Primroses
The purpose of this Society is to bring the people interested in Primula together in an organization to increase the general knowledge of and interest in the collecting, growing, breeding, showing and using in the landscape and garden of the genus Primula in all its forms and to serve as a clearing house for collecting and disseminating information about Primula.

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Judging Primula at a National Show requires knowledgeable judges as well as a qualifying apprentice. From left: APS president, Ed Buyarski, Kris Fenderson, and Mary Irwin. This issue features highlights from the APS National Show held in Boylston, Massachusetts. Look inside this issue for information on how you can attend the next National Primrose Show in Juneau, Alaska, in May 2007.

PRIMROSES • The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

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Soggy greetings from Juneau!

This summer has been the coolest and second wettest on record even while much of the rest of the country has been hot and under drought conditions. How were we so lucky? The only bright spot (?) is not having to water much of the landscaping I've installed. Of course I've been wearing my rubber suit most of the time too - just lucky I move fast enough that moss does not get a foot hold! One dry day in August with over 11" rain, a high of 68°F and 5 dry days in September with over 10" does anyone want to trade places? Even our greenhouses are damp and mildewed. Luckily our primroses can handle most of that but I have few seeds to contribute to the seed exchange this year. I hope some of the rest of you can pick up the slack and donate lots of seeds. There is information in this issue and the Fall issue soon to follow on how and where to send your seeds as well as current addresses at the new APS website at www.americanprimrosesociety.org.

In early August I was invited to speak at the First Garden and Art Fair held at the Alaska State Fairgrounds in Palmer where there are many of the historical buildings and artifacts from the Matanuska Valley colony that was
settled there in the 1930’s. I gave programs on the ‘Primula species A to Z’
and ‘Alaska Wildflowers and Primulas’ and answered a lot of questions on
varieties to grow in much drier and colder areas than Juneau. Garden tours
included some of our favorite plants and even the small rock garden display at
the Fairgrounds had *P. auricula* and *P. scotica* thriving under very dry exposed
conditions. I sold lots of our leftover seeds and a few old Quarterlies too. At
least I enjoyed a dry weekend away from Juneau.

We all apologize for the delays in getting this issue to you after switch-
ing to a new printer and facing other unavoidable obstructions. I assure you
that we are quickly catching up, and should be back on schedule by January
2007.

We now have a Quarterly Editorial Committee helping Matt put together ar-
ticles and photos for coming issues so you can contact one of them if you have
ideas for new articles and of course photos and writings to contribute.

Farther in the future is the 2007 National Primrose Show which will be
in Juneau on May 20th and 21st. I will be the Show Chair and am getting to-
gether my helpers to set up lodging, garden tours, sightseeing and other details
- more information for that too will appear at our website as well as in the next
Quarterly.

Until then I will try to stay dry and thank goodness that I live on a hill so
the water drains off well!

PRIMROSES have long been one of my favorite flowers, so a few years ago
I joined the American Primrose Society. Yes, a national organization dedicated
to information about primroses, one of the dozens of such single-plant societ-
ies in the United States dedicated
to species from daffodils to rho-
dodendrons.

Small speciality groups like
the American Primrose Soci-
ey are composed primarily of
amateurs, just lovers of the plant
rather than commercial growers.
However, a few primrose breed-
ers such as Susan Schnare of
New Hampshire and Maedythe
Martin of Victoria, British Co-
lumbia, are stalwarts of the na-
tional group.

The national convention, sim-
ply called the national ‘show’,
How many APS members does it take to get the perfect shot?

was held this year at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston during the first weekend of May. I spent two delightful days viewing primroses both in gardens and displayed at the competitive show and learning more about this diminutive but charming flower.

The first day was actually an exhausting but exhilarating tour. We visited Garden in the Woods in Framingham and Joe Pye Weed's Garden and Blanchette Nursery, both in Carlisle.

The second day featured the display of primroses in pots, from the 'hedgerow primrose', *Primula vulgaris*, to double polyanthus and striking show auriculas in jewel colors with contrasting edges. There were also slide lectures, a round-robin discussion of personal experiences with primroses, and a banquet back at the hotel at Marlborough. I left during the banquet to drive back to Amherst, but the symposium continued Sunday with a lecture on growing primroses by Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks of Joe Pye Weed's Garden.

The entire weekend was a learning experience as well as an opportunity to meet experienced growers from across the continent. The president, Ed Buyarski, lives in Juneau, Alaska, where he has an edible landscape business. The Sandors from Juneau are long-time APS members who will celebrate their 50th anniversary this week. The Bradleys came from Ottawa, Ontario. Harvey Wrightman, owner of Wrightman Alpines, also is from Ontario, and Alan Lawrence came from Wisconsin. Many of the other participants were from New England, including Amy Olmsted of Great Barrington, the New England chapter president. Amy and I trained as master gardeners together in 1986.

The primrose show itself is an eye-opener for those who have never grown primroses beyond the supermarket specials, as well as a chance for knowledgeable growers to be green with envy at the award winners. Displayed on long benches in the hallway leading to the Orangery at Tower Hill, the great variety of primrose forms was obvious. One visitor was astonished to see *P. denticulata*, the drumstick primrose, with its globe-like flowers. He said it just

Marianne Kuchel's Julie hybrid, 'Dorothy' took a blue ribbon.

APS Board member Rodney Barker proudly shows one of his many winning entries at the National Primrose Show.
didn’t look like the short yellow kinds in his garden.

The auriculas captured my interest. There are garden forms, perfectly hardy in New England, Canada and Alaska, as well as ‘show auriculas’, which need protection from the elements. I finally indulged in a yellow show auricula, which should be a challenge this winter since my sunroom is too warm and my cold frame needs a new roof.

**Best in show**

There are prizes awarded in many categories, but the highest honor is to be ‘best in show’. Susan Schnare of New Hampshire won that award with a show auricula. Deborah Wheeler of Colrain came in second with a red Cowichan, a form of *P. polyanthus* bred by the famous Barnhaven Primroses. Wheeler said she potted up four plants at 6 a.m. on May 5 and drove them to Tower Hill. All four won blue ribbons.

She purchased the red Cowichan several years ago because of its distinctive bronze foliage. The plant came from Canada for sale at Ward’s Nursery in Great Barrington. It was a prizewinner, Wheeler said, because of its good form. ‘Cowichans should have no eye’, she learned. Many polyanthus primroses have a distinct bright yellow eye in the center of the flower.

Although Wheeler has grown primroses for about 15 years, last year was her first time participating in a competitive show. She is also active in iris societies.

At Saturday’s round robin I got some good tips on growing primroses from seed: add turkey grit or chicken grit to the soil-less potting mix, try giberellic acid to speed germination, and grow the seedlings under lights indoors. I have had mixed results with outdoor winter seeding, running into problems this year because of the lack of snow cover and the rainfall in March. But several seeds of Japanese, Cowichan and garden auriculas did sprout. Next year they should bloom alongside my *P. veris*, *P. kisoana*, double ‘Dawn Ansell’ and several other forms including *P. denticulata*.

**World travelers**

Saturday afternoon featured travel lectures. Matt Mattus of Worcester, editor of the quarterly, showed breathtaking slides of his hiking trip to the Dolomites last June. The scenery was spectacular and the plants were to die for. I must learn more about gentians before indulging in a new plant passion.

Ed Buyarski gave a fascinating slide lecture about the China expedition in 2000 by the Alaskan Rock Garden Society. Dan Hinkley of Heronswood Nursery and Bleddyn Wynn-Jones of Wales led a group of 11 people to Yunnan Province near Tibet to collect seeds and cuttings of primroses and other plants. After obtaining field notes from the Alpine Society’s previous expedition, they spent the month of September in China, high in the mountains.

Buyarski’s slides alternated between stunning flowers like *P. poissonii* and *P. amethystina* as well as more gentians and countryside scenes, including Buddhist roadside shrines, strangely constructed farm vehicles, colorful markets and convivial meals. The collectors had to clean and dry seeds - quite an undertaking with fleshy fruits like cotoneaster- and make sure cuttings were free of soil. Some of their ‘finds’ are now growing happily in Buyarski’s Alaskan garden, but others found the Alaskan climate not to their liking.

I hope this gives you a flavor of what a national plant society offers: education, inspiration and the camaraderie of fellow gardeners. The societies have quarterly journals, local chapters and national conventions. For more information on the American Primrose Society, log on to www.americanprimrosesociety.org or email New England chapter president Amy Olmsted at amy_olmsted@hotmail.com. The New England chapter will meet in the Berkshires in August.

Reprinted with kind permission from the ‘Daily Hampshire Gazette’. Cheryl Wilson, a member of APS, writes regularly for this publication. To read more of her work, visit www.gazettenet.com.
Results of the 2006 National Show

There were fifteen exhibitors, representing five states, who benched one hundred fifty-five entries. The benches were beautiful and the one fabulous artistic design entry stopped everyone attending for at least a moment of study and admiration.

The Richard Redfield Memorial BEST IN SHOW AWARD
Auricula ‘Lee Paul’; Susan Schnare (see above photo)

RUNNER UP TO BEST IN SHOW
P. cowichan - Deborah Wheeler

BEST IN SHOW BY POPULAR VOTE
P. denticulata - Arlene Perkins

BEST ARTISTIC DESIGN
Kathryn Petuck and Clifton Below

Sweepstakes Award
Judith Sellers

Best Seedling
Marianne Kuchel

Best Growers Exhibit
Judith Sellers

Best Decorative Design
Mary Irwin

Best Genera Primulaceae
Elaine Malloy

NATIONAL PERPETUAL APS TROPHIES

Ivanel Agee Best Hybrid
P. juliae ‘Dorothy’ - Marianne Kuchel

Rae Berry Best Species
P. farinosa - Judith Sellers

Etha Tate Best Acaulis
Barnhaven seedling - Arlene Perkins

Frank Michaud Best Named Show Auricula
‘Green Shank’ - Susan Schnare

John Shuman Best Show Alpine Auricula
‘Lee Paul’ - Susan Schnare

Ellen Page Hayden Best Double Auricula
‘Hopley’s Coffee’ - Susan Schnare

John Kerridge Most Species in Bloom
Judith Sellers

John Kerridge Memorial Best Cowichan
Deborah Wheeler

Wesley Bottom Best Hose-in-Hose
Deborah Wheeler

Show Chairman’s Award
Joseph Philip

Dorothy Dickson Bronze Medal
For Outstanding Service to the APS
Mary Irwin
Anyone who has met Mary Irwin understands why the APS Board voted that she receive the Dorothy Stredicke Dickson Award for her years of service to the American Primrose Society.

Mary and her sister-in-law collaborated in starting the New England Chapter, and worked together as co-presidents from its earliest beginnings until 2005. She provided refreshments and door prizes, obtained donations of plants from prestigious nurseries, found interesting presentations, and arranged very special garden tours to make meetings informative and enjoyable. It's no wonder the membership has constantly grown, and the Chapter has thrived.

In addition to her work with the NE Chapter, Mary is a Junior Show Judge, has served on the APS Board, writes occasional articles for this Quarterly, has been instrumental in organizing Chapter and National Shows, and serves as the APS Slide Librarian.

Her enthusiasm and dedication are infectious, and many who have spoken with her have become permanently infected with what she calls ‘the Primula bug.’

Mary agreed to write an ‘e-mail interview’ for us, and her own words give a hint of the excitement she creates around her concerning ‘Our Plants.’

**Q. How did you get involved with Primroses and the APS?**

**Mary:** I moved into a new home close to my brother Alex and sister-in-law Elaine, who had been gardening for a number of years and LOVED primroses. Elaine shared a number of plants with me and she couldn’t stop talking about their beauty in the spring and how many different varieties there are and what a joy they are to grow. I had an area under some trees, where we had cleared out all of the weeds, that was perfect to grow Primula. Every time I went to Alex and Elaine’s we talked about Primula and gardening and Elaine would give me several more Primula treasures to take home to my garden. What a treat! Soon I was on my way to being hooked on Primula and gardening.

**Q. What made you decide that you really wanted to start an APS Chapter in New England?**

**Mary:** Elaine had gone out to the American Primrose Society National Show in Washington State and was so excited about the growers and friends she met out there that we decided to go out to the National Show in Puyallup, WA together the next year. Thea Oakley and Candy Strickland encouraged us to come out and we had a wonderful time. We saw wonderful gardens that members shared with us and Rick Lupp’s outstanding Mt. Tahoma Nursery. What a treat that was! There are always a lot of plants for sale at the shows, so Elaine and I would buy plants, knock off the soil, wrap the roots in moist paper towel, tuck them into baggies and put them in a suitcase to take them home. It was wonderful to get more new Primula varieties. June Skidmore, Ed Buyarski, and Dot Plyler of the Doretta Klaber Chapter in Pennsylvania kept encouraging us to start up a chapter in the North East and it only made sense to get the Primula lovers in New England together to share our common
passion. Thea Oakley and Candy Strickland were always very helpful with suggestions.

Q. What was the most difficult part of getting the chapter started?

Mary: All the miles between all of us in New England is our most difficult aspect. We try to rotate where the meetings will be to be fair to all. We cover 7 states: CT, MA, VT, NH, Maine, NY, and NJ. There is a lot of determination and many miles to travel to meet and share our love of Primula.

Q. Which experiences with Primula and other enthusiasts have most surprised you?

Mary: I was thrilled to find that Judy Sellers had been growing primroses in New York State for years. She had one primrose that she wanted to name (Was that ‘Bruce’s Fire’?). We eventually got that accomplished, and what a lovely plant it is. It is so exciting when a new plant is introduced and everyone wants it. I find it really interesting to meet people like Arlene Perkins and Kris Fenderson who have been growing for years and are tucked away up in Vermont and New Hampshire. Sidney Eddison and Richard Redfield, both in Connecticut, have been good friends to our group, and I was thrilled to meet them and to visit their gardens.

Q. What benefits have you received, and what have you learned from the work you have done?

Mary: I have met so many wonderful people and learned so much going to additional National Shows with Elaine in Juneau, Alaska and Vancouver, Canada.

The years of growing Primula have given me so much joy and happiness with many hours out in my garden where I can appreciate God’s wonderful gift.

Our chapter has hosted two National Shows and we continue to meet new Primula enthusiasts and pass on the enthusiasm to new growers. I have now been a Junior Judge for two National Shows.

It has been ten years now of growing and sharing Primula with many enthusiasts. Thank you, Elaine and Alex, for such a wonderful friendship and the gift of the love of Primula.
ABOVE: More from the National Show (Clockwise from above left): Susan Schnare's double auricula 'Hopley's Coffee' winning Best Double Auricula; a lovely girl admiring the display; a closeup of a Polyanthus grown by Rodney Barker; Arlene Perkins' entry of a Barnhaven seedling took the Etna Tate Best Acaulis prize; a display of P. elatior and P. veris. OPPOSITE: APS President Ed Buyarski (kneeling) examines native wildflowers as New England President Amy Olmsted (third from left) identifies the species.
National Primrose Show attendees walking the trails along a pond at the New England Wild Flower Society's Garden-In-The-Woods in Framingham, MA. 

ABOVE: From Anemonella to Dodecatheon to Trillium cuneatum, APS members were treated to a picture perfect New England May hike complete with spring blooming eastern woodland ephemerals, and some basking painted turtles.
The gardens of Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks (left) of Carlisle, MA were a treat for the APS National Show attendees. Some primula highlights are their brilliant red Cowichan ‘Radical Red’ and pink P. sieboldii. This page: Large displays of pink acaulis, white acaulis and blue garden auriculas (right) blue and white Iris cristata and Pulsatilla vulgaris (below) and yellow Iris koreana (bottom left).
New editions of the essentials

A Plant Hunter in Tibet
by Frank Kingdon-Ward.
Published March 2006. Hardcover.
Antique Collectors’ Club
ISBN: 9745240877
(Paperback edition available Sept.06. Orchid Press)

First published in 1934, this imprint tells of the famed plant hunter and explorer’s 1933 expedition to the southeastern corner of Tibet, of his hardships, and of the plants and people he encountered in his incredible journeys.

Frank Kingdon-Ward’s Riddle of the Tsangpo Gorges
Original text by Frank Kingdon Ward, edited by Kenneth Cox.
Additional material by Kenneth Cox, Ken Storm Jr. and Ian Baker
To be published October 2006. Hardcover, 328 pages.
Antique Collector’s Club
ISBN: 1851495169

Frank Kingdon-Ward’s original text was first published in 1926. This edition was first published in 2001. An extraordinary story of Kingdon-Ward’s exploration of the unknown area at that time, and a fascinating exploration by these men retracing the same route. The revised updated edition includes new photos and new material about the gorges, the authors’ travels since 2002, and the ecological state of the gorges today.

Travels in China - A Plantsman’s Paradise
by Roy Lancaster
To be published September 2006. Hardcover, 520 pages.
Antique Collector’s Club
ISBN: 1851495150

A new edition of a popular book written by a distinguished plantsman, this book tells of his journeys into China, of the plants grown there and of the people. Newly revised text with more color photos. This is a great account of diverse plants of an incredibly rich variety in so many different climates in a beautiful country.

Sources:
Amazon.com
How ‘Lee Paul’ Came To Be “Best In Show” at Tower Hill

SUSAN E. SCHNARE

The 2006 APS National Primrose Show at Tower Hill was my third experience with showing primroses. The 2004 and 2005 shows had been great fun, and I expected this show to be more primrose camaraderie in exceptionally pleasant surroundings. This show was to be different only because I had brought only auriculas to show and sell.

In 2002 after years of lusting after plants with names like ‘Prague’, ‘Orb’ and ‘Beechan Green’, I decided to finally give show auriculas a try. I located Lesley Robert and Gil Dawson’s nursery, Pop’s Plants, on-line and spent the cold winter months of 2002/3 comparing their listing with descriptions in Brenda Hyatt and Mary Robinson’s books. That April I imported fifty-four show auriculas from Pop’s Plants in Wiltshire, England. Although that order spent three weeks in US Customs (bare root) and half died, another order followed early in the spring of 2004.

While I really was anxious to grow the green and grey-edges, and to a lesser extent the show fancies, I filled out my orders with other types, including a few alpines. The gold-centered alpines ‘Brown Bess’ and ‘Lee Paul’, described in Mary Robinson’s Auriculas for Everyone, struck me as sounding particularly attractive and hearty. “‘Lee Paul’,” she said, was “a striking variety, excellent for the show bench. Maroon-brown strongly shaded to dirty yellow... a good clone is one of the best alpines available.”

My new potted auriculas spent spring, summer, and fall in a roof-covered stand built by my husband. That winter I moved them to a sunny horse stall where they spent the best part of four months plunged to their rims in muck buckets of wood shavings covered with armloads of Reemay (polyester fleece). During thaws the Reemay came off and they were watered lightly, but from December to mid-March they were usually frozen solid, sometimes at temperatures well below -10 F.

They came through in good shape and several blossomed in time for the 2004 Tower Hill Primrose Show. Winning my first blue ribbons for ‘Hopley’s Coffee’, ‘Paradise Yellow’, ‘Sword’, and others was exciting but also satisfying because I was seeing these plants blossom for the first time and had only had photos in books to judge them by. I thought they were fantastic but would anyone else, let alone the judges?

That spring several very good plants had stayed home because they flowered too late. To get more into the show I would need to wake them up earlier in the spring and fine-tune my fertilization program. The summer of 2004 saw the attack of the root-aphids, followed by the frantic repotting, plant losses, and despair that led me to resort to chemicals. A teaspoon of systemic granules is now part of the late spring regime.

By the time the winter of 2004 rolled around I had a simple unheated greenhouse but, unsure of how the plants would respond to freezing and thawing on a daily basis, sent most back to the barn and their containers of shavings and Reemay. I kept a few ‘Swords’ and ‘Susannahs’ under Reemay in the greenhouse as a test, and also moved some auricula seedlings, pansies, and other plants from the garden into a deep bed of gritty compost in the greenhouse. Daily freezing and thawing bothered them not at all: one ‘Sword’ blossomed all winter and the rest began active growth in February.

The barn auriculas returned to the greenhouse (a journey of about twenty feet) in March and by then the seedling auriculas and pansies were in flower. They quickly starting to show flower stalks and new leaves, but many were still too late to make the 2005 Tower Hill Show. ‘Star Wars’ won a blue ribbon in the foliage division for its beautiful meal-covered leaves and unopened flower stalk and, although ‘Brown Bess’ with only one glorious pip open and two fat maroon buds didn’t win a ribbon, a judge wrote “Beautiful!” on her label. A ‘Sword’ that had over wintered in the greenhouse won “Best in Division.”

By 2005 I finally had a sense of how to grow show auriculas, although the edges were still refusing to blossom, and spent many happy days in the greenhouse potting like crazy as they matured and began reproducing. That spring I removed numerous offsets from the ‘Lee Paul’ and in the late summer eight perfect specimens went into four-inch clay pots. Then to my dismay an infesta-
tion of fungus gnats caused root damage that left pale spots on their otherwise perfect leaves. I normally use a pyrethrum drench whenever I see fungus gnats but these had slipped past me until the damage was done.

All my potted auriculas (by then two or three hundred) spent last winter in the greenhouse where the addition of double-sided foil bubble-pack moderated the extreme cold, although the door was usually left open to keep it cold. On very cold nights and some days, bubble-pack was placed directly over the frames filled with plants. In late February the greenhouse was allowed to warm up and the Reemay was removed days and replaced at night. When growth was noticeable, I began fertilizing weekly with half strength Miracle-Gro.

As the plants began growing in the spring all the damaged leaves were replaced by beautiful glossy leaves and flower stalks right on schedule. The eight ‘Lee Pauls’ were nearly identical with slight variations in the development of the flowers. I had my eye on one for the show and intended to sell the rest, but all were prepared for the show in the same way: pots were wiped off, the soil surface was loosened and evened out with some fresh soil, and the leaves were lightly dusted over with a very soft sable cosmetic brush.

Then the plants, some to be shown and others to be sold, were loaded into the Subaru Outback and we set off for Boylston, some two hours due south. On arriving at the show, I dithered a bit and then substituted a ‘Lee Paul’ that seemed less open to be shown. It had had no special grooming beyond a light brushing. I expected it to get a blue ribbon because it was a beautiful plant, but had not realized how good. I can truthfully say that the news that ‘Lee Paul’ had won “Best in Show” took me totally by surprise.

Concurrent with learning to grow and show auriculas I developed an allergy to them, and possibly to all Primula. To reduce my contact time so that I can grow them at all, this fall I sold almost my entire auricula collection. I kept my green and grey-edges (at least until I get them figured out) and a few small plants for my personal enjoyment including, of course, ‘Lee Paul’.

Susan E. Schnare
Andover, New Hampshire

Books

Primulas in Ontario and at the 2006 National Show

LESTER BRADLEY

My introduction to primroses came seventy years ago in my native England. In those days they were a common and welcome sight in the countryside and especially along railway embankments. Unfortunately modern farming practices and urban development in the UK have greatly reduced their numbers today.

Most of my adult life was spent in Canada. When I retired ten years ago, with the help of my wife, Joan, I was finally able to spend the time required to look after a large garden at our home in Greely, just south of Ottawa, Ontario. From the beginning I planted Primula. The garden polyanthus, Primula x polyanthus, the cowslip, Primula veris and of course the native English primrose, Primula vulgaris were all readily available, and I grew these and was satisfied with my results. At least, I was, until I attended a lecture given by Pam Eveleigh at the Ottawa Valley Rock Garden Society. Exploring Pam’s website (PrimulaWorld) in search of more information, I clicked on a link to the American Primrose Society (APS) website. I was hooked!

A short time later I received in the mail a seed catalogue from Gardens North, a unique Canadian seed house specializing in rare hardy perennials (www.gardensnorth.com), including a good selection of Primula seed. As it turned out, Gardens North is located in North Gower, just a 20-minute drive from my home, and its founder and proprietor, fellow APS member, Kristl Walek is also a member of the Ottawa Valley Rock Garden Society. Thanks to Kristl my primrose garden was expanding.

In the spring of 2005 Joan and I made a trip to the West Coast to visit our son living in British Columbia. It was here that I was able for the first time to
have access to seeds of other Primula species. From the University of British Columbia Botanical Gardens I obtained *Primula beesiana*, and from the Van-Dusen Botanical Garden came *Primula buleesianna.*

Back home again, I started these two Primula in my home-built basement greenhouse. They were germinated using Pro-Mix PGX under a two-tube fluorescent fixture -- one tube cool white and one tube warm white. Germination took 20 days at 68 F (18.3 C) on a 14-hour light cycle. I transplanted them into the garden in late summer of 2005 and they bloomed in mid-June this year. They were planted in very rich combination of barnyard manure and mushroom compost, in a spot that receives sun for only one hour in the afternoon. Keeping them moist seems to help. As I write this (July 10) some of them are now three feet high and are just finishing. This year I also started *Primula polyeura* the same way. Germination took 19 days, and I got them outside early in June, where they are blooming now.

I joined the APS in late 2005, and their first quarterly brought word that the National Show was going to be hosted by the New England Chapter at Tower Hill Botanical Garden in Boylston, MA. That's seven hours by road from Greely, but then the National might never come this close to Ottawa again -- the decision to go was an easy one. We learned a lot and made many new friends, in particular Lee and John Sandor from Juneau, Alaska.

The folks from the New England Chapter were very generous to me with seeds from the APS exchange when they learned that I had not received any from that year's exchange. I plan to germinate all the seeds I brought back from New England in the same way, and we are looking forward to renewing our friendship with Lee and John and other new Primula friends at the next APS National Show, which is to be held in Juneau in 2007.

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**Fall Division of Polyanthus Primroses**

by Alfred E. Brooke


**Dividing Primroses is not a difficult feat and does your plants a great deal of good. If not divided, they soon deteriorate.**

If a maximum number of new plants is desired, divide down to single crowns, but if you wish to have a good display in the spring following division, leave two or three crowns in each new plant.

The actual division is simple. Dig the plant to be divided; remove all soil from the roots; divide into one or more plants as desired; trim the roots to about two and a half to three inches and trim off all old leaves. Don't forget to keep divisions cool and moist before and after resetting, watering thoroughly. Occasionally you will have a plant with a tough, enlarged root resembling wood. Cut this root with a sharp knife into the desired sized new plants, eliminating as much of the old woody structure as possible.

Primroses can be successfully divided at any season of the year, even when in bloom, but there is a proper season for such work. In the opinion of this writer, the proper season for dividing Primroses is late summer, just prior to fall rains.

Primroses are decidedly cool weather plants. The hot summer months are their rest or dormant season, and their long roots down in the cool, damp earth should not be disturbed until the fall growing season is about to commence. By delaying division until this season little watering is necessary and the plants do not develop a large lush growth before the winter frosts. An excessive growth during summer and fall makes Primroses particularly subject to winter damage for they have been forced and weakened through insufficient rest.

Fall division of Primroses also helps to eliminate Strawberry Root Weevil from the new plants. Weevil eggs are laid in early summer and hatch in a few weeks. The larvae immediately travel down the Primrose roots and start feeding on them. By late summer, or early fall, even the latest larvae are hatched and feeding. Division at this time removes practically all larvae from the roots and the new plants are set with clean roots ready to start natural growth and bloom freely in the spring. The writer has, for several seasons, observed that fall divisions have been free from the Root Weevils, whereas, plants which were baited, but left in place, had some larvae in their roots.

To summarize, let me repeat the advantages of fall division:

1. Primroses stand the hot weather better with a full root system.
2. Dividing should be done at the end of the dormant (summer) season so the new plants have cool weather in which to become established.
3. Late division is a great help in eliminating Strawberry Root Weevil from Primroses.
4. Don't overlook the human element. Who among us gardeners does not, some time or other, neglect the plants not in bloom? New Primrose divisions require watering frequently during summer.
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
MATT MATTUS

You all deserve an explanation as to why this Quarterly has been so behind. As I start to catch up with both the APS Quarterly schedule and with its related work load, I can see the passion in your board members, and with many other members who have offered words of encouragement. There is no excuse other than time and procrastination itself. Life has a way taking time away before one even knows it. Even though I foresaw problems with time at the beginning of 2006, with an impending promotion at work, this all combined with moving printing to the east coast from Alaska, a new printer, a new post office, new permits; it seemed that everything that could go wrong went wrong.

I resigned from editorship of the APS Quarterly back in February of 2006, but agreed to try to continue after meeting with the board at the National Show in Massachusetts in May when both a new editor could not be found, and a generous offer of time from a few board members resulted in the formation of an editorial board. This group has since dedicated time to much of the planning and organization, thus freeing up some of the process for me.

I would like to thank Maedythe Martin, Judith Sellers and Michael Plumb for their efforts in undertaking this role, but I especially would like to thank Susan Gray for taking so much time in organizing most everything related to this process. Her daily emails of encouragement and support in simplifying the process by gathering information, editing, and then compiling correspondence so that it arrives in a logical manner is most appreciated.

We all have a responsibility to this group, I by getting this publication out to the post office, and you by renewing your memberships. All plant groups are suffering membership loss globally, and the APS needs your help in increasing ours. The best way is to renew yourself, and then consider getting a gift membership for some plant lover in your life. I will continue to try to get the Quarterly out but hopefully another member will be able to step up to the plate and be able to dedicate the time that this fine publication and society deserves.

Matt Mattus

Spring Shows at the West Coast

By Maedythe Martin,
President of the BC Primula Group

Every April the B.C. Primula Group members bring their plants to the show of the Alpine Garden Club of B.C. in Vancouver. This year it was April 8 and 9 at the VanDusen Botanical Gardens, and with the show, the group puts on a unique display of primula memorabilia and plants. There is also a Primula plant sale on the outside porch. This year the weather cooperated and it was a very pretty spring show, with some spectacular plants.

Outstanding was Primula marginata 'Agee' in perfect condition: it won the trophy for Best Primula. The grower, Joe Keller, a superb plantsman, said he had groomed the plant and cleaned up the pot about 5 or 6 weeks before the show, so that on the day the plant could be staged without disturbing the meal, which covered the leaves. 'Agee' was named for Ivanel Agee, a well-known primrose grower and active member of the American Primrose Society, who lived in Oregon. She was involved in the coordination of APS shows in the 1950s and 1960s and there is a photo of her holding her award winning plant in the 1953 show. We don't know exactly who raised 'Agee', but it was shown from the 1960s. It has long narrow toothed leaves smothered in farina, which sometimes has a golden cast. The clear violet-blue flowers are thrum.

Many fine P. marginata were entered this year – it must have been the perfect time of year for them, and growers have collected a wide range of plants over the last few years. A large plant of 'Herb Dickson', one of the good clear blues introduced by April Boettger of A Plethora of Primula nursery, was at its best with 8 flower trusses. 'Janet' is not seen very often but was here on the day, as well as 'Sheila Denby'. And the group would not have been complete without a plant of 'Linda Pope'. It is such a classic P. marginata and still shows well after 95 years on the show bench!

The winning Gold Laced Polyanthus was a seedling entered by Maedythe Martin, which shows great promise. The lacing was clean on the dark ground.
The fashion for GLPs, as they are known by aficionados, varies from dark ground being the favorite to red ground being preferred. At the moment in England, many of the best plants have the red ground. A red ground GLP and a silver-laced GLP were also entered in the B.C. show. Silver-laced GLPs have gained some momentum in recent years, and seed was available from England last year. We might have some nice seedlings showing up in 2007. The silver-laced have never been as well regarded (as the gold) at shows in Great Britain, but now there seems to be a resurgence, with them appearing more often.

An outstanding example of the old P. x pubescens hybrid ‘Faldonside’ had been grown and fed so well that it outgrew the virus that often causes it to look a bit off-color. This plant was a prime example of what can be done with an old campaigner and it deserved the blue ribbon it won. ‘Faldonside’ was introduced about five decades ago and is recognizable for the color of its flowers, a deep red-magenta, and by the fact that the leaves often look sick. But not today — it was in prime condition.

In the small auricula class, Rhondda Plumb entered a nice plant of “Mrs. Dyas”. The color is paler than some modern introductions, but this is not an easy plant to grow, and it was a treat to see it. It is a collected named form from the Maritime Alps, I believe, and according to John Gibson in England has been in collections there since before the Second World War. It was only named once it went into commerce.

In the auricula classes, Maedythe Martin entered some attractive stripes. ‘Speckled Hen’ is one of Derek Parson’s introductions, and is striking with the yellow stripes on a dark rust-colored ground. Also on display was ‘Koenigin der Nacht’, ‘Queen of the Night’, and definitely queen of dark stripes. Having been around for more than two decades (raised by Allan Guest in 1988), she has been superseded by more recent introductions, but the clean white stripes on the dark ground still please the eye. Maedythe has been collecting and raising striped auriculas for the past 10 years, and the results are starting to show up on the show benches.

Once the Vancouver show is over, primula growers turn their attention to the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society spring show held in Victoria. This is the largest and best rock garden show in North America, with over 350 pots on display. The primula entries form about a quarter of the show, and it is a striking sight. This year there were many fine garden auriculas brought by APS member Bryan Davies. In fact the trophy for best three pans in show went to Bryan for a nice trio of garden auriculas consisting of a rust-colored one with a yellow eye, a clear red, and an old-fashioned-looking buff.

The trophy for Best Primula in Show went to a P. rusbyi brought by a longtime member who only brings a few things now. Reba Wingert is almost retired, but not quite, thank goodness. The plant was outstanding, with three flower scapes in the clear violet color of this alpine treasure. It is one of the North American primulas, found in the high mountains of southeastern Arizona. Richards says it is found “above the tree line in crevices and seepage-lines in shade.” Wouldn’t it be a treat to go sometime and see it in its habitat?

As in Vancouver, the class for P. marginata was very well filled here in Victoria, and the bench was a sea of blue-violet, blue and mauve. One interesting small plant was P. marginata ‘Philip’, which was raised by John Mercer in England. This plant has magenta-purple flowers with a fine silver wire edge around each floret. This matches the silver edge to the toothed leaves, making it a very handsome plant.

The Primula class showed a wide range of cowslips, oxlips and the classic P. vulgaris, the wild English primrose. The fresh appearance of these small wild promises of spring is always a delight to see. Next year the show will be quite early in the year, around the very end of March. If you have a chance, do come and see this most colorful display of alpine treasures -- and lots of primula!

These two shows present a place for primula fanciers to gather and show off their plants, to visit and compare notes, and just to enjoy the delight of seeing these wonderful spring flowers once again.
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