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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Front Cover: Michael Plumb’s ‘Paris 90s’, grown from Barnhaven seed, staged at the AGCBC show

Back Cover: Photo Contest winner in the category of “Other Gardens”: Ja-eun Son’s photo of *Primula seiboldii*. 
President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

Most years in early April we head for England to visit family. The early rhododendrons are in bloom; daffodils are everywhere; polyanthus in every garden; and the wild primroses \textit{P. vulgaris} are at their peak. It’s a good time to visit. This year we left Chicago for Heathrow on April Fools Day! Our return was scheduled for the afternoon of April 15th, which would give me 10 days or so to get my garden in order before leaving for the Annual Show in Massachusetts. At noon on April 15th ash from an unpronounceable Icelandic volcano closed Heathrow. April Fool!

Not knowing when we would get home, let alone if we would be in time for to the Show, we decided to make the most of a bad situation. A visit to Kew Gardens, especially the Alpine House, took one day. A chance call to Pops Plants on the Saturday discovered it was their annual Open Day. We had a wonderful visit to Pops Plants. Their plant display looked superb, despite being a little “retarded” by the cool Spring. And the tea and cake were pretty good as well! Thanks for the great hospitality.

I have two “Oak Leaved Primrose” plants growing in my sister’s garden, one is a pin and one is a thrum. We never seem to get any seeds, so this year I got out the paint brush and did a little pollination. Maybe the ash cloud will get me some results.

It was 8 days before we were able to get a flight back to Chicago. My 10 days to get my garden in shape was now reduced to 2. That was just about enough time to mow the grass and remove any seeding weeds, but Tower Hill was calling.

The New England Chapter had put on a terrific Show program this year, with the star attraction being
John Richards’ presentation and open forum. John had also been stranded in Greece by the ash cloud but also was able to “escape” home in time to repack and head for Tower Hill. The plant displays at the show were exceptional, and Joe Philip and his team are to be congratulated for the organization of this year’s show. We need a chapter to step forward and volunteer to put on next year’s show.

Finally, the new website is up and running, and Michael Plumb and Jane Guild have done a great job in providing a great site. Please note the website can now be accessed at either americanprimrosesociety.com or americanprimrosesociety.org.

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2009 Photo Contest
One of our APS members in Korea has won the contest category Primula from Other Gardens. Ja-eun Son works at the Pyunggang Botanical Garden and has sent us an article on the Garden (Summer 2009 issue) and is a faithful entrant in the annual APS photo contest. Here are *Primula sieboldii* in the Botanical Garden – a lovely stand of them.

The over-all contest winner, and winner in the category of My Garden, was Becky Carls with her photo of *P. sibthorpii*, seen on the cover of the spring quarterly. At least we are guessing it is *P. sibthorpii* but it is certainly a lovely harbinger of spring. The final winner in the contest was Barrie Porteous in the Category Primula Grown from APS Seed, with a photo of *P. cockburniana*, to grace the cover of the Autumn Issue of the Quarterly.

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Perennial Seed. Beautiful. Useful. Native... To the Planet.
Primroses for Sale

JOAN HOEFFEL

I have been selling primroses to the gardening public for almost twenty years. For the first eight years, the plants were field grown in our retail perennial plant garden. Later, plants were dug from my home garden, potted up and transported to plant sales in and around Rochester, NY.

My husband, Don, and I started Hunts Hollow Perennial Gardens in 1991 as a “segue-to-retirement.” We two workaholics selected an old, clay soil vineyard on a west-facing hill in the Bristol Hills south of Rochester and literally dug in. I had been a perennial plant gardener for most of my adult life and had been growing plants from seed for many years. Don is a mechanical engineer with minimal interest in plants but a good deal of savvy in business. He became an expert in tilling, soil amending, drainage and building.

It didn’t take us long to realize we needed a place to grow shade plants on our full sun hill, and Don set to work building a north-south facing shade structure at the top of the hill. In the eight years of our business, we added three more shade enclosures.

The first primroses in our retail garden were divisions of pass-along plants from my garden and purchases from wholesale nurseries. Most were Primula veris, P. acaulis and P. x polyantha. A year or two later, I saw two photographs of Primula japonica; one in a Winterthur catalog and one of the Eck-Winterrowd garden at North Hill in Vermont. I was caught! I ordered seed of Primula japonica and many other species, and thus began my love affair with the genus, Primula. Before we closed the garden in 1998, our catalog of plants listed the following: Primula auricula, P. x bullesiana, P. bulleyana, P. denticulata, P. florindae, P. frondosa, P. japonica, P. laurentiana, P. modesta ‘Alba,’ P. poissonii, P. saxatilis, P. sieboldii, P. veris, P. waltonii, P. ’Wanda Hybrids’ and a mix of Candelabra Hybrids.

Our customers are, to this day, a spectrum of gardeners from very knowledgeable to beginners. Whereas primroses were only one of over 100 genera offered in our retail garden, they are now three quarters of the 200 or so plants I dig and take to plant sales.

So what species do gardeners buy? From my experience I find that when faced with many species of flowering primroses, the runaway favorite with gardeners is the Candelabra primrose, Primula japonica. My boggy woods and stream beds are filled with P. japonica flowering in a myriad of colors from white through shades of pink, red, coral, magenta and some with variegated petals. They all sell. Gardeners will buy them by the dozens to populate their moist woodlands and fringes of ponds and streams. The next most popular would be P. sieboldii, especially those with frilly or deeply
divided petals. Late summer dormancy doesn’t discourage most gardeners. In fact, it is often a preferred characteristic. *P. denticulata* is sought after in early spring when showing off the “drumstick” form.

The *Primula* species that hold their inflorescence well above the basal foliage find favor with gardeners, if they are not yellow or orange. I am mystified by how unpopular those two colors are with far too many gardeners, not only with primroses but with perennial plants in general. Light yellow *P. florindae* gets a better reception than *P. bulleyana* and *P. cockburniana*, and a brick red *P. veris* will find a home before a yellow sibling.

The experienced gardener will often gravitate to the less known species of *Primula*. Thus, *P. capitata*, *P. frondosa*, *P. saxatilis*, and *P. waltonii* are never overlooked.

I realize that my sales are a sample of one, but if you are interested in selling from your abundance of primrose plants, my experience may be helpful in guiding you to which species to offer. Each year as I dig and prepare my plants, the selection looks much the same as previous years, and I think that, perhaps this year, the sales will be a disappointment. That’s never happened. As we know, primroses are a well-loved plant, and at the end of the day, even the yellow and orange gems are carried away by a happy gardener.

Pop’s Plants has many green-edged auriculas available for shipment overseas!
Breeding Green- and Grey-Edged Auriculas: A Beginner’s Tale
Part Three – Predicting Outcomes

DR. DAVID MELLOR

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”
Albert Einstein

Well – it’s like this. Part One set the scene. Part Two introduced the single gene model which determines whether an edged seedling grows up to be a green-edge or a grey-edge. All controlled – or so we imagine - by just one single gene for mealiness on the petals. Some detective story, huh?

Take a closer look at the single gene (M/m) model for the expression of meal in the edged show auriculas. We know that the model says there can only be three types of gene re-combinations:

Type 1 – is MM, i.e. two dominant genes for the absence of meal expression = Green-edge (T1)

Type 2 – is Mm, i.e. one dominant gene and one recessive gene = Green-edge (T2)

Type 3 – is mm, i.e. two recessive genes for the expression of meal = Grey-edge (T3)

- Where “T1” is shorthand for “Type 1” etc.

Remember – the dominant gene is for the absence of meal. Meal can only be expressed on the flowers and foliage of the seedling when two recessive genes (mm) are paired up, one donated from each of its two parents. Just one recessive gene paired up with a dominant gene won’t cut it! Therefore, every time we see a grey-edge, we know that both its parents each donated one recessive gene for mealiness (m).

So, we have three – and only three – types of parent plants according to this simple model. How many are the different ways in which these three types can be crossed with each other? Exactly six. But, since there are only three different types to start with, there will still be only the same three different types of offspring resulting from the crosses, but in varying proportions (or frequencies, if there are any botanists about to complain).
We can give the six crosses individual names so that we can identify exactly what we mean. Then we can use this information to calculate the probabilities with which each cross will produce particular types as offspring. Tabulated, they look like this, where “X” means “crossed with”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF CROSS</th>
<th>PARENTS USED IN CROSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CROSS 1</td>
<td>T1 X T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSS 2</td>
<td>T2 X T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSS 3</td>
<td>T3 X T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSS 4</td>
<td>T1 X T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSS 5</td>
<td>T1 X T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSS 6</td>
<td>T2 X T3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anyone can work out the probabilities of the offspring types arising from each cross, simply by considering which genes each parent can donate to the offspring. Take Cross 2 as an example:

CROSS 2 = TYPE 2 x TYPE 2

If it helps, think of the first Type 2 seed parent as ‘Fleminghouse’ and the second Type 2 pollen parent as ‘Roberto’ (both of which are in fact Type 2 green-edges).

Using the information that TYPE 2 = Mm, we see that each parent has an equal chance of donating a dominant gene (M) or a recessive gene (m) to an offspring. No other possibility exists in this simple model.

- Take the first parent, and let’s imagine that ‘Fleminghouse’ donates its first mealiness gene, which is the dominant M, to the offspring. Now see what choices this ‘Fleminghouse’ M gene has on offer from the second parent, ‘Roberto’ – it is either another M or an m. So the outcome, if the first parent donated its first gene (M) to its offspring, is equi-probable: it is either MM, or else it is Mm, when re-combined in an offspring (single seed). Each is exactly as likely as the other – 50/50 for MM or Mm.

- But while that’s both genes of the second parent (‘Roberto’) accounted for, we still have the second gene of the first parent (‘Fleminghouse’) to think about (m). What if the first parent donated its recessive gene (m) instead of its dominant gene (M) that we just considered? This m gene from the first parent can also combine equi-probably with either M or m from the second parent. Again, then, each is exactly as likely as the other – 50/50 for MM or Mm.

So we have four equally probable possibilities, which are:

MM        Mm
mM        mm

Notice that there will always be four possible gene re-combinations – even if two or more of them are the same (as is the case here for our middle two re-
combinations). There is no difference between $mM$ and $Mm$, so the resulting final probabilities from CROSS 2 are as follows:

- **One** chance in **four** of getting $MM$ in the offspring which would therefore be **TYPE 1** green-edge

- **Two** chances in **four** of getting $Mm$ in the offspring which would therefore be **TYPE 2** green-edge

- **One** chance in **four** of getting $mm$ in the offspring which would therefore be **TYPE 3** grey-edge

We can summarize this simply by saying that the outcome of CROSS 2 will always be **25%** Type 1 green-edges + **50%** Type 2 green-edges + **25%** Type 3 grey-edges among the edged progeny (not all the progeny will actually be edged sorts, but that takes us into a whole other realm of genetics best tackled another time). But a better way – you’ll see why in a minute – of expressing these same chances is in terms of “outcomes-in-four.” So the outcome of CROSS 2 is therefore better expressed as: one T1 green-edges + two T2 green-edges + one T3 grey-edges.

So, the summary for resulting edged progeny of all six crosses is going to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CROSS</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 T1 &amp; 2 T2 &amp; 1 T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 T1 &amp; 2 T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 T2 &amp; 2 T3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, we get to the payoff – the big “who dunnit” part of the detective story – we get to peer directly into the gene pool of green- and grey-edges. Suppose that, 200 years ago, there was an equal number of Type 1, 2 and 3 varieties of edged auriculas. This would mean, of course, that green-edges would outnumber grey-edges 2:1 since there are two genetically distinct types of green (T1 and T2) but only one type of grey (T3). Now suppose someone introduced a rule that you could only cross “like-with-like.” That is to say, you could only cross green-edged varieties (T1 and T2) with each other and grey-edged varieties (T3) within that group. What would be the long term consequences?

The answer lies in the above tabulation of crosses, from which we can see two crosses (CROSS 5 and CROSS 6) are prohibited as these would be mixed green x grey crosses. This leaves us with four “legitimate” crosses. Of these four, there is only one grey x grey cross: CROSS 3, which produces four grey-edges in four of the edged progeny and never produces any green-edges.

Compare this, now, to the three “legitimate” green x green crosses (i.e. CROSS 1, CROSS 2 and CROSS 4) which together produce a total of seven T1 green-edges.
plus four T2 green-edges plus one T3 grey-edges. The outcome of such a “like-with-like” breeding rule is astonishing – each generation of green x green crosses results in slightly less than half as many T2 greens in the generation (an average of 4 in every 11 greens) as it does T1 greens (an average of 7 in every 11 greens). And T2 is, remember, the recessive meal-gene carrier of the green-edged tribe. This means that the half-life of the \( m \) recessive meal-gene in the gene pool of the green-edged tribe is just a single generation – four years or less.

Because varieties are not generally long-lived (40 years is not atypical), it is not long before the original ancestral T2 community begins to bite the dust. But, compared to the burgeoning numbers of T1 green-edges being raised, there are progressively diminishing numbers of T2 green-edges in each successive generation. And all this happens without needing to tell the physical difference between T1 and T2 green-edges! After 100 years of abiding by the “like-with-like” rule, there would be essentially no T2 green-edges left in cultivation – an endangered species, they would be on the verge of extinction, or extinct.

I promised in Part One that the mystery would deepen. Well, we are at the bottom of things now, and suddenly everything promises to get easier and clearer. One question that you are doubtless asking is – where is all this leading? Another, doubtless, is – can anyone tell a T2 green-edge from a T1 green-edge anyway? And my personal favourite – why does this matter anyhow??

All will be revealed, in true detective cliff-hanger fashion – in the next part. For now, though, let me sprinkle a few clues to whet your appetite.

Firstly, there are physical differences between T2 green-edges (\( Mm \)) and T1 green-edges (\( MM \)), and these were first identified maybe a hundred or more years ago. The T2, recessive meal gene carrying green-edge has a tendency towards stray meal-smattering and a “China Edge” on the petals. This is decreed a fault by show judges and is actually the very origin of the ancient “like-with-like” breeding rule.

Secondly, it matters a great deal to breeders, because an analysis of the recorded data shows that, while T2 green-edges may not be perfect show plants, they are (theoretically) perfect breeding parents. Most of our very best, modern, top-notch green-edged show varieties are descendants of T2 parents raised decades ago by renegade breeders flying in the face of the “like-with-like” rule. And, because T2s carry the recessive meal gene (\( m \)), they should (theoretically) also make excellent parents for a whole new break of grey-edged varieties, broadening out that particular long-isolated gene pool in the process!

In Part Four, I’ll present the recorded data that proves these apparently outrageous conclusions.

You can request Part Four from the editor of the quarterly if your curiosity gets the better of you!
The 2010 American Primrose Society National Show was held on May 1st and 2nd at the Tower Hill Botanic Garden in West Boylston, Massachusetts. There were 124 show entries and eleven exhibitors. It was a very early season, with a sudden burst of extreme heat. None the less, there were more plants than usual for the first of May, here in New England.

There were 21 polyanthus in the class and the Best of Section was a yellow hose-in-hose entered by Amy Olmstead of Vermont. She received the Wesley Bottom Trophy for the best hose-in-hose. Rodney Barker entered a beautiful dark red Cowichan polyanthus grown from seed which received the John Kerridge Memorial award.

In the *Primula vulgaris* division Marion Stafford from Western Massachusetts entered ‘Rosetta Red’ and this was judged the Best of the Section for which she received the Etha Tate Award. In the *Primula x Juliana* Division Judith Sellers from New York received Best of Section and the Ivanel Agee award for ‘Jay Jay’.

The garden auriculas were really well represented and the Best of Section went to Marianne Kuchel from Vermont. Her plant was a rich purple with white to cream shading in the center. The Best Show Auricula was also Marianne’s and was a gold-colored double. She received the Ellen Page Hayden Award for this plant of an interesting Victorian shade. The Best Named Auricula was ‘Argus’ and was entered by Judith Sellers. She received the Frank Michaud Award for this entry. The Best Alpine Auricula was also Marianne’s and this went on to be the Best in Show. Marianne also received the Bamford award for the Best Show Seedling for another Exhibition Alpine, this time with a rose-shaded white-centred flower. The Best Alpine Auricula Seedling went to Judy Sellers for a red alpine grown from a
‘Prince John’ cross, and this plant also received the John Haddock Award. The Captain Comely Hawkes Award went to Marianne Kuchel for the best gold-laced polyanthus.

Susan Schnare from New Hampshire had the Best Edged Show Auricula for her plant of ‘Orb’. The best species was a *Primula farinosa* plant belonging to Marianne Kuchel and for this she received the Rae Berry Award. The Most Blue Ribbons Award was won by Marianne Kuchel with eight. The John Kerridge Award for the Most Species in Bloom went to Rodney Barker with six entries. The Novice Award, for the Best Plant benched by a novice went to Benjamin Fay from New Jersey who showed ‘Kelsey Ann’ a lavender pink *P. allionii x marginata*.

It was a colorful show and enjoyed by the visitors to Tower Hill both Saturday and Sunday.

Photos:

This page, top left: Susan Schnare, photo: Joe Philip

above: Mariane Kuchel, photo: Joe Philip

left: Mark Dyen, Mary Malloy, Kris Fenderson, John Richards, Alan Lawrence, photo: Judith Sellers

Previous page: Marion Stafford, photo: Judith Sellers
American Primrose Society
National Show Winners, 2010

Wesley Bottom Trophy for the best hose in hose: Amy Olmstead, yellow hose in hose

John Kerridge Memorial Award: Rodney Barker, dark red Cowichan grown from seed.

Etha Tate Award: Marion Stafford, *P. vulgaris* ‘Rosetta Red’

Ivanel Agee Award: Judith Sellers, *P. x Juliana* ‘Jay Jay’

Best of Section, Auriculas: Marianne Kuchel, garden auricula purple with white to cream shading

Ellen Page Hayden Award for best show auricula: Marianne Kuchel, gold double auricula

Frank Michaud Award for Best Named Show Auricula: Judith Sellers, *P. Auricula* ‘Argus’

Bamford Award for the Best Show Seedling: Marianne Kuchel, violet shaded alpine seedling

John Haddock Award for Best Alpine Auricula Seedling: Judith Sellers, red alpine

Captain Comely Hawkes Award: Marianne Kuchel, best gold-laced polyanthus

Best Edged show auricula: Susan Schnare, ‘Figaro’

Rae Berry Award for Best Species: Marianne Kuchel, *P. farinosa*

John Kerridge Award for the most species in bloom: Rodney Barker

Novice Award, for the best plant benched by a novice: Benjamin Fay, *P. x allionii* ‘Kelsey Ann’
A Primula from Africa?

MAEDYTHE MARTIN

Some seed was offered in the 2007/8 APS seed exchange labeled Primula simensis. Not P. sinensis, the exuberant Chinese Primula that sometimes makes people itch, but Primula simensis. In due course I received some seed and planted them. The resulting seedlings were very attractive, with clearly defined ribs and edges, all covered in a white meal.

The donor of the seed was Derek Salt in England. The seed was from his plant. I had a chance to ask him why he thought to grow this plant, and he said it was because of the attractive leaves, which he liked when he saw them in pictures.

John Richards, in his book Primula (Timber Press, Oregon, 1993, First Edition) tells us that this species is closely related to P. verticilliata, but is distinguished by the whiter leaves. And the place where it grows in nature? Ethiopia! In Africa! It is one of only two species of Primula to be found on that continent.

The plant has an interesting story. “This is an unmistakable group of plants,” Richards says, and is found in the section Sphondylia, “considered to be amongst the most primitive of all primulas” (Wendelbo, p.36 quoted in Richards p. 79.) This section is found in regions where few other Primulas grow.

Richards goes on to say “In 1899, a seedling of P. floribunda at Kew Gardens was found to resemble a P. verticilliata, although with the leaf-shape of its mother. Later intentional crosses with P. verticilliata onto other P. floribunda proved the parentage of this cross (in fact it seems very possible that the pollen parent was not P. verticilliata, but the closely related P. simensis.) These hybrids were sterile… However they were vigorous growers and were distributed…”

Primula x kewensis is a vigorous grower in cultivation and tends to be more popular than its parents.”It seems likely that the plants originally grown at Kew which gave rise to P. x kewensis were not P. verticilliata by P. simensis. Some forms of P. x kewensis are much more mealy than is usually found in P. verticilliata. Certainly, some of the ‘older’ strains of P. verticilliata in cultivation today match P. simensis, but the history of introductions is confused between the two species.”

Many of us have grown P. x kewensis, and have found it does not like winter wet, and can be affected by frost. Now that we know one of the original parents of P. kewensis comes from the slopes of a mountain in Etheopia, we know why. This is probably true for P. simensis itself, and why my pot of seedlings spent December and January on a cool windowsill inside, away from the 4 or 5 degrees of frost we had suddenly for about three weeks. But the leaves are so handsome: it is worth the extra care to see the plants continuing to flourish. I must go and divide the seedlings, liberate them from their seedling pot, and put them into bigger pots so they can achieve their full potential.
Out of Africa

Left: Maedythe’s seedling of *P. simensis*
Middle: Blue Nile Falls in Ethiopia
Bottom: yellow *Primula simensis*

“...an unmistakable group of plants... considered to be amongst the most primitive of all primulas...”
This page, top: Roger Witlock’s Best in Show *Primula bileckii*
middle, left: Winning Polyanthus, rose-colored wire edge by Bryan Davies
middle, right: ‘Gilded Ginger’ strain of polyanthus from Barnhaven
bottom: Bryan Davies’ white *Primula vulgaris*

Facing page, top left: bench of show auriculas
top right: bench of marginat
bottom: Rhondda Porter’s *Primula x allionii* ‘Amanda Gabrielle’
Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Show
Photos from the 2010 American Primrose Society National Show
This page, top: bench of double auriculas, Mariane Kuchel's winning double in centre, photo Matt Mattus
middle left: Susan Schnare's 'Figaro', photo Matt Mattus
middle right: display of spring primroses, photo Joe Philip
bottom: group photo of Show entrants, photo Joe Philip
Facing page, top: Mariane Kuchel's Winning Auricula, photo Matt Mattus
bottom left: Veris hybrids, photo Joe Philip
bottom right: P. 'Rosetta's Red', photo Judith Sellers
American Primrose Society National Show 2010
Alpine Garden Club of BC Show

This page, top: ‘Blue Calipso’ Maedythe Martin’s new *P. marginata* hybrid
left: white *Primula kisoana*

Facing page, top: BC Primula Group/AGCBC display, by Ruth Anderson
middle left: double yellow primrose ‘Marianne Davey’
bottom left: double auricula ‘May Booley’
right: *P. marginata* ‘Linda Pope’
All photos: Maedythe Martin
Painted Ladies

Above, clockwise from top left: two seedlings by Maedythe Martin, Furber’s double Painted Lady (1730), Allan Guest’s seedling from his recent book. Below: recent seedling from Derek Parsons ‘Stirling Castle’
APRIL

April for us is a bit crazy, when we’re chasing our tails and hardly have time to eat or sleep. Pollinating is in full flow and the shows have begun in earnest. Customers are remembering to order seed, and plant orders are coming in. If we’ve not done it all in March there is seed sowing to do – seeds for plants to keep aside for pollinating and seeds for plant sales. The majority of auriculas begin to flower this month. These plants, more than any other variety, seem to surprise us the most with their stunning beauty as one after another they come into bloom. It’s perhaps because they look so uninteresting all winter and we forget the magic to come.

MAY

We can start to breathe a bit. We no longer have regular opening hours and the last big show is in Paris mid-May. Pollinating continues with the later varieties such as auriculas and the asiatics. There’s the constant monitoring of seedlings – watching out for slugs if it’s wet, and guarding against drying out if it’s not.

Towards the end of May normally the seed pods start to ripen, so we have the daily round of checking every plant for ripe seeds before they tip themselves out all over. The *P. sieboldii* seeds are the worst– sometimes they open with a sort of smiley-mouth on one side and if you don’t catch them just at the right moment they spill their precious seeds everywhere. When we have enough in the paper bags attached to the benches they go to be hung up in the drying area, hopefully away from the earwigs which happily munch them.

JUNE

Depending on the weather lots of watering needs to be done. If June is cool and damp we’re happy, but no one else is! Harvesting continues, and prickling out begins for next year’s plants. If we’re organised enough, plant division begins, of show auriculas and double primroses. We have to decide if we need to keep any of the plants used for pollinating and which will end up on the compost heap. The bulk of our plant production is grown fresh from seed each year as we find it’s the best way to keep down virus and disease. If we keep any they have to have their roots washed and re-potted in new compost as we have an ongoing fight against vine weevil. Plant and seed orders will generally have stopped for the season so we have some evenings free to try and tame our own garden, which by this time is not a very good advertisement for the nursery!
Report on the BC Primula Group Show, April 10th, 2010

MICHAEL PLUMB

Our *Primula* show was held in conjunction with the show of the Alpine Garden Club of BC. [Note: The divisions, sections and classes of this local show do not correspond exactly to the APS National Show Divisions and Classes as given on the APS website.]

The Show Auricula Section of the Exhibition Plants Division was well supported by a large number of Show Selfs, of which three won a blue ribbon. One was ‘Douglas Black’. As its name implies, the petals are virtually black, which accentuates the brilliant white eye. Also winning the blue was ‘Trudy’, a dark burgundy. Both plants were entered by Ian MacGowan, an APS member who had travelled up from Washington for the show. Supplying some contrast to the darker Selfs was the yellow ‘Sunshine’, belonging to Phyllis Plenderleith of the BC Group. ‘Sunshine’ was grown from seed supplied by the late Dr. John Kerridge, a past APS president and past president of the BC Group. ‘Sunshine’ was won by a light-centred mauve-purple seedling. Another win and it can be named!

The show contained a Silver-Laced Polyanthus Class. Some traditional growers may balk at the idea of a Silver-Laced Class, but the rules of this particular show allowed for such entries, and Michael Plumb’s small but striking plant won a blue ribbon. There were no Gold-Laced entries this year, which was surprising, as it has been a warm spring in this part of Canada, compensating for the early date of the show.

In the Border Auricula / Pubescens Section, Maedythe Martin won with a blue-flowered seedling which was a cross between ‘Wharfedale Bluebell’ and ‘Alan Jones’. This is now provisionally called ‘Blue Calypso’.

First in the Edge Class was ‘Oban’, a Green Edge. It was a pity this was the only Edge entered, though ‘Oban’ definitely merited the blue ribbon.

In Fancies and Stripes, ‘Ruddy Duck’, a burgundy and gray stripe with some farina sprinkled on the petals, won a first. It held up at least twelve pips on its one scape!

The Exhibition Alpine Class was won by a light-centred mauve-purple seedling. Another win and it can be named!

In the Double Auricula Section: Ian MacGowan’s ‘Golden Splendor’ and Maedythe Martin’s ‘May Booley’. Ian’s plant is dark buff yellow with farina on the...
leaves and pedicels, and Maedythe’s plant, originating with Derek Salt in England, has petals shading from a greenish centre into a pale gray-pink as the main color.

A rare white form of *Primula pedemontana*, grown by Maedythe, won a blue ribbon in the Species / Species Hybrids Division. The leaves have a slightly bronze-colored tinge. The white form of ‘Linda Pope’ earned a blue ribbon in the Marginata Class. Rhondda Porter’s ‘Airemist’ gained a first in the Allionii Class, with its clear white, flat-faced thrum flowers.

In the Polyanthus Division, Michael Plumb won the Cowichan Section. His beautiful, very dark thrum Cowichan is probably ‘Velvet Moon’, bred by Dr. John Kerridge and still sometimes available in local stores. Michael’s seedling *P. x polyantha* ‘Paris 90’ won Best Primula in Show. It was grown from Barnhaven seed supplied through the American Primrose Society Seed Exchange. The pale yellow centre darkens into a lovely blue towards the petal edges, giving the petals a picotee effect. Small white patches dot the centre of each petal edge like little stars. This plant was one of four lovely ‘Paris 90’ seedlings that Michael entered. He highly recommends this Barnhaven seed.

The Double Acaulis Section was won by ‘Marianne Davey’. Many double acaulis primroses have disappeared over the years, but it is satisfying to know that some nurseries are making great efforts to keep the surviving doubles in existence. ‘Marianne Daley’ was covered in pale butter-cream flowers with glowing yellow hearts that completely covered its eight-inch pot.

The *P. x juliana* Class had only one entry, a lovely ‘Guinevere’. This variety was originally bred in Ireland, perhaps in the 1930s, and still produces lots of offsets. It has pale pink flowers and olive-bronze leaves. It is also known as ‘Garryard Guinevere’.

In the Cortusoides Section a white *P. kisoana* stood out as winner because of its multiple scapes completely covered in flowers. It was a serious contender for Best Primula in Show.

Finally, *P. rusbyi* won the ‘Any Other’ Section of species Primula. It is a North American native from New Mexico and Arizona, growing in moist rocky hillsides at about 3,000 meters. It has mealy leaves and stems and the flowers are bright red-pink and yellow-eyed.

For some people the best part of the show came at the end when there was a trade in prize-winning plants among some of the growers!
An early show this year, but still some very pretty plants to admire. The alpine plant show here in Victoria alternates, early and late in the season, each year in turn, and this show on March 26 – 27 was early indeed. It was a slightly smaller show that some years, at a pot count of 290, but the quality was very good.

In the primula classes, Bryan Davies’ plants swept the board. Bryan has been hybridizing primroses and auriculas for more than 6 years now, and is getting some excellent results. His primrose plants come in a range of colors from the innocent white form of the wild primrose (Best Primula in Show) to the very sophisticated color-combination of the Best Polyanthus winner – a seldom seen wire-edged deep rose-red form of the polyanthus.

In the show auricula classes, Bryan entered a number of three pan entries – a testament to the number of plants he has raised through his own hybridizing. The gold-centered alpine seedling shows great promise. Shading from velvety brown through rust to a golden-colored edge, this plant just needs to be grown on to a bigger size to be a true show-stopper. Three selfs ranged in color from the deepest black through a fiery orange-red to shining yellow. These are seedling plants, but having been show winners, Bryan will now have to come up with some names for these beauties.

It was a treat to see the Barnhaven “Gilded Ginger’ polyanthus presented by John Sheridan, the president of the club. He grows many plants from seed, and this plant with the shining gold edge to the petals is a striking plant for the garden but also gives an indication of how the more formal exhibition gold-laced polyanthus must have evolved.

In the show auricula class Maedythe Martin gained a first with a seedling show stripe now called ‘Silver Sentinel’. Dark red stripes alternate with wide bands of silver-mealed petals in striking contrast.

The winner of Best Plant in Show came from the *Primula* classes. Rodger Whitlock brought in an example of the seldom seen *Primula x bileckii* (*P. minima* x *P. hirsuta*). The small whorls of shiny leaves are a good foil for the pink-magenta flowers, a softer color than *P. hirsuta* itself. John Richards (*Primula, Timber Press, 1993*) states that the hybrids of *P. minima* are more reliable in their flowering habit than the species, and while the species is “very distinctive” (p.91) it hybridizes easily in the wild with a number of other *Primula*. This is one attractive example.

The so-called ‘expert’s class’, Class no. 1, requires a “Collection of 6 pans
of any distinct rock garden plants (recognized color variants or forms are distinct varieties for this purpose)”. This year there were two entries. Maedythe Martin entered six pans of Primula focusing on the varieties of leaf forms available, from the tiny, tidy leaves of P. allionii to the exuberant serrated leaves of the larger P. marginata form. One interesting plant in this collection was a P. hirsuta cross that Maedythe had made years ago. The ticket read:

**Primula ‘Maedythe’s Cameo’**

Some years ago I foolishly crossed P. hirsuta, known for the ‘hirsute’ foliage covered in tiny red hairs that make the leaves slightly sticky, with a buff garden auricula. The resulting seed was like dust! I gave it to a friend who, three years later, brought me back a piece of the plant he had raised from it. He insisted I name it ‘Maedythe’s Cameo’.

It has grown into a large healthy plant and the bronzy-tone to the leaves nicely set off the pale pink flowers – which were later to appear after the show was over – nicely.

Fine examples of other Primula plants rounded out the display: ‘Linda Pope’, one of the oldest yet finest of the P. marginata; P. denticulata in a classic purple form; a tiny P. frondosa covered in flowers; and even a P. forrestii with its clear yellow flowers.

Spring has truly arrived with the annual rock and alpine show in Victoria.

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**The Website Committee**

has been working on revamping your website to bring it up to date and make it more interactive. Just search in Google for ‘American Primrose Society’, or type in www.americanprimrosesociety.org to see what we have been doing. We are adding content all the time, so if you would like to write an article, send some photographs of your plants or make suggestions, please contact the webmaster. Most of the website is accessible to the general public, but some sections are accessible only to members by means of a username and password. To obtain these, follow the directions you will find under ‘Register for a Username’ in the menu. You will then be able to ask and answer questions on Primula and share your knowledge and experiences with a large group of fellow enthusiasts. And you can now show off your garden photos for all to see! Don’t forget to bookmark your new website!
Earthworms in the Garden

JOAN HOEFFEL

As Primula growers, we work to produce a rich, evenly moist soil in which most species of Primula thrive. The earthworm is our partner in creating this medium. As we garden above ground, the earthworm works its magic underground.

I wasn’t so sure about the benefits of worms two years ago when I had what I termed, “The Invasion of the Earthworms.” I first noticed the holes rimmed with tiny balls of soil which I knew to be the excrement of earthworms called castings. I always thought that worm castings were good for a garden, but I never knew exactly why. The holes surrounded by worm castings began to appear everywhere and digging anywhere in the garden brought up big, long, fat, squiggly, wiggly worms that actually jumped when touched. I have to admit, I thought they were a bit scary, and I sure didn’t think that so many worms and holes could be a good thing. Having no idea how to rid my garden of the overabundance of enthusiastic helpers, I tried to ignore them (but all those holes really ruined the garden’s appearance). I hoped that this was one of those “cycles” that would surely be better the next year. And it was, but not before a well-meaning gardening friend warned, “They eat the plant roots, you know!” It made me think that I needed to better understand the role of earthworms in the garden. Is there such a thing as “too many?”

For starters, there are several types of earthworms that one might find in and around the garden. The red worms are about 3-4 inches long and stay near the surface of the soil under leaves and in manure piles. When composting kitchen and garden wastes, red worms can be purchased to put in the composter to speed up the process. Ordinary garden worms are 5-7 inches long, pinkish brown and are usually found in damp soils. But the big guy, 8-10 inches long and reddish brown, is the nightcrawler, much sought after by fishermen, and invader of my garden, I might add.

So how do earthworms benefit the garden? They burrow. They make tunnels into the soil by ingesting bits of soil through their toothless mouths as they push their pointed heads down into the soil. They literally eat their way down into the earth. Their slimy bodies lubricate the tunnels as they burrow, making it easier to for them to move through tight spots. It is these tunnels that allow air and moisture to enter the soil, creating an environment that aids plant growth and helps in the fight against pests and diseases. As earthworms ingest the small bits of soil, some of the nutrients in the soil are digested and can be used by the worm’s body. The remainder is excreted in the form of castings which they mix through the soil. Worm castings contain nutrients and minerals that are needed for plant growth. Earthworms are nature’s expert recyclers.

As earthworms burrow down, they bring up fresh soil from below the surface, tilling the soil as they go. The tunnels
of nightcrawlers go straight down for 3 to 6 feet. At night, the worms come to the surface to collect food and pull it into their tunnels. They eat rotting parts of dead plants, decaying leaves, seeds, insect eggs, larva and body parts of dead insects and small animals. During the day, they are usually underground feeding on the roots of dead plants. Notice I said “dead.”

Earthworms have no eyes or ears, but their nerve cells sense light, vibrations and touch. They avoid sunlight as it dries their skin, through which they breathe and which must be kept moist, but not wet. The vibrations they most dread are those of their underground predator, the mole. Birds knock the ground with their beaks hoping to fool the worms into thinking it is a mole they sense, and the worms pop up out of their holes to escape the mole, only to be eaten by the bird. A worm can be difficult to dislodge from its tunnel. Earthworms have tiny bristles on their underside which help them to cling tenaciously to their tunnels. Not every bird gets its worm. And yes, if touched, nightcrawlers jump!

Almost all types of soil contain earthworms, but the healthier the soil, the greater the numbers. Scientists estimate that there may be 50,000 or more worms in an acre of soil, but an acre of rich soil several feet deep may be home to over one million worms. If you want to entice more earthworms to work in your garden, the best way is to add more organic matter to the soil. If you add it, they will come …

Charles Darwin studied earthworms for almost 40 years, and he opined thus about the seemingly simple earthworm:

“Long before the plow existed, the land was regularly plowed and still continues to be plowed by the earthworm. It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world, as have these lowly organized creatures.”

APS Seed exchange for 2010

It’s time to save seed again for the APS seed exchange! There is no better place to get Primula seed to grow! If you are interested in what went first in last years seed exchange, Here are some comments:

As usual, the double and the blue flowers are the most popular. Seeds from named forms had extra appeal if the name was new. However there appeared to be much less interest in special auriculas than in the past, and also in unusual species even if they came from impeccable sources.

Most frequently ordered were auricula, double mixed; double primrose; P. sieboldii ‘Ice Princess’ and P. sieboldii ‘Lacy Lady’. In the primrose line, P. vulgaris ‘Barnhaven Blues’ were most requested. P. marginata, P. juliana pink/salmon, and the Cowichan blue polyanthus were all popular. The Gold-Laced Jack-in-the-Green and the hose-in-hose, those traditional but fascinating polys were soon all gone.

A few species disappeared quickly: P. vialii, and P. maximowiczii, both interesting and exotic were in high demand as was P. flaccida

If you are able to provide seed in any of these categories, or ANY Primula seeds, once again, APS would be most grateful. Any hand-pollinated seed from named plants is always welcome. Send in what you have, and look forward to the list on-line on the APS website sometime in December.

Send seeds by October 31, 2010 to Amy Olmsted 421 Birch Road, Hubbardton, VT 05733. In Canada send seed to Maedythe Martin, 951 Joan Crescent, Victoria, BC Canada V8S 3L3. Donors please include email address and telephone number when sending seeds.
Our Favorite British Blog Again!

I have referred you to the Northumberland Diary postings in earlier Pins and Thrums, and want to be sure you have another chance to look at it. John Richards is the premier *Primula* expert and APS was fortunate to have him come to the National Show, near Boston, this year. You can see the pictures he took of A New England Spring in his post on May 9, 2010. There are some comments on the APS show, too. Go to The Alpine Garden Society website, look for Member’s Diaries, and click on the one for the Northumberland Diary.

Other posts of interest to Primula lovers might be the post of July 12, 2009 on Androsaces in the Dolomites. Or read the one about Potting On from May 21, 2010. Lots of tips and invaluable information for Primulacae fanciers.

I am reprinting here, with John’s permission, his post from August last year on dealing with rot in Asiatic Primula for your information.

**Northumberland Diary – Alpine Garden Society**

**John Richards**

**August 3, 2009**

**Primula Rot**

I find this is by far the most dangerous time of year for the less easy Asiatic primulas, particularly those multicrowned plants that are more than a year old. Just a few hours of warm weather and dry air (and warm means only 20C or over), even out of the direct sun, and there is a danger that leaves lose turgor. In many cases, turgor once lost will never be regained. At this point it is vital that the limp leaves are removed, NOT by pulling (you may easily remove the rosette or even the whole plant) but by cutting off at the base with a small pair of fine scissors (by far the most important tool at this time of year). If the limp leaves are not removed promptly, rot rapidly sets into the crown and the plant is lost.

I am delighted to say that I managed to save a little seed of *Primula sonchifolia* this year (only enough for me says he rapidly!), as seed failed last
year and I have no young plants coming on. Consequently, I only now have six two-year olds. These all showed signs of stress after one dry warmish day on Friday. I rapidly cut off all the limp leaves and sprayed in the cool of the day, and all the survivors look much healthier again.

Often associated with these limp leaves is root degeneration. Roots wither and die back almost to the crown. These symptoms are similar to those caused by vine weevil, but often if the plant is unpotted and examined carefully, no larvae are found. As long as a few roots remain, this condition need not be fatal. I repot into fresh compost and put the repotted plants back into the shadiest, coolest, most humid spot available for a couple of weeks.

As I say, these symptoms usually affect older plants. One solution is to make sure you always have young plants coming on, as single rosettes are always easier to manage than multirosetted monsters! Nevertheless, much can be achieved by spraying plants nightly in the evening cool. Don’t overwater! That will just lead to more rot; just a gentle spray to cool the leaves by the latent heat of evaporation, and to reduce evapotranspiration is all that is needed.

With Sadness, Anita Kistler

This information was received from NARGS about a long-time member of APS.

It is with deep sadness that I inform you of the death of longtime NARGS member Anita Kistler of West Chester, Pennsylvania. She was a member of the Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS since its founding in 1965 and served as chapter chair. She died on April 22, 2010, at age 89.

Betty Mackey, chair of the Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS, notes that Anita has been actively contributing to the NARGS chapter all along, even last year donating plants for the plant sale and enjoying visits from members. “For decades, Anita introduced the gardening public to rock gardening. Her farm and garden, included in so many garden tours over the years, gave so many visitors their first view of this enchanting way of dealing with plants in our landscapes. She directly taught many gardeners how to make and plant excellent troughs and how to propagate rock garden plants at her hands-on workshops,” Betty remembers.

Anita contributed articles to the quarterly and was an ardent supporter of APS for many years, as well.
American Primrose Society  
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on May 1st, 2010

The meeting was held in person and online. It opened at 3:30 pm, Eastern Time.

Board members present: Rodney Barker (Director), Ed Buyarski (President, Juneau Chapter), Mark Dyen (President, New England Chapter), Julia Haldorson (Director, Membership Secretary), Jon Kawaguchi (APS Treasurer), Marianne Kuchel (Director, VP elect), Alan Lawrence (APS President), Michael Plumb (APS Secretary)

Other APS members present: Amy Olmsted

A. Approval of the Agenda  Marianne/Michael

B. The Minutes of January 31st, 2010 – Accepted (Ed/Marianne).

C. Treasurer’s Report  (Emailed before the meeting)
   1. Income less expenses January 1st to March 31st, 2010: $1,664.88  
      Total liabilities and equity as of March 31st, 2010: $27,914.64  
      MOTION (Michael/Julia) to accept the report - carried.
   2. Discussion on financial aid to chapters holding a national APS show:  
      Michael asked if the $500 was intended to be a loan or a gift to the chapter. Jon added that available APS funds must be a determining factor. The board agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
   3. Jon reminded the board that once an annual budget has been agreed, no further major expenditures should be voted except for extraordinary reasons.
   4. Marianne has taken over the Primroses Quarterly advertising portfolio, and will be liaising with Jon re the financial side.

D. Committee Reports
   1. Seed Exchange  
      a. Another successful year. The board made an official VOTE OF THANKS to Jacques Mommens and his team (Michael/Mark). Seed Exchange Report accepted (Rodney/Mark).
      b. Discussion on whether to raise our fee for using a credit card to purchase seed from $2.00 to $3.00. Jon pointed out that credit card companies currently charge $30.00 a month for their service to us. Jon and Julia agreed to have their motion to increase the fee POSTPONED (Jon/Julia) until the next board meeting while the PayPal alternative is investigated.

   2. Editorial Committee  
      The spring issue of Primroses is in the mail. The summer issue is ahead of schedule and almost complete. Report accepted (Marianne/Michael)
3. Website
   a. Michael said the website committee members had only recently been given the URL of the test site of the new APS website, so they had had no time to give feedback yet.
   b. The committee will be examining PayPal as an option for paying membership fees, and purchasing seed and back issues of the quarterly.
   c. Michael reported that Jane Guild, who has been responsible for all the technical work in completely revamping the website, recommended changing website providers on technical grounds. Members of the board expressed agreement.
   Report accepted (Michael/Mark)

4. National Show
   Report POSTPONED to the next board meeting.

5. Membership
   Julia reported that membership was down about 26 members from last year. Michael expressed hope that the new website would encourage people to join and may make payment easier. Renewals in response to Julia’s emailed reminders had been good.
   Membership report accepted (Michael/Mark)

6. Technical Committee
   No report as yet. (Rodney and Mark are working on ways to improve communications at board meetings, which are currently held by internet chat.)

E. Business Arising and Old Business

1. Dorothy Dickson Award
   The winner of this award for exceptional service to the APS is Ed Buyarski, now President of Juneau Chapter, who served as APS President for more than four terms.

2. Election Results
   As there were no other nominations, the following candidates were elected ‘by acclamation’:
   Vice-President (2-year term): Marianne Kuchel
   Directors (3-year term): Rodney Barker, Julia Haldorson
   Directors (2-year term): Amy Olmsted, Susan Schnare
   [For an explanation of the different terms for these directors, see Item 5, first bullet, in the Minutes of November 1st, 2009.]

3. Advertising Help for the Treasurer
   Marianne has taken over the advertising portfolio for the quarterly.

F. Provisional dates of the next three board meetings
   Alan will arrange these dates with Michael in the next week.

G. Adjournment (Amy/Mark) at 5:00 Eastern.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Plumb, Secretary
Join the National Auricula & Primula Society

Midland & West Section

www.auriculaandprimula.org.uk

£10.00 Overseas Membership.

to: The Honorary Treasurer, Roger Woods,
44 Tansey Crescent, Stoney Stanton,
Leicestershire, LE9 4BT United Kingdom.

North American Rock Garden Society

Yes, I am interested in a seed exchange, discount book service, slide library, field trips, fact-filled Quarterly, garden visits, and plant sales.
Sign me up!

Membership:
USA, Canada: US$30
Overseas: US$35

Please contact:
Mr. Bobby Ward
Executive Secretary, NARGS
PO Box 18604
Raleigh, NC 27619-8604
Make checks payable to
North American Rock Garden Society

https://www.nargs.org/info/smembship.

NATIONAL AURICULA AND PRIMULA SOCIETY

SOUTHERN SECTION

The National Auricula & Primula Society - Southern Section was founded in 1876 by and for enthusiasts who raised and exhibited Auriculas, Gold-Laced polyanthus and other primulas.

The Annual subscription is £7.00 (UK) for single or family membership, Overseas £8.00
Members receive an illustrated Year Book and a Newsletter - Offsets, containing interesting articles on growing and raising Primulas together with their history and cultivation.

Applications for membership of the N.A.P.S. Southern Section should be made to:
The Honorary Secretary, Lawrence Wigley,
67 Warnham Court Road, Carshalton Beeches,
Surrey, SM5 3ND.

NATIONAL AURICULA AND PRIMULA SOCIETY

NORTHERN SECTION

Please consider joining the National Auricula and Primula Society - Northern Section. Overseas memberships are some of the best ways to learn more about your favorite plants. Benefits include publications and more.
Write: Mr. K. Leeming, 3 Daisybank Drive, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 4JR
Overseas membership £7.50 ($10.00 US)
Please make checks payable to NAPS.
www.auriculas.org.uk
New Members this Quarter

2010  Daisy Lee Bitter  62479 Skyline Drive  Homer, Alaska  99603 U.S.A.
2010  Kathy Korinek  1227 Dahlia Lane  Grafton, Wisconsin  53024 U.S.A.
2010  Mary Lamoureux  P. O. Box 126  Columbia Falls, Maine  04623 U.S.A.
2010  Janet Magedanz  29740 SE Shady Oak Drive  Corvallis, Oregon  97333 U.S.A.
2012  Jan Szyren  1848 Catholic Church Road  Stockbridge, Michigan  49285 U.S.A.

Should there ever be a question about your membership, please contact:

Julia L. Haldorson, APS Membership
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