President’s Message

The autumn leaves may be falling as you read this message and your primroses prepare for their long winter rest — especially in the colder parts of the US. Here in the mild Northwest, the long flowering *P. florindae* and *P. capitata* seem to bloom right up until the first frost arrives.

The Alaska group is busy sorting and packaging seed, and thanks go to all members from home and abroad who contributed seed for this important feature of the A.P.S. Contributions, however small, are most appreciated.

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting John Gibson and his wife, Josie, from the UK, who were visiting this area for a short time. John, an ardent primula grower and contributor to our Quarterly, is a regular participant at the various shows. He just happened to have some slides of plants with him (!) and some local members were fortunate to view a number of show quality plants as well as primulas growing in the wild. It is obvious that the show standards are very high in the UK and competition strong — but this is not too surprising as they have a long tradition of growing of primroses and auriculas there.

Some excellent plants, however, are being grown in this country, and members will have the opportunity to see many on display at the National Show, to be held on the first weekend in April at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, just east of Seattle. The setting is ideal in this lovely garden, where primulas can be seen growing in the rock garden and the perennial border. This Show will be a joint effort by Chapters in the Seattle area and added attractions will be a plant sale, tours of members’ gardens, plus a banquet with a featured speaker. Local members are offering accommodations — so the welcome mat is out.

I have news of a new book, *Primroses and Polyanthus* by Peter Ward, to be published in November. There are chapters on species, single and double primroses, gold-lace polyanthus, Barnhaven, cultivation and hybridizing. This is exciting news and members will be able to purchase this book through the APS bookshop soon.

I have just one more reminder: your dues are due in November! It makes life a little easier for our Treasurer if they are received as soon as possible before the holiday rush. Thank you.

June Skidmore, Mercer Island, Washington 🌟

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Primroses

Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

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COVER PHOTOS

Even in pots, double primroses put on quite a display: ‘Sunshine Susie’ (top) and ‘Dawn Ansell’ (bottom).

— Photos by John N. Gibson
Fambridge Primroses

By Thea Service Foster, North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Maedythe Martin's report on the primrose shows (Primroses, Vol. 55, No. 3, pp. 20-22) prompted me to write an update about my auricula strains, as over the years Primroses has carried comments of mine about my border auriculas, species primroses, auriculas, and Primula pubescens hybrids, and a lot has "gone on" since I last wrote. Spring, 1997, was an extraordinary year for my various hybrids.

THE "WILD COLLECTED" SWISS AURICULAS: FAMBRIDGE FORMS

In 1979, an Austrian member of our Alpine Garden Club of B.C. (AGC B.C.) received fresh wild-collected species P. auricula seeds. His sister had gathered it on Mount Schneeberg near Vienna at about 6500 ft. I had sown species auricula seed previously and found it took well over a year to germinate. Usually plants grew slowly and flowered only every other year — if that.

The seed from Schneeberg came up quickly. Although the seedlings were obviously true species, they weren't at all typical. They were all small, with less leathery leaves than usual. The leaves had only faint traces of meal and only on the occasional plant, though the flowers had well-mealed eyes. By 1981, one of the plants had taken a first prize in a club pot show. I donated about half a dozen plants to that year's club spring sale. After several wins at our shows, the prize winning plant was named P. auricula f. 'Lemon Sherbet'.

To my amazement, f. 'Lemon Sherbet' regularly bloomed in both spring and fall — a most remarkable and rewarding habit. Divisions of f. 'Lemon Sherbet' soon appeared in the VIRAGS shows and took awards there as well as in Vancouver. The AGC B.C.'s Daphne Guernsey also regularly received prizes for a deep yellow plant that I had donated to the club sale. It is very dark-leaved and produces generous trusses of flowers.

In 1995, Daphne's plant and f. 'Lemon Sherbet' were in our Vancouver spring show. It suddenly dawned on me that they were perfect candidates for hand pollinating. Daphne gave me a small flowering division that I promptly crossed with f. 'Lemon Sherbet'. A good yield of seed was produced and sown fresh in July, 1995. Seed promptly germinated and there were 40 seedlings. To my amazement, 15 blossomed in May, 1997. They vary in flower quality and leaf color but are uniformly small in size, like their parents. The five best were clay-potted for the 1997 AGC BC show and ten less showy plants were planted in a 12" oval clay planter for the BC Primula Group display. That is the "pan" of plants that Maedythe remarked on in her show report. The remaining plants from f. 'Lemon Sherbet' x f. 'Guernsey Gold' (as it is now named) are growing well and could possibly show some bloom this fall. I'll offer up a prayer that they've inherited f. 'Lemon Sherbet's reblooming habit, too. (Hey! Just looked and one is in big bud!)

I am now working on another generation. The largest f. 'Guernsey Gold' x f. 'Lemon Sherbet' (in 1997) plant had two trusses of dark yellow flowers. Another similar sibling was crossed onto it, producing 200 seeds. Fifty seeds were promptly sown on July 21st. Auricula growers may accuse me of telling tall tales — believe it or not, there are three seeds germinated by July 31st! As a raiser of auriculas only, I am very familiar with their distinctive cotyledons (I haven't had time or space to devote to other primulas for several years because I have so many auricula family plants). Ten days to germination is a record for species auriculas in my experience.

I have just sent friend Ann Lunn some of the seed. She has f. 'Lemon Sherbet', so possibly she might do a future cross with any worthwhile plants that result from the seed.

A footnote here seems advisable. Rick Lupp recently strongly advised against sowing fresh seed in summer. Our climate here in Vancouver is quite different from his area, where temperatures reach 10 to 15° higher than ours in mid-summer. Many British experts advise sowing seed fresh, so their summer temperatures may resemble ours, where an 80-85° spell of weather is a real heat wave. I enjoy having my seedlings bloom so much in advance of spring-sown plants as I have a large bump of curiosity — especially regarding my own HP's. (This may be an especially good year for fresh sowing as there are signs of germination in a pot of OP P. pubescens. 'Faldonside' put in on July 12th.)

FAMBRIDGE P. X PUBESCENS

The neat form of P. x pubescens had always appealed to me, but unnamed plants seemed invariably to tend to cerise or fuchsia shades, which are far from my favorite colors. Then in Milwaukee, in 1986, Ann Lunn had coppery-red P. x pubescens 'The General'. That sold me on the possibilities of P. x pubescens.

On our way home from Milwaukee, we stayed at Herb Dickson's. I did a thorough prowl of his miles of shelves and came up with 'Bob Putnum's Ruffled Red'. It was not in bloom at the time. Herb said it was a 'Rufus' or 'The General' cross. That sold me! On its first blooming (a lovely deep copper-red), it was crossed with 'Apple Blossom', Rae Berry's hybrid. None of the resulting seedlings were copper toned, but a lovely assortment of clear ruby reds and pinks resulted, plus some deep garnet reds. On its first flowering, the best pink took first in the 1992 AGC B.C. Show, with Cy Happy as judge. I have since named this hybrid 'Happy Pink', and it is a true Northwesterner, with Bob Putnum and Rae Berry as the breeders of the its parents.

In the 1995 AGC B.C. Show, I had an assortment of my 'Apple Blossom' x 'Bob Putnum's Ruffled Red' plants. Brenda Faulkner appeared with the first plant I'd ever seen of the British plant 'Rufus'. The color and mass of flowered stunned me. At show closing, Brenda said "Help yourself to pollen". In a wink of an eye, I'd used 'Rufus' on three of mine — a coppery garnet, 'Happy Pink',...
and another small pink. Seed yield was terrific, and this seed was sown in July, 1995. Seedlings from those crosses started to flower in April and May, 1997. There have been good, clear-eyed reds, lilac-pinks, and one clear light strawberry pink. Those are the ones Maedythe mentioned in Primroses. They were really precocious, blooming in 22 months from seed. I have an extensive area devoted to the remaining seedlings, with over 70 yet to come. The one clear strawberry pink has my hopes up for more of its type among the remaining ones.

**FAMBRIDGE BORDERS**

I would highly recommend border (garden) auriculas to first-time hybridizers. They are such fine, sturdy plants with such strong stems. These characteristics make them easy to handle for pollinating. The large flowers are easy to transfer pollen from, onto the large pistils. Herb Dickson's magnificent strain, seen in A.P.S. shows since 1978, with such strong stems. I have an extensive area devoted to the remaining seedlings, with over 70 yet to come. The one clear strawberry pink has my hopes up for more of its type among the remaining ones.

The stock I used to create my 'Fambridge' strain of border auriculas came from many sources. I had one lovely plant grown from seed donated to the 1978 A.P.S. Seed Exchange by Kris Fenderson. The flower is close-to-white, tinted in the center with lime green, nicely ruffled; I named this plant 'Marguerita' in 1981. I also had an extremely good, classic deep yellow, white-eyed plant from Herb's seed, whose flower had an almost perfect self show form. On yet another visit to Herb's, I got a plant labeled '77's Best Yellow Prizewinner'. It is a soft yellow, nicely ruffled, rather like photos of the old Irish border 'Queen Alexandra'. In the mid-1980s, John Kerridge gave me a division of the British border 'Paradise Yellow'. It is a very sturdy deep yellow plant and a splendid pollen parent. These plants together created my 'Fambridge' strain. Pale yellows and close-to-whites dominate. They are the most highly scented, as they use scent rather than color to attract bees. Since 1992, Cy Happy has consistently given his top award to my pastel fringed and ruffled forms at the AGC B.C. Spring Show. The fringing and ruffling appear to stem from Herb's '77's Best Yellow Prizewinner' and the tendency to white or ivory from Fambridge 'Marguerita'.

My only problem with border auriculas? They like me too well, and end up filling every spare inch of the garden! ♠

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**Book Review**

By John N. Gibson, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, United Kingdom

**Primula allionii, Forms and Hybrids**

By Bob Archdale and David Richards

This 36 page booklet by two very respected experts is a mine of information and will be read by both beginners and those who know a little bit more. There can be no more excuses that there is no information available, all you need to know is here.

The chapter on cultivation gives sound advice on watering and the importance of good drainage, and describes a musical -moisture indicator, which may be all right for a small collection but the imagination runs riot at the prospect of testing several hundred plants by this method. The authors also describe several methods of cleaning clay pots. Compost is discussed in some detail, and various mixtures as used by successful growers are mentioned. Of particular interest to non-British gardeners are the formulas for John Innes Compost and also the base fertilizer that is used with it.

Propagation and hybridization are gone into very thoroughly and we should all become experts at both crafts. Methods used vary from camel hair brushes to crocus leaves. Other chapters discuss Pests and Diseases, Exhibition, etc. The advice for intending exhibitors is sound and should be compulsory reading for all, including those who are considered to be expert.

The final pages give a tantalizing list of forms and hybrids, many of which will be unobtainable outside the U.K. The descriptions are so mouth watering that the nurseries recommended will be receiving quite a lot of airmail. The Authors list six publications for reference — I would say that this work will make a seventh source of information. ♠

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**In Memoriam: Bill Metzlaff**

The sudden death of Bill Metzlaff of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, startled all of us who had met Bill at various rock garden and primrose conferences. Bill was such an enthusiastic grower and collector. Anne Savannah remembers Bill this way:

With deepest regret I must inform all who knew Bill Metzlaff that he passed away very suddenly yesterday evening, doing what he loved the most, showing his alpine garden to visitors from across the country. Many people from around the world knew Bill from either traveling with him, meeting him at conventions, trading plants or seed with him or visiting his wonderful alpine garden in Calgary, Alberta. His passion for alpines was unequalled by anybody I’ve ever met before and his collection and care of those alpines reflected that passion. His enthusiasm was infectious; many of us caught it, starting our own alpine gardens because of that enthusiasm. He contributed hugely to the knowledge base on what is hardy for our northern climate and introduced us to new and unusual plants each year. He will be greatly missed.
A. P. S. On-line

By Maedythe Martin, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

There is a new breed of gardener out there who not only gets her hands dirty but plays in the ethereal plane for cyberspace. Some of these talented growers are even interested in primroses! What a good thing it is that the A.P.S. has a very handsome home page for the net-surfing gardeners to visit.

The A.P.S. website is a clever and well-designed spot where you can learn more about the society, and can be tempted to join in order to learn more about primroses. Duncan McAlpine is the wonderful designer of this marvelous computer-world creation. I knew the web page was there, but I'm not really an inveterate Internet browser — I like my e-mail to primrose pen pals and that's about it. But I offered to answer queries logged on the A.P.S. web page, and a whole new world unscrolled before my very eyes.

When you open the web page, the cream-colored, subtly-textured background (like parchment paper) sets off the picture of the purple alpine auricula to perfection. Many of the primula photos are thanks to Jay Lunn's wizardry with a camera. But read on. There is information about us in A.P.S. and like all clever web pages, you can click on phrases like "Seed Exchange" and "Round Robin" and learn more on those particular aspects. More photos — one could never say the flower of Primula vialii was shy — and learn more on those particular aspects. More photos — one could never say the flower of Primula vialii was shy — and learn more on those particular aspects.

Since I have been answering the potential primrose-growers' questions, I've had serious interest shown by a grower in Australia who lives up at 3,500 feet and has a moderate climate, so there is hope for primroses to survive, and a keen gardener in South Africa. I believe these two questioners have now joined the society! Imagine! And all of this possible through the shiny blue medium of cyberspace!

But the gardeners are not just hanging about in the ether — their questions included, "How do I find plants?" or "Where can I get seed?" The aspect of a seed exchange seems to have wide appeal. There's nothing like finding an international pen pal as keen as you are on primroses, but the real gardener wants to get something to plant in the good rich loamy soil of home, too.

If you want to look at the A.P.S. web page yourself, check out http://www.eskimo.com/~mcalpin/APS.html

And if you bookmark this place once you have found it, you never have to type in that whole long string again!
The Ancient Society of York Florists

By Penelope Dawson-Brown, Low Askew, N. Yorkshire, England

[Reprinted with permission from Country Life Magazine, July 3, 1997.]

To most of us, the word florist describes a person who sells flowers. But from the beginning of the 17th century until the last quarter of the 19th century, it signified someone who cultivated plants, to a high standard, purely for their beauty. Before that, plants were grown mainly by herbalists for their healing qualities.

There were eight classic florists' flowers: auricula, polyanthus, hyacinth, anemone, ranunculus, tulip, pink, and carnation. All were grown at York, but auricula, tulip and carnation were especially popular.

The Ancient Society of York Florists was formed in 1768 (the word “ancient” was added to its title in about 1804). Today it is the last horticultural society to retain the word florist in its name and, remarkably, its archives have survived intact.

The Society’s first show was held at The Sand Hill Inn, Colliergate, on April 24, 1768. There were just three classes, and the first prizes of 7s 6d were awarded to Charles Brown (auricula), John Roebuck (hyacinth) and William Salmon (polyanthus).

In 1829, the York Florists were presented with a copper plate which was used for printing invitations. This came from the Royal Society of Gardeners of York, an earlier society which was founded in Queen Anne’s reign. The plate bears three coats of arms: The Royal, The City of York, and The Gardeners.

Florists’ society members coupled the pursuit of excellence in a chosen flower with the desire to compete against their friends, and this led to “shews” being held at florists’ feasts. In the early days, these were enjoyable events where good food and wine were as important as the flowers themselves. A merry band of wealthy city tradesmen, the first York florists were no exception, and the principal rule — “happiness being the ultimate end proposed by the Society” — sometimes led to drunken brawls at the annual gatherings.

But there were also professional nurserymen among the 200 founding members. One was John Telford Junior, whose forebears had established a celebrated nursery at the Friars gardens in Toft Green during the 1660s. In 1816, this was bought by and renamed after Thomas and James Backhouse, who were also loyal supporters of the Society.

Future members included clergymen, councillors and even lord mayors, but there was no place for the working classes until 1869, when the Archbishop of York was president. Then, a special class for window gardening was created at the summer show held in the Guildhall.

The tulip was always special to Yorkshiremen, and the founding of the Wakefield Tulip Society in 1836 attests to this. Tulips were first shown by the York florists on May 20, 1768, when John Roebuck won 7s 6d for best exhibit. He won many more prizes until his unruly behaviour over judging led him to be disqualified for one year.

Throughout the 18th century, the carnation was by far the most widely grown of all the florists’ flowers. There were four classes: flake, with only two colours; bizarre, with not less than three colours; picotee, which at that time denoted pricked or spotted colouring; and seedlings, which were always greeted with excitement.

A florist’s joy when he first beholds his seedling was charmingly described in Thomas Hogg’s Treatise on the Carnation etc (1820) as “equal to that of a Lord in first viewing the infant heir to his title, wealth and honours”. The names of conquerors, emperors and heroes were usually bestowed on the flowers at their ritualistic “christenings”.

Included in the July carnation show was a class for gooseberries (for which Yorkshire was famed). An 1821 Backhouse nursery catalogue listed 163 varieties. Judging entailed the weighing of individual berries in pennyweights, complete with foot stalks and snuffs. There were classes for each colour — red, yellow, green and white.

But of all the florists’ flowers, perhaps none was more adored than the auricula, which thrilled voluptuously in the North. Few could argue that here was equal to that of a Lord

Continued on Page 12
Primula allionii Spotlight
By John N. Gibson, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, England

KENS SEEDLING

‘Kens seedling’ is a vigorous and comparatively fast growing form of Primula allionii that will make a good exhibition size cushion in four or five years. Its large thum-eyed pips often hide the foliage completely. If it has a fault, it is its intense dislike of moisture on the leaves, which almost always results in an attack of Botrytis.

‘Kens seedling’ was raised in 1952 by the late Kenneth Wooster and was given by him to his lifelong friend Joe Elliot. Mr. Elliot was at that time a nurseryman at Broadwell in Gloucestershire and he released some plants that were labeled ‘K.R.W.’ Some of his competitors went a step further and lengthened the label to ‘K.R.Wooster’. Mr. Wooster was not amused at that but acknowledged that it was indeed a fine form and gave his permission for it to be called ‘Kens seedling’.

The parentage was not recorded but it is known that Mr. Wooster used P. a. alba and P. ‘Frank Barker’ in his breeding program. *

THE PURSUIT OF PLANTS

The June 1997 The Rock Garden of the Scottish Rock Garden Club includes several pieces of interest to primula buffs. Sheila Brinkley explores the life of Carolus Clusius, a great Renaissance fellow in the 16th century who influenced botanical researchers such as the celebrated botanist Carl Linnaeus. Clusius traveled and botanized extensively throughout western Europe where he discovered and named Gentiana clusii and Primula clusiana in the mountains near Vienna, Austria. He introduced Primula auricula into the Austrian markets patronized by noble ladies after he named the plant Auricula ursii because the foliage looked like bears’ ears.

Clusius also collected and distributed a primula cousin, Cortusa matthioli. He died in 1609 at the age of eighty-three.

Anne Chambers, Fred Hunt and Richard Lilley also recount their memorable 1995 expedition to southeast Tibet. Despite many soggy days on their trek; they gleefully describe a host of botanical treasures. They locate Primula bellaflora near the summit of one pass and farther on they come across “thousands of purple P. calderiana.”

Fredrick M. Bailey discovered Meconopsis betonicifolia in 1913 in the Rong Chu valley, and it is here that the group locates large patches of P. chungensis, alpicola, sikkimensis and florindae. An accompanying photo of P. cavodoria reveals thin, tubular petals much like bloated tassels. Finally, the lucky party’s plant list includes twenty-one primulas, twenty-six rhododendrons and scores of other Tibetan natives.

The final article, “Primula Edgeworthii” by Alastair Mckelvie, opens this short and snappy plant profile with the argument by John Richards that the correct name should be P. nana. Yet, Mckelvie maintains that if a plant has more than one published name, the author can use any one as long as an authority is credited after the name such as P. edgeworthii (Hook. F.) Pax. (syn. P. nana Wall.). He describes that the plant grows from Himachal Pradesh in India to Central Nepal. Curiously, plants in the western range have blue or lilac flowers while those in east Central Nepal are pink. He also adds that P. edgeworthii dislikes winter wet, is short-lived and may need hand pollination to guarantee seeds.

PRIMROSE PRIMER

I recently stumbled upon a little known British publication called Plants: A Journal for New Plant Hunters. Dirk van der Werff, the editor, started it in 1995 as a forum “where new, rare and reintroduced species and varieties of hardy garden plants are introduced to plant enthusiasts.” The January 1997 issue contains a piece by Jaqueline Giles called “Primrose Delight.” This short but informative article traces the primulas rise in popularity from the late fourteen hundreds to present. Giles recalls that many primroses grown today were named in Tudor times (1485-1603) typically after men’s apparel such as Hose-in-Hose oxslips. She also briefly describes the...
Doretta Klaber

By Anita Kistler, West Chester, Pennsylvania

How lucky I was to have known Doretta Klaber and her garden! The year I joined the American Rock Garden Society (about 1966) found my husband, John, and me immediately involved with the 1967 Annual ARGS meeting to be held at Longwood Gardens in nearby Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. One of the recipients of the Society Awards was to be Doretta Klaber, already the author and illustrator of three wonderful books: Rock Garden Plants — New Ways to Use Them, Gentians for Your Garden, and Primroses and Spring. The fourth book, Violets of the United States, was published after her death.

From that fortuitous meeting arose a wonderful friendship that even included monthly visits to help weed and maintain her rock garden. Also, I discovered her no-nonsense method for germinating seeds, in very crude cold frame beds. In some cases, there were three labels on a row where the previous sowings had not germinated. Doretta was hopeful to the end!

Rocky was an understatement of the east facing hillside that rose near her house. Supposedly, the former owners had tried to vegetable garden on the slope with little or no success. It was the perfect spot for her rock garden. Halfway up the slope was a tiny spring that cut diagonally across the hill — away from the house. This was the Primrose Path. I never saw it in full bloom, but it was lined with many different species of primula growing happily. Further down this little trickle was the most glorious bed of Gentiana scabra forms. It was a sight to see in September.

In the growing seasons, Doretta kept very busy with her seeds and plants, and making quick sketches of her plants. In winter, she sat at her drawing board making the lovely illustrations for her books. Her drawings are a delight. Clear bold lines absolutely identify each and every plant.

I can still point out plants, whose ancestry was from her garden, to visitors to my garden. Interestingly, none are primroses, although I do grow as many as I can and will survive in my eastern garden. My favorite gift was Lathyrus (Orobus) vernus ‘Albo-roseus’. This still is an attention getter. A rue she gave me lasted long — I detested its odor, although it had nice grey foliage.

Her last book on violets has both her black line drawings and colored line drawings, making it so easy to identify any violet from the United States. The ARGS Bulletin and several other publications printed her informative articles. She stressed growing from seed, so you could try any new plant in several different locales to find what the plant preferred.

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She offered no magic soil mixes, just simple suggestions to anyone who questioned her.

There was not a surplus of funds in the Klaber household, so few plants were ever bought. Often there were exchanges, but most often she sowed seeds. Her correspondents were global and local.

Because of her love of seed growing, we in this area give a Doretta Klaber Award at The Philadelphia Flower & Garden Show for a plant “grown from seed”, naturally. Who else could inspire us so? Hence, we are called the Doretta Klaber Chapter of the American Primrose Society.

Her garden is no more, but her books are widely read by gardeners in this part of the United States. They are so full of valuable and sensible advice, and are sprinkled with her charming, witty manner of writing — a wonderful little lady —

Doretta Klaber, 1888 to 1974. *

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Journal Report

Continued from Page 13

story of Florence Bellis and Barnhaven. Florence apparently exclaimed that Hose-in-Hose and Jack-in-the-Green primroses were "Strictly for the nuts." Giles finishes with her experiences and delight in growing primroses.

HAIR TODAY; CROPS TOMORROW

Finally, the July 1997 HORTIDEAS includes a great idea for those who save
Notes from the Editor
By Claire Cockcroft, Redmond, Washington

PRIMROSE CHORES IN AUTUMN

Auriculas
It is time to move your potted auriculas from the garden to a coldframe or alpine house. When you move them, take the time to tip them out of the pot and check their roots for weevil larvae or root aphids. Spot treat those that show infestation. Cut down on watering, so that the soil gradually dries to a barely moist condition. For the next three months, your auriculas will need minimal attention, as long as they enjoy good air circulation, good light, and barely damp soil. Remove leaves as they shrivel and die to avoid fungal attacks of Botrytis.

Primroses and Polyanthuses
It is time to put your garden to bed for the winter. You can divide primroses early in October, if the weather is still mild and the plant divisions have time to establish themselves before the really cold weather sets in. In my garden, the crowns of ‘Quakers Bonnet’ and ‘April Rose’ double acaulis were heaving out of the soil so high that their new fall roots were hardly able to find the ground! I divided them quickly, feeling very guilty!

Clean up old leaves and dispose of any that show signs of black spot (pictured on the next page) or other fungal diseases — don’t put them in your compost pile.

If you see a lot of weevil damage on the leaves (see below), you may want to check the roots of that plant. My primroses don’t seem to mind a quick dig, check, and replanting. This check also gives me an excuse to dig extra mulch or compost into the soil to improve drainage and make the soil more friable.

Remove slug and snail hiding places in the garden. Check around the base of primroses for slug and snail eggs — tiny white or cream colored “pearls” — and destroy any you find. After cleaning, I usually top dress my primroses with a fairly coarse compost of shredded fir and hemlock limbs and needles. Take care not to cover up the crowns.

Seeds
I frequently plant primrose seeds in the fall, along with seeds from alpine plants, keeping the seed pots in an unheated hoop house. Most of the time I keep the ends of the hoop house wide open to provide good air flow (and to minimize fungal diseases). Only when temperatures are predicted to dip below freezing do I close them off. Fall sowing chills those seeds that need it; primroses that were seeded last fall bloomed their first blooms late this summer.

If primrose seedlings are crowded in their plug trays or their roots are twisting in the bottom of too-shallow pots, I repot them into bigger pots now without disturbing the root ball. They can use their autumn root-growing period to settle in well, and spacing them out creates better air flow and less fungus problems. Wait until the spring to prick out seedlings, though.

Garden Design Changes
The cool weather of autumn signals the start of the best planting season for most trees, shrubs, and perennials. Take advantage of this time to reassess your garden design. Most primroses can be moved successfully if dug in a clump (checking for root weevils, of course).

TARGET THE PEST... 
CONSERVE THE REST
This is the slogan of Sharon Collman, a Seattle entomologist fondly known as the “Bug Lady”. She stresses how important it is to clearly identify the pest that is damaging your plants, so you can choose the appropriate treatment. In my garden, black spot (pictured below) is fairly common on Vernalis primroses in the late summer or early fall. But the plants are rarely harmed by it, so my treatment is simply to remove the old, infected leaves and dispose of them.

Root weevils are small brown or black beetles having a long head with a curved snout; their larvae are white with a brown head, less than a half inch long and shaped like a half moon. The adult beetles feed on primula leaves, while the larvae live in the ground and feed on the primula roots all winter, leaving the plant with nothing to draw upon when growth starts in the spring. Weevil damage can easily be distinguished from slug or snail damage when you compare the pictures on the previous page. Adult root weevils leave characteristic notches along the edge of the leaves.

Hand pick adult weevils in the evening after dark and crush them, freeze them, or otherwise dispose of them. Here in the Pacific Northwest, root weevils are active all year round, so we weevil hunt in the autumn, too. If you divide or dig your primroses, carefully...
Board of Directors Meeting
July 12, 1997 at the home of June Skidmore, Mercer Island, Washington

Present: Claire Cockcroft, Cheryl Fluck, Bridgie Graham-Smith, Rosetta Jones, Thea Oakley, Miwako Ohta, Addaline Robinson, June Skidmore, Dorothy Springer, Candy Strickland, Allan Jones

The meeting was called to order by President June Skidmore; minutes of the April 12, 1997 meeting were approved. Addaline Robinson (Treasurer) distributed copies of fiscal report covering the first two quarters of 1997.

EDITOR’S REPORT
Claire Cockcroft reported that the next issue is at the printer and includes a seed exchange order form. She asked for more articles for future issues and would welcome any referrals of possible contributions. The fall issue will contain an entire membership directory prepared by Jay Lunn. Questions on advertisements were raised; non-profit organizations such as ours should be careful about the amount of ads in its publications.

CORRESPONDENCE
June Skidmore received two letters: one from Jack Smith of Michigan about Primula sieboldii and another from Board Member Harry Leighton. She will see Harry in England in October, 1997.

INTERNET
Ann Lunn has been doing a great job of answering e-mail from the A.P.S. Web Page. Maedhythe Martin will now take over the position of Internet Secretary from Ann.

MEMBERSHIP
1997 membership total was 625, a decline of 18 from last year at this time. Ann Lunn will give a complete report in January, 1998.

SEED EXCHANGE
New chairman Pat Wilson is willing and efficient. 1997 Exchange Chairman John McDonnell purchased two shares of a seed expedition to Nepal for 1998. Discussion centered on whether or not to buy from alternate seed sources, perhaps one year buying collected seeds on expeditions, and the next year purchasing seeds from commercial suppliers. Rosetta Jones suggested providing a ‘beginner’s package’ containing regular, hardy primrose seeds, to make newcomers feel welcome. She also suggested articles for beginners and a planting calendar for the Quarterly. The closure of the 1995 Seed Exchange bank account in Alaska brought in another $1,082.

NATIONAL SHOW
Candy Strickland, the 1997 show chairman, read her report. For the 1998 show, June Skidmore has investigated several locations and dates, as the second weekend in April, 1998, is Easter. After a thorough discussion, the Board voted to have the show at Bellevue Botanical Garden on April 4 and 5, 1998.

JUDGES
Rosetta Jones noted that garden auriculas should be judged separately from show auriculas. The judging of garden auriculas at the Tacoma Show was confused due to the wording in the show schedule. A discussion of the 1998 show schedule will take place at the next board meeting.

ARCHIVES
Archives held by Larry Bailey are expected to arrive next week. Trophies currently at Louise Fenelli’s house will be stored at Bridgie Graham-Smith’s and Bridgie will prepare an inventory. Thea Oakley has prepared a history of the Eastside chapter, and will forward it to Claire Cockcroft.

NEW BUSINESS
Thea Oakley called the attention of the board to a gray area of naming new auriculas and primulas. Creating a registry of new varieties was discussed in depth. The following criteria were considered: the primrose should not be previously named; the applicant should submit an official registration form along with a photograph of the plant; registration should cost a nominal fee and be reported in the Quarterly; and the applicant should possess more than one division of the plant. Claire Cockcroft and Dorothy Springer will work together to prepare a definite format and rules, and present them to the board. Dorothy Springer already has such a system for Juliana primroses.

The next board meeting will be held October 11 at Mary McCranks Restaurant in Chehalis, Washington.

Respectfully submitted,
Miwako Ohta, Recording Secretary

Notes from the Editor
Continued from Page 17

inspect the roots for weevil larvae and crush any you find.

In the greenhouse, check your pots from time to time by carefully tipping the root ball out of the pot and examining the pot and the root ball for the tell-tale traces of root aphids and root weevils. Yes, root weevils will get into your potted primroses, too. Cy Happy reports that he has found some success using an insecticidal powder called Pestkill™ from Lily-Miller to control root weevils in both pots and in the garden. An effective treatment for root aphids in pots is to either repot in a clean potting mix after carefully rinsing the root ball, or use an insecticide such as Diazinon™ or Malathon™.

Slugs (and snails) are a perpetual problem in my damp, shady garden. My husband and I both hand-pick slugs, freeze them in plastic “baggies”, then put them out with the trash, rather than use bait, which can attract beneficial insects that feed on slugs. (I freeze slugs rather than cut them up, to avoid the mess and any flies that might be attracted to the huge carcasses.) A flat board or a pot, left on the ground on purpose, can act as a hiding place that you can check every day for slugs. Protect slug and snail bait from the wet, and protect beneficial beetles, birds, and snakes from the slug bait.

If you do use an insecticide, follow the instructions carefully, and don’t overtreat by using too strong a concentration or treating more often than is necessary. Remember, target the pest ... conserve the rest! ★
Double Primroses

By Barbara Flynn, Redmond, Washington

'Buckie-faalie' in Caithness, 'Darlings of April' in Somerset, 'Simmerin' in Yorkshire, and 'Butter Rose' in Devon are all affectionate names for that most beloved of flowers we know as Primula vulgaris. As a small child, I would clamber up banks to pick bunches of primroses and their favorite companion, the purple sweet violet, carrying on a tradition hundreds of years old. Shakespeare knew the primrose and wrote in 'Hamlet':

"Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads."

I never saw a double primrose in the wild but Tabernaemontanus knew of a sulphur double primrose in the year 1500 and John Gerard has an illustration of a double white primrose in his Historie of Plants (1597). Later, (1629) Parkinson described a Double Green Primrose, and in 1732 Philip Miller gives information on two yellows and a red.

Four types of double primrose apparently were brought into the British Isles: a red known as 'Madame Pompadour'; a purple named 'A. de Moulin'; a white with the calyx forming a green ruffle, 'April Rose', a luscious rose pink, and 'Lillian Harvey', a pretty light pink, 'Miss Indigo' is a beautiful true indigo blue with white edges to each petal. Several people brought it back here from Drake's Nursery after the International Rock Garden Convention in Scotland in 1991. Primula vulgaris lilacina fl. pl. is available often under the name of 'Quaker's Bonnets', 'Quakeress' or 'Lady's Delight'. There is a rather wimpy white form available also. 'Easter Bonnets' is a sturdy plant, a very variable pink in color and was developed here by Fred Crandall in the 1960's.

Double primroses can be grown from seed. Florence Bellis had great success developing the Barnhaven strain of these and other primroses. Angela Bradford is the current custodian of her Barnhaven strain and offers seed for sale. Rosetta Jones of Shelton, Washington, also sells seed from her crosses. However, it is difficult to get seed from double primroses. This is because doubling occurs when the reproductive parts of the primrose grow as petals. If you wish to experiment with developing your own strain of doubles then the classic way to carry this out is shown in the accompanying article that follows.

Double primroses are lovers of a semi-woodland. Filtered sunlight under deciduous trees is the best. I well remember Bob Putnam's lush array of doubles growing under his apple trees. The north or east sides of hedges would also serve for protection from the hot midday sun. Primroses are gregarious plants and like being planted close together. They have hearty appetites and should be lifted every two or three years, divided and, if possible, replanted in a fresh bed, well prepared with lots of well-rotted manure, organic fertilizer and peat, in an area that does not dry out. I believe this switching of beds cuts down enormously on the possibility of disease or insect damage to which monocultures are prone. My best results have been obtained by dividing in mid-September when our fall rains begin. Some people like to divide immediately after bloom time. Experimentation is the key here. A little liquid fertilizer (5-10-10, well-diluted) after they have bloomed will help keep their spirits up. Be sure to remove the spent flowers and rotting leaves.

The branches of untreated Christmas trees make great protective cover for the doubles in winter. Some people keep old sleeping bags to put on their treasures when the temperature drops to single digits. Leaves make great mulches but they also make great shelters for slugs and other nefarious pests.

Double primroses add a joyful note to the spring symphony. Ferns are natural companions but heliophiles, snowdrops, soldanelas, forms of Anemone nemorosa, trilliums, the smaller epimedium species and pulmonarias all blend with our double delights splendidly. Watch out for Sweet Woodruff and Ajuga, not for nothing are they called 'groundcovers'. On a final note, it is always well to share your double primroses with a good friend — then you can compare notes on how the plants are doing plus have a replacement if your own should be lost. Oh yes, and that friend might join APS too! *

*Photo by Claire Cockcroft

Photo by Brian Davis

Even gold-laced polyanthus can be found in double form.

"Blue Sapphire' is truly blue, blooms well, and increases in size rather rapidly.
Breeding for Doubles


**SEED PARENT**
- **Single:** (or semi-double)
  - Choose for color, vigor, good stem and type. Pin-eye easier to work with. Do not select a plant with unusually large flowers because such flowers, when double, are usually too heavy for the stem. If Polyanthus, choose one with a stout stem and short foot-stalks. If Acaulis, select one which holds flowers up well. Pot up seed parent plants for easier handling and control. Do not use too many blossoms; fewer flowers give better seed. Doubles sometimes revert to singles – especially ‘Quaker Bonnet’. If you find one, try it as a seed parent.

---

**1st Cross**

**SEED PARENT**
- **Single:** 1st generation x double.
  - Select only the best plants and breed again to double. Watch for such evidences of recessive doubleness as: an extra petal, an irregularly shaped or divided pistil. Also, to be sure of a successful cross the year before, the new plant should show traits of the double parent in leaves, stem and particularly color.

---

**2nd Cross**

**SEED PARENT**
- **Single:** 2nd generation x double.
  - Again select only the best.

---

**3rd Cross**

**SEED PARENT**
- **Single:** 3rd generation x double.

---

**4th Cross**

**SEED PARENT**
- **Single:** 4th generation x double.

---

**POLLEN PARENT**

**Double:**
- ‘Quaker Bonnet’ (Acaulis, some pollen late in the season)
- ‘Burgundy Beauty’ (Poly.)
- ‘Arthur Dumoulin’
- ‘Marie Crousse’, etc.
  - Lots of pollen

Pollen may not be produced early in the blooming season, but usually can be found later on the last flowers to bloom — if the plant has not been over-fed. Tear open blossoms and look closely for an anther tucked down inside or a yellow thickened area on an inside petal that will produce a few grains of pollen in the morning sun. No trick here, you just have to watch closely. Being kept out of the rain helps — in frames or pots in greenhouse. But don’t be too kind to them or there will be no pollen.

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**2nd Cross — (A few doubles may result from this pollination if you started with a semi-double seed parent in the first cross.)**

**POLLEN PARENT**

**Double:**

---

**3rd Cross — (A few more doubles may show up here).**

**POLLEN PARENT**

**Double:**

---

**4th Cross — (Many doubles should be produced here.)**

**POLLEN PARENT**

**Double:**

---

“**Single:** 4th gen. x dbl” plants can be selfed or crossed with other fourth generation plants to give a good percentage of doubles. Breeding a “**Single:** 4th gen. x dbl” with any double pollen parent will produce a high percentage of doubles.
Plant Portrait

By Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

**PRIMULA ANGUSTIFOLIA**

It is the second day of July. Although the sky is blue and the sun is shining, the wind conspires with the altitude to make wearing a coat necessary. The concern now is not the chill, but rather how to step along the rocky trial without crushing fragile alpine cushions in full bloom.

On the left is a ten-inch mat of *Silene acaulis* with its bright pink star-like flowers resting atop thick foliage. *Minuartia obtusifolia* provides contrast with hundreds of tiny white blossoms. Close by, nestled against a granite rock, is a mound of *Phlox condensata* topped with flat, pale blue-white flowers. Another mat-former, *Androsace chamaejasme* ssp. *carinata*, produces clusters of creamy white flowers whose yellow centers turn pink, then red, as the flowers are pollinated and age.

With its silvery foliage and fragrant, bright blue forget-me-not flowers resting atop thick foliage, *Eritrichium aretioides* (E. nanum) is truly unforgettable. Here, the white form is *E. caespitosum* ssp. *nanum*. The white form is truly bright blue forget-me-not flowers.

*Primula angustifolia* is a plant of the tundra. Its home is above tree line in moist but well-drained sites under boulders or at the edge of snow fields at elevations of 7,200 to 13,000 feet. Its range extends from the Rocky Mountains of Colorado to northern New Mexico.

This member of the Parryi Section is closely related to *P. cusickiana*, although not nearly as difficult to grow! In cultivation, the plants may be long-lived and fairly floriferous. To imitate nature's conditions, *P. angustifolia* should be grown in a rich, well-drained mix that is well watered in the summer and allowed to nearly dry out in winter. Perhaps the best way to raise it is in pots or troughs that can be covered in the winter. Plants can be grown from seed that occasionally appears on seed lists.

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**1998 Dues Reminder**

1998 membership renewals are due November 15 and delinquent after December 31, 1997. The annual rate for both domestic and foreign memberships, either individual or household, is $20 US per year ($21 for renewals postmarked after January 1, 1998), $55 for three years, or $275 for an individual life membership. Membership is based on the calendar year. The year your membership will expire is printed in the upper right-hand corner of the address label affixed to the envelope used to mail your copy of *Primroses*.

If you are an overseas member and wish to have your quarterly sent via airmail, include an additional $10 US to cover the cost of postage.

We prefer that foreign members make payment in the form of an international money order. However, payment may be made by personal check in currencies of Australia, Austria, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, and Switzerland. Checks payable from foreign funds should be in an amount based upon the current exchange rate plus five percent.

Make checks payable to the American Primrose Society and mail to:

Addaline W. Robinson, Treasurer
41809 S.W. Burgarsky Rd.
Gaston, OR 97119-9047
U.S.A. *
News from the Chapters
A summary of chapter meetings

ALASKA
The Alaska Primrose Group generously voted to donate $500 from their plant sale proceeds to support color printing in the A.P.S. quarterly magazine. Thank you, Alaska!

John O’Brien reports that last winter’s variable weather wreaked havoc on primroses and all sorts of greenery. (See his article on Page 29.) The next meeting of the Alaska Primrose Group is October 25. Rosetta Jones will be the invited speaker at their May meeting.

PENNSYLVANIA
Doretta Klaber Chapter
Meets four times a year. Contact Dot Plyler, chapter president, for details.

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.

The Washington State Chapter will co-host the 1998 A.P.S. National Show, along with Seattle and Eastside chapters. Unfortunately, because membership in the Washington State Chapter has dipped so low, the chapter will meet in October to decide the future of the chapter.

Seattle Chapter
Meets four times a year. Contact June Skidmore, chapter president, for details. Next meeting: Thursday, November 6, 1997, at 7:30 p.m. at the Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle.

The program will include slides from the A.P.S. Slide Library on the last National Show.

The Chapter enjoyed its annual picnic in August at Fred Graff’s house. Seattle Chapter will co-host the 1998 A.P.S. National Show. Plans have been made for fundraising and other responsibilities.

Eastside Chapter
Meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Kirkland Firestation #22, 6602 - 108th Ave. NE, Kirkland, Washington.

The July meeting was a picnic, well-attended and enjoyed. Members voted at their harvest pot-luck and plant sale in September to co-host the 1998 A.P.S. National Show.

TACOMA

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.

September’s meeting featured a presentation by Mary Haire on cyclamen. The Chapter will sponsor a one-day primrose and rock garden plant show (competition) on April 11, 1998 at the Lakewood Mall in Tacoma.

OREGON
Oregon Primrose Society
With great regret, the Oregon Primrose Society chapter has voted to dissolve. One of the original groups to lead the society, the chapter has gradually lost membership over time and can no longer continue. It will be missed!

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 209th, Beaverton, OR. Contact Thelma for details.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
BC Primrose Group
Meets at the South Arm United Church at No. 3 Road and Steveston Highway. Contact John Kerridge for details.

American Primrose Society bookstore
Florists’ Flowers and Societies, by Dr. Ruth Duthie — $9.00 US
The Barnhaven Book, by Angela Bradford — $12.00 US
Polyanthus, by Roy Genders — $15 US
Auriculas & Primroses, by W.R. Hecker — $15 US
The Genus Primula, by Josef Halda — $20 US
Society Guides from the National Auricula and Primula Society, Midland and West Section (Great Britain)
- #1 Show Auriculas, by Peter Ward, revised 1997 — $4.00 US
- #3 Alpine Auriculas, by Derek Telford — $2.00 US
- #4 A Classified List of Alpine Auriculas, by Ed Pickin — $3.25 US
- #5 Auricula History, by David Tarver — $3.50 US
- #6 Stripped Auriculas, by Allan Hawkes — $2.00 US
- #7 Border Auriculas, by Geoff Nicole — $3.00 US
Shipping for a full set of all six guides is $3.00 in the US, $5.00 outside the US.

Periodically, our librarian obtains older, used books. For a list of what is currently available, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to her. Address your orders and inquiries to:

Thea Oakley, American Primrose Society Librarian
3304 288th Ave. NE
Redmond, WA 98053 USA
Thea’s E-mail address: othea@halcyon.com

Orders must be prepaid in US dollars by check on a US bank or by international money order, made out to Thea Oakley, A.P.S. Librarian. 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.
Plant Societies

National Auricula and Primula Society
Invites all auricula and primula lovers to join in this old society. Membership includes yearbook.

Northern Section
D.G. Hadfield
146 Queens Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, England.

Midland and West Section
Peter Ward
6 Lawson Close, Saltford, Bristol, England BS18 1BG.

Southern Section
Lawrence E. Wigley

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

Unusual weather this past winter resulted in large losses of formerly hardy primroses in the Juneau, Alaska, area. Many gardeners lost all their Polyanthus Primroses, and many Primula denticulata plants. Those P. denticulatas that still looked normal when they came up, mostly did not bloom at all. ‘Garryard Guinivere’ & ‘Jay-Jay’ bit the dust.

What happened in the weather overall was that a sharp, long lasting freeze occurred when there was no snow cover at all. Ground froze as deep as 6 and 7 feet. Then in March, there was a thaw, which gave the plants the message it was time to grow. This thaw was followed by another hard freeze, no doubt the finishing blow. Many formerly hardy primroses, other perennials, and some fruit trees, such as pie cherries and ‘Yellow Transparent’ apples, either were killed outright, or suffered damage from which they have not recovered.

There was quite a variation from garden to garden, where some places with a more favorable micro-climate did not suffer losses, but most gardeners did.

Scientists from some universities now feel that mankind has so altered the Earth’s surface and atmosphere, that weather occurrences are now becoming more severe and unusual, as evidenced by the unusual winter here, and the many springtime floods this past season in the lower 48 states and Canada. The total amount of atmospheric pollution is expected to double by the year 2032, so things will no doubt get a lot worse, unless mankind mends its ways — which unfortunately is unlikely.

Primula florindae hybrids, which do well here, mostly survived; but at this writing in July, the plants have less blooms than usual, and the bloom stalks are on the average, very much shorter than usual. The pleasant fragrance is still there, though.

Best survivors in our yard were the Garden Auricula primroses, which had 100% survival — without any mulching or coddling — and beautiful blooms. We grew our Auriculas from seed obtained from the A.P.S. Seed Exchange, and if I recall correctly they were principally seeds from Herb Dickson and Barnhaven Gardens.

Garden auriculas (above and top right) were the sturdy survivors of 1997's harsh winter in Alaska.
Officers of the Chapters

Alaska Group
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Juneau, AK 99801

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APS GARDEN AURICULA PHOTO CONTEST!
A generous friend of the A.P.S. would like to sponsor a full color edition of Primroses featuring Garden Auriculas, and what better way to get pictures than a photo contest! The photos must be in color, and may be slides, prints, or on PhotoCD. Photos must depict Primula auricula species and/or hybrids growing in the garden (not in pots), and may feature single plants or groups of plants. $5 will be awarded for each photo accepted for publication. First, second, and third place cash prizes will also be awarded.

Prizes:
1st Prize $25
2nd Prize $20
3rd Prize $15
$5 for each photo accepted for publication

Send your photos to:
Claire Cockcroft
A.P.S. Editor
4805-228th Avenue NE
Redmond, WA 98053-8327
USA

Send Photos to Claire Cockcroft
APS GARDEN AURICULA PHOTO CONTEST!

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