color during July and August. My experience with Pinellia pedatisecta and P. tripartita is that each individual plant produces a succession of flowers. After the first blossom fades and begins to produce seed, a second blossom appears (even if you don’t deadhead the plant that blooms in the shade garden). One word of warning, however; these plants are extremely late in putting something in that bare space because more than likely the bulb is still dormant rather than dead. The plus side of this tardiness is the extended season of Arum blossoms in the garden. Our native jack-in-the-pulpit, Arisaema triphyllum, and other garden Arisaemas such as the much admired A. sikokianum and the less familiar A. amurense all bloom spectacularly in May with many of our native wildflowers. The Pinellias extend the season from late June into July and frequently beyond. Unlike the closely related Arisaemas that produce only one flower per bulb per season, the Pinellias continue to bloom over an extended period.

YEAR ROUND CARE OF SAKURASOH

In late April, we enjoy the beauty of Sakurasoh. We remove the flowers after they fade, so that the seeds do not ripen. If seed is allowed to ripen, there will not be enough nourishment for the next year. After the flowering season, we add soil to the flower pots of Sakurasoh to protect the newly formed roots. Next, we manure them. In summer, the part of Sakurasoh above the ground withers, but we must continue to water them.

The budded roots increase and begin to grow underground in the fall. At the end of winter, we separate the budded roots and plant them in pots. This work must be done before the buds begin to sprout. We use glazed ceramic pots, and usually bury four budded roots per pot.

After the buds have sprouted, we must be careful not to let the Sakurasoh dry out or get frosted, and of course, be sure that they get enough sunshine.

SAKURASOH MATSURI, THE PRIMROSE FESTIVAL OF URAWA

In the latter part of April, Sakurasoh Matsuri is held in Urawa. Many events are held, the display format was created in the 19th century. Today, there are about 300 kinds of Sakurasoh in Japan. The majority of them were developed in the Edo period, which ended in 1868.

Pinellias: Summer Blossoms for the Shade Garden

by Ronald Bendixen, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Those of us who concentrate our efforts on shade gardening face a particularly unique set of circumstances that our fellow gardeners with large, open, sunny areas never have to deal with. My shade garden is very colorful from early May until mid-to-late June. With the exception of hostas, almost nothing blooms in the shady garden during July and August. Since I garden on a very small inner-city lot, my space is very precious and I grow few hostas because of their space requirements. After my hepaticas, anemoniellas, trilliums, primulas, cypripediums, woodland phlox, shade irises, and other wildflowers have faded, I am left with a very green space. This isn’t all bad; the shapes, textures, and various shades of green (accentuated by the lacy fronds of over one hundred varieties of ferns) create a very cool and soothing atmosphere in the hottest part of summer.

I have also added tubs and hanging baskets of impatiens for splashes of color during midsummer. Nevertheless, any plant that blooms in the shade garden during July and August is a bonus and certainly worthy of consideration.

This is where the genus Pinellia enters the picture. This is, in my opinion, an underused genus that isn’t as familiar to most gardeners as it should be, and isn’t represented in nearly enough woodland gardens. A member of the Arum family, these Japanese woodlanders so closely resemble the related Arisaemas (both in foliage and in flower) that it is understandably easy to confuse the two.

The plants are well worthy of space in any woodland garden or shady border, and are reliably winter hardy in zone 4. Don’t be in too much of a hurry to replant something in that bare space because more than likely the bulb is still dormant rather than dead. The plus side of this tardiness is the extended season of Arum blossoms in the garden. Our native jack-in-the-pulpit, Arisaema triphyllum, and other garden Arisaemas such as the much admired A. sikokianum and the less familiar A. amurense all bloom spectacularly in May with many of our native wildflowers. The Pinellias extend the season from late June into July and frequently beyond. Unlike the closely related Arisaemas that produce only one flower per bulb per season, the Pinellias continue to bloom over an extended period. My experience with Pinellia pedatisecta and P. tripartita is that each individual plant produces a succession of flowers. After the first blossom fades and begins to produce seed, a second blossom appears (even if you don’t deadhead the developing fruit cluster), often followed by a third. Consequently, the period of bloom is extended through much of the summer when very little else is blooming in the woodland garden.

Pinellia pedatisecta is the largest of the three species readily available,
Arisaema foliage is growing as tall as 24 inches (although mine reliably stays at 15-18 inches). As the name implies, the foliage is dissected and the plant closely resembles our native *Arisaema dracontium* in both leaf and flower, but tends to be a coarser plant in all respects. The green spathe is open rather than hooded, with a protruding green spadix, and is held above the foliage. The lighter green color of the flower contrasts with the darker green of the foliage so despite the camouflage color, the bloom stands out and draws attention. *Pinellia tripartita* grows twelve to fifteen inches tall and superficially resembles our native *Arisaema triphylla*. The leaf is three-lobed and the spathe is green outside and a mahogany brown inside. The spathe isn't hooded like our common 'Jack', so the long spadix protrudes from the top and the interior of the spathe is clearly visible. The contrasting green and mahogany make a striking color combination in the shade. A single plant in my garden produced four flowers in succession and extended the season well into August. The WE-DU Nursery catalog says of this plant: "It is adorable, reliable, and blooms forever." This species is my favorite of the three. *Pinellia ternata* is the smallest species, growing just eight to ten inches tall. It is very delicate compared to the other two species. It also has a characteristic that some gardeners find objectionable: it produces bulbils on the leaf petioles and can become a nuisance in some instances by forming rather invasive colonies if not kept in check. The spathe is erect, green with dark stripes, and the leaves are two-lobed. The species is probably the most familiar of the three, but is frequently grown under an "assumed" name. Many growers in my area refer to this as the "mouse plant". The mouse plant (here we go with those confusing common nicknames again!!!) is the common name usually associated with *Arisarum proboscideum*, also in the Arum family, so the flowers of course are similar. I got my *P. ternata* from a local nursery who gave it to me as *Arisaema proboscideum*, although no such plant exists. So, as you can see, much confusion surrounds the real identity of this plant. It looks like a miniature Jack-in-the-pulpit about the size of a thimble, and it is awfully cute (a term I usually reserve only for puppies and kittens). If the protruding spadix and brownish spathe remind you of a mouse's rump and tail, go ahead and call it a mouse plant — nobody will really mind! Pinellias will grow in almost any woodland situation; they don't seem to be too fussy about soil type, but like most woodlanders they should not be subjected to drought conditions. Most of my plants grow in full shade, but one clump of *P. ternata* gets about two hours of intense afternoon sun each day, which doesn't seem to bother it. Pinellias are starting to show up in some of the more specialized nursery catalogs. WE-DU sells all three species, Roslyn features one. [Editor's Note: Pinellias appear from time to time in the North American Rock Garden Society Seed Exchange.] Fortunately, the plants grow very easily from seed and almost always produce liberal quantities of seed under ordinary garden conditions. If the size of these plants is compatible with the scale of your garden and you don't already grow them, you might be very pleased with their midsummer contribution to your shady area.

**WE-DU Nurseries**
Route 5, Box 724
Marion, NC 28752
(704) 738-8300 Catalog: $2 US

**Roslyn Nurseries**
211 Burrs Lane
Dix Hills, NY 11746
(516) 643-9347 Catalog: $3 US

**Sakurasoh in Urawa, Japan**

Continued from page 24

Sakurasoh are held at the Tajimagahara field and on the grounds of Gyokuzouzin Temple. One of the most important events is the exhibition of Sakurasoh, with the main show held at the Gyokuzouzin Temple. Many Sakurasoh pots are displayed on a traditional shelf with a roof, like a hut. Then a competitive show is held, in which the potted entries are judged for the prize.

**EPILOGUE**

As I said, there are about 300 kinds of Sakurasoh in Japan. This number is the result of an adjustment by the Sakurasoh Society (c/o Mr. Torii, Tokyo). Indeed, there had been about 1000 names. Now if a new kind of Sakurasoh is created, it can be registered after strict judging. The Saitama Sakurasoh Society (president Masao Okamura, Urawa) also has its own system of registration. The most appropriate books to be consulted are the following:


Mr. and Mrs. Ogaki helped me write this article. I must thank them. ♦
In Memoriam
by Claire Cockcroft

ALICE HILLS BAYLOR
Alice Hills Baylor, 97, died May 22, 1995, in Morrisville, Vermont. She attended Iowa State University and was a graduate of the National Park Seminary in Washington, D.C. She was involved with landscaping along the Mississippi River for the government. Two of her proudest pieces of work were designing the Jackson and Lincoln Parks in Chicago.

At her Skyhook Nursery in Vermont, Mrs. Baylor propagated primroses and distributed them from coast to coast. She published numerous horticultural articles on the use of primroses in the garden, providing excellent, practical instruction about their culture.

Mrs. Baylor is survived by a daughter, Dorothy Schramm of Norcross, Ga., a granddaughter, two grandsons, five great-grandchildren, and two nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, Sidney Baylor.

Mrs. Schramm wrote to tell us that two of her mother's greatest loves were primroses and the out-of-doors. Mrs. Baylor enjoyed and appreciated all of her friends in the APS, and in 1972 was awarded a life membership in recognition of her outstanding service to the society.

EVELYN BALCOM

The APS lost another long-time supporter and life member when Evelyn Balcom died on August 12, 1995. Evelyn and her late husband Ralph, along with John and Winnifred Shuman and Ross and Helen Willingham, were at the core of primula enthusiasm in Seattle in the early 1950s and '60s. Together the three couples helped set the standards for judging primula shows in the Seattle area. Ralph hybridized double auriculas, keeping meticulous records of his crosses, and showed them quite successfully. Although not a plantsman like Ralph, Evelyn was a steady, dependable supporter of the Washington State Primrose Society, attending the Seattle primrose shows whenever she was able.

After their second son, a U.S.A.F. pilot stationed in Thailand, was shot down over North Vietnam in 1966, the Balcoms worked in several organizations devoted to MIA and POW concerns. The loss of their son distracted Ralph from his beloved primroses, and eventually he was unable to continue to care for his plants. Knowing how valuable these plants were, and appreciating the time and effort that went into their creation, Evelyn shared Ralph’s plants with Cy Happy, recognizing the virtue of “preserving the heritage”. Through her efforts we can continue to enjoy the fruits of her husband’s labors. ✪
Journal Report

By Mary Frey, Kent, Washington

OF PRIMROSES AND PEAT

Joel Smith offers an engaging treatise about Primula macrophylla growing on the Indian Himalayan range in the Quarterly Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society, June, 1995. Smith explains that because P. macrophylla, P. moorcroftiana, and P. purpurea all thrive in boggy turf and damp rocky ledges, they were sometimes confused with one another by early plant explorers.

Although Wallich recorded his discovery of P. macrophylla in 1820, it wasn’t until 1941 that Smith and Fletcher scientifically analyzed P. macrophylla and published their findings in “The Genus Primula: Section Nivales”. They cited geography as the basis for chromosomal differences between the Chinese and western Himalayan varieties — rivers in China divide the land so that new species develop due to natural selection whereas the western species hybridize among themselves because there is “no true separation”. Smith and Fletcher cataloged five primula varieties in addition to P. macrophylla, which appears to dwell primarily in western Himalaya, eastern Hindu Kush and southern Pamirs.

All experts agree that P. macrophylla is difficult to grow but Joel Smith suggests taking clues from the plant’s native habitat. High altitudes provide a protective snow cover and then the rapid gush of melting snow; one can duplicate this by using a glass pane over the plants to shield their dormant buds, then water frequently in April to induce swift growth and bloom. He cautions, however, that timing and water are the key factors for success.

In the same issue, Margaret and Henry Taylor discuss their many pleased and pleasing Himalayan flora prospering in peat beds. These plants include Primula, Meconopsis, Calanthe, Rhododendron, and Gentiana. The Taylors helped renew interest in Himalayan plants through their writing, lectures, plant introductions, and, of course, garden. This extensive article provides a healthy dose of information from these remarkable people.

OF CYCLAMENS AND DEER

In the June, 1995, Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Club of B.C., Andree Connell examines the growing conditions of cyclamens. She describes each of the nineteen species and even lists obsolete names like europaeum, neapolitanum, vernum and ibericum that still appear in nursery catalogs. She also asserts that all the Primulaaceae she’s grown are virtually deerproof as food items. Can anyone counter this claim?

ON A PRIMROSE PATH

A marvelous article about Charles and Martha Oliver’s Primrose Path nursery in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, appears in American Horticulturist, July, 1995. Included in the piece are quotes from APS members Marie Skonberg, Norm Singer, Nancy Goodwin, and Jack Ferreri.

continued on page 32

APS Book Review

PRIMULA by John Richards, Illustrated by Brigid Edwards

Batsford, London 1993

This beautiful book by John Richards should be in the library of every serious primula grower. It is THE definitive reference work, covering 800 species in the genus. Richards gives each species its valid name and place of publication, and a full description of each plant, its breeding behavior, cultivation, and altitudinal range.

There is a chapter on the history and evolution of Primula and its relatives, a section on pests and diseases, and details of propagation.

PRIMULA is lavishly illustrated by Brigid Edwards, who has worked with Sylvia Kelso. Edwards has contributed 116 colored painting on nineteen plates to Richards’ book. Additionally, there are 51 color photographs, mostly taken in the wild.

Available from Timber Press at $49.50 US. PRIMULA is not cheap, but is worth every penny.

by Dennis Oakley,
Richmond Beach, B.C.

Anyone with an active interest in The Genus Primula or those likely to develop one should surely invest in this book. While it has a scientific approach to some aspects of the subject, it will serve as a valuable general reference that many gardeners will grow to appreciate as they gain experience with this wonderful and challenging family.

The author is an environmental botanist who has worked with primulas for some fifteen years and has, as he says, “grown and lost some 140 species”. I find the botanist x gardener hybrid breathes a strong breath of practicability into what would otherwise be a meticulous scientific work.

I was pleased to see that North American species are well documented in the book. So much has been discovered about them in recent years and it is good to have the information within one cover. For the life of me, I can never understand how the British succeed with some of our difficult alpine plants. Primula suffrutescens, for example, has “been in cultivation since 1884, easily raised by cuttings and division”. I would like to be able to grow one long enough to see a cutting!

Brigid Edwards, R.H.S. Gold Medal botanical illustrator, has painted nineteen plates containing 116 excellent individual species that quickly lead to the identification of many species. The 51 color photographs are largely taken in the wild and many are being published for the first time. The photographers’ names are well known and the quality of their work is excellent, as usual. I found the atmosphere captured in some of the natural habitats very appealing, readily showing why many species are so hard to grow on Vancouver Island.

by Rex Murfitt, Victoria, B.C.
American Primrose Society Bookstore

Hot off the press! Auriculas, by Gwen Baker and Peter Ward, describes more than 200 varieties and includes the lineage of numerous popular hybrids. This beautiful book contains over 60 color photos. APS members can enjoy our bargain price of $25 US plus shipping.
Primula, by John Richards, is available for $36 US. See APS Book Review on page 31.

Address your orders and inquiries to:
Thea Oakley, American Primrose Society Librarian
3304 288th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98053 USA

Orders must be prepaid in US dollars by check on a US bank or by international money order. Postage and handling: in the US add $3 for the first book and $1.50 for each additional book, or outside the US add $5 for the first book and $2.50 for each additional book.

Notes from the Editor

By Claire Cockcroft

SUMMER, 1995

It's been a strange summer in Seattle this year. First we had unusually long stretches of warm, sunny days, interrupted by drenching cloudbursts that toppled tall perennials but blessed the rest of the garden. The early hot days shortened the bloom season of Primula japonica, P. helodoxa, P. pulverulenta, and other "asiatics", and later heat wilted their leaves every afternoon. Fortunately, cool evenings revived them with little extra water required. The P. deticulata's looked like Romaine lettuce, with leaves a foot and a half long, overflowing their allotted space. Black spot menaced the Julie hybrids and stalked the fringes of all my primula beds.

Then we had "October in August". In came cool, half-sunny days that fooled the poor asitic primulas into blooming a second time. Perhaps they are trying to make up for their short bloom the first time out. Cylcemen blossoms are everywhere, at least a month earlier than usual, joined by colchicums and polyanthus primulas. Rains have been frequent but not too heavy.

I've been busy dividing many of my primulas as they burst into root growth before the real autumn arrives. By now our weather is really mixed up — cool, with teasing glimpses of warm summer days, interrupted by thunderstorms. Whenever I start to grumble about it, I think about the extreme temperatures in the rest of the U.S. and England and count my blessings. The summer of 1995 will be one to remember for all of us.

SAKURASOH

The American Sakurasoh Association, dedicated to the hybridization, growing, and enjoyment of Primula sieboldii, has been picking up steam and new members. Founder Paul Held sends out an excellent instruction sheet covering the gathering, storing, and sowing of P. sieboldii seeds. He also edits an interesting newsletter.

This fall Paul is planning to send every ASA member a dormant plant bud from either of two of his named forms, 'Cover Girl' or 'Pretty Boy'. He has also selected a set of twenty newly-named forms of P. sieboldii, which he describes in his newsletter. For the first time, he is selling color photocopies of these selected forms, as well as plants from the set.

HERB DICKSON

Addaline Robinson reports that Herb's new house in Missouri was coming right along, and if things stayed on schedule he should be in it by the time he reads this edition of Primroses. Herb has been staying with his daughter while his son-in-law builds the house.

Herb's new address is 19081 Julie Road, Lebanon, Missouri, 65536. He will need some time to get organized, as his storage sheds are so full that it takes him a while to find anything!

APS memberships are still coming in through Herb's efforts. Addaline get lots of requests for his catalog and seed lists.

We missed him at the APS annual picnic — it was the first one he missed in 28 years.

'PRIMPOT' PRIMULAS

At the 1991 symposium "Primula Worldwide", polyanthus primroses were distributed as gifts. Although not hardy, they had rosebud-shaped flowers in amazing colors clustered over large, heavily veined leaves. Jack Smith writes that these primulas are now available from Twyford Plant Laboratories under the name "PrimPot". Twyford grows them in 200-cell liners that they ship to nurseries.

Send a SASE to the editor for a list of nurseries in California and New Hampshire
Notes from the Editor continued

that have been buying from Twyford. Or you may wish to contact the producer directly: Twyford Plant Laboratories 15245 Telegraph Rd. Santa Paula, CA 93060

PRIMROSE SEED FROM ENGLAND

Lawrence Wigley writes that he is producing two seed strains and may have surplus seed for sale. The first is a gold-laced polyanthus primrose and the second is a hybrid strain of Primula juliae for hardiness, compactness and long life.

Both strains are hand-pollinated. Send an international reply-paid coupon for details to: Lawrence E. Wigley 67 Warnham Court Road - Carshalton Beeches Surrey SM5 3ND - UK

THOMPSON AND MORGAN’S ‘COWICHAN’ CLAIM TO BE REVISED

APS President John Kerridge writes that the chairman of Thompson and Morgan has given his assurance that information in their catalogue concerning the ‘Cowichan’ polyanthus primrose will be changed. As you may recall, their 1995 catalog contained a claim that the origin of the ‘Cowichan’ primrose was Thompson and Morgan seed purchased in the 1930’s. This claim was the subject of much disagreement (and derision) in the APS. The change may not appear until after the 1996 edition of their seed catalog, however, because of printing deadlines.

News from the Chapters

A summary of chapter meetings

ALASKA

Everyone was busy this summer enjoying the season. Misty Haffner reports that her family hiked up to a favorite spot just above timberline (1500 to 2200 ft.) on the Mt. Roberts Trail and found wild timberline (1500 to 2200 ft.) on the Mt.

News from the Chapters

PENNSYLVANIA

Doretta Klaber Chapter

Meets four times a year. Contact Dot Plyler, chapter president, for details.

This summer’s blistering, rainless days took a heavy toll on primroses in the Delaware Valley. What the heat didn’t kill the fungus and root rot did. Our friends in the east could use some “care packages” of seed to help them restock. The Doretta Klaber Chapter has a popular seed-saving meeting every February. If you have any extra primula seeds that didn’t make it into the seed exchange, or perennial seeds (since these plants were “crisped”, too) please contact Dot Plyler, 18 Bridal Path, Chadds Ford, PA 19317. Your surplus seeds will really be appreciated and will find a good home!

WASHINGTON

Washington State Chapter

Meets the second Friday of each month, except July and August, at the United Good Neighbor Center at 305 S 43rd Street, Renton, (across the street from Valley General Hospital) at 7:45 p.m. Guests are welcome.

WASHINGTON

The July meeting featured APS President John Kerridge, giving a talk on primulas and their hybridization. Officers were elected for the coming year: President Rosetta Jones, Vice President Thea Oakley, Secretary-Treasurer Allan Jones, and Program Chairman April Boettger.

Eastside Chapter

Meets the first Monday of each month at First Interstate Savings Bank, 6615 132nd Avenue NE, Kirkland, at the Bridal Trails Mall at 7:30 p.m.

New officers were elected: President Thea Oakley, Vice President Sandra Holleenbeck, Treasurer Beth Tate, and Secretary Rose Brock.

Seattle Chapter

Meets four times a year. Contact June Skidmore, chapter president, for details.

August’s meeting was a picnic and plant exchange. The Seattle Chapter is small, but there was enough food to feed a small army and enough plants to stock a small nursery! June Skidmore continues as president with Jane Micklesten assisting as treasurer. Next meeting: October 26.

Tacoma Chapter

Meets the first Tuesday of each month, except July and August, in the Fireside Room of the First United Methodist Church, 1919 West Pioneer, Puyallup, at 7:30 p.m.

Tacoma Chapter, with the Mt. Tahoma Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, jointly sponsored a lecture by Josef Halda, who spoke about “A Mix of Attractive Plants from Greece and the Alps”. Mr. Halda wrote “The Genus Primula”, plus six books about plants written in Czech, and is now working on several books in English. He has spent the last few years collecting seed in the south central area of Asia, after seed gathering from China, Lesotho, and Patagonia.

Dan Pederson is the new chapter president, Duncan McAlpine is vice-president, Verna McClarney is secretary and Candy Strickland is treasurer.

OREGON

Oregon Primrose Society

Meets the third Friday of every month from September through May at 7 p.m. at the Milwaukee Community Club, 42nd and Jackson Sts., Milwaukee OR. Contact Ann Lunn, chapter president, for details.

Chapter officers for the coming year are President Ann Lunn, Vice President Thelma Genheimer, Treasurer Orval Agee, and Secretary Dorothy Macfarlane.

Valley Hi Chapter

Meets the second Monday of the month from September through November and February through May at 1 p.m. at Thelma Genheimer’s house, 7100 SW 290th, Beaverton, OR. Contact Thelma for details.

Chapter officers for the new year are President Orval Agee, Vice President Helen Moehnke, Secretary Addaline Robinson, and Treasurer Thelma Genheimer.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC Primrose Group

Meets on the third Wednesday of September, November, January, March, and May, at 7:30 p.m. at the Thomas Hobbs Southlands Nursery, Vancouver. Call (604) 274-0551 or (604) 224-7813 to confirm.

In May, Maedythe Martin visited from Victoria and treated the group to a talk on auriculas. Her collection includes a number of old-fashioned and striped varieties that induced mouth-watering and envy. Maedythe’s many tips on growing helped everyone.

In June, the group set up a booth at the Van Dusen Garden Show. There was plenty of interest, since there were many primulas in bloom. Thirteen species and many hybrids provided unusual material to show off the diversity of primulas. Small demonstration items for raising seedlings such as plastic pop-bottles and pots in plastic bags drew much attention and brought the public in to chat. A “Smell Me” sign on a glorious Primula florindae had everyone bending over and arising in ecstasy. Oh, for a high-speed rear-view video of the three days of that!

Rosetta Jones was the scheduled speaker for the September meeting.

American Primrose Society - Fall 1995 35
Board of Directors Meeting
Held July 8, 1995 at Thelma Genheimer's house, Beaverton, Oregon

PICNIC
Twenty three members from Washington and Oregon gathered at Thelma Genheimer's house for the annual potluck and plant auction. Thank you, Thelma, for providing such a lovely setting! As usual with parties involving gardeners, lively conversations bounced amidst many tempting dishes and many tempting plants. Auctioneer Flip Fenili, assisted by Ann Lunn, led spirited rounds of bidding in the plant auction. After the fun, some serious business was undertaken at the board meeting.

DUES
The board spent a long time discussing dues and APS expenses. The current dues no longer cover the cost of publishing Primroses due to increases in printing costs and postage. Alternatives were explored, including decreasing the size of the quarterly, limiting color printing to only once a year, and bringing out the quarterly only three times a year. (What would we call it then, a thirdly?) As a small society, specializing in a single genus, we have difficulty attracting the large membership over which costs could be spread more evenly. In the end, all agreed that a small increase of $5 per year was reasonable compared to other societies and would allow the APS to continue serving its membership. Remember the benefits derived from your dues:

- Primroses, the APS Quarterly Bulletin
- APS Seed Exchange, where you can find primula seeds that aren’t available anywhere else
- APS Slide Library, where you can borrow beautiful and interesting slide programs
- APS Round Robin, where you can enjoy the old-fashioned fun of being a pen pal with a whole group of interesting people from all over the world
- APS Bookstore, where you can get great bargains on great books, many difficult to find
- APS Plant Shows, where you can see the best of both the old and the new and compete for glory and prizes
- Camaraderie, information, and just plain fun in APS chapters — so remember to pay your national dues along with any local dues!

Individual or household membership dues will increase to $20 US per calendar year, or $55 for three years. Individual life membership dues will increase to $275. Membership renewals for the coming year are due November 15 and delinquent after December 31, 1995.

ELECTIONS
John Kerridge, APS president, will soon appoint a nominating committee to seek out candidates for APS offices (or may have already done so by the time we go to press). Since the APS is a relatively small organization, the nominating committee’s job is often a difficult one. To help you decide if YOU might like to run for office, here are brief descriptions of each position and its duties. If you would like more information or want to throw your hat in the ring, write or call John Kerridge (or the editor).

The President acts as the official representative of the APS, presides over board of directors meetings held four times a year, and takes on correspondence outside the society. He/she gets to appoint and oversee committees to help when they’re needed.

The Vice President presides when the president is not in attendance and takes on specific projects as decided by the president.

The Secretary is a recording secretary (the corresponding secretary is appointed), who takes minutes at board of directors meetings, distributes these minutes and appropriate materials after the board meetings, sends out the agenda for board meetings, and receives and tallies the election ballots.

The Treasurer receives dues, keeps a current membership list, pays the bills, and appropriately invest the society’s moneys. The office involves some correspondence apart from that done by the corresponding secretary, responding to requests for information about the APS. The treasurer prepares and submits quarterly and annual financial statements, prepares and submits an annual budget, and makes out mailing labels for the quarterly (although the current treasurer has help doing labels).

SPRING SHOWS
On a lighter note, host chapters and sites were chosen for the upcoming spring shows. The Valley Hi chapter and the Oregon Primrose Society will co-host the National Show on March 30-31, 1996, in the Beaverton Mall in Beaverton, Oregon. The Tacoma Show will be held April 13-14, 1996.

by Claire Cockcroft

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EDITORIAL DEADLINE FOR WINTER ISSUE OF PRIMROSES IS NOVEMBER 1

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MEMBERSHIP
Dues for individual or household membership in the American Primrose Society, domestic and foreign, are $20 U.S. per calendar year ($21 for renewals postmarked after January 1); $55 for three years; or $275 for an individual life membership. Submit payment to the treasurer. Membership renewals are due November 15 and are delinquent at the first of the year.

Membership includes a subscription to the quarterly Primroses, seed exchange privileges, slide library privileges and the opportunity to join a Round Robin.

PUBLICATIONS
Manuscripts for publication in the quarterly are invited from members and other gardening experts, although there is no payment. Please include black and white photographs if possible. Send articles directly to the editor.

Advertising rates per issue: full page, $100; half page, $50; quarter page, $25; eighth page and minimum, $12.50. Artwork for ads is the responsibility of the advertiser, and camera ready copy is appreciated. Submit advertising to the editor.