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*.

**Contents**

President’s Message by Alan Lawrence .......................... 3
Munstead Bunch Primroses by Susan Schnare ............... 5
Soil Mixes for Primulas and Auriculas by Michael Plumb ................................................................. 9
The Primula Itch by Joan Hoeffel .............................. 12
Sikkim And The World Of Primulas: Book Review by Marianne Kuchel ..................................................... 16
The 2011 APS National Show .................................. 25
Pins + Thrums ...................................................... 27
Keeping a Healthy Greenhouse by Ilse Burch, with Rick Lupp .................................................................. 28
Barnhaven through the Year by Lynne Lawson ............ 33
Chapter Reports ....................................................... 34
Rebirth of a Primula Garden by Judith Sellers ............ 35
Minutes from November 7th, 2010 .............................. 36
New Members this Quarter ........................................ 39
Officers of the Chapters ............................................ 39

Credits: Photos and text reproduced with permission.

Front Cover: Special thanks to the Jekyll Estate for thier kind permission to use a plate from Gertrude Jekyll’s book “The Garden.” See [http://www.gertrudejekyll.co.uk/](http://www.gertrudejekyll.co.uk/) for more information.

Back Cover: *Primula palinuri*, photo by Riho Teras, taken in the botanical garden of Tartu University in southern Estonia.
President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

For me, winter is usually a time for reflection and planning. I check my records for the year, seeing what worked and what didn’t. This year mostly it didn’t. But with each failure I learn something, and try not to make the same errors next year. This year most of my problems have been with potting mixtures in which Primulas just don’t want to grow. I was pleased to see that Maedythe Martin has been good enough to share the secrets of her potting mixtures on the website, and now in this Quarterly. I will be mixing these up in the near future as I have a few dormant plants waiting for spring and a good potting mix. One success this year was a sturdy polyanthus I grew from seed about four years ago. The seed parent was a pin P. elatior, and this was hand pollinated with a thrum P. veris in an attempt to get P. x media. However it seems some local pollinator got there first, as the resultant surviving seedling turned out to be pink, suggesting that the pollen was from a pink supermarket-bought P. vulgaris hybrid, not known for hardiness. This single plant had grown into a large clump by this spring, and I was able to get eight divisions for transplanting. It is now the end of November, and there have been many days and nights of below freezing temperatures, but two of these plants are still happily blooming in my garden!

I like to read reference books during winter; I read and re-read John Richard’s “Primula” and Mary Robinson’s “Primulas” and Peter Ward’s “Primroses & Polyanthus.” And I marvel at the knowledge and information contained in these books.

Recently, our Vice President Marianne Kuchel
and I were privileged to receive complimentary copies of a book entitled “Sikkim and the World of Primulas” by Keshab C. Pradhan, currently the President of the Sikkim Nature Conservancy Foundation, and an expert in the alpine plants of Sikkim. Marianne has promised a review of this book. Needless to say it will occupy much of my reading this winter.

It is seed exchange time again, and I need to replace many of my favorites which suffered during the year. The New England Chapter is handling the seed exchange again, and hopefully many of you will find something of interest to grow. The seed list will be on the website by the New Year, and I know my order will be larger than usual.

The New England Chapter is also hosting the 2011 National Show at Tower Hill Botanic Gardens, becoming one of our favorite locations. The guest speaker this year is Chris Chadwell, a world authority on Himalayan plants and the proprietor of Chadwell Seeds. This is an event not to miss, and details are in the quarterly and on the website.

Best wishes for the New Year and good growing!

---

**A Special Thank You....**

Special thanks go out to those who contributed enough money to cover the cost of the color photos for this Winter issue! The support of our Chapters and Group is greatly appreciated.

*New England Chapter*

*Doretta Klaber Chapter*

*BC Primula Group*

We also owe gratitude to an anonymous donor whose generous contribution will cover the cost of the color pages for the next two issues.

Thanks for all the donations sent to the Treasurer by individuals renewing their memberships. Each one will help APS keep the budget balanced while providing the benefits we all value.
It is said that heirloom plants link us into the continuum of gardeners and gardening. I have always felt this to be true.

In 1995, I received a letter containing a packet of Munstead Bunch primrose seeds that a friend had collected from plants in his West Yorkshire garden. The garden designer and author Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) had bred this strain in her Surrey garden, Munstead Wood, in the late 19th Century, and I was anxious to grow them.

I had always admired primroses individually as I would jewels, but as these grew into large (relatively speaking) plants with generous numbers of sturdy flower stalks, the designer in me began making plans for them. Within a few years they had their own bed on the north side of a low stone retaining wall, backed by daylilies that were under planted with daffodils. The effect was stunning and lasted for a few weeks late in the spring.

Complacently, I regarded my job as done. The primroses flourished for several years, fertilized yearly with compost and mulched in the autumn with fallen leaves. I watered, weeded, and did little else until, years of moles’ tunnels and not being divided took their toll, and they began to fail. Last summer I lifted and divided the survivors and replanted them in a shaded raised bed to regain their strength.

Instead of being part of the continuum, I had become the receiving end, the consumer. What I knew, but didn’t fully appreciate, was the amount of energy, focus, and commitment it had taken to create the Munstead Bunch Primrose in the days, not only before tissue culture, but before Mendel’s laws were available to Jekyll.

Gertrude Jekyll’s breeding program began when she found a polyanthus named “Golden Plover” and planted it next to another of the same type. Through a process of roguing, or selecting and culling seedlings, she produced a strain of large-flowered polyanthus in a yellow and white color range. Late in her life she wrote:

“It must have been quite forty-five years ago, sometime in the early seventies of the last century, that I came upon a Bunch-flowered Primrose in a cottage garden. I was familiar with the old laced Polyanthus, and had seen some large-flowered ones of reddish colouring; but one of a pale primrose colour—something between that
and wh to the National Show ite—was new to me, and I secured the plant. The next year, from some other source, came a yellowish one, much of the same character. They were of a quality that would now be thought very poor, but they were allowed to seed, and among the seedlings some of the best were kept. Gradually, from yearly selection, the quality improved, and, as the grower’s judgment became more critical, so more and more of the less satisfactory Primroses were discarded. It was an immense pleasure, as the years went on, to see the coming of some new type or some new degree of colouring, and to watch for the strengthening of some desired quality. The strain is kept to whites and yellows only, and though confined within the limits of these colourings, the amount of variation in size, habit, marking and shade of colour is quite remarkable.” (F. Jekyll, *A Memoir*, 145)

Jekyll sought to maintain a wide variety of flower forms and colors within the strain, and while she realized that the brighter yellows and the white with the contrasting orange eye were the showiest, her preference was for the “tender” shades. At one point, while attempting to list all the individual classes, she stopped after describing some sixty. Some she named. ‘Lemon Rose’ was a pure primrose color with six wide petals with waved edges and a pale lemon blotch, and ‘Virginie’ was white with a citron eye. The rarest among them was a pale greenish yellow. (*Memoir*, 146)

Gertrude Jekyll’s Munstead Strain won awards and prizes and became commercially available. In 1933 Carters Seed Company of London wrote, “We have been honoured with the distribution of Miss Jekyll’s famous re-selected MUNSTEAD STRAIN, which contains every possible shade of white, cream, yellow and orange. It is splendid for bedding or for growing in woodland walks and other shady positions.” (Tooley in Tooley& Arnander, *Gertrude Jekyll*, 1995, 142)

In 1935, Florence Bellis bought five packets of seed from Sutton Seeds that were later sold as the ‘Silver Dollar’ strain. Subsequent owners of Barnhaven Seed continued the selection and crossing program. Today, direct descendants of Miss Jekyll’s Munstead Strain may be purchased from Barnhaven as ‘Harvest Yellows’ and ‘Winter White.’ At some point in Bellis’ selection and pollination program, the rare pale greenish yellow reappeared, and was isolated and is named ‘Chartreuse.’ I have grown this several times without realizing its Jekyll connections. (various sources: e-mail from Lynne Lawson, barnhaven.com and Bradford, *Barnhaven Book*, 20-21)

Jekyll dedicated an entire garden to this strain of primroses, first along a stream at her mother’s house and later in a grove of oaks and hazels at her own home, Munstead Wood.
“The Primrose garden is in a place by itself—a clearing half shaded by Oak, Chestnut, and Hazel. I always think of the Hazel as a kind nurse to Primroses; in the copses they generally grow together, and the finest Primrose plants are often nestled close in to the base of the nut-stool. Three paths run through the Primrose garden, mere narrow tracks between the beds, converging at both ends, something like the lines of longitude on a globe, the ground widening in the middle where there are two good-sized Oaks, and coming to a blunt point at each end.” (Wood & Garden, 219)

The annual renewal of the primrose garden was an two-day affair involving four people, including Jekyll:

“Every year, before replanting, the Primrose ground is dug over and well manured. All day for two days I sit on a low stool dividing the plants; . . . the lusciously fragrant heap of refuse leaf and flower-stem and old stocky root rises in front of me, changing its shape from a heap to a ridge, as when it comes to a certain height and bulk I back and back away from it. A boy feeds me with armfuls of newly-dug-up plants, two men are digging-in the cooling cow-dung at the farther end, and another carries away the divided plants tray by tray, and carefully replants them.” (Wood & Garden, 219)

Seed from the best plants was collected and sown the following spring, and the seedlings pricked out into shaded beds or empty frames to be “planted out in any suitable weather in the later summer.” Although she started with a poor sandy soil, through annual cultivation and the addition of cow manure, the garden was gradually enriched. With this treatment, Jekyll observed, the primroses did not “seem to mind being in the same place year after year.” (The Garden, June 22, 1918)
Besides being a commercial nursery that produced plants and seed, Gertrude Jekyll’s primrose garden was the essence of a spring garden. In 1911, E. T. Cook observed in his *Gardens of England*:

“But one may have primroses in the woodland, a primrose garden perhaps, such as Miss Jekyll has at Munstead Wood. There, in a clearing from the wood are gathered together those bunch primroses of which I have already written, and in the cool light of a spring evening there seems a mysterious beauty in the bold massing of flowers of white and yellow shades. A subtle scent is wafted from this flower-covered clearing in the wood, and we feel the joy of spring, its fragrance, colour, and sunshine.”

Gertrude Jekyll was not the only one working with polyanthus in the late 1800s. According to journals available on Google Books, other breeders, in fact, took more prizes and received higher billing, but almost certainly their plants have been lost. A number of factors saved the Munstead Strain, most notably Florence Bellis’ recognition of its worth and its continued commercial success at Barnhaven. My question now is how many of the types and colors did I lose through neglect, and can I get them back by collecting and growing seed from my twenty surviving plants?

Sources:
Special thanks to the Jekyll Estate - see their website for more information
http://www.gertrudejekyll.co.uk/
Lawson, Lynne, e-mail to author. 21 October 2010. Citing Florence Bellis, *Gardening and Beyond*.
www.barnhaven.com
Soil Mixes for Primulas and Auriculas

MICHAEL PLUMB INTERVIEWS MAEDYTHE MARTIN

MP: I am still experimenting with soil mixes for my primulas and auriculas after twenty years. What have you found to be the right mix for you?

MM: It seems like the search for the “right mix” is like the search for the Holy Grail! In my experience, the ‘right’ mix is the one that works for you. And you know it is the right mix if the plants are growing well. Geoff Nicolle [Wales, UK] told me the healthiest auriculas were the ones that had filled the pot with roots. After many years of talking to some of the seasoned primula and auricula growers, I have evolved a number of guidelines.

MP: What do you use for a primula mix? You know, for the Section Primula or vernales types such as the double acaulis, polyanthus and julies?

MM: I have had very bad luck with primula – I live on top of a rock that dries out every summer, and unless I take extra care and keep the primula plants watered, they just curl up and die. I have found in my area that there is a fungus in the soil that makes brown round patches in the leaves, so for the few plants I have, I have decided to use a soiless mix:

1/3 coir, rubbed through a half inch screen, so it is not too coarse
1/3 brown clay-ey local soil
1/3 Perlite

This seems to work, in that the coir fibre holds moisture, the local brown soil provides some mineral nutrients, and the Perlite keeps the mix open and airy. I also try to fertilize once a month with either half strength 20-20-20 or half strength tomato fertilizer. How about you, Michael? What do you use for polys like your prize-winning ones from last spring?

MP: My problem is that for many years I kept my primula too wet, in plastic. My success this year was purely accidental! For a change, my Barnhaven Cowichans and Paris 90s were in large clay pots, in a pretty gritty mix (50% pumice). They were outside, exposed to the rain all winter and spring, but they must have had the right amount of moisture without getting waterlogged. Then, once the heat of summer arrived, I had to watch them very carefully - A few times I caught them just before they dried up completely, so I eventually put them in the ground, even though the location under my conifer trees is not ideal! But they are still alive this November.
Now let’s look at auriculas. In the last few years you have produced some very good Stripes which have won first prize in several shows. What do you use for a soil mix for auriculas?

MM: For years now I have used a mix based on Ken Whorton’s recipe. Ken is no longer with us, and any recipe from England has problems in North America. For a start, you can’t buy John Innes mix over here. So I started making my own. I use the same local brown clay-ey soil, and add grit and coir (I started using the coir product as it is reputed to not attract weevils as much as peat does.). The basic mix is

3 parts coir  
3 parts soil  
1 ½ parts grit

I use a one-gallon plastic pot as my main measure, which is what I mean by ‘part’. To this basic mix I add

3 oz. superphosphate  
1 ½ oz. ground dolomite lime (the recipe calls for ground limestone)  
1 ½ oz sulphate of potash.

This makes up a John Innes mix that works quite well for alpines. Even more grit can be added. For the auriculas, I then start with the John Innes and add things. Ken’s recipe called for:

4 parts John Innes mix  
1 part peat potting mix  
½ part Perlite.

I use:

4 parts my John Innes mix  
2 parts sharp grit  
1 part rich compost or leaf mould  
½ cup lime  
½ cup grated charcoal

I often find, when I am potting up plants, that I need to add more grit to the mix – I think the auricula plants like an open soil to grow more roots. Talking to John Mercer in 2008, he told me he has started adding Perlite to his mix: I am guessing at a pot of Perlite to every 4 parts mix. John felt the plants were doing much better in the more open mix. But what you are aiming for is an open, well-draining mix that has good nutrients – auriculas are heavy feeders. Having said that, the exceptions are the “alpine” auriculas. These include the *Primula allionii* and the other small hybrids. They need a leaner mix and even better drainage.

Michael, you grow quite a few auriculas. What do you use?
MP: In our previous home we had a beech tree growing in our front yard. I used to mash the fallen leaves with a ‘weed whacker’ [UK: ‘string trimmer’], then leave them to compost for a year (sometimes not!). They formed a fabulous, well-draining and airy compost to add to my auricula soil, and made up about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the mix, with $\frac{1}{3}$ good loam and $\frac{1}{3}$ grit. Alas, I now live in a coniferous forest (gorgeous though it is), so beech leaves are unavailable. I have turned to Perlite too, but I now use plastic pots for my auriculas because I have so many plants and clay is a lot of work with all the cleaning and storage problems. Of course, the mix has to be very gritty and well-draining in plastic. I am trying about 1 part Perlite, 1 part granite grit (designed originally to help turkeys’ digestion!), 1 part pumice (carefully washed, or it turns to concrete!), and 1 part potting soil. I mix the different types of non-soil in the superstitious belief that they will provide a greater variety of minerals. To all this I add a small handful of charcoal, superphosphate and potash. I have to give the plants liquid feed because the mix is so thin. Liquified kelp seems good.

MM: Your wife Rhondda has won prizes with her allionii and allionii hybrids. What kind of potting mix does she use?

MP: Like most of us, the measures are only approximate and she keeps adding bits until the mix looks and feels right. This is what she told me:

- 1 part worm castings
- 1 part ordinary sterilized potting soil (not peat-based)
- 1 part forestry grit (washed round very fine gravel)
- 1 part ‘turkey’ (‘number 1’) grit
- 4 parts washed + sieved pumice (large)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ part marble chips
- $\frac{1}{2}$ part limestone stucco
- a generous sprinkling of charcoal

She will substitute the coarser grade of Perlite for either the forestry grit or the #1 grit, depending on what is available. So you can see, her mix is about 3:1 grit to soil. Very lean. And she keeps her allionii in clay pots out of the rain, as the water will rot the leaves otherwise. But I think her constant care and attention to these demanding plants is just as important as her mix!

MM: In my opinion, you have to experiment to find the mix that works for you. Start with a recipe others have found works for them, like the ones we have talked about, and see if it works for you. Use what local material you have to hand and remember to feed auriculas a couple of times through the summer so they will set fat flower buds for the next spring.
It would be interesting, and maybe alarming, to know how many gardeners are affected by the “primula itch.” Perhaps this article will alert some to the cause of a rash they have endured with no clue to the source. To that end, we have asked three APS gardeners who have this troublesome malady to describe the condition as they have experienced it. The three are: Derek Salt, Susan Schnare and Maedythe Martin.

Derek Salt (DS) grows auriculas on the east coast of Lincolnshire, England, two miles from the sea. He began growing Primulas, mostly polyanthus, in the 1950s, but it was when, in 1979, he started to grow auriculas in a fairly large way that he first experienced the “primula itch.” Undaunted, he soldiered on and is presently a premier grower and hybridizer of double auriculas in England.

Susan Schnare (SS) is a landscape historian who owns Mountain Brook Primroses, a nursery in New Hampshire. A member of the New England chapter of APS, Susan won blue ribbons for many of her auriculas in the New England Primula Society Show in Boylston, Massachusetts last May and won top honors for ‘Orb,’ the Best Edged Show Auricula.

Maedythe Martin (MM) is a long time member of the APS and president of the British Columbia Primrose Group. She raises and hybridizes auriculas, mostly stripes, and often wins honors for her show plants.

A number of questions were posed to these three Primula growers and all graciously responded. Here are the questions and their comments.

**How do you describe the primula itch?**

**DS:** A bloody nuisance! It is a sensitization problem caused by “primine” which can develop in a few weeks or after many years. Both *P. obconica* and *P. sinensis* contain high levels of “primine.”

**SS:** It’s a bothersome itch that persists if not treated.

**MM:** It hurts more than itches.

**How does it manifest itself?**

**DS:** It starts as an itch, the skin turns red/pink, hardens and cracks. At this stage, one needs to guard against infections.

**SS:** I get reddened skin and blisters on my hands and wrists. Much of the damage is the result of scratching.
MM: In 2008, I developed a ¼” red spot on the back of my left hand. I suffer from eczema, but this rash is flatter, less scaly and much more persistent. In 2009, I started getting a rash of red spots on my face, mostly in the creases of my eyes and mouth. Working anywhere near auriculas caused new spots to appear.

Does it spread on your body or just where touched by primulas?

DS: Where there is contact with any green part of auriculas, marginatas, sinensis and obconicas. I wear gloves, but I have to be careful not to touch my face as that can cause the skin to peel. My wife finds that her eyes are affected and must then get away.

SS: Just direct hits.

MM: I have only had it on the back of one hand in 2008 and on my face in 2009. Quite enough!

Do you get it with any other plants?

DS: Only from auriculas and marginatas. I no longer grow obconica or sinensis.

SS: Just auriculas and marginatas.

MM: No, just auriculas.

Did you get it immediately or after some exposure time?

DS: Within a few hours.

SS: I had been growing auriculas about 3 years before blisters appeared on my knuckles.

MM: I get a rash within 4 to 6 hours of exposure.

What remedy(s) do you use once you get it and what works best for you?

DS: A prescription product in the UK named Betnovate Cream. It contains a cortisone chemical. Long term use thins the skin, so frequent use is best avoided. Most doctors recommend that you stop growing the plants that affect you.

SS: Time and a cream called “Protopic” prescribed by my dermatologist. It is a non-steroid eczema treatment.

MM: Nothing seems to make it go away. I have a cream containing cortisone, but it didn’t affect the spot on my hand.
Are there any preventive measures that help?

**DS:** I use latex gloves. Some people use a barrier cream, but it doesn’t work for me. One well-known grower uses both.

**SS:** I wear latex gloves. Long sleeves are critical when I weed the auriculas growing in beds, because the leaves touch my arms when I reach between the plants. When I work with auriculas in pots or seedlings, the contact is easily restricted to my hands. I wish I had something to wash with after touching them by accident or in an emergency. If anyone knows a home remedy or two, I’d be glad to try it.

**MM:** I have used nitrile gardening gloves and even covered my face with a cloth. That minimized the rash, but it’s very unwieldy and there’s little pleasure in working with the plants in a “space suit.” Limiting the time I spend near the plants seems best.

How does the primula itch affect your work or attitude towards primulas?

**DS:** I regard it as a nuisance but carry on regardless. My doctor does not approve, but I told him that his job is to keep me fit.

**SS:** At first, I tried to ignore it, but when my hands were red, cracking, peeling and covered with blisters, I sold all but 80 of my plants. I gradually acquired more plants but also learned to protect myself by wearing gloves and treating the itch as soon as I noticed it.

**MM:** I avoided working with my auriculas as much as I could during the winter of 2009, but I had to prepare plants for a show in spring 2010. Luckily, the outbreak didn’t get worse and now is mostly gone.

Other comments?

**DS:** Many auricula growers in the UK have given up soon after they got the “itch.” The late Dr. Duncan Duthie, a well-known grower in the UK, was a consultant dermatologist, and when he got the “itch,” he followed his own advice and gave up growing the offending plants. Luckily his housekeeper was interested and carried on with his plants. One grower switched to growing *P. marginata* but got even worse. After many years, I think I am not as sensitive as I was, but I continue to wear the gloves. I’m not willing to take the risk of giving them up. I am fortunate that my wife, Pat, does all the pollinating and prickling out and dresses my plants for show. These three operations are not easy wearing gloves.

**SS:** My dermatologist said I had contact dermatitis caused by sensitization to the oils on the plants and that if she could wear gloves for her work, I could too! I advise anyone handling auriculas regularly to wear gloves when working.
with the plants for prolonged periods to avoid becoming sensitized. I am not as sensitive to them in the winter or early spring when they are not in active vegetative growth. I try to do as much repotting and propagating as possible in the fall and early spring and handle them as little as possible during late spring and summer. It is a bother, but not an insurmountable problem, and the enjoyment I get from the plants and their blossoms makes it worthwhile. I routinely consider getting rid of my auriculas, but I don’t know what would take their place.

**MM:** I am lucky! I’ve had years with no reaction to the plants, and the outbreak I had was very minor. However, after 30 years of working with the plants, I believe I am sensitized and I try not to touch the plants without gloves. This means not even taking off a dead leaf! Very frustrating, but not impossible. It does take some of the pleasure out of working with the plants, and because I limit my time with them, I also have to reduce the number of plants I grow. But they are such wonderful plants, and I am developing some interesting new hybrids … I don’t want to abandon them completely at this time.

**Author’s Note:**

Certainly the “primula itch” can be bothersome, a nuisance and even a terribly itchy, painful rash with blisters. For some primula growers, it’s the end of their work with the offending plants. However, reading between the lines of the comments of the three growers interviewed, one gets the sense that “where there’s a will, there’s a way!” Be it creams or gloves, long sleeves, helping hands or even reducing the number of plants one can work with, the accommodations are well worth the pleasure and satisfaction one derives from growing and hybridizing these lovely species of the genus *Primula … auricula, marginata, obconica* and *sinensis*.

**Editor’s Note:**

Apparently this allergy is gaining some notice! I see that primin-free (primin is the main substance these plants produce that cause the reaction) obconicas are being introduced. The first cultivars were introduced in 1990 under the names Freedom and Beauty. Evidently, some growers still responded with a skin rash to these cultivars despite the claims of no allergen content. In 1995, the Libre series (Goldsmith Seeds) was released as true primin-free selections. Additional primin-free cultivars in the Twilly Touch Me series (Schoneveld Twello) were released in 2000. See http://www.gpnmag.com/German-Primrose-A-Fresh-New-Look-article4577 for more information.
SIKKIM AND THE WORLD OF PRIMULAS

BOOK REVIEW BY MARIANNE KUCHEL

Profusely and beautifully illustrated, this book is a wonderful addition to any primula-lover’s library. Some of the Sikkim Himalaya varieties described can only be dreamed about -- such as *P. tenella* and *P. calderiana* – at least for those on the North American east coast.

Now a constituent unit of India, Sikkim is an area in the Himalaya bordered by Bhutan, Tibet, China and Nepal. For a long time, entering Sikkim was difficult and required special permission. Now, thousands of tourists are able to visit and admire its spectacular scenery and flora, so much so that the author, a second generation Sikkim Forestry Department head, fears potential ecological damage. The area boasts some 40 species of *primulas*. Pradhan includes an informative, whole chapter describing the valleys and plains where alpines and primulas are to be found.

The author’s “lust for primulas” dates back from childhood when the British colonial official and plantsman, Major George Sherrif, would visit his father for long discussions about the flora of Sikkim. His father would go out on expeditions searching for alpine plants. As a boy, Pradhan helped his father preserve the collected specimens. Mr. Pradhan later went on to get a post-graduate degree in forestry from Yale. He is now President of the Sikkim Nature Conservation Foundation and Chairman of the Sikkim Development Foundation. He is the recipient of the American Rhododendron Society’s ARS gold medal.

What I found very interesting in the book are the author’s tales and stories of Sikkim’s early plant explorers. The pioneer was Joseph Hooker, who surveyed Sikkim’s *primulas*, in addition to rhododendrums, between 1848-1850. He was followed by the inveterate explorer, Sir William W. Smith, who collected some 1000 Alpines in northwest Sikkim, including *P. atrodentata*, *P. caveana*, and *P. flagellaris*, which were new to science. Mr. Pradhan describes very affectionately the two native Lepscha collectors of seed, Ribu and Rhomoo, who worked with George Cave. Known as ace collectors, they provided seed for the Lloyd Botanic Garden in Darjeeling as well as to Kew and Edinbourgh. The work of John Claude White (*Primula whitei*), Sherrif and George Ludlow are also highlighted.

This book is obviously a work of love for *primulas* and the author’s native land. Each species is described in detail, accompanied by wonderful photographs. Many of the photos were contributed by great plant photographers like Pam Eveleigh and others. The author gives them full credit.

“Sikkim and the World of Primulas” is printed in India on demand in a limited edition. Those interested in obtaining a copy should contact Ms. Queenie Rodrigues Fernandez in Goa, India, for details at Queenie.Rodriques@gmail.com

“Sikkim and the World of Primulas” by Keshab C. Pradhan (292 pages)

“Profusely and beautifully illustrated, this book is a wonderful addition to any primula-lover’s library.”

“Sikkim and the World of Primulas” is printed in India on demand in a limited edition. Those interested in obtaining a copy should contact Ms. Queenie Rodrigues Fernandez in Goa, India, for details at Queenie.Rodrigues@gmail.com

Munstead Bunch Primroses
see article on page 5
“Gradually, from yearly selection, the quality improved, and, as the grower’s judgment became more critical, so more and more of the less satisfactory Primroses were discarded. It was an immense pleasure, as the years went on, to see the coming of some new type or some new degree of colouring, and to watch for the strengthening of some desired quality. The strain is kept to whites and yellows only, and though confined within the limits of these colourings, the amount of variation in size, habit, marking and shade of colour is quite remarkable.” (F. Jekyll, A Memoir, 145)
New Seedlings 2009 & 2010
FROM DEREK PARSONS
Derek Parsons, well-known hybridizer responsible for continuing the work of Allan Hawkes in bringing back striped auriculas, continues to present wonderful new plants every year. Here are some of his introductions from 2009 and 2010.

Facing page:

All Photos: Derek Parsons
Dionysia for the Arm Chair Traveller
Last month we had a survey article on *Dionysias*, but no pictures. I have just discovered that a friend of mine, Yvonne Rorison, went to Iran in April 2010 and among the lovely flowers she saw there and photographed, were some *Dionysias*. Having seen the landscape and the type of terrain and soil in which they grow, I am resigned to looking at these pretty plants in pictures. Here are some of the ones Yvonne captured, for your viewing pleasure.

Facing page, top: *Dionysia archibaldii* in the Koohrang Valley, bottom: *Dionysia crist-galli* near Shulabad.

This page, clockwise from top left: *Dionysia bryoides* near Semirom (photo by George and Liz Knowles), *Dionysia mozaffarianii* near Semiron, *Dionysia boliverii* in the Koohrang Valley, *Dionysia zagrica* in the Karobas Pass. All Photos, except where noted, by Yvonne Rorison.

Join us for a presentation by modern-day plant hunter Chris Chadwell at the 2011 APS National Show. Chadwell, who is the veteran of twenty-three expeditions, is the leading authority on the plants from the Himalaya. His own English garden, which contains hundreds of introductions from the Himalaya, may be the world’s smallest botanical garden. His seeds, sold by packet or subscription, are popular with Alpine enthusiasts worldwide.

Top: Chris Chadwell on expedition, bottom: P. primulina. Photo by Chris Chadwell
The 2011 APS National Show

A dazzling array of primroses will greet visitors to Tower Hill on April 30th and May first. The long, sunny hall will hold an intoxicating display of Primula in pots, each plant at the peak of its beauty and deserving of a prize. From first sight of the newly transformed botanical garden to the final plant purchase, APS members and other primrose lovers will find the 2011 APS National Show as welcome as spring.

Throughout the show members will be welcomed and registered at the APS table at the hall entrance, and all Tower Hill visitors will be offered educational materials, membership information, and primrose books and theme products for sale.

A pre-show garden tour for members, families and guests will be offered on Friday. On Friday evening all registered attendees are invited for dinner and a greenhouse and garden tour at the home of Matt Mattus and Joe Philip in Worcester. Details these events will be available at the membership table.

On Saturday at 2 PM, join us for a presentation by modern-day plant hunter Chris Chadwell. Chadwell, who is the veteran of twenty-three expeditions, is the leading authority on the plants from the Himalaya. His own English garden, which contains hundreds of introductions from the Himalaya, may be the world’s smallest botanical garden. His seeds, sold by packet or subscription, are popular with Alpine enthusiasts worldwide.

A friendly and lively Banquet and Awards Ceremony will take place on Saturday evening at the conference hotel. On Sunday from 10:30 to noon, a Round Table Discussion, will be lead by Chris Chadwell, Kris Fenderson, and Rodney Barker. This event is popular with primrose growers of all levels.

Nurseries from throughout New England, including, Rocky Dale Nursery of Vermont, Sunny Border of Connecticut, and Mountain Brook Primroses of New Hampshire, will offer primroses and other fine plants for sale throughout the weekend. New venders of primroses and other desirable plants are welcomed. Please, consider selling plants at this show.

Tower Hill has changed since our show last year. The $8 million expansion is now complete. The restaurant has been reconfigured and the gift shop improved, and two new gardens have been added: the Winter Garden, an Italianate courtyard created by the angles of new and older buildings that highlights plants of winter interest; and the “Limonaia,” a 3,500 square foot Lemon House built to accommodate the Garden’s collections of camellias and citrus.

This spring join us in Massachusetts to enjoy a cheery weekend of total primrose immersion. Indulge your senses, support the society, and meet other primrose lovers to learn and talk about, and generally have a good wallow in our favorite plant. From armchair gardeners to serious exhibitors, everyone will find something of interest.
Notes On Exhibiting Plants

All primrose growers are encouraged to pot and bring their best plants to be exhibited at the show. Benching of plants may begin at 11am until 4 pm on Friday, and will continue from 8 to 9:30 am on Saturday, when judging begins. Help filling out benching slips will be available in the hall.

These notes on exhibiting plants are offered by Judge Kris Fenderson:

In potting up garden grown plants for show: 1. Try to do it several days before the show to allow plants time to adapt. Judges are not impressed with a plant that is hastily dug from the garden and beginning to wilt during the show. 2. Try to achieve a natural positioning of the plant in the pot, i.e. centered, and check height... not deep down in the pot or crammed into a pot that is too small or lost in a pot that is too big. The proportion of the size of the plant to its pot and its position in the pot is an important “first impression” on judges. 3. Careful grooming is very important, fading flowers and foliage should be removed. Condition is an important factor judges consider in the judging plants of that may otherwise be of equal merit. 4. Do not be afraid to enter small plants, as they can frequently be winners if well chosen. 5. Plants that are coming into bloom rather than just slightly past their prime often look better by the day of the show.

Even those new to showing will have a chance for a blue ribbon for the “Best plant benched by a novice”.

Chris Chadwell - Special Speaker

Chris is a modern-day plant hunter specialising in the Himalaya. After organising and leading 23 horticultural and scientific expeditions along the Himalaya from Kashmir, through the borderlands of Western Tibet into Nepal, he is the leading authority on the study and cultivation of plants from this region.

He is a popular and versatile public-speaker, having delivered hundreds of entertaining and informative slide-shows and lectures, primarily about his Himalayan travels, all over the UK. His presentations appeal to gardening clubs, specialist horticultural societies and more general audiences such as National Trust Centres or Rotary Groups. He makes a fine “After-Dinner” speaker (accompanied by slides).

2011 National Show Details:

For more about the 2011 APS National Show events and schedule, lodging information, and a printable registration form, please visit our website <www.americanprimrosesociety.org>, or write or email a request to Judith Sellers, 2297 Co. Hwy. 18, South New Berlin, NY 13843. <jsellers@frontiernet.net>
Passings...

Lee Raden

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Lee Raden, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, who served as NARGS President from 1986 - 1990.

As stated in “A History of the American Rock Garden Society” by Marnie Flook, Lee “joined the ARGS (American Rock Garden Society before name change to North American Rock Garden Society) in the early 1960s. A few years later, he was instrumental in organizing local members as a Section of the North Atlantic Region. The Section soon became the Delaware Valley Region as more and more members joined. Many were inspired to join by Lee’s entertaining and enthusiastic newsletters and because of the fine programs and camaraderie among the members. Lee was Chairman of the group from its beginning until 1971. In 1966 he was elected to the ARGS board of Directors, which begin his long-time involvement with the national Society.”

All the while, Lee passionately tended to his rock garden in which he grew many challenging plants. He was also very active in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and its Philadelphia Spring Flower Show. (Excerpt of Message from Bobby Ward to Jay Lunn)

Beth Tait

“Bessie M. Tait, 92, passed away on 10/19/2010 in Bothell, WA. She was born 9/28/1918 in Grinnell, Iowa, but has been a resident of this area for 68 years.” (Excerpt from her obituary.)

For over 30 years, Beth ran the business of Primrose Acres on Fin Hill in Bothell. She was one of the early members of the Redmond Saturday Market. She was recently honored as a dedicated 35 year member.”

Beth is remembered by APS members for her introduction of the fine red Show Self auicula, ‘American Beauty’ which is still occasionally found in members’ collections.

ELECTION OF APS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2011

The time has come round again for you to choose some of the people who volunteer to help run our Society. Please take a few moments to fill out the ballot sheet enclosed with this issue of the Primroses quarterly. Though there is presently only one name for each position, the election is not a ‘done deal’. You and a group of friends (perhaps your chapter) may still enter your own candidate or candidates in the ‘write-in’ spaces.

Bios of the listed candidates will be posted on the APS website (www.americanprimrosesociety.org) in the very near future.
Keeping a Healthy Greenhouse

ILSE BURCH, WITH RICK LUPP

When I was asked to write about what I did for greenhouse sanitation (I have had a greenhouse for about 15 years), I thought it would be easy. I wanted to give people an idea of what I thought was necessary to maintain a healthy greenhouse -- what to do to reduce or eliminate the problems of keeping plants in what usually amounts to a pretty humid but stuffy atmosphere. I also have a cold frame and an alpine house, and I thought I could touch on them as well.

Then I decided to look at commercial practices and came away feeling unsettled. In the world of greenhouse sanitation, I am a veritable piker. I don’t do very much. Most of what I do is preventive, but I use very few chemicals, and the commercial growers use a whole lot of stuff I don’t even want to have around. So my suggestions of what I do should not be viewed as the last word on the subject.

In order to provide a more complete view of greenhouse sanitation, I solicited the help of Rick Lupp, the proprietor of Mt. Tahoma Nursery. He is a small grower of mainly alpines who has a lot of experience growing the sorts of Primulaceae that are found in greenhouses- mainly Auriculas, <em>P. allionii</em>, Soldanella, and others. He will add his part as we go along.

Greenhouse Care

In my greenhouse I have a large array of plant life, some of which isn’t too happy with the temperatures (too warm or too cool), and also some of which (citrus, and gardenias) seem to be the Typhoid Marys of the plant world. That is to say, they have a huge array of pests that require a lot of vigilance to keep at bay.

I also have an alpine house - an unheated greenhouse that mainly keeps the heavy rains of winter off of plants that are basically hardy, and in addition I have several cold frames, one of which is banked into a hill and gives a lot of frost protection. I use the banked cold frame for plants that are not quite hardy but don’t need to be in the warmer greenhouse, and the regular cold frames to keep the water off. Generally, there are fewer pest problems in the alpine house and cold frames, unless you count rodents.

Rodents can do a lot of damage to plants in an alpine house, etc., chiefly because it is almost impossible to keep them out, and they can eat just about everything you grow including the frankly poisonous! The only solution to the rodent problem is to use control measures. Once I caught a song sparrow by accident in a mouse
trap and I still feel badly about it, but I can’t believe that the bird would actually climb up under an overturned flat in complete darkness to get at the trap!!! Live trapping at least allows you to release birds, etc., and maybe even your dog, if he is small enough to get into the trap. (The author once caught one of her corgis in a catch alive trap baited with a carrot. Poor Opie was very upset to find himself caught but of course was restored to happiness once released!) If you decide to use poisons to control these critters, please try to avoid poisoning pets, other wildlife, and of course, yourself- for me using poison is not worth it unless it is in the attic or crawl space where nothing I want to live can actually get to the poison. Do remember that rats will pick up pieces of poison bait and carry them off, and drop them - making it easy for a small dog to poison itself.

Before I pack my greenhouse in the fall I try to empty it out while the weather is still pretty warm, and I pressure wash the inside of it. I feel that this dislodges pests and algae that will cause problems later. Then I close the greenhouse up and try to get it completely dry. If I can get the internal temperature over 80° F it makes me happy, because I think it helps eliminate resting pests, but nobody has told me that this is actually true. I have a brick floor in my greenhouse, and I make a fresh application of sand- this makes sure that no happy slugs lie waiting in the cracks in the floor. Usually, by now, I have accidentally blown out the pilot light on the furnace, and I have to relight it- and this is a good time to be sure the heater is actually working and will get you through the winter.

Problems that are experienced in greenhouse cultivation basically fall into two categories- plant pests and fungal diseases. Out in the garden during the summer, there are abundant predator insects that generally keep all but the worst pest (mealy bugs) numbers down. Lots of fresh air keeps many fungal diseases at bay (except powdery mildew, but that isn’t too bad a problem once things go into winter storage).

Part of keeping the greenhouse clean requires maintaining health in the plants that are to be kept through the winter. For example, about once a month I spray my gardenias and citrus with horticultural oil to keep the number of spider mites (a terrible problem) down, so that I don’t put infected plants into the greenhouse for the winter. I use a hand lens to identify these critters, and I check plants as I put them into the greenhouse. If a plant is severely infected with spider mites, don’t even think of putting it into your greenhouse! There is nothing a spider mite likes better than the inside of a greenhouse- you will have so many spider mites by spring, it isn’t funny!

Rick Lupp adds that he keeps his houses as open as possible and finds that he has few problems with spider mites and aphids as long as he does this. He only
closes his houses during heavy frosts and prolonged cold spells (my greenhouse is a warm house where it is actively heated, and I keep it closed unless it is pretty warm outside). When Rick does have problems, he uses a product called “Bug-be-Gone.”

**Treating Pests**

For most of my foliage insect pests (scales, aphids, and mites), I use horticultural oil combined with washing with a pressure washer set about as low as it can go. The oil kills insects by interfering with their respiration and thus, has a wide array of pests it is effective on. Oil tends to spare predatory insects too, and degrades to nothing in the environment. The pressure washer works well on large plants, and keeping plants clean is a big part of keeping them healthy. Just be sure to set it at the sweet spot where it is damaging the bugs but not the plants- like a very hard shower. At this strength it is not particularly dangerous to people, but please remember that pressure washer injuries are actually burns and can be lethal. Be careful with pressure washers!

Fungus gnats are often a serious problem on small seedlings and ferns and such. I rarely have them in the fall- they are much worse in the spring on auricula seedlings. I have used general-purpose insecticides with some success, but they still cause me a lot of losses. I will try one of the new BT types (Bacillus thuringiensis) that has been tweaked to kill fungus gnats next spring and we will see if they continue to be a scourge for me.

I do use chemicals on the ubiquitous root aphid- I am working on a bag of granular diazinon that I bought pre-ban, but there is another synthetic pyrethrin that appears to be available and works even better called Talstar. I don’t have any yet. There are people who just dip the plant into a solution of rubbing alcohol and water as it is being transplanted, but I don’t do this and cannot speak to it. Rick uses alternating sprays of diazinon and orthene every 6 weeks during the growing season to control the root aphid. It is worth noting that it is pretty well impossible to actually eliminate the root aphid- all we can do is keep the numbers down.

Keeping plants happy will do a lot to keep the root aphid problem under control. I find that keeping pots on damp sand will keep them from getting too dry during the winter (they should be dry but not bone dry), and Rick believes that proper watering and preventing stress to the plants helps with the root aphid.

Slugs are always a problem. They tend to get into the bark compost of the orchids where I can’t find them as I pack the greenhouse, and come out at night to feed on flowers, etc. I haven’t got a great solution to these and I am tempted to try one of the liquid metaldahyde sprays. Regular slug bait always gets moldy with Botrytis and
becomes a source of infection to other plants. Other measures (aluminum sulfate, etc) don’t seem to work in the greenhouse. This year I may even try repotting the Cymbidiums that are the source of a lot of my problems and I hope I may find and eliminate the slugs and slug eggs that are bound to be there.

Mold and Fungus
Fungal diseases are pretty common in the greenhouse and the most common of all is botrytis, or grey mold. Factors that contribute to the development of botrytis include a close atmosphere (lack of ventilation and plants being too close together), and the presence of dead material on the plants. When I first pack the greenhouse in the fall, I try to maximize the ventilation for awhile by keeping the door open as much as possible, and I often turn the temperature up just a bit for a couple of weeks to try to dry things out. Not for nothing is botrytis called a “water mold”. I also am very careful to remove all dead leaves, flowers, etc., from each plant as I place it into the greenhouse. Botrytis often starts on dead flowers and then becomes epidemic in the greenhouse a short while later. When botrytis gets really bad it can attack healthy plant tissue and then can cause serious losses. Periodically I pick all the dead flowers off of the plants and put them onto the compost pile so that they don’t become a reservoir of infection.

If we have a long stretch of bad weather where I have the lids tight on the cold frames, then ventilation can become an issue, and I can have outbreaks of botrytis. Keeping things on the dry side helps a lot.

Rick made the point that letting plants get surface dry before watering them again is one of his key ways to reduce fungi in his houses.

Rick uses a product called “Physan” in his propagators to sanitize them and on his seedlings and cuttings to prevent fungal attack. He uses it at the highest recommended rate of dilution, and he says it is very effective. Rick does not have much in the way of botrytis on his plants, except perhaps the smaller primulae if they get too wet in the winter.

It is very hard to control botrytis chemically. I basically don’t try- if I have a plant that is infected I remove it, clean the infected material off, and leave it outside for a few days in a dry area to let the ventilation do its magic. Then I return the plant to the greenhouse and watch it like a hawk for a return of the disease. I keep hoping that some common thing might control botrytis the way baking soda is reputed to control powdery mildew.

With my auriculas, I try to leave them outside as long as possible so they benefit from all the fresh air, but eventually I must put them under cover, generally into a
cold frame or the alpine house. It is good to try to remove dead leaves if there is any substance to them so that they don’t give rise to botrytis. If I had an outbreak of botrytis, I would separate the plants so they got more air, and I would try to do this before they got very sick. In the case of auriculas, I have found natural rain and air circulation to be very effective in helping limit the outbreak, but there will be people who don’t agree with me about the rain. You might try it, though, and keep an open mind- leave the auricula out in the rain and see if it doesn’t look better in a day or two (not much longer).

I have also had small troubles with powdery mildew in the greenhouse, mostly on kalanchoe and begonias, and I will admit that I used a commercial fungicide twice this season to cope with this rather minor problem.

**Care with Watering**

Once the greenhouse is packed and the humidity has been balanced out- in my opinion this can take the better part of a month, then you have to keep plants watered well enough to keep them healthy, but take care not to overwater! Too much water just causes trouble in a rather sealed environment as it evaporates and contributes to the overall humidity. The best atmosphere in the greenhouse can be described as “buoyant”- fairly humid but not too humid. It is hard to describe what this might look and feel like- maybe a visit to a well-kept greenhouse might be instructive. One clue is that it doesn’t smell moldy, and there won’t be tons of botrytis in a “buoyant” greenhouse.

So, to recap- the way to keep a healthy greenhouse is to 1) clean the greenhouse prior to packing it for the winter, 2) put clean plants into the greenhouse, 3) be proactive and watch for problems and deal with them promptly so they don’t get out of hand, and 4) take care in watering.

I hope you have many years of enjoyable growing in your greenhouse. It is a bit more work than just growing plants in the open garden, but it is worth every bit of trouble!
Barnhaven through the Year

LYNNE LAWSON

October

By the beginning of October, we’ve begun sending out plant orders. By then the new seedlings are big enough to be planted out and the auriculas and double primroses that have been split should have made enough root. Seed orders too should be in full swing, and I’m forced to spend some time in the office making up packets. No fancy equipment here either – I’ve two tiny measuring spoons passed down from Jared Sinclair. We state a minimum number of seeds per packet, so it’s about a spoonful, depending on variety, and every so often we do a count to check. Counting auricula seeds is not the easiest, and I admit to never counting Primula capitata.

October is when we usually try to get away for a short holiday. It’s a month when we can go away without worrying to death about watering etc. This year we went to Edinburgh, Scotland. We had the chance to visit the Royal Botanic Gardens which was a great treat. We’d heard they’re hot on Primula and had never seen so many varieties – well, so many labels and a few leaves (it being the end of October). A total of 154 varieties in their four gardens are listed on their Living Collection database. When we retire, perhaps we’ll be able to visit gardens in spring!

November

There’s still potting on to be done ready for our plant shows and sales in spring. Our breeding-stock auriculas are often split in this quarter as it’s the only time we have. Hunting has begun on the farmland around the nursery, and sometimes they get just that bit too close. Lots of shouting and dogs barking, but they don’t seem to shoot much. I think it’s just a boys’ day out.

I’ve recently had some time to browse in the Barnhaven archives and especially enjoyed re-reading some of Jared Sinclair’s letters and notes, reminding myself of the origins of some of our varieties. ‘Flamingo’ for example (pictured in last month’s quarterly) came from a failed attempt at a pink Cowichan. I was amused to discover that Florence Bellis also suffered from insomnia in spring!

December

Days get shorter and shorter and we’re forced to finish the day at the greenhouse early, as we’ve no lights. David keeps threatening to put some in, but I think he’s joking. We rarely get any seriously cold weather before January, mostly wind and rain. The wet conditions bring their own problems with a constant battle against mosses and liverworts in the shade tunnels. Beautiful as they are, they cause a lot of extra work.

Walking round the tunnels it’s time to anticipate the coming year. What surprises are the new seedlings going to reveal? Not long to wait now.
Chapter Reports

B.C. Primula Group
In March, we discussed the small early Primula species and hybrids including *P. x juliana*. Some members brought plants for examination, and other plants were available for members to take away. Planning for the upcoming spring show of the Alpine Garden Club of B.C., where our members enter their plants, continued. Pam Eveleigh, the speaker at the AGCBC meeting held three days after the show, was co-sponsored by our group.

The show in April was one of the best in recent years, and a member of our group, Ruth Anderson, put on a whimsical display. Our group had a sale table where members could sell extra plants, which disappeared very quickly.

The May meeting was cancelled, but the September meeting focused on *Primula* ephemera. Examples of china dishes with primrose patterns, and prints of *primula* were brought in by members. Maedythe had found the name *Primula* on the web in company names, a programming language and in the name of a hotel in Toronto called the Primrose!

The November meeting will look at recent research on *Primula* seed and discuss member’s experiences with seed and germination. We hope to have a program on *Primula* in troughs in the New Year.

~ Maedythe Martin

Doretta Klaber Chapter Report
We have fewer than 30 members with about 10 who attend meetings. The group had Lee Nelson to speak last fall, and in February we joined in with the Delaware Valley NARGS to hear Janet Novak on Native Orchids. We distributed primrose seed from APS and NARGS at this meeting.

We had a picnic in June at a member’s garden along with a plant sale. It was an extremely hot summer, so the picnic was not well attended, unfortunately. We are not planning on a fall meeting as so few participate. I am not sure we will be able to continue as a chapter. We have joined with DVC NARGS, as many of our members are also NARGS members.

~ Diana McCormick

Juneau Chapter Report
The Juneau Chapter’s May Plant Sale was another success-selling out in an hour during a beautiful day in a record dry, sunny month last spring. Dry weather until the Solstice led to incredible spring and early summer flowering, especially Rhododendrons and Lilacs. More normal weather in July with abundant rain then helped plump a terrific berry and cherry crop that extended into a mild, warm, sunny fall with some of the best fall color in memory. Primroses were reblooming into early November, especially many Juliana hybrids.

The weather wizards are forecasting a cooler and more snowy winter which seems to be happening as I write this in early December. That should help to insulate the ground and hopefully lead to good flowering in 2011. We gardeners are an optimistic bunch always looking forward to spring!

~ Ed Buyarski

New England Chapter Report
We’ve had a busy and enjoyable year, which included the very memorable visit to the National Show by John Richards, the author of the preeminent book on *Primula*.

Our first meeting was in January 2010 at Joe Phillip and Matt Mattus’ home to begin
planning the 2010 show and included a tour of their wonderful greenhouse.

We began our big project for the year in April when we met with Dorthe Hviid, the horticultural director of the Berkshire Botanical Garden. We had talked and corresponded with her, and she welcomed our plan to plant a primula garden in their beautiful grounds.

On April 30th, May 1st and 2nd we hosted the National Show under the direction of show chair Joe Phillip. John Richards, the special guest and featured speaker, stayed with the Barkers, and we enjoyed his visit. John also shared with Kris Fenderson in leading our round table discussion, where many of the perplexing questions *Primula* growers ask were answered by the two authors.

We met again in May at the Berkshire Botanical Garden for the planting of our *Primula* garden. Many of the Chapter members attended and planted *Primulas* donated by the group.

In early June a number of us went to Vermont for a lunch and plant swap at Amy Olmsted’s home followed by a tour of Rocky Dale Gardens in Bristol, Vermont. Our final meeting of the year was again at the Berkshire Botanical Garden for more planting. Richard May had donated over 20 plants to the *Primula* garden, and they were planted up by our members. Our meeting consisted of detailed planning of the 2011 national show where our featured guest and speaker will be Chris Chadwell from England, a well known Himalayan plant explorer and seed collector. We all look forward to the show and hope that many members from outside of New England and New York will be able to attend.

~ Rodney Barker

Rebirth of a Primula Garden

In October of 2009, Dorthe Hviid, Horticultural Director of the Berkshire Botanical Garden asked us at a New England Chapter meeting if we were interested in working with the BBG staff to revitalize what was once a fine display garden for *Primulas*, but which had deteriorated to a forlorn patch of mertensia over the years (see photo). After a few minutes’ discussion involving what plants we could donate (lots!), and who would maintain the garden (BBG Staff!), we decided it would be an honor, a challenge, and a pleasure to be involved with a permanent planting which would be seen by many people, and agreed to meet early in 2010 to plan how to proceed. The area under the ancient apple trees was explored and weeded, and a design drawn in April. In May, we planted about 150 *Primula* plants from our own gardens, and in September, we added more varieties to fill in any gaps. We anticipate an improvement in how ‘our *Primula* Garden’ looks next spring, and look forward to sharing our photographs and progress notes.

~ Judith Sellers
American Primrose Society
Minutes of the Board Meeting held on November 7th, 2010

The meeting was held online. It opened at 6:10 pm, Eastern Time.

Board members present: Linda Bailey (Director), Rodney Barker (Director), Mark Dyen (President, New England Chapter), Julia Haldorson (Director, Membership Secretary), Marianne Kuchel (APS Vice-President), Alan Lawrence (APS President), Amy Olmsted (Director), Michael Plumb (APS Secretary), Susan Schnare (Director)

Regrets: Ed Buyarski (President, Juneau Chapter), Jon Kawaguchi (APS Treasurer), Maedythe Martin (Editor, President of BC Group)

1. Approval of the Agenda (Rodney/Julia) with the removal of item E3 (credit card charges)

2. The Minutes of August 1st, 2010 – Accepted (Rodney/Susan)

3. Treasurer’s Report (2011 Budget, Quarterly Finances and YTD) (Emailed before the meeting)
   a) Income less expenses July 1st, 2010 to September 30th, 2010: ($2,217.92)
   b) YTD Income less expenses January 1st, 2010 to June 30th, 2010: ($4750.30)
   c) Total liabilities and equity as of October 18th, 2010: $22,005.36
   d) 2010-2011 Seed Exchange Budget $1,000; 2011 Quarterly Printing Budget $4,500
   e) MOTION (Rodney/Michael) to accept the report and approve the budget - carried.

4. Committee Reports
   Seed Exchange
   a) Amy reported that the deadline for donations has been extended to end November 2010.
   b) The finalized seed list will be ready around Christmas.
   c) Printed copies of the list can be obtained from Judy Sellers (member of S. Exch. Committee).
   d) The Committee now has a sufficient number of glassine envelopes, but more can quickly be obtained from NARGS if needed.

   National Show
   a) Rodney announced that the dates of the 2011 Show are April 30th to May 1st. The location will be the Tower Hill Botanical Garden in Worcester MA. As reported in the previous minutes, the guest speaker is Chris Chadwell, a well-known Himalayan plant and seed explorer. Judy Sellers is the contact person. Details will be finalized in January.
   b) ACTION: Susan will send her press-release for the Show to Michael.
   c) ACTION: Rodney will send Michael the details when ready, including a photo and bio of Chris Chadwell. He will also send the bio to Susan for her press-release.

   Editorial Committee
   a) Alan reported that moving the printing to a new printer in the USA could save around $2,000 per year (Alan calculated $0.75 saved per copy, four times per year, plus large savings on postage). If changing printers is approved, will contact the Editor to arrange for transfer of the electronic files, probably via the APS website.
   b) MOTION (Michael/Marianne): to ask the Editorial Committee to set up the new printing and distribution system as outlined by the President. Carried.
   c) The Editor (Maedythe Martin) reported in her email sent previously that the Fall Quarterly was on time and already in the mail. A form for membership renewal was
inserted with the mailing. No dues increase would be possible this time as members would have insufficient notification. She invited donations to help with the cost of the color pages (approx. $400 for eight color pages per issue).

d) **MOTION** (Michael/Marianne): to accept the Editorial Report. Carried.

**Membership**

a) Julia reported that as of October 27th, 2010 there were 349 APS members in good standing, of whom 199 were due for renewal. Notices were sent out by email at the end of October, and cards will be sent in November.

b) **ACTION**: The website will post a reminder of the November 15th deadline for renewal of membership.

c) Susan and Amy were advised to contact Jon (treasurer) for membership rack cards.

d) **ACTION**: Michael will ask Jon for the electronic file of the rack card. If posted on the website, it might improve on the present membership application form.

e) **MOTION** (Rodney/Amy): to accept Membership Report. Carried.

**Website**

a) The website had introduced the increased charge for use of credit cards (now $3), which was necessary as the society would otherwise lose on each transaction.

b) The Webmaster, with the assistance of Julia, will make further inquiries concerning the use of PayPal for online payment of dues, etc. Susan observed that PayPal would make transactions much easier for overseas members.

c) **MOTION** (Julia/Amy): to accept the website report. Carried.

**Judging Committee**

Report POSTPONED.

5. **Business Arising and Old Business**

a) Support for chapters holding a National Show on behalf of the APS:

   **MOTION** (Michael/Susan): that $500 be presented to each chapter holding a National Show on behalf of the American Primrose Society, as much of this amount as possible to be repaid to the APS treasurer within two months, depending on the chapter’s profit from the show. Carried, with two against.

   It was noted that any profit over the $500 loan would belong to the organizing chapter, and that the APS National would bear any loss up to the amount of the loan if a profit of less than $500 were realized.

   It was noted that the New England Chapter had not yet repaid the $500 loan from the 2010 Show to the APS National (See previous minutes: Committee Reports/ National Show). **ACTION**: Rodney said he would ask the New England Chapter treasurer to send a financial report of the 2010 Show to the APS Board.

b) Increasing credit card fee - Removed from agenda - A fee of $3 is already in effect.

6. **New Business**

a) Increasing Membership Dues: **MOTION** (Michael/Linda): to POSTPONE discussion of membership dues to the AGM in spring. Carried. This is to allow time for any savings from using the new printer to be assessed.

b) Nominating Committee: Alan asked Ed and Julia to find an Alaskan member to stand for director.

7. **Adjournment** (Rodney/Linda) at 8:20 pm Eastern Time.

   Next meeting: Either January 30th or February 6th, 2010 - Alan will confirm asap.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Plumb, Secretary
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/smembership.

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Expiry</th>
<th>Name &amp; Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2036</td>
<td>Raynald Bergeron  84 Rue Antoine Grenier  Clermont, Quebec  G4A 0R6  Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Robbie Frankevich  P. O. Box 1001  Girdwood, Alaska  99587  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Sandra Kay Hampton  3751 North Bell Street  Chicago, Illinois  60618  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Gena Hart  Route 2 Box 115-F  Grassy Meadows, West Virginia  24943  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Terri Koch Clevenger  997 Julie Street North  Keizer, Oregon  97303  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Kenneth Kraus  197 Mile Creek Road  Old Lyme, Connecticut  06371  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Kirk Lloyd  8032 Liberty Road South  Salem, Oregon  97306  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Blossom McBrier  6721 Brier Hill Road  Fairview, Pennsylvania  16415  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Ellen Preissler  67 Obre Place  Shrewsbury, New Jersey  07702  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>JA Robins  931 Huckleberry Lane  Glenview, Illinois  60025  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Jonathan Willis  2 Ainsworth Road  Winchester, Massachusetts  01890  U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Julia L. Haldorson, APS Membership  
P.O. Box 210913  
Auke Bay, Alaska  99821 U.S.A.  
membership@americanprimrosesociety.com

OFFICERS OF THE CHAPTERS

**British Columbia Primrose Group**  
Maedythe Martin, President  
951 Joan Crescent Victoria, BC  V8S 3L3  
(250) 370-2951  
martin951@shaw.ca

**Tacoma Chapter**  
Cy Happy III, Acting President  
11617 Gravelly Lk. Dr. Tacoma, WA  
98499  
(253) 588-2585

**Doretta Klaber Chapter**  
Diana Cormack, Acting Chair  
424 Bulltown Rd., Elveron, PA 19520  
610-286-0577  
diana54@dejazzd.com

**Juneau Chapter**  
Ed Buyarski, President  
Box 33077 Juneau, AK  99803-3077  
(907) 789-2299  
amprimsoc@hotmail.com  
http://www.alaskaprimroses.org

**New England Chapter**  
Mark Dyen, Co-President  
132 Church Street Newton, MA 02158  
dyenreisen@rcn.com  
Rodney Barker, Co-President  
49 Woodcliff Road Newton Highlands, MA 02461  
rodneybrkr@gmail.com