Editor’s Farewell

All good things must end — in this case, my term as editor will end with the Fall 1998 issue of *Primroses*. I have immensely enjoyed being the A.P.S. editor. It has been a privilege to work with the regional reporters, those unsung but extremely faithful few who gather the stories that you read. Especially enjoyable has been corresponding with many A.P.S. members and then meeting them in person. Needless to say, the difference between my mind’s image of someone and what they really look like can be quite a surprise. Fred Knapp, for instance, is much taller than I expected, as is John Gibson!

I am an unabashed fan of primulas, so it has been a delight to trade stories and ideas with others who share my enthusiasm for this large and complex genus of plants. I plan to continue to sow my many pots of primula seeds each year and further explore hybridizing primulas. I have much to learn, but my passion for primroses appears unabated, at least for now.

I am leaving this post a bit sooner than I had originally planned, but I am proud of what I have produced thus far and am confident the A.P.S. will recruit a fine editor to follow me. Thank you for being such kind and friendly readers!

Claire Cockcroft, Redmond, Washington

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Looking for a New Editor

The A.P.S. is in need of a new editor, starting with the Winter 1999 issue of *Primroses*. At a minimum, applicants should be able to use word processing software to facilitate electronic publication of the quarterly. Although the current editor performs all pre-press processing prior to publication, this skill level is not required of a new editor.

Anyone interested in this position may contact the current editor, the A.P.S. president, or a member of the A.P.S. Board of Directors. The names and addresses are listed on this page.

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Primroses

Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

Volume 56 Number 2 Spring 1998

Contents

4 John’s Giant
   By Ian Scott
5 Garden Auricula Photo Contest!
6 Construct Your Own Rock Garden
   By Karen Schellinger
9 Helped By Friendly Inspiration
   By Dot Pyler
10 Oregon Primrose Society
11 One Society, Three Sections
   By Bob Taylor
12 Primulas in Ottawa
   By Gerald Taaffe
14 Journal Report
   By Mary Frey
16 Plant Portrait: *Primula waltonii*
   By Ann Lunn
18 Book Review
20 Primula Primer
21 First Things
   By Ise Burch
24 Hand Pollinating of Primulas
   By Herbert H. Dickinson
26 American Primrose Society Bookstore
28 Seed Sources
   By Maedythe Martin
29 Companion Plants I Grow with Primulas
   and Auriculas
   By Ruby Chong
31 Officers of the Chapters

Cover photo

*Primula moupinensis*, a petiolarid primula described in the Winter 1998 issue of *Primroses*, is also known as the Strawberry Primrose.

— Photos by Rick Lupp
John's Giant

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

On my visit to John Mattingly at Cluny, 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 his eye. I could hardly believe my eyes. The plant looked vaguely familiar, but it was the wrong size.

The leaves were of that gentle, hairy softness that one associates with the soldanelloid primulas. They were long and narrowly elliptical, like Primula flaccida, but over 30 cm long. The flowers were also flaccida-like, wide-open bells of a pale lavender blue, dusted with a fine white farina and exuding a deep perfume. What was strange, was that instead of forming a tight, compact spike, the flowers were spread out. It was as if the whole spike had been stretched out until the individual flowers were scarcely touching.

John gave me two plants to take away and "play with" (plenty of paint brushing). They were planted into a new bed that I had been preparing that was moist and fairly rich in humus. By the time that they were producing seed capsules the scapes were over 70 cm high.

In late September we harvested the seed heads and put them into our warm seed cupboard to finish ripening. After a week they were ready to harvest, but disaster! The pods were fat but contained not a single viable seed. I phoned John the day they were ready to harvest, but he was busy getting used to black primulas, when John hauled out another pot. "Any idea what this is?" he said with a twinkle in his eye. I could hardly believe my eyes. The plant looked vaguely familiar, but it was the wrong size.

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In late September we harvested the seed heads and put them into our warm seed cupboard to finish ripening. After a week they were ready to harvest, but disaster! The pods were fat but contained not a single viable seed. I phoned John — exactly the same story — plenty of promise but not a hint of seed.

I think that it is fairly certain that "John's Giant" is a hybrid, which would account for its sterility and possibly its vigor. Can we speculate on its parentage? The pollen parent is obviously P. flaccida, but what of the other parent? Initially, I gather, John had been under the impression that the seed had come from an albino form of P. watsonii that he was growing in his plastic tunnel (along with P. flaccida). A chance crossing between species from these two different sections would not be impossible.

Richards mentions only one similar cross, P. x vaniana, which I once saw in Jim Sutherland's display area at Ardfearn. This was an accidental cross between P. vialii and P. flaccida. Its flower spike was akin to the former with its leaves like that of the latter — an interesting cross that I have never managed to engineer myself, as I find it impossible to arrange for the two species to flower simultaneously. Richards suggests that this cross occurs as both species are diploid (2n=20). This is a problem as P. watsonii is reported as being a tetraploid (2n=40). Perhaps the albino muscarioid was P. cernua (2n=20). We may never know with certainty, but whatever its parentage, this is another fine plant from Cluny.

So, back to my car carrying my two treasures, but escape is not that easy. "Before you go, you'd better have a look at the "strawberry patch", says John...
Construct Your Own Rock Garden

By Karen Schellinger, Avon, Minnesota

I fell in love with the mountain wilderness in 1986 after viewing the work of Mother Nature in Montana's Glacier National Park. The ruggedness of the rocks and the charm of the small plants nestled among them were breathtaking. I had no idea such beautiful plants existed high above the tree line.

I vowed to recreate that beauty at home, so I joined the Minnesota chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS).

I was an old beginner and still describe myself so at age 51. But NARGS members were very helpful and generous with their knowledge and enthusiasm, which gave me the confidence to start. They told me to assess my yard carefully for overhanging trees and their roots while observing the existing patterns of sun and shade. Sunny rock gardens must not compete with canopies of trees that will take away light and moisture. It may even be necessary to remove a tree that is in the way of your garden.

On either side of our garage door I had hillsides with very steep grades, lots of sun, and no overhanging trees. I decided a terraced rock garden would be a wonderful and attractive solution to those large rocks were not necessary, because the soil was a light rocky garden loam on a steep slope and drainage was already excellent.

For planting mix, all I had to do was add some peat or compost to the existing garden loam I removed, along with some small mulch rock for drainage. A good mix is one part of each ingredient. An old cement mixer would be great for mixing the soils and drainage rock together; a tiller works well going over the pile of soil to mix the ingredients, too. When you place large rocks in the soil to build your rock garden, you will raise the soil level. Be sure you heap the soil higher than the final level you want, because the soil can settle by as much as 20%.

I had to make two trips to buy the large rocks, because I underestimated the amount needed on my first trip. In a NARGS bulletin, Gwen Kelaidis, an experienced rock garden grower and landscaper, advised buying one third more large rock than you think you would need. Just be careful that you don't overload your springs! A Minnesota landscaper, known for her large naturalistic rock gardens, said to use large enough rocks and build your rock garden big enough, as it is always too small. She was right — I have already built two more rock gardens! In fact, I keep looking at my large perennial bed with thoughts of making more mini-mountains. But no, I love my perennials too.

How do you place stones in a rock garden? I remembered the rocky ledges that were very prominent in the mountains of Glacier Park and tried to recreate them on my terraced slope. I was careful to bury the rocks far enough into the soil so I can step on them without any rock movement. You don't want the stones perched on top of the soil nor do you want an upright "tombstone" look. Group three to five rocks together — for some reason an uneven number always looks better.

Moving rocks into their designated positions can be problematic. Using a scoop shovel to drag the rocks into place works well for some people. If you decide to use very large rock — because you have the room and want a garden with such large rocks — then you will need a bobcat to move the rock into place.

I personally like to start placing the rocks from the bottom up; others start from the top down. It's your choice; just remember to plan the placement of the paths. Our two large golden retrievers follow my paths very well in the new rock garden, eliminating most of the possible dog damage to plant material.

I have become more conscious of providing considerate garden access for people in wheel chairs, which means I will now be making wider paths in my perennial and woodland gardens. It is not necessary with my rock gardens, as they, being less than eight feet across, can be viewed from the outside edges.

I left a space between each rock for a plant or put the rocks almost touching so that a sprawling plant could drape over the ledge. Making a ledge also creates a natural looking path behind it, if you leave enough space behind the rocks. Be sure to make the path wide enough for walking. There is nothing worse than stepping on a favorite plant with your heel, especially if it was rare and doing well!

You can use limestone, California driftstone, trapp rock (angular gray rock) or granite boulders (not round in shape). I decided to use California driftstone because of its texture and wonderful brown and tan coloring. Even though it was heavy, it was a size I could handle. Because of the cost, I did not use as many pieces of California driftstone in the rock gardens as I would have liked.

I got some free one-inch angular crushed granite at a friend's gravel pit to use as drainage material and as rock mulch. I screened it myself onto our two-wheeled trailer. While it saved me some money, I soon learned what a big mistake that rock was. It is very difficult to dig in because the angular edges lock together. While great for holding back a shrub bed on a steep slope, it is miserable to get a trowel or shovel into when you're planting or replanting.

I have found pea gravel (or "buckshot") to be the most economical mulch and drainage material to use. It is the easiest to work in because it is round and about a quarter inch wide, which also provides wonderful drainage in the soil. Its only drawback as mulch is that on a steep grade the pea gravel will not stay in place.

I began on the east side by outlining the rock garden area with a garden hose, removing what sod was left, and excavating all of the soil. I had to use a shovel and a pick-ax because of the rocky soil.
Construct Your Own Rock Garden, continued

place if the rocks are placed too far apart. To prevent its movement, you can place the rocks very close together and let plants cascade over them or place a rock right below the area with a plant or dwarf shrub right above it.

Another variation on the rock garden is a rock garden wall. Using a slab stone such as limestone, you plant as you build the wall. Make sure the bottom of the wall flares out slightly so it won’t tip over. Measure the square footage (height times width) of the intended wall and work with an aggregate company to get the proper amount of stone for your wall. If you plan to do it yourself, be warned that a limestone slab wall is difficult to do well. A wall rock garden is one way that gardeners in wheelchairs could have a rock garden; just be sure they can reach easily across the top of the bed to tend plants growing there.

Now it was time to plant. The first to go in were the dwarf conifers and other dwarf shrubs. (Had it been late September, I would have added dwarf spring bulbs and waited until spring to continue planting.) When the shrubs were in place, I planted suitable alpines (10 inches or less) with a variety of foliage textures and giving more protection.

Rocks do not make the rock garden, the character and variety of the plants do. For every genus of large perennials there are alpine forms. The number of tiny species bulbs like the tulips, crocus, and narcissus are wonderful when they bloom in the spring and look in character with other alpine plants because of their diminutive size.

There are many good rock gardening books that explain what conditions alpine plants prefer. Lincoln Foster’s “Rock Gardening”, for example, is a good source on plants suitable for the rock garden as well as instructions for constructing rock gardens plus many other things useful to all gardeners. You can start your alpine plants from seed, or go to a nursery that grows alpines and ask for their help in choosing your plants.

Don’t be afraid to experiment — it’s the secret to an inspired gardener’s special outlook on life. ✎

Helped By Friendly Inspiration

By Dot Plyler, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania (Chair, Doretta Klaber Chapter)

This year at the Tuesday judging of the Primula class at the 1998 Philadelphia Flower Show, I realized that, with one exception, every entry in the Class was by a member of the A.P.S. Doretta Klaber Chapter. But nothing had been entered by the Chapter Chair. How embarrassing! What kind of a Chapter Chair doesn’t even enter when other members do? I had never entered anything in this show, but I decided that situation needed to change immediately.

When I got home I looked over my meager stock of possibilities and told the plants, “OK, we’re going to enter on Friday — you ... and you. We know we’re not going to win anything. Our intent is to show our faces (petals).” The chosen were a rather showy Primula verticillata (showy had won on Tuesday) and a tiny Primula saxatilis.

We did get our pots scrubbed a bit, and we checked for any animal life on our leaves. When we entered, a stager inadverently broke a leaf. She apologized profusely but I told her it really didn’t matter, “They’re not worth anything anyway.” (Not a nice way to talk in front of one’s plants.) Then I told the entries goodbye, “You’re on your own now.”

When I checked later I found the P. verticillata sporting an honorable mention ribbon, and little “Saxxy” — a blue! A blue?? I told the friend with me there had been a mistake and it would soon be corrected. But the mistake was mine, and Saxxy really had won herself a blue. So DKC’s honor was upheld, and maybe, just maybe, we’ll try this competition stuff again another year.

Many members of the A.P.S. Doretta Klaber Chapter have won ribbons in the Philadelphia Flower Show. In addition to Primula, they have received awards for other plants entered. In 1996 the Chapter won a blue, plus the award for “best exhibit of the day with two or more varieties.” This was given for a window with pots on shelves that were visible from all sides.

DKC member Barbara Bruno consistently wins blue ribbons for her lovely auriculas. In addition, she has received the North American Rock Garden Society’s (N.A.R.G.S.) “Best of the Day” Award. Barbara is a fine writer on garden subjects and is currently working on a book. One of her most recent articles, “Getting to Know Auriculas”, appeared in the Nov.-Dec. 1997 issue of The Green Scene, published by The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

Dick Van Duzer, treasurer of the Chapter, staged DKC’s previously mentioned award-winning window. Every year Dick designs and does most of the construction on the N.A.R.G.S. Delaware Valley Chapter’s winning major exhibit. Dick does so much work for DKC behind the scenes — nitty-gritty
Oregon Primrose Society

After many years as an important chapter in the American Primrose Society, the Oregon Primrose Society has decided to disband. What a loss for our society! But its members have generously endowed the A.P.S. with a useful tool for helping future A.P.S. chapters. The following proposal was presented to the A.P.S. Board of Directors in January and accepted by the Board. We thank the Oregon Primrose Society's members for their thoughtfulness and concern for the future of our society!

NEW CHAPTER TRUST FUND

The Oregon Primrose Society wishes to donate $600.00 to the American Primrose Society (hereafter referred to as the A.P.S.) with certain provisions appended. The provisions are:

(a) This money shall be held in trust by the A.P.S. for a specific purpose.
(b) The purpose shall be to provide monetary aid to any new group (not renamed or relocated chapter) that wishes to become an A.P.S. chapter.
(c) The new group has a need for financial assistance to get established.

Outright grants of a minimum of $100.00 to a maximum of $200.00 shall, until the fund is exhausted, be provided to qualifying groups that meet certain criteria. The criteria shall be:

(a) That they have a demonstrated need for assistance.
(b) They meet the A.P.S. requirements for qualifying as a chapter of the A.P.S.
(c) They have applied to the A.P.S. Board of Directors for acceptance as a new chapter.
(d) They request financial assistance.

Barring any legitimate reason for denying the request, the A.P.S. shall grant the appropriate amount to the new chapter with no obligation to reimburse the A.P.S. However, if that chapter subsequently becomes very successful, they should be encouraged to donate funds to the trust fund for the purpose for which it was established.

If the terms of this proposal are agreeable to the A.P.S. Board of Directors, the Oregon Primrose Society will present a check to the A.P.S. Treasurer for this fund. There is no requirement that the A.P.S. account for anything more than the principal amount of the fund and any subsequent donations to it.

Helped By Friendly Inspiration

Continued from Page 9.

work so essential in keeping a chapter running — that he deserves a blue ribbon for all his DKC work!

Peggy Bowditch, Mike Slater, Barbara Bruno, Dot Plyler and Lee Raden won a total of fifteen ribbons in the Primula class this year. By now Lee must have so many ribbons that the box is too heavy to lift! Anita Kistler, Roxie Geyjan and Claire Muller did not exhibit this year but have won many past awards.

I'm sure other DKC members have won ribbons in the past. What a shame that I don't have all their names!

One Society, Three Sections

By Bob Taylor, West Yorkshire, England

Members of the American Primrose Society might find it interesting that America has only one primrose society, while in Britain there are essentially three — the National Auricula and Primula Society (NAPS) Northern Section, NAPS Midland and West Section, and NAPS Southern Section. Why don't the three societies over here merge? Well, it is not a personality difficulty. The reason was stated back in the 1850s, when the idea of merging was being bandied about — when and where would we hold the show? Even in a country as small as ours the flowering times of the plants is markedly different, and it would not be possible to agree upon a show date.

In the 1860s they tried to move the show around the country from year to year, but that plan proved a disaster and was largely responsible for the collapse of the society. The northerners resurrected the society in 1872/3 and decided to hold the show in Manchester every year. When they wouldn't move the show away from Manchester, the southern growers formed their own section (in 1875) and held their show in London. The midlanders formed their group in 1900, holding shows in Birmingham.

The question of amalgamation crops up periodically and members usually decide there is nothing to be gained from it, because we would still require the Organization to run three shows, etc. An executive coordinating committee would be superfluous since the Organization on the ground is already in place. Moreover, the subscriptions are so low many growers belong to two or even three sections, and the total works out to less than many comparable societies.

The combined number of members would be around a thousand. Most people feel that since all our officers are volunteers and no expenses are paid, the three smaller societies share the administrative burden very effectively along geographical lines. A loose cooperative federation seems to be the ideal arrangement, even in a small, overcrowded country like Britain.

Membership in the National Auricula and Primula Society is open to all auricula and primula lovers and includes a yearbook. [See Page 30 for Section Officers' names and addresses.]
Primulas in Ottawa
By Gerald Taaffe, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

1997 was a good year for primulas here in USDA Zone 4 Ottawa, despite a very late spring and an extended summer drought. I had good germination from Primula kisoana for the first time in several tries, although I believe that the seed was the type species from the Scotch Rock Garden Club rather than the APS-offered ‘Alba,’ of which there seems to be no trace. The seedlings grew extremely well, with nice hirsute stems and somewhat wavy, typical Cortusoides section leaves. For the first time in my new (since 1995) garden I have a lot of P. polyantha, P. sieboldii and P. cortusoides seedlings that should, judging from past results, put on a bright show next year. While the first two are longer lived and, to my eye, have more interesting flowers, P. cortusoides can put on the liveliest garden show. In their second or third year from seed, the patch is covered with flowers of the various species P. glaucescens, P. spectabilis, P. wulfeniana, P. bilecki, and P. x vochinensis — all but the last two in the second or third year from seed and seemingly happy in their troughs or rock garden sites. A major disappointment was the somewhat tender P. palinuri, that flourished for two seasons in a partially shaded trough and was lush and succulent at snowmelt, looking as though it were about to bloom. You know the rest — an April shower followed by frost that killed this, and only this plant.

I’ve had good germination from APS seed of P. reidii v. williamsii over the years, but only once have I had flowering plants. My current batch of seedlings is in a trough that sports a few mossy rocks, which may keep them a little cool. One way or the other, I’m going to start some more next spring for a new rocky, peaty area with a good cover of woodland rock-mosses (mosses that grow naturally in a mat directly on granitic rock in open Canadian Shield woods). As always with this plant, it’s fingers-crossed time.

The Auriculastrum section is my current primula mania, and for the first time ever I had a really showy display of gorgeous flower heads of garden auriculas from APS seed in an astonishing range of colors. I particularly liked the large, two inch wide florets of yellow-streaked rusty reds, abominable as they may be to purists. Less showy but very welcome was a double of a nice lively pink. What I’m really looking forward to, though, are flowering plants of the various species P. glaucescens, P. spectabilis, P. wulfeniana, P. bilecki, and P. x vochinensis — all but the last two in the second or third year from seed and seemingly happy in their troughs or rock garden sites. A major disappointment was the somewhat tender P. palinuri, that flourished for two seasons in a partially shaded trough and was lush and succulent at snowmelt, looking as though it were about to bloom. You know the rest — an April shower followed by frost that killed this, and only this plant.

The Proliferae section also finally gave me a satisfyingly vulgar display of five and six-tiered flowering plants, mostly of various color forms of P. japonica, including the marvelous yellow and red-eyed whites and very pale pinks. The display should be even louder next year with healthy, second year seedlings of P. beesiana, P. burmanica and P. bulleyana. The similar Sikkimensis section got off to a reasonable start with a nice display of rusty red forms of P. florindae, but somewhat disappointing results from P. sikkimensis. Some of the plants are set where they get constantly splashed by a nearby fountain and look promising for next year, however, with strong, very lush growth.

This year’s P. laurantiana didn’t have the elongated stems I mentioned in earlier correspondence and came from seed gathered wild in the Gaspe. That’s the good news. The bad news is that most grew into nice small rosettes that didn’t bloom at all in their second year, and two appeared to be a cross with P. darialica or P. frondosa, with small flowers on much larger leaf rosettes.

Finally, the third year plants of a motley collection of various “Wanda Hybrids” and Cowichans from APS seed made a fine jewel-studded display of exceptionally fine color this spring. My single second-year seedling of P. megacalyx (P. elatior v. megacalyx?) surprised me with much bigger flowers than the similar oxlip on a tidier plant. These, along with garden auriculas, are planted in the light shade of a young ‘Jane’ hybrid magnolia in very rich, moisture-retentive soil. All are mulched with small river pebbles that were put there to save young transplants from squirrels but may have helped protect the auriculas from rot. (At the time, it was a lazy gardener’s one-size-fits-all tactic.)

I could use some help in identifying two plants. They are like garden polyanthus with the very common yellow-eyed red flowers, but much, much smaller, about 3” high and wide? They’re in their third year now from seed and bear more flowers, perhaps 6 or 7, but show no sign of getting much bigger. ✪

Primula japonica in a garden setting.
HIMALAYAN FANCY

If you do not have the time to pack your bags and fly to India, then spend a few moments reading Margaret and Henry Taylor's account in the January 1998 Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. The Taylors take us on a bumpy, misty and amusing ramble through the northern end of the Himalayas in July. At over 8,000 feet, they locate a few Primula sessilis seed capsules and find P. denticulata and P. macrophylla growing with a pink Cortusa brotheri. They set up camp close to P. rosea and nearby they find P. macrophylla v. moorcroftiana and a few white P. minutissima among thousands of the normal pink. After the Taylors reach over 14,000 feet, they spot a fanciful purple blue primula with a unique splayed brown calyx. The Taylors deduce it is Primula elliptica but a friend disagrees and “we nearly come to blows.” A month later, a primula expert confirms their initial guess. A near encounter with a bear and many plant visions of the Himalayan kind follow the Taylors on their fantastic trip.

There are two “Plant Portraits” in the same Journal pertaining to primulas. Alastair Mc Kelvie describes Primula sikkimensis v. hopeana, which grew from the seed he collected in Ganesh Himal in Central Nepal in 1992. Mc Kelvie writes that it is half as short as P. sikkimensis and that it matches P. ioessa except it has more serrated leaf margins. He finds it “a beautiful and delicate primula . . . and is greatly admired when in full flower in May.”

Fred Carrie and Alastair Mc Kelvie write about a primula hybrid they grew from cuttings collected in Gosainkund in Central Nepal in 1995. The small mystery primula was growing between Primula aureata v. fimбриata and P. deuteranana. It has dark crinkled foliage like deuteranana but has more farina. Also, except for the leaves, the plant resembles P. aureata v. fimбриata and they label it ‘GOS 134’. The cuttings bloomed in March 1996 with one plant producing “a dazzling large white flower,” one with a whitish-pink bloom and the third with a tiny white bloom. The first plant won First Prize at the 1997 Edinburgh Show.

Dr. John Richards, author of Primula, disputed that the plant was a hybrid because the pollen was fertile. The authors, however, maintain that because GOS 134 shows many characteristics of the two species it grew with, it must be a hybrid. And that’s that.

MATERNAL MEDICINE

If natural medicine and healing intrigue you, Susanne Fischer-Rizzi’s book Medicine of the Earth is a refreshing resource. It contains an enlightening chapter on the Cowslip primrose which the author describes as both Primula veris and P. elatior. Historically, Cowslip connects to female powers and soul energy. Freya, the Germanic Earth Goddess (and my great grandmother), supposedly unlocked Mother Earth with her golden Cowslip key each year to awaken Nature’s sleeping forces. Ultimately, Cowslip is dedicated to the Blessed Mary (another great grand-

COWSLIP TEA

2 teaspoons dried cowslip flowers
1 cup boiling water
Steep the flowers in boiling water for 5 minutes.

from Medicine of the Earth

E-mail address: MLFREY@AOL.COM

A.P.S. Annual Summer Picnic
SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1998 — 12:00 NOON

Every year it seems the attendance shrinks a little more. Remember, all A.P.S. members are invited — we’d really like you to come! It’s a potluck picnic, so bring a dish to share and we’ll provide the soda and coffee.

This year’s picnic will be held at the home of A.P.S. President June Skidmore. You can call June if you need directions or other information.

Following the picnic there will be a meeting of the A.P.S. Board of Directors. Members are invited to attend.

6730 West Mercer Way
Mercer Island, Washington
Tel: 206-232-5766
**Plant Portrait**

*By Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon*

**PRIMULA WALTONII**

As the sun penetrates the canopy of *Styrax japonicus* overhead, an array of jewels glows beneath: rubies, garnets and pink sapphires. These are the hues of *Primula waltonii*.

Discovered in 1904 by Captain H. J. Walton, *P. waltonii* hails from high damp meadows and streamsides of southeastern Tibet and Bhutan. Bright green, lance-shaped leaves, rounded at the tip and cuneate (wedge-shaped with the narrow part attached to the stem) at the base, have prominent pale midribs, narrowly winged petioles and toothed edges. In June or July, seven to twenty widely funnel-shaped flowers crowd atop a 12 to 18-inch stem. The shape of the flowers has been likened to a lampshade. At first glance, the fragrant flowers appear to be those of *P. secundiflora*. A closer look will reveal white or yellow farina liberally dusting the outside and face of the petals. In the center, a clear, ruby-red eye appears. Both pins and thrums exist, and the plants are self-sterile.

The calyx, likewise, is abundantly covered with farina and is often deeply stained with purple. Although the leaves are totally without meal or hairs, the flower stalk frequently has farina, particularly toward the top.

The species *P. waltonii* is reportedly difficult to grow and possibly not in cultivation outside a few private and botanic gardens from wild collected seed. Fortunately, seed listings of *P. waltonii* are probably hybrids because they are better “doers.” *Primula waltonii* is a member of the Sikkimensis section and, therefore, is closely related to *P. sikkimensis*, *P. florindae*, *P. alpicola* and *P. ioessa*. In a garden setting, it readily crosses with any of the four to produce viable hybrid seed. “Waltonii hybrids” are probably a complex mix of *P. waltonii*, *P. sikkimensis*, *P. florindae* and perhaps *P. alpicola*. The color of the species ranges from pink to burgundy, maroon or a deep intense violet. Much more variation is possible with the hybrids, including salmon and strawberry colors.

They need deep, cool, moist soil, preferably in dappled or afternoon shade. A humus-rich soil beside a pond or stream would be ideal if the drainage is satisfactory. The plants are hardy and winter wet does not seem to be a problem. Because of their deep, thick roots, they do not do well in small containers.

Both the species and its hybrids germinate readily from seed, especially if the seed is freshly gathered. The seed, if properly stored, however, may retain its viability for up to five years. Transplanting the hybrid seedlings is likely to be much more successful than those of the species. Similarly, propagation by division is easier with the hybrids.

For the purist, it is definitely worth searching out seeds or plants of the true species. For ease of cultivation and the wide range of jewel-like colors, *P. waltonii* hybrids should be placed high on any gardener’s wish list.

**SOURCES:**


**Want More Primroses?**

Back issues of the A.P.S. quarterly, *Primroses*, are available from the A.P.S. Quarterly Librarian. Prices depend on the issue date:

- 1996-1997  $3/copy
- 1991-1995  $1/copy
- 1990 & before  $0.25/copy

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

Cheri Fluck
17275 Point Lena Loop Rd.
Juneau, AK 99801-8310
USA

Tel: (907) 789-0595
FAX: (907) 789-2593
E-mail: cheri@ptialaska.net
**Book Review**

Both reviewers agree, Peter Ward's new book is a must-have for your gardening library!

**Primroses and Polyanthus; A Guide to the Species and Hybrids**, by Peter Ward.

**EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PRIMROSES IS HERE!**

Want to know the story behind Barnhaven? It's here! Want to know about the new strains of primroses sold at your local supermarket? 'They're here, with pictures! Want to know the names of the current most widely grown primroses in Britain AND in North America? There is a nice long list for collectors. Most of those listed are ones that can actually be found and are currently in cultivation. Move over, Roy Genders. His was the great want-list of primrose plants, mostly grown in the 1950s, but Peter Ward, in his new book **Primroses and Polyanthus** has created THE new list. Check out the hybrids introduced by APS's own Jay and Ann Lunn or Dorothy Springer, such as 'Early Bird' or 'Sea Foam'. Even the origin of our beloved 'Jay-Jay' is included. This book has it all.

Peter Ward used considerable arm-twisting among his friends and acquaintances in North American to get the facts on North American-raised plants and Pacific Northwest stories of the primrose world, such as the Barnhaven story. His book thus sets a precedent in spanning the world of primroses in both Europe and in North America.

This is a book for the amateur primrose grower and includes all the basic information on how to grow them, and what they need. The three main species are described — *Primula veris*, the cowslip, *P. elatior*, the oxslip and of course *P. vulgaris*, the little wild primrose of England — and the way in which each contributed their own characteristics to modern primroses is clearly laid out.

The story of the Garryard primrose from Ireland is here. The history of polyanthus development, including the very influential Pacific Giant Strain raised in California, is elucidated. Their influence on the Sakata company’s seed strain, some of the ones sold by the thousands in supermarkets today, is something I did not know. And the story of the rise of good garden double primroses in the 20th century is told. Members of the APS greatly expanded the range of double primroses with their hybridizing in the 1950s and many growers are mentioned. Peter Ward culled all this information from APS bulletins and whatever other sources he could find.

Those of us who love the unusual anomalous primroses, known as Jack-in-the-Greens, Gallygaskins and Hose-in-Hose will find a whole chapter on them. The growers who have raised modern forms of them, including Peter Atkinson, are listed with their accomplishments. History buffs will enjoy the print from Parkinson and the information from early references — early meaning from 1600 onward — to these unusual primroses.

The story of the resurrection of the Gold-Laced Polyanthus is as good as a mystery novel! Imagine the last of the old English strain being rescued from the compost heap! It happened. Florence Bellis is credited with preserving Gold-Laced Polyanthus through a low point in their history. She developed an American strain of Gold-Laced Polyanthus, raised originally from British seed, which is still sold by Barnhaven today.

John Kerridge, former president of the A.P.S., is another North American Gold-Laced Polyanthus hybridizer and is featured as one in the long line of GLP raisers and growers. Peter’sparting comments on the GLP — that it is not just a plant for the exhibitor, but makes a handsome and unusual garden plant — is, in my opinion, right on the mark. Thank goodness all those growers kept it going through the difficult period of the two World Wars.

The plates in the book are excellent, and will provide the reader many happy hours of contemplation. Old favorites are included, such as the Juliana ‘Dorothy’ and Barnhaven’s ‘Chartreuse’ — have you ever grown this? — the flowers can be up to two inches across! Modern wonders, such as the double Gold-Laced Polyanthus and the yellow Cowichan indicate some new directions in hybridization. Peter Ward’s own hybrids, including doubles and Jack-in-the-Greens, are much to be admired. The range of primrose and polyanthus plants currently available, as demonstrated here in the photographs, is truly amazing, and certainly will encourage growers to try something they haven’t grown before.

An appendix includes sources for plants and seed, as well as the list of primrose societies, most of which offer seeds in their seed exchanges.

The chapter on cultivation is revealing in Peter Ward’s encouragement to grow primroses in pots if that is all that is available to you. We, in the Pacific Northwest, are fortunate that our climate is very suitable for primroses, but gardens on heavy clay or in areas where the soil is very alkaline might take heart from Peter Ward’s advice and try pots.

For would-be hybridizers the information on primrose pollination is useful. “Unusual, attractive and interesting plants are easily raised,” Peter Ward says, and having seen some of his successes in the photographs of the book, we can only agree. Follow his advice and achieve your own primrose successes.

If you want to read more on primroses, there is an extensive bibliography, and the list of named varieties at the back of the book will help you track down whichever primrose catches your fancy of the moment.

But beg, borrow or just spend your money, and spend time looking through this book. You will enjoy it.

— Reviewed by Maedythe Martin

**THE DIFFERENCE IS EXPERIENCE**

"Yet another book on Primroses!" was my first reaction, but a few minutes reading proved to me that this book was different. Obviously it was written by someone who actually grows the plants — and so knows many of the varieties — and has seen others on his extensive travels on two continents.

Peter Ward starts his book by describing the Vernales species — or as he points out, Primula subgenus Primula as they are now known. He describes the known subspecies as well as color variations and natural anomalies such as doubling. There is a comprehensive list of varieties of primrose and polyanthus,

Continued on Page 26.
Primula Primer

Here's a quick review of basic primula plant and flower parts. How's your plant terminology?

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Flower Parts

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Fertilized Flowers

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First Things First

By Ilse Burch
Redmond, Washington

TAKING THE PLUNGE

Many thanks to reader Margaret Lundquist for the suggestion that I write a column about sand and plunge beds. There is a dearth of written information about the subject, or at least I had trouble finding much, so a lot of this will come from my own experience.

Sand and plunge beds are a lesser known tool of the serious gardener. As far as I can tell, sand beds and plunge beds are the same thing. They consist simply of a thin layer of moist medium, mainly sand, into which potted plants or sometimes cuttings are placed or "plunged", thus the name. The whole point of sand and plunge beds is to keep roots evenly moist and relatively cool.

I became very interested in the subject when a lot of plants I was trying to grow weren't doing well because I wasn't able to keep them at the correct moisture level. Inadvertently I was alternately drying and soaking them, and many of the fussier varieties were not doing well or were dying outright. When you think about it, a pot is a very unnatural place to grow from the plant's point of view. Pots heat up faster than normal soil, and they often dry out faster, too. A sand or plunge bed allows you to stabilize the root zone to a degree that is difficult in a small pot. The moisture levels remain more stable, and the temperature definitely becomes more stable.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POTS

Different types of pots have different qualities that you can exploit for the benefit of a particular type of plant. One important quality of pots is their ability to change temperature. Black plastic pots of all sizes tend to heat up faster than just about every other type. This is good for jump-starting a heat-loving tomato plant, but it is not good for many of the better alpines, including primulas, that do not like a hot root zone. Now it just so happens that black and green plastic four-inch pots are the staple of my horticultural diet — I use these plastic pots for almost everything because they are cheap and readily available. They tend to stay moist longer, and could probably suffocate a plant's roots if a sufficiently aerated soil was not used. How do I deal with their heating up? With their sides protected from direct sun, plastic pots can work well for most plants. In a sand bed they are fine for alpines, and the sun does not heat them.

Ceramic pots are another choice. Terra cotta is the cheapest and easiest to get, but terra cotta has several big drawbacks. Terra cotta is very porous, and works well in a sand bed because moisture and air can come through the sides as well as the bottom holes. However, freezing and thawing tend to make it "spall", or flake apart, even when protected by a sand bed. Other ceramic pots, such as stoneware, work well in a sandbed provided they have an adequate hole in the bottom through which water can enter.

Although any kind of pot will work in a sand bed, you need to remember that until the plant is rooted into the sand
First Things First, continued

through the bottom of the pot, a plant in a plastic or glazed ceramic pot is still quite vulnerable to drying out. A plant in terra cotta is better off because water can go through the sides of the pot. There is a kind of pot, used often in the nursery trade, called a “band”. That is because most of the bottom of the pot is open and the plant can get moisture more readily through the bottom from the sand or soil below. They are very easy to keep watered, and I am using them for growing seedlings on to flowering size. They are available in a variety of sizes from nursery supply houses.

THE MINUS SIDE OF SAND BEDS

There are drawbacks to sand beds. It can be easy to overwater a sand bed, and you will need to have some way to protect it from the rain without cutting off the ventilation. If you keep the sand too moist, you may see a lot of fungus gnats. (They look like mosquitoes but don’t bite.) These gnats don’t bother all plants, but they can be bad in primula species. The larvae, which look like tiny cream-colored worms, feed on humus and tender plant tissues such as young primula roots. I can guarantee that you have these things, whether or not you’ve seen them; everybody does. They are only a problem in great numbers, so don’t worry too much about them.

Predictably, slugs like the moist sandbeds, and weeds are a big problem. If you are harboring some no-account clematis species, it will root all over your sand bed; you can either pull it out and toss it on the compost pile for yet another incarnation. Better yet, you can pot it up as a gift for the lady who gave you that pesky campanula that has devoured your rock garden!

ROOTING ALONG

Incidentally, one use to which sand beds are put is the rooting of difficult and slow rooting vines such as some of the most desirable Clematis species, Lapageria rosea, Holboellias, etc. I don’t know of any primula species requiring sand bed treatment, but there are sure to be some. The “sand” we need for the sand bed is a medium that will wick moisture well and is neither acid nor alkaline. Some of the old books I consulted suggested “ashes”, presumably cinders from burned coal. It isn’t easy to get coal ashes these days, so what I recommend is the washed sand that is commonly used for playboxes, etc. It doesn’t take a lot of sand per square foot of sandbed. “Grit”, such as we mix in soil, is too expensive, and won’t wick moisture as well as fine sand, so I don’t recommend it. I do think that fine pumice would be good, especially for plants that are very sensitive to overwatering, but I haven’t tried it yet.

DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY

Now that you’ve heard enough generalizations to make you turn purple and run from the room, we will get down to details. Sand beds are actually easy to make. I didn’t use any tool besides a scissors, measuring tape, and tools for digging. You can be a perfectionist if you wish and use a level, but I’m not convinced that the plants will care. You will need the following materials.

1. Have enough 10 mil polyethylene film (any color) to cover the sand bed’s bottom plus enough to go up the sides 6 inches or so. I doubled it, but I’m not sure that is necessary.

2. Choose a reasonably level area where you will have adequate light. (Remember you can shade an area, but it’s hard to import light.) You can make your sandbed any size or shape you wish, but it is hard to tend one that is too wide, and odd shapes are hard to cover from the rain.

3. You need to decide what you will grow in the sand bed, because plants with widely differing water needs aren’t compatible. You can’t grow bog plants in the same frame with desert plants, for example. The auriculas aren’t compatible with Primula florinda.

4. You will need to provide a structure to hold the sand. I have used bricks and/or boards, but a coldframe is best because it can be covered easily with a lid that should allow light to enter. I keep my frames propped open most of the time unless it is really cold.

5. Line the structure with the polyethylene, and fill with sand to a depth of about 3 inches. This will be displaced by the bedded pots, and will become 4-5 inches deep when “planted”.

6. Fill the bed with sand, and water gently. The bed is properly moist when you can insert and remove your finger and the sand holds your finger’s shape for a minute or so. You should not see your finger’s impression fill with water immediately, although there may be some free water in the bottom of the hole. I always seem to need to poke a couple of small holes in the plastic at the bottom of my sand bed to facilitate drainage. I usually use a pencil or a chopstick for this.

7. All you have to do to “plant” your sand bed is to nestle the pots down into the sand. It helps to try to keep the soil levels even, but if you have the odd plant that wants less moisture, you can sometimes get away with not nestling it down quite so deep.

After you “plant” your sand bed, you will need to keep the plants moist until they root into the sand bed. You may either sprinkle the bed or water individual pots. Once it is established, you can just water a corner of the bed and the moisture will even out.

ONE LAST WORD

A word of warning about removing pots from the sand bed is in order. If your plant has rooted extensively into the sand, and you remove it, you have just removed a part of its root system and left it very vulnerable to drying out. You will need to watch it very carefully. If you wish to show the plant, I suggest you lift the sand and, for a minute or so. You should not see your finger’s impression fill with water immediately, although there may be some

THE EDITORIAL DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER ISSUE OF PRIMROSES IS JUNE 1.
Hand Pollinating of Primulas

By Herb Dickson, Lebanon, Missouri

[As Spring is upon us and primulas are in bloom or just nearing bloom, it is appropriate to review some techniques on pollinating primulas. This article, by A.P.S. past president Herb Dickson, first appeared in the Winter 1968 issue of Primroses, Vol. 26, No. 1.]

HAND POLLINATING is very simple. You merely take pollen from the male part (usually called anther or stamen) of a flower and place the pollen on the female part (usually called stigma or pistil) of a flower where the pollen grains will grow and fertilize the egg cells, which then grow into seeds.

There are a few things you should do to insure harvesting a crop of seed and that the seed are the result of your hand pollinating.

FIRST: Select your parent plants both for seed and pollen. Pot these up in extra large pots or plant them in a raised bench that will hold dirt six to eight inches deep. The reason for this is to get your plants up to a level where you can see and easily work with them. CAUTION! If planting in a bench leave 12 inches or more between plants. Provide protection from the rain, some shade and good ventilation.

SECOND: Mark your parent plants to identify them for future reference.

THIRD: Mark each plant to show what cross you made on it. If you number your crosses, record complete information in a notebook.

FOURTH: Strip each seed parent plant of all spent or old flowers that have withered or I can plainly see pollen on the pistil after the tube and anthers are removed.

If the flower is a thrum eye (pistil in the base of the flower. The tube will split and detach at the base. Since the anthers are attached to the tube, they will be removed with the flower. If this is done the same day the flower opens, the pollen is usually not developed; so there is little or no chance of self pollinating the flower. Bees are not attracted to this pistil after the tube and anthers are removed.

With your seed parent flowers ready for pollen, strip flowers from the pollen parent plant in the same way you removed the pin eyed flowers. This gives you a pollen flower in two or more pieces. Fold the base of one of these pieces back against the underside of the petals and hold between the thumb and finger of one hand so that the anthers with the ripe pollen protrude. Hold the flower to be pollinated with the other hand. Brush the anthers across the tip of the pistil. Some of the pollen will stay on the pistil. A small amount is enough and several flowers can be pollinated with the pollen from one flower.

Flower tube folded back, ready to put pollen on the pistil of a polyanthus flower whose petals and tube have been removed.

This is a daily procedure until all the flowers on the seed parent have opened and been pollinated.

You could use a magnifying glass and be sure each pistil is receptive before you pollinate it; but I find it easier to pollinate every pistil every day until it is withered or I can plainly see pollen on the pistil from the previous day.

This is the procedure when your seed and pollen parent plants are both in bloom at the same time. By varying the amount of light and heat the blooming time of some plants can be changed. You may store pollen from early bloomers to use on late bloomers. Collect ripe pollen from the anthers (do not take the anther) into a small container and store this in a smaller container unassembled in a larger sealed jar that contains a desiccant. Keep the large jar in the refrigerator but DO NOT FREEZE. With care in this process, pollen can be stored and kept viable from one season to the next.

After all the flowers are pollinated, some people prefer to return the plants to the growing bed or plunge the pots in a shady place. I prefer to leave mine on the bench until the seed is harvested. The important thing is to provide good growing conditions so the plant never wants for water but avoid excessive dampness — this encourages disease and fungus that cause the stem to rot or wilt and you lose your seed crop. GOOD AIR CIRCULATION WITHOUT CROWDING OF PLANTS IS A MUST.

Seeds ripen in the same succession as the flowers opened. The seed must be collected daily as the seed pod starts to split. During this period have a container for each cross and label it with the correct identifying information. This seems an unnecessary reminder, but more crosses are mixed up during this seed picking time than any other time.

The method I have described of hand pollinating is not acceptable for accurate scientific experiments. Scientific experiments require positive protection against chance pollination from other sources. You can be as meticulous and scientific as you wish depending on the degree of accuracy you require in your results. My method is good enough for all practical purposes and about 99% accurate.

In hand pollinating when you put the pollen back on the same flower it came from or on another flower on the same plant, it is called SELFING. When you put the pollen on a flower of a different plant within the same species it is called CROSSING. When you put the pollen from one species on a flower of a
Hand Pollinating of Primulas, continued

different species it is called HYBRIDIZING. When you cross-pollinate closely related plants with the same color or characteristics to intensify and perpetuate these characteristics it is called LINE BREEDING.

Since hybridizing and cross pollinating have become popular with the amateur, the term hybridizing has been loosely used so that now it is used to mean any cross pollinating.

Why do we go to all this bother when primulas usually set plenty of seed if we just leave them alone? There are many good reasons. The most important one is that it gives us control over the parentage of the plants we grow instead of depending upon the random chance of nature. This control allows us to develop plants to better suit our tastes and desires.

It has been a relative few years that the knowledge of how plant characteristics are inherited been known to man and fewer yet that this knowledge has been available to the ordinary layman. Because of their greater economic value, governments have sponsored scientific experiments that have tailored our food crops to meet regional climatic conditions and farming methods, as well as, a greatly increased yield. In this same period, the amateur, hobbyist and backyard gardener have greatly changed our ornamental plants. We have produced new colors, larger flowers, longer blooming season and original plant habits from miniature to enormous size.

Some people call these changes improvements. It is a matter of opinion that I will leave to the future to decide. Growing plants from your own hand-pollinated seed helps satisfy your natural curiosity and your creative instinct. When compared with growing plants from purchased seed it is the same difference as putting up with the neighbors terrible offspring or caring for your own sweet children. Anyway it is a lot of fun and I wish you success in your pollinating.

Book Review

Continued from Page 19.

Book Review

Continued from Page 19.

together with descriptions of the color and habit. He names the raisers where known, a surprisingly large number of whom are from North America. There is a concise history of Gold Laced Polyanthus, and the Barnhaven story is retold with quite a lot of new information.

Commercial strains of seed from Europe, North America, Japan and New Zealand are described in some detail. The text should create a lot of interest in them. There is a chapter on cultivation and another on Pests and Diseases, both of which are sure to help the newer grower and give food for thought for those with more experience.

The Bibliography is extensive and lists many titles that should be available from Public Libraries, although there is little need, so thorough is Peter Ward in his research. This is a very readable book with delightful color pictures and line drawings by another expert, David Tarver who also grows the plants he illustrates so well.

— Reviewed by John Gibson

American Primrose Society Bookstore

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.

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Seed Sources

By Maedlyne Martin, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Looking for some wild primroses or auriculas? Two seed catalogs I have received this winter have sources for a number of these.

Gardens North, 5984 Third Line Road, North Gower, Ontario, K0A 2T0, Canada (email: garnorth@istar.ca) lists seed for Primula auricula from the limestone mountains of Europe, and P. veris, the cowslip. Along with the wild seed there are a number of garden-collected primulas listed, including a polyanthus mix, P. denticulata and a mix of species, collected from the Stackhouses’ garden right there in N. Gower, Ontario.

The catalog itself is worth a read, for in their determination to offer hardy perennial seed that will grow in Canada (and the catalog list is extensive!), they took a seed collecting trip across Canada. Their notes are great. The catalogs are marked $4 Cdn — and you can even e-mail your order! For anyone wanting hardy plants, this is an impressive source.

The intrepid Czechs collect wild auricula seed, along with many others from the Alps, and Andrew Osyany, Karmic Exotix Nursery, Box 146, Shelburne, Ontario, L0N 1S0, Canada, is the distributor for some of this seed in North America. This year I ordered and received wild collected auricula seed from Slovakia, the Little Fatra Mountains. I can’t wait to see this one. This is only one of the 25 Primula listings — great choices, with seeds collected all over Europe. Some primula seed listed is of garden origin, but some of the listings for wild collected seed, such as Primula elatior ssp. pallasii, are a collector’s dream. The time to order is early December, and who knows what’s left at this time, but write this source down for next fall, and order the catalog early.

CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

This year the BCAA (British Columbia Automobile Association), of all people, is taking a garden tour to England that will include the Chelsea Flower Show. The tour is based in Ashford, Kent, and includes Sissinghurst, Kew Gardens, and five other garden trips. Twelve nights accommodation, leaving Vancouver May 15 to 28, price tag of $3,695 Cdn for members and $3,795 for non-AAA members. The Vancouver BCAA number if you are interested in the brochure, is 604-268-5622 or the web site www.bcaa.bc.ca so you can try that.

What’s your favorite primrose reference book?

My favorite primula “bible” is John Richards’ Primula (Timber Press, 1993, illustrations by Brigid Edwards) with its many colored plates and detailed descriptions of the various species. He gives the geographical locations of the plants, growing conditions and other characteristics including color forms, hybrids, etc. The first chapters are a bit technical but interesting where he shows relationships between species, pollen types, etc. I never get tired of leafing through the pages and checking things out — particularly when ordering seeds.

— Dennis Oakley, Richmond, BC

Companion Plants I Grow with Primulas and Auriculas

By Ruby Chong, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

How do you provide an attractive setting for primulas in a garden? Rhododendrons, azaleas, Pieris japonica and a Clematis montana form the background for two north-facing flower beds in the front of our house.

Along with drifts of primulas & auriculas, there are groups of miniature narcissus, miniature irises, Puschkinia libanotica, Muscari latifolium, crocuses, grape hyacinths, Anemone blanda, mini tulips and snowdrops, lewias, cyclamens, violas, and pansies. For summer or fall blooms, there will be annuals such as impatiens, petunias and fuchsias.

On the south/east side of the house we have a greenhouse shaded by a large pine tree. By the greenhouse is a covered area where I house show and named auriculas. Along the fence there are asters, erysimums, euphorbias, phlox, lupines, irises, delphiniums, papavers, penstemons, and campanulas. In this area Primula denticulata, P. florindae, P. bulleesiana, along with Cowichans, polyanthus hybrids, and ‘Wanda’, do quite well because of the setting for primulas in a garden? Rhododendrons, azaleas, Pieris japonica and a Clematis montana form the background for two north-facing flower beds in the front of our house.

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— Dennis Oakley, Richmond, BC

Primroses help create a garden focal point.

Photo by Claire Cockcroft

Bright red polyanthus primroses and dark red 'Cowichan' primroses surround a sundial in Don and Mary Keefe’s garden. Providing a green background for the primulas are white Japanese irises and Anemone japonica.
Plant Societies

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

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Southern Section
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67 Warnham Court Road, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, England SM5 3ND.

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invites you to join other overseas members enjoying the benefits of our Society. Two informative Bulletins each year and an extensive NZ native section in our seed list enhance the contact with New Zealand alpine plant lovers. Enquiries to the Membership Secretary or join by sending the equivalent of NZ$25 payable to NZAGS (Inc.). Visa/Mastercard facilities available.

New Zealand Alpine Garden Society,
PO Box 2984, Christchurch, New Zealand.

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Seed Exchange
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Back Cover Photos
If you haven’t entered the Garden Auricula Photo Contest, you’d better hurry! Here are a couple of quick snaps taken in Dan Pederson’s garden in Tacoma, Washington.

Photos by Claire Cockcroft
On your mark, get set, SNAP! Enter the Garden Auricula Photo Contest today. Details on Page 5.