President's Message

Here we are at the start of another year, and I hope it will be a successful one for all primula growers. The Seed Exchange in Juneau, Alaska, is now in full swing. Many thanks go to Pat Wilson and her helpers for all their hard work. The seed selection this year is quite impressive.

This Winter issue of Primroses is devoted to practical advice, both for the novice and experienced gardener. Our thanks go to Ilse Burch, a very successful gardener here in the Northwest, whose column, ‘First Things First’, will appear regularly. Ilse grows many plants from seed and will be happy to answer members’ gardening questions.

I had the pleasure of reading Peter Ward’s new book, Primroses and Polyanthus, now available to members through the APS bookstore. This 160 page hardback has magnificent color photographs and line drawings. I am happy to say that contributors included a number of A.P.S. members. One whole chapter is devoted to the Barnhaven primrose that is dear to the heart of many growers in this country. This book is full of information and practical advice with excellent drawings, and the chapter of hybridizing took the mystery out of this subject.

We are looking forward to this year’s A.P.S. National Primrose Show, taking place April 4th and 5th at the Bellevue Botanical Garden near Seattle. I hope as many members as possible will attend, as this promises to be an event not to be missed. As mentioned previously, accommodations will be available for out of town members.

On a serious note, Herb Dickson (Mr. Primrose) recently fell and was in hospital; on behalf of the Society, I wish him a speedy recovery. I am sure he would enjoy hearing from members near and far.

I have often heard members say they would like to swap plants with members from various parts of the country or possibly abroad. If members are interested, please let me know.

It will be interesting to see how the growing season will be affected by El Niño. Here the weather has been particularly mild, and many perennials are still in bloom in my garden, plus a few slug eaten primroses.

I wish you all a very happy 1998 with a garden full of primulas.

June Skidmore, Mercer Island, Washington
1998 A.P.S. National Show
Bellevue Botanical Garden
12001 Main Street
Bellevue, Washington
April 4, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  April 5, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
A.P.S. Banquet and Annual Meeting, April 4
Featured Speaker: Dr. Charles Muller
“Primulae & Companion Plants on Five Himalayan Passes in Southeastern Tibet”

Plant Competition
Plant Sale

Pre-show Seminars
Bellevue Botanical Garden Visitor Center
March 4, 10:30 a.m. —
June Skidmore: A Survey of Primulas
March 14, 1:30 p.m. —
Jay Lunn: Wild Primulas of Western America
March 25, 7:00 p.m. —
Cy Happy III: Vernales Primulas

Pre-show Garden Tours, April 2 - 3
For banquet reservations, tour maps, visitor accommodations, plant sale vendor list, etc., please contact:
Claire Cockcroft, Show Chairman
4805 - 228th Ave. N.E.
Redmond, WA 98053-8327
Tel: (425) 868-6788
E-mail: ccrft@halcyon.com

Growing Primulas on Long Island
By Fred E. Knapp, Locust Valley, New York

Long Island, winter hardiness Zone 7 except for whimsical 6's or 8's, could be referred to as a typical northeastern, or Mid-Atlantic, area. Many of its characteristics are common from Boston to South Carolina. But to make “typical” apply fully, one must stay near the coast, or at least on the low plains that abut the coastline. Inland areas used as a current or former summer vacation refuge — generally foothill areas to some part of the Appalachian mountain chain — present a very different environment, despite their geographic kinship as Northeastern or Mid-Atlantic areas. In many ways, Long Island is a model for the East Coast lowland climate over an extended Mid-Atlantic range. The extremes of summer weather are quite well matched to the ends of the range, although a bit more persistent in the south.

Is there a problem for primula growers in this “greater Long Island” area? You bet! And I believe it is much the same up and down the Coast. How do we know there is a problem; by what signs? There are political, economic and physical indicators to tell us.

Ten years ago I was working in Los Angeles. One spring weekend I flew to Seattle, rented a car, and visited three APS chapter shows on the same day. Here on the East Coast we have only Dot Plyler’s Doretta Klaber Chapter. The only other organized effort in my experience was 20 years ago in New England. It was carried for years by two individuals, with marginal help from others, and lapsed when death took one and business requirements the other. Primulas do not have popular support from the voters.

Economically, primulas are established only by a precarious toehold on Long Island. With few exceptions, they are sold as colorful pot plants (the Vernales types, whether “poly”, “julie”, etc., or greenhouse plants of Primula malacoides or P. obconica) around Christmas time or in early spring when people are starved for color. They are timed and presented for impulse buying, not sold as serious perennial plants, not generally designed into local landscapes. Featured in only a few public gardens, they are usually planted as temporary annual displays, their beds replanted after flowering. Primulas do not have popular support from nurserymen or landscapers.

Woe unto us primula lovers when we consider the physical problem indicators! Most primulas planted on Long Island will languish and die quickly. The word gets around. Moreover, when a would-be primula grower does find a thriving primula collection, the owner is nearly always a compulsive liar who insists that there’s nothing to it; it’s easy! Primulas thus become a mystery plant, with no apparent clues to successful growing. So primulas are not popular with beginners.

THE VERNALES PRIMROSES
You may by now have realized that a lot of comments above (and elsewhere) referring to primulas seem to lump the whole tribe in with the characteristics of the most familiar forms, the acaulis and polyanthus hybrids based primarily on...
Growing Primulas on Long Island, continued

**Primula veris**, *P. vulgaris* and their closest relatives *P. elatior* and *P. juliae* — formerly known as the Vernales types. For the moment, let’s continue that approach as we try to define the Long Island growing problem. The adverse factors on Long Island can be presented in outline form:

- We have too many days of very high temperatures and humidity, often without much relief at night.
- We have a preponderance of sandy soils, plus some clay areas, both lacking in humus.
- We often have droughty periods, stretching into weeks, with many 90 degree plus days to dry out our soils.
- Primulas, hardly enough in general, have been inbred too long for color, size, doubleness, etc., losing their adaptability to winters as severe as ours when combined with the stress of our summers.
- There are few examples of primula culture in area gardens, thus no accumulation of primula garden lore.
- Primulas are a high maintenance plant, a feature that easily discourages new gardeners in any growing area.
- Where to turn, and what to do?

There are several alternative plans to deal with the problems. All require a modicum of fanaticism. The easiest of all requires the most courage. If you are not the kind of gardening wimp who permits his garden to be sited by the location of a lucrative job, or of other family members or lifelong friends and pursuits, then move. Move to the West Coast where you will find primula gardens/gardeners, readily available plants, APS activity centers, and an environment that primulas accept quite readily. Move just a bit west to the eastern slopes of the Appalachians, or move to Vermont/New Hampshire. Get your plants some daytime and nighttime relief from the coastal summer temperature and humidity range. You, of course, will like it, too.

For most of us who do not move, there are two courses open — selection of material and improved cultural practices. Selection of material is the best place to start, giving some immediate gratification while the accommodation of garden and gardener to the cultural preferences of primulas proceeds. The reason this works so well is that there are two kinds of primulas ready and willing to grow under our conditions. One of them is even fairly widespread in the nursery trade. Joann and I grow three kinds of primulas year after year because, of all we have tried, they are the ones that respond to Long Island and to our random good intentions as gardeners. These are *P. japonica*, *sieboldii*, and the traditional Vernales types. Some of their needs are quite different, as you will see below.

**PRIMULA JAPONICA**

*Primula japonica* has one overriding requirement; it loves to be streamside, poolside, boggy swampy, indeed any place which gives it “wet feet”. When we built our house, our septic system was dug through an unexpected clay lens. This meant some extra rings to penetrate into sand below the clay. It also meant pure clay spread about a considerable area of prime planting land on the flat part of our property. Fortuitously (not then by design), some of our first Japonicas went into this area, which still remains (even after 25 years) wet enough to be a problem for some other plants. They thrive, they still thrive, they self-sow all around the wetter parts of the area. They require no care; none at all! The only labor spent on them is trying to select for favorite colors by rogueing, replacing with selected plants (you can get them from many nurseries or seed lists), sowing seedlings, and digging plants for friends or plant sales. So if the garden has a wet area, natural stream, or contrived pond with wet edge, or poor drainage area (not some sour sink-hole!), plant *P. japonica* for a very successful first affair with the world of primulas.

**PRIMULA SIEBOLDII**

A very different plant, but just as easy as *P. japonica*, is the Japanese *P. sieboldii*. The virtue of this plant, culturally, is its natural adaptability to Long Island’s worst problem, the combined effects of sandy soil, high summer temperatures and periodic drought. When these conditions get too onerous, *P. sieboldii* will go into its summer dormancy. The timing of dormancy is fairly responsive to the growing conditions. The plant should be given the best possible chance for success by preparation of the planting area, but has an effective defense of its own against our summers.

Recently, *P. sieboldii* has become a popular debuteante, prominent among the many spring beauties that compete for the gardener’s dollars and hours. This was brought about by the enthusiasm and energy of one man, Paul Held, who started the American Sakurasoh Association. Paul has distributed seeds, plants, and information lavishly, bring *P. sieboldii* into the gardening world with unusual verve and success. Recent APS bulletin articles have shown some of the great beauty and variability of this plant.

In our garden, special beds for *P. sieboldii* and the Vernales primulas are prepared with extra organic matter and super absorbent (read on). But beyond this, *P. sieboldii* gets only a winter mulch of pine needles, spring cleanup and fertilizer, and is a very low maintenance plant once the new bed is established. This is another primula that returns a high amount of garden pleasure for the gardener’s effort. It should be in every garden, yet can easily be grown by the beginner.

**SELECTING VERNALES PRIMROSES**

For the traditional Vernales types, selection of material is at a more detailed level, since we have already decided to grow them, no matter what. The key characteristic of these plants is their genetic background. Much of the plants and seed strains have been tinkered with for decades (one could argue centuries). The only stock that results often loses some other qualities, and prominent among these potential losses is environmental adaptability or summer and winter hardiness. Some of the species stock involved grows in upper Scandinavia and Siberia, some is circum-Mediterranean. Breeding for color, flower size or doubleness, for instance, does not necessarily retain that implied range of “hardiness”. So we need a mechanism for selecting individual plants. If the beginner can acquire some adaptable or forgiving clones to teach himself primula culture, there will be less reason to give up! Some simple rules are listed below for the beginning primrose grower:

- Don’t go for the biggest flowers or the most unusually bright colors.
Growing Primulas on Long Island, continued

- Don’t go for the wonderful doubles or other interesting aberrant forms.
- Get a flat of those bright mixed colors and plant it out in spring. Expect only 1 or 2 to live. These are probably clones retaining some genetic adaptability. Expect them most likely to be yellow, possibly blue.
- Similarly, seek older named plants that show up in several catalogs from time to time. They are bound to be easy to propagate, easy to grow, and easy to divide in your garden.
- When buying a flat of colorful primulas, choose the plants with smaller flowers and leaves if there is a choice. There are some odds that their seed strain is closer to the species forms, or has recently been reinvigorated by crossing in P. juliae or its hybrids.
- Grab any of the older named Juliana hybrids. They are quite adaptable to Long Island.
- Grow species and primary cross seeds, plant out and select for adaptability — it’s an automatic selection process. After a few years living by these rules, you will have an attractive and effective primula collection, and a solid primula addiction. At that time, throw restraint to the four winds and try every form!

PRIMROSE CULTURE

The cultural practices referred to from time to time are simple, if sometimes labor intensive. A listing of categories follows.

Sunlight — Plant in high shade, dappled shade, edge of the woods situations, or morning sun. Do not plant in afternoon sun or midday sun. Of the three kinds of half-day sun, only morning sun is suitable.

Humus — The traditional primulas have an inordinate need for organic matter in the soil. Well rotted manures, dried/bagged manure, compost, even good old peat moss can go into the bed in amounts exceeding reasonable — whatever you can do, but more is better. We do this almost as seriously for the P. sieboldii beds, but have made no similar effort for the P. japonicas.

Moisture — Don’t let them dry out while in active growth. P. sieboldii are less sensitive as summer wears on; P. japonicas should be planted where this is not at issue.

Fertilizer — Vernales primulas are heavy feeders, but will resent chemical assault and battery. "Weak and often" is probably the best policy. Winter applications get a jump on the growth cycle. We use dried cow manure and various liquid fertilizers. Use more on Vernales, less on PP sieboldii and japonica.

Top Dressing — This is a good way to keep up the level of organic content, and in spring to cover up heaved or exposed root systems. A good use for compost of most kinds, in our case based on chopped leaves, rotted or as is. Good for P sieboldii as well. We don’t do it for the P. japonicas but probably should.

Mulch — We do the Vernales and P. sieboldii beds with a thin covering of White Pine needles every fall to moderate the freeze-thaw cycle. The P. japonicas fend for themselves unless there are too many needles available. If you do this, keep the beds away from your house, especially if your friends smoke!

Super absorbent — As described in an earlier article in the APS quarterly, we use this material in preparing beds for the Vernales types, and find it very effective.

Use it at about half the recommended rate and try to work it in below the surface. We also use the material for P. sieboldii beds and other new planting areas, but the correlation with improved results is not as evident as with the Vernales. It might well serve to sustain P. japonicas in areas not clearly wet enough for them, but we have not used it for them. I would be happy to hear from anyone who has experimented with this material and P. japonica.

- Look through catalogs and friends’ collections for plants described as “found” in old abandoned gardens or churchyard corners, plants that survived on their own.

Dividing/Replanting — We try to rotate Vernales plantings bed by bed, as well as an individual basis for problem areas or known sensitive clones. Three years is a good nominal interval. Don’t wait for a whole bed to look tacky. P. sieboldii are less addicted to this, but if they are really clumping up happily you will want to do it. It doesn’t seem to be part of the requirement for P. japonica. Don’t divide too ambitiously; it makes for a lot of extra planting and an increased loss ratio.

That is probably as much as one needs to hear about growing primulas on Long Island at one sitting. The point is that it is possible, and it is rewarding, and there is a way to ease into the primula commitment by steps, keeping the rewards commensurate with the level of effort at each step. ♦

American Primrose Society Bookstore

New Books!

Society Guides from the National Auricula and Primula Society, Midland and West Section (Great Britain):

#8 Primula allionii, Forms and Hybrids, by Bob Archdale and David Richards, 1997 — $4.00 US, shipping $0.75 US

Primroses and Polyanthus, Guide to Species and Hybrids, By Peter Ward — $35.00 US

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 (unless otherwise noted): in the US add $4 for the first book and $1.50 for each additional book, or outside the US add $6 for the first book and $2.50 for each additional book. ♦
Growing Primula: The Basics

By John Kerridge, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

I shall write this without referring to anything — it's just the way I do it, and for the most part it works.

For the beginner "Primroses" means either the sweet lemon-yellow Primula vulgaris of the European countryside, or the array of bright hybrids that are forced for sale in the late winter. Well, there are 430 species and countless hybrids from these. Only a few are commonly in cultivation, so one needn't be daunted or overwhelmed.

CARE OF SEED

Store seed in a glass screw-top jar in the refrigerator (not the freezer).

SOWING

I use the same method for all — Medium Rediearth®, a peat based planting mix that is excellent for seedlings, but which should be amended for growing on to make it more open.

For small quantities, sow seed in a 4" pot and cover each pot with a plastic sandwich bag.

For moderate quantities, sow in a 2 liter pop bottle whose top has been cut off and then replaced to keep seeds damp.

For larger quantities of seed, I use a flat with a plastic dome, or I will sprinkle the seeds directly on Rediearth® in a cold frame.

Time to plant: the last half of February, or in November.

Light requirements: low, no direct sun.

Temperature: low, not more than 60°F, ever. Primula seed will be fine outdoors in winter, as freezing is no problem in my area.

Never let surface dry out. After the first two leaflets are out, begin to ease the cover off slowly. Feed with quarterstrength Hyponex® or 20-20-20 fertilizer. You can sprinkle a little perlite on to anchor any wayward roots.

Avoid damp-off by taking these precautions:
1. Sow thinly.
2. Fill container to the brim — this allows better air circulation around seedlings.
3. Don't get the planting mix too wet; water from below, with maybe only a slight mist from above.
4. Allow air to circulate; for example, use a fan on low.
5. Use Damp-off® or other fungicide at first sign of trouble, or even prophylactically.
6. Seeds can be stored with a trace of systemic fungicide powder.

PRICKING OUT INTO FLATS

Much of this information is from Herb Dickson's tips that he showed me years ago. I prefer to prick out seedlings when the first true leaf is out. This is on the early side, but I sow too thickly all the time!

First, prepare the growing-on flats. On the bottom half of each flat, use an all purpose mix (equal parts fresh soil, pumice, and sand, to which you've added one tenth volume perlite, one tenth volume peat moss, and a sprinkle of a slow release fertilizer (e.g., Osmocote®), a mix of trace elements (such as Agro® #3), and superphosphate. On the top half of each flat, use the same mix with Rediearth® mixed into it. I feel this gives the seedlings a more familiar environment without so much transplant shock. Be sure to press the mix down well on all sides and in the corners, and then top up to a level surface. For auriculas, add some dolomite lime to the mix.

Seedlings from their original container are lifted in clumps and separated by dropping the clump once or twice on the counter. Do not try to pull them up or tear them apart. If two or three small ones don't want to separate, plant them together and separate them later. Plant the seedlings about 2" apart, at a depth down to the leaves. Place the really small ones together in a corner, so that they will not be shaded out by faster growing plants.

TRANSPLANTING OUT

Choose a cool, damp spell in the weather for transplanting. Usual placement is about a foot apart, depending on the species or variety. If the roots are tangled in the flat, you can cut the flat into a pie or tray of 'brownies', then leave it for two or three days before transplanting while the plants settle with their pruned roots systems.

Add a little Osmocote® and water to the planting hole before planting.

Always shade the transplants for a few days; sheets of newspaper held down by rock work well, as do old bed sheets.

Give each variety the growing environment that it needs. Remember that in general, primula like either:
- Meadowland or woodland
- Rock and scree
- Marshland and bog.

DIVISION

The most commonly asked questions about polyanthus and acaulis primroses concern division. Since flowers that bloom in the spring are well divided in the fall (and vice versa), the ideal time to divide primroses is around early September, which allows the divisions time to re-root before frosts.

Remove the outer leaves and any sick ones. I am ruthless about this! Hose off the soil or throw the plants in a bucket of water to loosen the soil. Most primroses can be pulled apart; you seldom need a knife. Pull the plants apart at natural divisions, leaving some new (whiter) roots on each piece. These new roots are formed every year on the higher parts of each stem. Prune all roots to about 4" (a hand width). Discard the old woody central root, unless the plant is something special. In that case, keep it in damp perlite, where it will re-sprout.

Plant divisions about 1 foot apart. I like to plant mine quite deep. Again, put some Osmocote® and water in the hole before planting, and shade.

Candelabras only divide well very early in the year, as soon as growth is evident.

FERTILIZING

Put your primroses to sleep in the fall with a 0-10-10 fertilizer to encourage healthy root growth. Wake them up in the spring with a 20-20-20 fertilizer.

Organic material that is well rotted, leaf mold, and fish fertilizer are all excellent. Seaweed mulch is great if you can get it. I almost bury my plant in the early spring with leaf mold, believing that the leaves absorb nutrients.

Always keep your plants clean by removing dying and diseased leaves. Dispose of any diseased leaves in the trash, not the compost pile.
Growing Primula: The Basics, continued

PESTS

The first culprit suspected of munching primroses is always the slug. But if slug bait fails to work, you probably don’t have slug or snails but cutworms instead. Find them feeding at night, since in the daytime they hide deep in the plant crown. Three or four treatments of Sevin powder sprinkled every 10 days can control cutworms.

Weevils are a menace, notching the leaves and gnawing the roots, and seem ever present near rhododendrons and salal (Gaultheria shallon). Pick adult weevils off at night. Nematode spray is costly but effective if your soil temperature is warm enough.

Pots can breed woolly aphids and mealy bugs deep inside. Periodically turn the plants out of their pots and check the roots. Beware of all new purchases or gifts, even from quality sources. Buggy hitchhikers can infest your whole garden.

FUNGUS

Rot, damp, decay, and stale, still air promote fungal growth. Keep your plants clean and try a fan in the greenhouse to increase air circulation. Beware a summer fungus in the ground that rots plants as soon as the soil warms up. Deep digging and prophylactic fungicide may be needed.

BOOKS

A Plantsman’s Guide to Primulas, by Philip Swindells, is a good starter book that is easy reading and has excellent photos.

Primulas, by Mary Robinson, is more detailed, and well-written.

Primroses and Polyanthus, by Peter Ward, promises to be the most complete description and guide for the average grower of the more common varieties.

Primula, by John Richards, is a fine work that experts reach for as a reference, but is also useful all around.

The A.P.S. Bookstore often has these and other primula books available at very reasonable prices.

SEEDS

A.P.S. Seed Exchange
Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia Seed Exchange
Barnhaven Seeds
Josef Halda Seeds

Painted Ladies of the 18th Century

By Maedythe Martin, Victoria, British Columbia

‘Excellenz von Schummaker’, ‘Clegg’s British Lion’? Painted ladies and bizarres? Auriculas of the early eighteenth century sound exotic and were highly prized. During this period multicolored edged auriculas, no longer seen today, came to the fore.

In his talk at the Annual General Meeting of the National Auricula and Primula Society (NAPS) (Midland and West), held in Birmingham, England, in September, 1997, David Tarver gave us some highlights of auricula history, particularly through historical illustrations. Some of the earliest descriptions are by Clusius, who tells of finding auriculas around 1580 in the markets in Vienna, brought down from the Alps. The descriptions, found in Clusius’ Rariorum Plantarum Historia (1601), no doubt includes plants he took back to Leyden when he returned there from Vienna, and are indicative of the auriculas of the day.

Primarily they are simple plants of yellow and red found growing in the wild. One was a tawny red, “but sprinkled over with certain whitish spots” (Tarver, Auricula History, p.8). This was an early mention of the white meal or farina on the auricula flower petals. Others seen by Clusius later in the century in a Nuremberg garden were more sophisticated in form and color: “saffron-yellow, pallid, turning purple, turning blood-red, ash colored and black” (Tarver, p. 8).

Early illustrations of British auriculas were done by Alexander Marshall (Duthie, Florists’ Flowers and Societies, p. 35) and in this group, striping is predominant. Actual pressed examples of 17th century auriculas are found in the Hortus Siccus now at the Fielding Druce Herbarium in Oxford. David Tarver had slides to show many of the auriculas from this time but the ones that caught my eye and imagination were from a little book written by F. A. Kannegeisser and published in Dresden in 1801.

In a quick search for references to Kannegeisser, I found him mentioned by C. Oscar Moreton in the handsome folio The Auricula published in 1964. He lists the English auriculas illustrated in Kannegeisser, and wild and exotic are the names: ‘Hesiodus’ (green-edged), ‘Kennion’s Plantagenet’ (green edged) and ‘Hugh’s Magna Carta’ (white-edged) are on the list. Moreton’s folio has a useful history of the development of the auricula, and the lists of auriculas over the centuries are invaluable. But even better than the list of names from the Kannegeisser volume are the illustrations themselves, seen in David Tarver’s slides.

This striped auricula seedling has the potential to produce a Painted Lady:round the eye, improve the flower form, and drop the vestigial (double) petal.
Painted Ladies of the 18th Century, continued

Here are many-hued, meal-covered auriculas not seen any more. The edged auriculas are emerging and there is one admirable white edged, 'Excellenz von Schummacher'. The colors in the flower pips cover all the colors of the rainbow and make one marvel. The modern auricula has improved the form of the flower and clarified the colors, but the charm and quirkiness of these multi-colored jewels have a quality all their own.

Kannegeisser is describing auriculas of the day, though it is thought the flowers illustrated were grown during the late years of the 18th and into the 19th century. In his comments on Kannegeisser, C. Oscar Moreton says, "There are no examples of a pure green edge, all are very slightly dusted over with farina" (Moreton, p. 37). He attributes this to artistic license in capturing the blossoms on paper but it may be that there was a sprinkle of farina, "which appears to be the continuation of the painted ladies and are less double than 'Dusty Double'."

It seems clear from reading Moreton and Tarver that the development of the green edged show flower did originate in England and stands as a tribute to the "florists" of the 17th and 18th centuries. More of this history is available in David Tarver's book and Ruth Duthie's book, "Florists' Flowers and Societies."

Another dedicated auricula hybridizer who gives us some insight into the history of the auricula is Rowland Biffen. His book, "The Auricula", published in 1949 after his death, contains a record of his work to redevelop the stripes seen in 17th century auriculas.

Here, also, is a scientific description of the meal so characteristic of show auriculas, described by someone with a botanist's eye. "The meal consists of an unusual type of glandular hair which occurs in many types of Primula. Each hair, when examined under a microscope, is seen to be a transparent globe carried on a short stalk. Protruding through the thin walls of the globe are large numbers of incredibly fine filaments of a waxy or resinous nature. The whole structure thus has much the appearance of a short-handled household mop." (Biffen, p. 46). Painted ladies had a large number of these waxy hairs all over the surface of the pip, giving a particular silvery cast to the flower.

What remains today of these wonders from the 18th century? There are now stripes aplenty thanks to Allan Hawkes in England and a number of other growers who are working with his development and moving in new directions. David Tarver, in his talk, showed one or two modern stripes by these growers. The re-created stripes could bring us one step closer to painted ladies. David Tarver believes that, in time, the painted ladies will be revived in the same way that we have seen the re-introduction of the striped auricula.

The auricula 'Dusty Double' which originated in the Pacific Northwest by Cy Happy has both stripes and meal over the whole face of the flower. The shape is reminiscent of early auriculas having both pointed petals and a tube-shaped (rather than flat-faced) flower, but the characteristic meal of the painted ladies is there in abundance. Some of the striped auriculas I have raised in the past two or three years, using 'Dusty Double' as a pollen parent, have potential for painted ladies and are less double than 'Dusty Double', with a nice flat face. There is more hybridizing to be done, but the painted ladies may shine again.

Illustrations of earlier auriculas, like the ones in Kannegeisser, stir the imagination and stimulate the hybridizer in new directions. Now, if the plants will bloom and the weather will cooperate, perhaps next year there will be a whole new generation of historical "re-creations" to be grown and admired.

REFERENCES


Tarver, David. "Auricula History." NAPS (Midland and West Section) Society Guides No. 5, [1994]

Painted Lady Auricula 'The Glory of England' after Furber 1730, drawing by David Tarver (with permission).

The outstanding painted ladies of the early 18th century included 'Holt's Royal Widow', 'Glory of the East' and 'Shelford's Hester'. The main source of illustrations of painted ladies is found in James Furber's "The Twelve Months of Flowers", 1730, reproductions of which can often be found in art prints.

Furber described 'Holt's Royal Widow', the best of the painted ladies, "it brings a good truss of well powder'd flowers and is marked with crimson streaked now and then with purple; and some yellow here and there intermixed." (Tarver, p.25)

Illustrations of earlier auriculas, like the ones in Kannegeisser, stir the imagination and stimulate the hybridizer in new directions. Now, if the plants will bloom and the weather will cooperate, perhaps next year there will be a whole new generation of historical "re-creations" to be grown and admired.

REFERENCES


Tarver, David. "Auricula History." NAPS (Midland and West Section) Society Guides No. 5, [1994]
So You Want to Grow Primulas from Seed?

By Rene Oakley, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

Well, if you have decided that you can do it, you may not know it, but you are already half way there! In what our boys refer to as “the olden days, when Mum and Dad were young”, we lived in England and purchased all our primulas, little realizing that the hardy ones are easily started from seed.

We were both Senior Citizens when we joined the Alpine Garden Club of B.C., where we met Thea Foster, a primula expert. She had brought some beautiful plants for “Show and Tell” and when she discovered that we had always liked to grow them she insisted that we must meet John Kerridge, another expert.

Next month, lo and behold! Thea gave me some seeds collected from her own Auriculas and insisted that I must follow all her instructions and we were absolutely delighted when the first shoots began to pop through. Success!! We were hooked!

It didn’t take John and Thea long to persuade us to join the American Primrose Society, as primulas have always been among our favorite plants. We had already been borrowing back issues of the A.P.S. quarterlies from the A.G.C. library, and I always recommend them to newcomers, as they are a fund of information. How we envied these experts — who gladly shared their knowledge about how they had been growing primulas for many years — years we felt we had wasted.

Unlike geraniums and fuchsias, or bedding plants, primulas require no greenhouse, heating cables, etc., and while a cold frame is sometimes useful, it is not absolutely necessary, except for a few extra tender varieties. Our seed benches are just cedar planks resting on sawhorses, placed in sheltered parts of our back yard, such as underneath a large old apple tree or at the end of the lot in the small space between the end of the house and the dividing fence. Fine shadecloth like that used in screen doors can be draped over the flats to protect them from heavy rain or hot sun.

In the kitchen, I follow recipes exactly, but in my many years growing geraniums and pelargoniums in the greenhouse, I used to toss in some of this and some of that until it looked right. I am afraid that I am now doing the same thing for primulas. I find it easiest to use a wheelbarrow, spade, and trowel to do the mixing. My guide for the mix was a talk at an Alpine Garden meeting, given by two young men from Washington State where they had a very successful nursery. The recipe was really intended for saxifrage, but I adapted it for my alpine and primula seeds. I use approximately equal parts of peat, pumice, and No. 1 and No. 2 grit. We buy large bags of the latter at the local pet food store, where it is known as “Chicken Scratch”. John told me that Herb Dickson, “Mr. Primrose”, had told him that the mix should be so open that if watered from above, it would drain right through.

I usually half fill the containers and then, depending on the size of the containers, sprinkle a pinch or two of 6-8-6 granules to provide food for the seedlings when they have used up the food that was already in each seed. We were told to spread a thin layer of grit and then scatter the seeds. This meant, of course, that I had to watch out for any seeds that had not fallen between the cracks and were germinating on top of the grit. So I was delighted when Rosetta
So You Want to Grow Primulas from Seed, continued

Jones told me that she scatters the seeds on the damp mix and then covers them with a thin layer of perlite. As it is both light weight and very white, perlite allows the seeds to pop through and reflects the needed light to encourage germination.

You often see the phrase “Popping up like mustard and cress” — well, that happened to me and I can assure you that prickling them out is for the birds. If the seed is very fine and you don’t have any very fine sand, use a pinch of ordinary sugar in the packet and shake it up with the seeds before scattering them. This helps to spread them out. The larger seeds I gently shake onto the flap of the seed packet and flip them off one at a time, using the point of a label. You will be glad that you took the extra trouble when prick-out time comes around. Don’t be in too big a hurry to do the latter, as when I pricked out some very tiny ones they all died!

I have chatted about planting the seeds but not where to get them — sort of putting the cart before the horse. Well, of course, the A.P.S. Seed Exchange is a must, plus all the members who advertise in the quarterlies. You haven’t lived until you have heard the person judging the monthly A.G.C. Pot Show absolutely raving about the plant labeled “Rosetta’s Double” grown from seed by you. John introduced us to the Barnhaven Seed Company, now in France, and we have had great success with their seeds.

Don’t be in too much of a hurry to discard any packs that are not showing any sign of life, as I once put a flat in an out-of-the-way spot in the garden and forgot it. We thought that all the seeds that had germinated had been pricked out, but THREE years after planting, some were still popping up.

Always keep your seedlings well away from any purchased plants because root mealy bugs have decided to invade the Club, and they travel from plant to plant, chomping on the roots in no time flat. That’s not root aphids or root weevils — it’s ROOT MEALY BUGS, described in the Fall 1996 A.P.S. quarterly.

You have taken all the precautions — pots and flats either brand new or well washed in a ten percent bleach solution, have used only new uncontaminated growing mix, etc., but seedlings are still disappearing? Well, apparently they give off a special aroma “Eau de New Plant”, very attractive to numerous bugs. Keep an eye on your containers and watch out for slugs, cutworms, and sowbugs that can shear seedlings off like lawn mowers.

Slugs are among the first diners. There are several ways to deal with them. Deadline® comes in a plastic squeeze bottle, making it easy to place a thin black line of gooey stuff around the pots or flats, and works very well. It survives rain quite well and does a very good job of seeing them off. Some brave and not too squeamish souls go out after dark with a flashlight and pick slugs, disposing of them in a container of salt water.

Sowbugs, that look like tiny gray Volkswagens, will eat seedlings completely — roots, stems, and leaves — until nothing is left. “Cutworm and Sowbug Bait” works very well, but must be put underneath the flats to protect the birds. Corn meal will eventually kill them, but is very attractive to rats and squirrels. So don’t use it if you have any of these in your area. A hot salsa mix whomped up in a blender with extra garlic, onion, hot peppers, and Tabasco sauce, along with a little cooking oil to prevent it from drying out, really discourages many bugs. To save tedious sieving and straining, we just slosh it on the bench with a paint brush. It really works!

It doesn’t actually kill the bugs, just persuades them to move away, hopefully far away. Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem to work on slugs — but then, you can’t win them all!

Don’t hesitate to talk to the experts, but be aware that if you talk to six people you will get six different tips. Do what I did — decide which sounds easiest for you and go for it. After all, they all work.

Good luck and successful germination! ★

Want More Primroses?

Would you like to join an overseas primula group, but you’re confused about international currency exchange rates? Becoming a “TWIN” will make it easy for you. A.P.S. members in Canada and the U.S. can pair up with members of the National Auricula and Primula Society (NAPS), Northern Section, where A.P.S. members pay the annual A.P.S. membership for their English twins in return for membership in NAPS, Northern Section. For details, please contact:

Dennis Oakley
10060 Dennis Place
Richmond, BC V7A 3G8
Canada

A set of quarterlies running from the 1940's through 1990 (a few issues are not available) is priced at $40. For availability or for ordering copies, please contact Cheryl Fluck
17275 Point Lena Loop Rd.
Juneau, AK 99801
USA
Tel: (907) 789-0595
Primula fasciculata

By Ian D. Scott, Newport-on-Tay, Fife, Scotland

At the Scottish Rock Garden show in Perth this year, the R. S. Masterton Memorial Trophy for the best Asiatic primula was won by Jim Sutherland. His glorious entry was a 9" clay pot filled with a swathe of Primula fasciculata in full bloom. Needless to say, his trade stall did a roaring trade selling much smaller plants for the rest of the day.

Primula fasciculata is a dwarf alpine of Chinese origin that was initially collect by Reginald Farrer in 1915, and later by George Forrest in 1918. Neither of these collections lasted long in cultivation, which is quite surprising as it is an undemanding plant, and it wasn't until the Chungtien - Lijiang - Dali (CLD) expedition of 1990 that this delightful primula was reintroduced. On this trip, two collections were made: CLD 345 and CLD 489. The former was found in short turf beside a hot spring near Nada village (Chungtien), while the latter was found in the wet meadows that make up a flooded plain close to Zhongdian. In both cases the altitude was about 3400 meters.

In early spring the awakening mounds are covered with tiny rose-pink flowers with a yellow ringed white center. John Richards states that the flowers are stemless in the wild, but this is incorrect. The stems of wild flowers can be anything from 1 to 5 cm in length depending on light quality. It is also certain that the stems elongate before seed production.

We have found cultivation remarkably easy, yet "The Plant Finder" only lists two sources of this species. At Edrom, Jim Jermyn cultivates it successfully in a trough of sphagnum and grit where it soon forms sturdy clumps of tiny, spoon-shaped, lime-green foliage. We have found that it will grow just as well in a purely peat-based compost with no added grit. He also recommends a cool shady position during the summer. Our plants do just as well in a greenhouse, in full sun, throughout the summer. There is just one trick — the pots must stand in a couple of centimeters of water all the time. This saturates the compost, replicating the natural habitat.

In November the dying leaves are removed — we just give the rosette mounds a haircut with scissors! The pots are removed from the water and usually freeze solid in our unheated greenhouse. Come spring again, the mounds start to awaken and as the first new leaves start to appear, they are returned to their watery home. This is also a good time for vegetative propagation. The mounds are easily teased apart to give maybe a dozen rooted segments. Planting the segments into the water-logged compost must be like planting rice in a paddy field, but they love it. Within a year the segments will expand and join together forming a solid mass of vegetation. This method of bulking up is fortunate, as we have had little success with seed. Despite strenuous efforts at hand pollination and encouraging insect pollination, ripe seed pods are extremely rare.

Garden Auricula Photo Contest!

Issue date: Fall, 1998

Since I announced the A.P.S. photo contest in the Fall, 1996, issue of Primroses, I have received entries from seven members — from Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Michigan, Alaska, Wales, and Sweden. As excellent as these photos are, they won't fill a full color edition of Primroses. So I am making another call for photos, with a scheduled publication date of Fall, 1998.

That means you have the spring and early summer seasons to take out your camera and snap away. Don't feel that you must be a professional photographer (or grower, for that matter) to enter. Pictures of friends' gardens and public gardens are appropriate. Of course, the most fun is showing off your own garden!

Here again is the formal set of rules.

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

Publication date: Fall, 1998. All prizes will be awarded. All photos will be returned, but the A.P.S. retains reprinting rights at no additional fee.

Primula fasciculata

Continued

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The leaves seemed shorter and wider than the usual strap-shaped leaves of nivalids, but this might have been because the plant was pot grown, rather than being in the open ground. They also looked slightly fleshy, with a fairly wide mid-rib, and were finely toothed along the margin. The underside of the leaves was covered with a meager coating of white farina. The flower stem was about 20 cm and was dusted with white farina that increased towards the apex, where there were the remains of six blooms. The petals were thinner and more separate than with *P. sinopurpurea*, rather more like those of *P. leucochnoa* / *melanops*.

Richards is rather dismissive about *P. purdomii*, claiming that it only differs from *P. sinopurpurea* in farina color. I can only suppose that he has had to rely upon dried herbarium material for this opinion, for the living plant appears quite distinct and well worth growing in its own right. In the autumn, two specialist nurseries were selling a few plants. At £5 a plant they were snapped up quickly, but I suspect that, like many nivalid primulae, they will be extremely difficult to maintain in cultivation.

I was still feeling rather dazed getting used to black primulas, when John hauled out another pot. "Any idea what this is?", he said, with a twinkle in the eye. "John's Giant" is another story...
Plant Portrait

By Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

PRIMULA CACHEMERIANA

What exactly is Primula cachemiriana? Over the years, it has been called a legitimate species, a geographical form of *P. denticulata*, a variety of *P. denticulata* and simply a synonym for *P. denticulata*. To muddy the waters even more, possibly three different plants have been identified and given that name, one described by Munro in 1879 and one by Carrière in 1880. Hooper described a third one and named it *P. denticulata var. cachemiriana* in 1882. A review of the reference books also reveals three different spellings: cachemiriana, cachemiriana and cachemeriana. In general, *P. cachemiriana* or the varietal name was used to designate plants in cultivation that have yellow farina (meal) on the leaves and a more clearly defined white eye in the flowers.

Prior to 1948, no fewer than eleven geographical forms of *P. denticulata* had been given specific names. Although all were listed in their book, Smith and Fletcher considered them to be synonymous with *P. denticulata*. The plants under the name *P. denticulata var. cachemiriana* Hooker, were considered by them to be very mealy *P. denticulata* hybrids of garden origin. The latter view was further supported by Brun in the early 1930s when he determined the chromosome count of var. *cachemiriana* Hooker to be 52 whereas *P. denticulata* has 22. Smith and Fletcher also judged *P. cachemiriana* Munro to be of garden origin.

Blasdale (1948), the American Primrose Society Dictionary (1967), Green (1976), Fenderson (1986) and Halda (1992) all regarded *P. cachemiriana* to be a synonym of *P. denticulata*. Robinson (1990) considered it to be a “selected form, neither better nor worse than the original.” Clapham (1972), however, states that “*P. cashemiriana* is readily distinguished from the type plant [*P. d.*] by its deeper coloured flowers and golden meal on the underside of the leaves.”

After receiving and growing a wild-collected plant that he feels is similar to Munro’s original specimen, Richards (1993) believes there are enough differences between it and *P. denticulata* to warrant giving species status to *P. cachemiriana*. After almost 14 years of its growing close to *P. denticulata* in his garden, there have been no signs of hybridization. It is not the same plant, however, as that found in gardens under the name *P. denticulata var. cachemiriana* Hooker. Richards feels the latter is merely a very mealy *P. denticulata*.

So, what exactly is *P. cachemiriana*? I am not sure I know any more now than when I started this research. I do know the plant currently in our garden labeled *P. cachemiriana* does look distinctly different from the nearby *P. denticulata*. The leaves of the former are much longer, more strongly recurved and, in mid-November, are still covered on the underside with a thick coating of yellow farina. This year’s leaves are persisting on the plant longer than those of *P. denticulata*.

The resting buds of *P. cachemiriana* are more pointed. At this time of year, they are heavily coated with yellow meal whereas the *P. denticulata* buds and leaves show no sign of meal, either white or yellow. The upper surfaces of the leaves are smooth while those of *P. denticulata* exhibit minute hairs.

The flowers of the two species looked very similar although at the time they were in bloom, I did not look at them as closely as I should have. The flower stem of *P. cachemiriana* was perhaps longer and more wiry, but that distinction could have been due to cultural differences.

Regardless of its name, *P. cachemiriana* is worth growing. It is as easy as its better-known counterpart and provides an added dimension to the garden, even if it is only to provide a topic of debate.

First Things First

Continued from Page 23

in manure or other soil amendments, or applying alfalfa pellets. If you are growing in pots, be sure to use a good soil mix with adequate air-holding capacity.

TO GET THE BEST RESULTS, USE FERTILIZERS

Use whatever you like, “organic” or otherwise. My personal favorite is alfalfa tea; make it with alfalfa pellets and water and let stand overnight. I always use it before it gets smelly, since I worry about the bacteria. There seems to be something in alfalfa that beefs a plant up, and I use alfalfa tea on everything from roses to orchids to primroses. I also believe that the tea is more effective than simply strewing alfalfa pellets on the ground, because bacteria decompose the strewed alfalfa pellet before its essence reaches the plant’s roots.

SOURCES:
Journal Report

By Mary Frey, Kent, Washington

Articles pertaining to primroses and their companions are scarce during the waning of the year but I did unearth some tidbits. I encourage anyone with leads for articles to please contact me either by phone, mail or e-mail. This information is at the end of this report.

A PERFECT SPECIMEN

Paul Held, APS member and founder of the American Sakurasoh Association (ASA), details his pursuit of the perfect flower specimen in the November 1997 Newsletter of the ASA. Held's desire to have a visual record of registered *Primula sieboldii* (sakurasoh) plants leads to several frustrating, tedious, and expensive consequences. Pressing blooms often distort the petals and drying the flowers in borax gave Held experience as an archaeologist. He notes that despite the time consumption of the latter method, the flowers that "did survive this attempt looked in excellent shape." Photographing the blooms seems to be an obvious solution but obtaining a print of the exact size of the flower proves so costly that the negatives are still gathering dust at the local photo processor. Held finally discovers that the electronic scanner satisfies all his requirements. The newsletter includes delectable photos of *sakurasoh* plants leading to affectively combat weeds in cracks and paths. It is non-selective so take care when applying. Vinegar works best in warm weather. Also, do not forget about using ammonia to create instant composted slugs. Combine a solution of half water and half ammonia and shoot.

A PERFECT ALPINE

The September 1997 Quarterly Bulletin of the Alpine Garden devotes the entire issue to practical alpine gardening methods and practices. Articles include choosing plants (Vic Aspland recommends *Primula marginata* and *P. allionii*), soil types, shade, troughs, alpine houses, propagation, photography, travel and safety. This is an excellent issue for all gardeners to learn new techniques and review traditional formulas.

Linda Verbeek discloses the cure for liverworts in the September and November 1997 Bulletin for the Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia. Friends from the Netherlands suggest using vinegar to eliminate the problem. Verbeek paints the liverworts with the vinegar and she finds that they turn brown and shrivel within days. She also reasons that the vinegar will not harm the soil because it is a natural compound, metabolizes swiftly, and is volatile. She finds, too, that this method is not new and she wonders "who the genius was that first invented it!"

(I have used vinegar in a spray bottle to affectively combat weeds in cracks and on paths. It is non-selective so take care when applying. Vinegar works best in warm weather. Also, do not forget about using ammonia to create instant composted slugs. Combine a solution of half water and half ammonia and shoot.)

OUT, OUT DAMN LIVERWORT

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Primula moupinensis

By Rick Lupp, Graham, Washington

There has been a huge influx of new plants from China in recent years since the country has once again opened up its borders to plant and seed collectors from around the world. I was fortunate enough to be offered a share in a collection expedition sponsored by the Rhododendron Species Foundation of Federal Way, Washington, in the fall of 1995. As part of my share, I received a plant of *Primula moupinensis* (SEH086NA) collected by Steve Hootman of RFS.

My short experience in growing this plant has me convinced that it has the potential to change the long and widely held image amongst growers around the world concerning the "petiolarid" group of primulas. Ever since I began collecting and growing primulas in a serious way, I have heard that the "petiolarids" were all very touchy and demanding plants, suited only to very dedicated growers who were willing to go to great lengths to provide for their needs or for those growers who were blessed with cool summer climates similar to their native habitats. These widely held views have been borne out in my past experience with species from this group of *Primula* as has been proven by my very poor rate of success in growing and increasing the plants.

Upon receiving my first plant off. *P. moupinensis* in early winter of 1995, I potted it up into a 5" pot of moderately gritty, humus rich potting mix and set the pot on the floor of one of my hoop houses in a shady spot, thinking that it would soon go the way of most past "petiolarids" and gradually fade away to a brown mess. I noticed whenever I watered that winter that the plant seemed to be doing quite nicely and was putting on new growth. Based upon past experience, I did not think this unusual as the "petiolarids" are generally no problem during the cooler months of the year. Warm weather would be the test.

It was my intention to move the plant out into an open sided, heavily shaded lath house when the weather warmed up in the spring. I forgot! By the time that I remembered to take a good look at the plant and move it to the lath house, it was mid-May and we had already had temperatures up into the 80's. When I did look at it, I was about as surprised as I have ever been by a plant. It not only still looked very good and was still making new growth, but it was also starting to produce plantlets at the end of strawberry-like runners. My one plant had turned into 21 plants by the end of its first year.

These 21 plants were potted up into individual pots and grown on another year at the end of which I had 90-odd 3” pots plus 5 large flats packed full of plants. The larger stock plants in the flats bloomed in February of 1997 and just covered themselves with umbels of 2” rich lavender-pink blooms with a white eye, all held on short stems. These contrasted beautifully with the heavily toothed, crisp, thick foliage that has a light dusting of yellow farina at the base. I now have plants that are in their second winter in the open garden in a rather normal woodland soil, in shade where they are making runners and
Primula moupinensis, continued

increasing nicely. I expect them to bloom very early this coming spring. As an experiment, other plants have been left all year round in pots in my hoop houses where they have all done well during even the hottest weather, as long as they do not receive direct sun and do not dry out.

If anyone had suggested to me a few years ago that there was a "petiolaric" primula of such beauty that could shrug off the worst heat of summer and increase like a strawberry I would surely have thought this to be impossible. This only proves that when it comes to plants, wonders never cease.

One That I Cannot Grow
By John N. Gibson, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, England

PRIMULA MINIMA
Probably there will be a chorus on the east side of the Atlantic of “Only one!” However, I must have bought dozens of both the pink and alba forms of Primula minima over the years, always with the same result — complete and utter failure. On occasion I have been rewarded with the odd flower, and then the inevitable demise of the plant. There cannot be much room left in the Big Greenhouse in the sky.

Primula minima grows in Central and Eastern Europe on the Alps and Dolomites. Where it is found it grows in profusion at altitudes from 900 – 3000 m. I have seen it growing on many sites in the wild, including one above the Pordoi Pass in the Dolomites, where it covers an area of approximately half an acre. When I saw it, flowering was just finishing but there was no evidence of there being any better percentage of flowers than I get at home.

I have tried several compost mixtures, including those that I grow my Auriculas and P. allionii in. I have even tried the starvation diet recommended by Stephen Doonan in the American Rock Garden Society Bulletin, Vol. 49 No. 2. He recommends a mix of 1 part sphagnum moss peat, 4 parts clean sand, and 4 parts granite chips; according to him this will produce a vigorous specimen with more root than foliage. It obviously works for him but in my greenhouse it only accelerated the inevitable.

For some reason P. °° bileckii, which is a hybrid of P. minima, grows well for me, even though the experts say that it should have the same treatment as its parent.

Looking at the photograph that was taken at the Royal Botanical Garden, Edinburgh, P. minima is capable of flowering well. Having looked at the picture, I have decided to have another try with it. I would welcome any tips or suggestions.

Get Well Soon, Herb!

Herb Dickson, past president of the A.P.S. and primula grower extraordinaire, fell recently and broke his hip. He is now recuperating. We here at Primroses wish him a speedy recovery. If any of our readers would like to send Herb a get-well card, his address is 19081 Julie Road, Lebanon, MO 65536 USA.
Plant Societies

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Wanted to visit: ‘nice’ primula gardens in Vancouver, B.C. area. Plan to visit from April 28 - May 3, 1998. We are from Invercargili, New Zealand.

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As a fundraiser for the A.P.S. National Show, the Seattle Chapter has been making and selling canvas tote bags stenciled with primroses. The back cover picture is a composite of the stencil designs. Another composite of stencil designs is on Page 4.