President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

In late spring/early summer we occasionally head out somewhere new, and this year we decided on a road trip taking in Yellowstone, the Tetons, Logan Canyon and a loop through the mountains in eastern Utah. These trips are often slow as I am continually stopping to take photos of flowers along the route. It was even slower when we got to the top of Beartooth Pass on our route to Yellowstone, as the pass was closed due to a snowstorm; this was the second week in June! In Yellowstone our campsite still had four feet of snow! Along the Firehole River valley we came across an amazing display of shooting stars in full bloom. These were probably Dodecatheon pauciflorum (syn. D. pulchellum). Based mainly on DNA analysis there is a proposal to include the genus Dodecatheon in Primula section Auriculastrum, in which case these would be named Primula pauciflora.

The trip down to Logan Canyon was to see the location of Maguire’s Primrose, Primula cusickiana ssp. maguirei. It was too late for flowering of course, but I was interested in viewing the plants in their natural Dolomite cliff habitat. There has been an extensive effort to secure the survival of this subspecies which only grows in Logan Canyon and perhaps this could be the key note talk at some future National Show. Other than habitat, without the flowers there is a remarkable similarity to Dodecatheon. Our proposed loop through the mountains of eastern Utah was again not possible because the pass was still closed due to snow. The map says “Closed in Winter”; perhaps it should say “Closed in Winter, Spring and early Summer.”

Since our return home, summer has arrived with a
vengeance here in the Upper Midwest. Temperatures are above 90°F and most Primulas here are suffering from heat stress. Thankfully there have been plenty of storms to give them some relief.

It’s seed collection time for many species and I encourage everyone to collect fresh seed for the next year’s Seed Exchange. The procedure for donating seed is on the website, and see page 30. There have been enquiries on the availability of seed of the delightful pink primrose Primula vulgaris ssp. sibthorpii. This seems to have become unavailable in recent years. If anyone has seed producing plants of this, please consider donating some to the exchange.

The American Primrose Society celebrates 70 years this year! To commemorate this milestone, the Quarterly will publish articles on some of the people who have helped the society flourish over these seven decades. In this second commemorative article we meet Doretta Klaber, a strong APS supporter, who sadly died in 1974. Her charming line drawings of Primula graced the cover of the quarterly for some decades and formed the decorative border of the Pictorial Dictionary. Joan Hoffel gives us a glimpse of her personality through her articles and her book on Primula.

Doretta Klaber, Intrepid Gardener

JOAN HOEFFEL

I have just been introduced to Doretta Klaber … not as a girl, but as a mature woman who has found her passion – plants, and in particular, Primulas. Would that I could have known her in person, but one can not read about her and read her writings without discovering the many facets of this interesting woman.

I will start back with first meeting Mrs. Klaber as she and her husband moved to Washington, D.C., probably in the 1930s. It’s quite obvious that she was already a knowledgeable gardener, and I learn that she also had practiced landscape architecture.

Let me first remark on the marriage. I must read between the lines to know that Eugene Henry Klaber fully supported his wife’s passion for gardening. He was in every way a helpmate as Doretta took on one daunting project after another. One senses an affectionate bond between these two as they tackled prodigious projects, built cold frames together and enjoyed the fruits of their labors. Indeed, there also seemed to be an enriching sense of humor uniting them.

And so, because of the convenience of the location in D.C., they rented a house badly in need of redecorating and surrounded by a really horrible little yard. From

A Special Thank You....

Special thanks go out this time to the Juneau Chapter for their generous donation of $500 sent in early May towards the cost of the quarterly! This is one of the strongest Chapters, in terms of members, who grow many wonderful plants as the conditions in Juneau are almost perfect for many Primula – lots of spring and summer rain.

Special thanks also are sent to President Alan Lawrence who has found a printer in Michigan that is saving the society about 30% per issue in printing costs! This is very beneficial to the Society’s budget. And mailing the quarterly in the US instead of from Canada is a further saving! Thanks so much, Alan, for organizing this.

Legendary Barnhaven seed - still carefully hand-pollinated from rigorously selected plants. We also send bare-rooted plants to the USA.

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The American Primrose Society. Summer 2011
her own written description, we quickly learn that Mrs. Klaber was a visionary. She could see the end product, and she knew how to get there. Not only did she have the vision, knowledge and skills to get the job done, she was undaunted by the labor involved in the process, and her family fell in step behind her. They dug and cut and moved figurative mountains to create a lovely garden space while considering the surroundings for outdoor dining. All this as she kept in mind the surrounding plantings to provide color and charm through the seasons. Nothing “just happened” – this enchanting outdoor living space was the result of the knowledge and experience of an intrepid, passionate gardener. Doretta Klaber was no plant snob. She used whatever plants were necessary to complete the picture. Impatiens took over as primroses faded in the shady areas, perennials and annuals provided brilliant summer color and flowers from a cutting garden filled vases in the house.

Later on, in 1950, the Klabers moved to Cloud Hill Farm in Quakertown, Pennsylvania where Mrs. Klaber opened a nursery specializing in rock garden plants. Now she had the space and environment for growing and experimenting with all species of *Primula*. In an area of uncertain climate, she tried and tried again to grow many species of *Primula* that are difficult and even rare, and she hastened to share her knowledge and findings through her writings. While becoming a student of soil conditions, unpredictable weather and variations in temperature, she emerged as a teacher, a mentor, and a very influential voice in plant horticulture. “Hold on to your hats!” she tells readers in her book, *Primroses and Spring*, while she describes her seed growing techniques in a dilapidated cold frame she and her husband, both “uncarpenters,” built years ago. She tells us why this disgraceful cold frame works in spite of its terrible condition, so we, too, can learn the requirements for germinating *Primula* seeds.

In his book, *The Collector’s Garden*. Ken Druse (Timber Press, 2004, p. 157) credits Doretta Klaber as one of two women who influenced and inspired Lee Raden in his gardening career: “Doretta’s woods were filled with primroses. Oh, it was a sight!” It was Mrs. Klaber who convinced him to start a Delaware Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society which, after more than 30 years, is still one of the most active chapters in the organization. Doretta Klaber herself was a member of the American Primrose Society, the North American Rock Garden Society, the Scottish Rock Garden Club and the English Alpine Garden Society.

At the age of 70, Doretta Klaber began to write. She penned three books and many articles. Her favorite subjects were primroses, gentians and violets, but she also had an avid interest in all rock garden plants. She was an extremely talented artist. Her books are illustrated with her exquisite and precise pen and ink drawings. Her subjects were most often live plants – most of which she grew herself. Doretta Klaber’s writings are inspirational for both seasoned and beginning gardeners. She encourages us to try something new, regardless of its being considered impossible. Her enthusiasm and joy are evidenced throughout her works. Her commitment to writing with integrity – to add something that has not been said before, to inspire – connects her to the chain of writers, past and future, who add to our growing understanding of the plant world. Here was a serious woman; one who didn’t flinch at the vagaries of nature or grieve over lost plants but saw these as opportunities to assess the damage and find solutions.

Through it all, Doretta Klaber maintained an abiding affection for all plants, even those most difficult, and a lovely sense of humor, as she writes:

“Beware!

“I warn you! Primroses cast a spell. The only way to avoid it is to have nothing to do with the plants. Once you start to grow primroses you are lost. You want more and more, earlier and later kinds, more varieties, more species, more colors. You start with a few plants. You are entranced. Soon your little patch spreads. You divide your plants because you want pools of one color. You raise primroses from seed to have them by the hundreds. A corner of the woods soon becomes a woodland path – a Primrose Path. The path grows, new paths branch off. Primroses are insidious, they are devastating – growing them becomes a habit. And few things can possibly give you so much pleasure in both anticipation and fulfillment.”

Editor’s note: Doretta Klaber’s charming and useful book is still available through retailers such as Amazon.
Trials and Trophies:
2011 National Show Results

JUDITH SELLERS

In spite of a cold spring and an early show date, New England Primula growers managed to put an interesting variety of quality plants on the benches at Tower Hill this year.

One of our usual New England judges, Mark Dyen, was delayed in reaching Tower Hill in time to begin the judging but Marco Polo Stufano, founding Director of Horticulture at Wave Hill in the Bronx, NY, and prominent in current garden horticulture, design and preservation just ‘happened’ to be attending the Show and agreed to serve as a guest judge. Marco, Kris Fenderson and Mary Malloy, along with clerks Marion Stafford and Deborah Wheeler, had just begun their examination when Matt Mattus arrived with his freshly planted pots! Alas! Matt had stayed up to 3 am cleaning up after the dinner party for thirty guests which he and Joseph had hosted the evening before, and risen at 5 am to dig and pot the plants which were left in situ to look good for the garden tour. Although deprived of ribbons and awards, Matt’s beautiful plants received a lot of praise from visitors who found them in prominent locations around the show.

In Division I the Best Polyanthus was Rodney Barker’s simply elegant yellow-flowered plant, which was a surprise to anyone who had witnessed its arrival at Tower Hill on Friday. Some Primulas have the ability to bounce back from looking like yesterday’s spinach salad, and in the cool of the hall overnight, this plant recuperated marvelously. Rodney also benched a bronze-leaved Cowichan with closed buds receiving Best in Division VIII for Foliage Primulas. The Exhibition Gold Laced Polyanthus plants were not yet in bloom, but a GLP Jack-in-the-Green, dark ground, grown by Judith Sellers from APS exchange seed, gathered the Captain Comely Hawkes Trophy. The John Kerridge Memorial Trophy was awarded to Amy Olmsted for a glowing garnet Cowichan. The Wesley Bottom trophy for best Hose-in-Hose was given to Marion Stafford for her plant with delightful yellow flowers.

Division II, Acaulis, was the class for Jim Jones’ P. vulgaris, clean, fresh, and floriferous, which won Best of Division and the Novice Award. We look forward to many more quality plants on the benches from Jim next year.

Division III, Juliae Hybrids, included an excellent clone of ‘Wanda,’ benched by Marion Stafford for a blue ribbon, and large pot of the pale yellow ‘Dorothy,’ which won Best in Division and the Ivanel Agee trophy for Judith Sellers.

Division IV, found Susan Schnare’s bright garden auricula, ‘Paradise Yellow’ with a strong stem and at least 15 fully open pips: it was Best in Division. A new fully double copper-colored auricula, ‘Forest King Cup,’ bred by Richard Austin in the UK and exhibited by Judith Sellers took The Ellen Page Hayden Award.

The plants for Division V, Exhibition Plants, were displayed on an impressive auricula theatre, built and brought by Benjamin Fay specifically for the show. Most of the plants were small early bloomers, with sparse pips, but good form. The exception was Marianne Kuchel’s dark blue show self, which was grown from seed and selected as Best in Show and earned both the Mary Zack and Bamford Trophies. The John Shuman award winner for Best Show Alpine was ‘Erica,’ and best seedling was a very pale cream self, both grown by Judith Sellers.

Division VI, Species and Hybrids was dominated by P. denticulata plants in all possible colors. The second runner up for Best in Show was another plant from Marianne’s garden, a blue P. denticulata with at least eight “heads,” more than enough to deserve the Rae Berry Award for Best Species. In sharp size contrast was the tiny, but bright, P. rosea benched by Amy Olmsted for another first.

The only entry in Division VII, Non Hardy Primulas, was a P. forrestii grown from seed by Marianne Kuchel. It received a first and contributed to her receiving the National John Kerridge and New England Richard Redfield Trophies for most species in bloom.

Division IX contained several promising foliage plants including Rodney’s winning Cowichan and a little gem benched by Deborah Wheeler, perhaps ‘Lismore Jewel,’ which would have won its class with flowers the next week.

Division X, Grower’s Exhibit, contained one entry with a small black container of six plants benched by Judith Sellers. All were light blues, including a P. denticulata, P. marginata, ‘The President,’ a seedling Rosie form of P. vulgaris, the hybrid ‘High Point,’ a garden auricula, and ‘Clarence Elliott.’ This entry would have had serious competition for Best in Division if Matt’s huge pan of assorted spring primroses had arrived on time for judging.

A superior plant with lots of bright blue flowers, ‘Clarence Elliott,’ benched by Mary Malloy won Division XI, Other Primula Hybrids, and was first runner up for Best in Show.

The Sweepstakes rosette for most points in show went to Judith Sellers, but we all knew Matt Mattus and Joe Phillip should have received a special award for greatest effort towards providing others with good will and enjoyment at a National Show.
### APS National Show Winners

**Ivanel Agee**-Best Hybrid Julie -- Judith Sellers

**Rae Berry**-Best Species -- Marianne Kuchel *P. denticulata*

**Bamford**-Best Show Auricula Seedling -- Marianne Kuchel Dark Blue Show Self Seedling

**Captain Comely Hawkes**-Best Gold Laced Polyanthus -- Judith Sellers, GLP ‘Jack’

**Mary Zach**-Best Show Self -- Marian Kuchel Dark Blue Show Self Seedling

**John Shuman**-Best Show Alpine -- Judith Sellers ‘Erica’

**Ellen Page Hayden**-Best Double Auricula -- Judith Sellers ‘Forest King Cup’

**John Kerridge**-Most Species in Bloom -- Marianne Kuchel

**John Kerridge Memorial**-Best Cowichan -- Amy Olmstead

**Wesley Bottom**-Best Hose-in-Hose -- Marion Stafford

**Novice Award**-Best plant entered by a first time Primula exhibitor -- Jim Jones

**Sweepstakes**-most points for ribbons -- Judith Sellers

**Richard Redfield (New England Chapter)**-Most ribbon worthy plants in bloom -- Marian Kuchel

More pictures of the national show, including ladies in hats, are available on Matt Mattus’ blog: [http://www.growingwithplants.com/](http://www.growingwithplants.com/)

### Garden Tours at the APS National Show

**CHERYL WILSON**

On a perfect New England spring day, members of the American Primrose Society toured three charming private rock gardens in the tiny central-western Massachusetts town of Petersham, population just over 1,000, as part of the program for the National Show. All the gardeners on the tour are members of the North American Rock Garden Society rather than primrose experts but they have unusual primroses both in their rock gardens and in shadier places or greenhouses.

The Petersham story started with a man named Larry Rue, a rock garden enthusiast who was “the man who came to dinner” at the home of Gloria and Peter George in the mid 1990s. Rue convinced his new Petersham neighbor that he should create a rock garden on the south side of his early 19th century house.

“I went from ground zero to where I am now,” said George who is very active in the North American Rock Garden Society and has several large rock gardens as well as a huge vegetable garden. On another side of the house he has what he called “a hybrid swarm” of aquilegias which are known to interbreed indiscriminately.

George’s extensive rock gardens inspired botanical artist Abigail Rorer to begin her own rock garden and later Dr. Bruce Lockhart followed their lead.

Peter George is the consummate rock garden enthusiast. Late Friday morning, April 29, he led a dozen APS members through his gardens, exclaiming frequently, “You must see this.” Among his treasures are *Primula rusbyi*, the western desert primrose, native to moist crevices among rocks, and *Primula farinosa* with tiny lavender flowers. Both nestle between huge rocks. Another choice *Primula* he has is *P. allionii*.

“I love epimediums,” he told Karen Probst, owner of Garden Vision Epimedium nursery in nearby Hubbardston. She identified one of his unknowns as *E. brevicornu*. A delicate *Anemonella thalictroides* was nearby as well as several Asian jack-in-the-pulpits. In addition to the large rock garden near the house there are other sizeable gardens, one of which was created atop a former stable yard rich with manure. Gloria George is fond of dwarf conifers, which fit nicely with the rock garden perennials. Daffodils and grape hyacinths were in full bloom along with aubrietia and a stunning specimen of *Adonis vernalis* with yellow flowers incredibly larger than surrounding Alpine plants. In one garden were four troughs
filled with minute rock garden plants.
The Georges provided snacks as well as red and white wines from nearby Hardwick Vineyards and other non-alcoholic drinks.

A short walk down a country road took us to Abigail Rorer’s farm with much shadier gardens. In addition to a large mounded rock garden in full sun, there was a Japanese garden, a large vegetable garden and an impressive greenhouse filled with succulents from South Africa.

“I built this rock garden after Peter did his,” Rorer recalled. “We put in big rocks and then built the garden over them,” she said. A wide array of rock garden plants was in full bloom.

Nearby is the Japanese garden with peonies, a bonsai, which she keeps in a cold frame over the winter, and lots of shade-loving plants including a Jeffersonia dubia, a spring ephemeral of great charm with longer-lasting flowers compared to the native Jeffersonia, and lots of epimediums from the Probst nursery.

Her greenhouse is jammed full of unusual plants. A least a dozen different species of Haworthia were stand-outs along with an equal number of species of Gasteria. Rorer is especially fond of Lithops and other plants that resemble living stones. She also likes caudiciform plants, known as “fat plants” for their bulbous caudex or stem. Outside the greenhouse were several shade gardens with primroses including some Cowichans and one named ‘Guinevere,’ stunning double bloodroot and Dicentra cucullaria (Dutchman’s breeches).

After walking back to the Georges where we had left our cars, we drove to the much newer garden created by Bruce Lockhart. Here we found not only well-established shade gardens to which he is still adding, but a fairly new rock garden created from rocks excavated when he built a greenhouse. “When they excavated for the greenhouse there were tons of rocks. What better to do with a pile of rocks than make a rock garden?” he asked. Lockhart has a collection of auriculas, mostly purchased from Pop’s Plants Nursery in England.

As Lockhart gave a guided tour of his gardens he cradled a bottle-fed lamb named Dulcie in his arms. The Lockharts have a flock of sheep composed of 13 ewes, 5 rams and 12 lambs this year.

The property overlooks a placid lake and is a lovely setting for a very varied set of gardens. The first gardens Lockhart created were shade gardens filled with hellebores in many hues, ferns, ‘Thalia’ daffodils in profusion and an immense stand of may apples. Several lovely primroses were scattered under the trees. Again there are plenty of epimediums (with a specialty nursery just a few miles away, it’s impossible not to splurge on these wonderful shade plants).

Lockhart has an excellent sense of design and is creating an herb garden outlined with boxwoods. He also is planting peonies in an allee of boxwood. A favorite plant is willow, not the common weeping form but one called Salix ‘Rubykins’ with pinky-red catkins, that is being trained into a hedge.

After driving more than an hour to the wonderful Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston to register for the National Show and view the spring bulbs and trees in the Garden, we went to our hotel to get ready for a special dinner. Matt Mattus and Joe Philip not only organized the Friday night dinner and hosted the featured speaker, Chris Chadwell, but provided the evening’s entertainment. We were urged to wear “royal hats” because of the morning wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. Joe wore a head-dress reminiscent of Lawrence of Arabia while several women sported garden party hats or the new “fascinators.”

Wine glasses or beer mugs in hand, we toured Matt and Joe’s fabulous garden and greenhouse in Worcester, then adjourned inside to watch the coverage of the royal wedding and feast on an English pub dinner. They served steak and ale pie, chicken and leek pie and tiny éclairs and cream puffs for dessert – a meal fit for a king or at least a prince and his duchess.

Alas, Matt was so busy cooking and acting the genial host that he didn’t have a chance to dig his primroses for benching until Saturday morning. He arrived too late for entry in the judging but graciously placed his gorgeous specimens on the registration table where they elicited a great deal of favorable comment. He had one pot of mixed polyanthus all grown from a Barnhaven seed mix. Another pot was simply a huge specimen of P. vulgaris (acaulis). The largest container, however, displayed five different kinds of primroses: two forms of P. veris, P. acaulis, P. x juliana ‘Lilac Cottage’ and P. denticulata. Visitors were fascinated to see the variations in form of a plant many of them simply associated with supermarket offerings in midwinter.

The traditions of touring local gardens and competing for national prizes as part of the APS National Show were upheld admirably in 2011. Participants obviously enjoyed themselves enormously and we gained some new members as a result of the tours and the displays at Tower Hill.
Visiting Arlene Perkens’ Vermont *Primula* Garden  

MARIANNE KUCHEL

A couple of weeks ago, I spent a delightful Sunday afternoon visiting Arlene Perkins, known in these parts as the East Coast’s “Queen of *Primulas*” for her propagation skills and spectacular *Primula* garden. Arlene and her husband Henry live in an old white farmhouse just outside Montpelier, the capital of Vermont. As you drive up to her house, you have the most wonderful view of the Green Mountain ridge.

In her garden you find *Primulas* and other flowers everywhere. Her main garden, with the *Primulas* and other woodland plants, has a fence around it to protect it from deer. It is such a wonderful sight with surely thousands of blooming single and double primoses in all colors.

Of old Vermont Yankee stock, Arlene has just turned eighty but remains as active as ever. She has grown *Primulas* since the late 70’s, when she started with seed and a few doubles from Barnhaven. The business was still located in Oregon at that time. Still today, she favors seed from them. In the beginning she sometime planted plants in the wrong places, but a neighbor encouraged her to keep going and now she grows them to perfection. Arlene still has a few plants that survived from that time, notably a dark Cowichan with a very small eye as well as a plant grown from seed she named ‘Agnes’ after a very close high school friend, a cream double with an edge of pink which blooms late and multiplies well.

Arlene likes to start her seed in December, so that the plants will be large enough to put out in the spring. She likes the APS and NARGS seed exchanges and usually orders a lot. One piece of advice that she gave me when I admired her doubles was that they have to be divided every 2-3 years, or they will become root bound and not make it through our tough northern winters.

Her husband Henry is her biggest supporter, mulching and digging and even building her a little greenhouse last year. I am sure he also placed the many rocks in the garden to make such a wonderful setting, with the old apple and ash trees giving dappled shade.

After touring the garden we were offered pie, coffee and good conversation. We also left with a tray of treasures for our own gardens. It had been a wonderful day spent with a woman so full of energy and a love of her garden, on her special hilltop.

Editor’s Note: Arlene’s garden is also featured as this issue’s cover photo.
Vancouver Show

Perennial Seed. Beautiful. Useful. Native... To the Planet.

Clockwise from top left: *Primula x pubescens alba*, display by Ruth Anderson: “What if you won the lottery and could design any garden you wanted?”, *Primula marginata* ‘Mauve Mist’. All seen at the Vancouver Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia show 2011. Photos: M. Martin
Victoria Show

Above: *Primula minima alba*
Right: Bryan Davies’ winning seedling, probably a *Primula hirsuta* cross
Below: *P. forrestii*
Photos: M. Martin


Above: National Show Winners, left: APS President Alan Lawrence with displays. Photos: Judith Sellers
Below: Show bench with *P. denticulata*. Photo: Matt Mattus
Chris Chadwell is more likely to fly east to the Himalaya from his home in Slough, England, than to come west to New England, but Rodney Barker, our Chapter co-president, invited him to the National APS show this year to be our Presenter and Round Table Guest Expert. Since he was coming to the USA for our Society, Chris scheduled several engagements with NARGS groups, and spent a busy three weeks traveling, in Michigan, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, touring celebrated private and public gardens, and learning from his hosts about gardening in our part of the world.

The tour also provided him with the opportunity to devote time to the botanical-side of his activities, studying pressed specimens in the herbaria of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and the New York Botanical Garden. These institutions boast the best collections of material from the NW Himalaya and borderlands of W. Tibet anywhere in the world. His long-term project of compiling an up-to-date flora for Ladakh (known as “Little Tibet”) will benefit from this work.

On Friday, Chris was accompanied by Dorothy Swift and Marla Gearhart on tours of three quite different gardens in Petersham Massachusetts. During their informal discussions, Chris learned that many of us are eager to find seeds for some of the many enticing Himalayan species which would be possible to grow in the US. Chris is now planning to concentrate on gathering seed from a range of elevations, habitats and climatic conditions in the Himalaya of the Primula species most likely to find success in cultivation in North America.

In the evening, he cleverly assumed the duties of Doorman and Name Tag Supervisor at the beginning of the party at Matt and Joe’s home, so he met each guest on arrival, introduced himself, and learned some names. It is hard to say what he thought of some of us as we arrived wearing fancy hats or solar topes, but the evening’s theme was “The Royal Wedding” to suit the date.

The plants on the benches were not overly crowded, but Chris appreciated some Sino-Himalayan species such as Primula forrestii, Primula rosea and plenty of good examples of the early blooming Primula denticulata.

One of Chris Chadwell’s many hats is that of today’s foremost Himalayan seed and plant hunter, so his Saturday presentation gave us some idea of just what that title means. Aside from enduring the trials and tribulations of international travel, Chris must contend with major political upheavals, epic natural disasters, frightening military restrictions, appalling mountain topography, dangerously dilapidated
A patch of tiny shrubs and smothering grasses and allow Chris's pictures show that grazing yaks tend to keep lush alpine slopes clear of... Although grazing by sheep and goats can be detrimental to... could become available if we were to grow them from seed. We think we should be able to grow this one with a bit of care, and Chris agrees. We love to see this plant in cultivation but never do. Aside from the overwhelming nature of growing P. reptans, collecting its miniscule seeds is almost impossible due to its habit of dropping the few it produces at the wrong time and place.

A photo from Annapurna in fall included flowers on P. boothii subsp. autumnalis growing under a waterfall! The fuzzy leaves of P. wigramiana and fat bells of P. woolastonii, the blue of P. elliptica against the dark limestone of a vertical cliff face, and P. caveana hiding beneath an overhanging rock create other memorable pictures.

Among dry stones beside a shining lake in late autumn, P. aureata is breathtaking. Primula macrophylla subsp. moorcroftiana thriving in glacial stream beds, Proseca growing as sheets of pink bubble gum color in moist regions and clumps of familiar P. denticulata, the most widespread of Himalayan Primulas, all make superb subjects for the Chris’ photographs.

The people with whom Chris shares a love of the mountains were not ignored. Plant collectors could not function at all without brave and knowledgeable guides and porters. Welcoming and helpful residents make each trip a memorable adventure, and professional botanists and seed suppliers provide essential help with export permits and regional advice (all Chris’ collecting in India is undertaken in association with the respected firm of P. Kohli & Co., established in Kashmir in 1928). A nimble Nepalese friend serves as seed collector during the ripening times when Chris is not able to be in the mountains himself.

Chris insists that, in return for the treasures we have received from the Himalaya, we must give something back. He therefore works with the Tibetan Medical and Astrology Institute of H.H. The Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, providing scientific identifications and advice on the cultivation of plants of value in traditional Tibetan medicine. His lecture to the Institute in September of 2010 stressed the importance of preserving and conserving medicinal plants from the Himalayan region to this end he will be undertaking Stage II of his ‘FLOWERS FIT FOR A DALAI LAMA Plant Conservation Project’ this fall. Chris would welcome feedback from our members concerning cultivation of Himalayan Primulas to add to his existing information for sharing with doctors of traditional Tibetan Medicine. They are trying to learn how to grow Himalayan mountain plants for use in their herbal formulations, rather than always collecting directly from the wild. We in the APS have an opportunity to contribute to this worthwhile project since our members can offer private “trial grounds” under a wide range of conditions. The results -- both successes and failures -- can be most informative.

Chris’ anecdotes, information and photographs kept our full attention as he illustrated some practical aspects of seed collection: the seeds must be properly dried (in cloth, not paper which becomes wet, or plastic, which encourages mold); labeled correctly (not easy when the pods are ready for harvest after flowers have...
and the traditional blessing, ‘Namaste’.

Following his presentation, Chris surprised Rodney Barker and his hosts, Joseph Philip and Matt Mattus, with gifts of embroidered Tibetan hats, white silk scarves, and the traditional blessing, ‘Namaste’.

The Round Table Discussion

On Sunday morning, Chris became a panel member for the annual Primula Enthusiasts’ Round Table Discussion. Chris Chadwell, Kris Fenderson and Susan Schnare all know and grow Primulas -- in very different ways. Chris is specifically interested in knowing how different Himalayan species germinate and grow in European gardens. Kris Fenderson has written about and grows Primulas from all parts of the globe and from many of the best private collections. Susan Schnare grows and sells the most advanced auricula hybrids through Mountain Brook Primroses. Among them, they can answer most questions concerning Primulas, and their collective expertise was employed to great advantage as we crowded around the oval table in the Tower Hill Library and asked our questions.

One thread of the discussion involved germination: Chris advocated storing seeds dry and for as brief a period as possible, then using the methods suggested in Norm Deno’s book for sowing and sprouting. If seeds must be stored more than a season or two, Chris and Kris both said that freezing might be a better approach than cool storage in a refrigerator. In all cases, hot and humid conditions should be avoided. It was generally accepted that breaking some of the traditional rules is sometimes necessary to get seeds to sprout, with experience and good record keeping being of great benefit to future successes; Chris felt that the medium for sowing need not be of an exact texture and pH, as everything a plant needs to germinate is already in the seed. The growing mix can be adjusted later on, after several true leaves have grown on the seedlings.

Some experts are adamant about when and how to prick out and transplant the seedlings, but here again, we learn there is room for successful experimentation. Chris has found that although many nurserymen insist on each seedling finding a private growing space early in its life so that it can be individually grown and sold, his own work growing various Primula species for the home garden has shown that not prickling out at all, but keeping some seedlings as a clump until they fill their seed pot is the best method of guaranteeing success. In species where damping off is a problem, one must be careful to use sterilized sowing medium and not sow too thickly. When the seedlings outgrow the pot, or when they are large enough to survive in the open garden, the entire clump or subdivisions of “mini-clumps” should be planted in one space and allowed to sort for themselves which plants survive and prosper. In nature, seeds are not evenly dispersed, and some species do much better with roots tangled among their siblings than alone in the wild. Natural selection provides that the stronger examples live to reproduce, and weaker seedlings eventually provide “mulch.”

Another topic concerned feeding plants. Chris felt that organic matter was the most important addition to a Primula’s growing medium, as it holds moisture and slowly releases nutrients, and others agreed. Kris Fenderson likes using fresh horse manure (without any stable bedding or urine) dug into the garden, while Elisabeth Zander recommends decayed leaf mold. Rodney Barker swears by Maine Lobster Compost as an effective and clean form of organic matter, and Judith Sellers recommended using any chemical nutrients at half the label’s recommended strength. Chris chimed in about some Himalayan Primulas thriving on yak-grazed pastures so perhaps the ‘ultimate’ organic additive could be Yak dung!!

Alan Lawrence brought up the subject of moisture control potting mixes, with the general opinion being against using them, as good cultural practices should eliminate the need for the crystals, which can ultimately take water from plant roots when a pot dries out. Another item deemed necessary only in extreme cases was GA3, the hormone which may encourage germination and rapid growth.

The topic of splitting, dividing and maintenance of older plants was of general interest. Chris pointed out that many species are not long lived perennials in the wild, do not need dividing, and should not be considered “failures” in cultivation if they last only 3 or 4 years. Kris finds regular division of the longer lasting species to be essential for good flowering and to maintain plant health. The Juliana hybrids, particularly, he said, need to be divided just as the clumps begin to look really good, as their surface roots become vulnerable with crowding. Susan regularly uses dividing and potting after flowering as a way to reduce the height and width of auriculas and P. marginatas, and to obtain offsets for propagation. She recommends digging up an entire area of primroses in the garden when some need dividing in early spring, as the whole bed can thus be rejuvenated, and plants replaced, moved, or shared.

Matt Mattus asked Chris for more details about harvesting seed. Cotton bags were recommended, as seeds can air dry in them, but we were advised to remove seed...
from pods as soon as practical to avoid rot or insect damage. Labeling all seeds (and maintaining labels and other complete cultural records) is also of the greatest importance. Since there are times when Chris can not positively identify a plant, having found it in seed but not in flower or full leaf, he provides a best guess (aff.) and a collection number so the plant can be properly identified at a later date. If growers also label their plants with the CC collection numbers, they can learn what the plants are and provide welcome feedback to Chris about the results of his seed collecting.

Chris explained why seeds for species which are already common in cultivation need to be collected again. The plants in cultivation now are probably the narrowest selections from the wild, having been crossed with other plants from the same or similar collection sites for several plant generations. Since every single seed is different (containing genetic information for hundreds of different traits) there is every likelihood that a better selection for growing in any specific garden is growing somewhere in the wild, and can be collected. Plants such a Primula aureata in cultivation are all from a limited collection, and the strain in England is apparently losing vigor as plants are repeatedly inbred. A new collection would introduce fresh genetic material and strengthen the strains we cultivate. Chris is able to collect from different areas -- perhaps a higher altitude, a different aspect, or dryer site -- which may provide us with plants which withstand humid summers, high winds, or colder temperatures than those currently in gardens.

Links for contacting Chris Chadwell can be found in the Speakers pages of the ‘National Show 2011’ section of the APS web site, and he will be happy to respond to our inquiries about Himalayan Primulas, his seed explorations, or speaking engagements. Chris says he would like to share his exploits from future plant hunting expeditions and to speak to us on “Growing Himalayan Primulas in the US.”

Chris will be in the US again in July, staying with several of the people he met in May. In return for hospitality, he will be showing a delightful DVD by Indian Rupin Dang describing a trek into the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, culminating in the construction of a shrine to the mother goddess of the mountain, decorated with exquisite blooms of “The Snow Primula” (P. macrophylla) recorded as the world’s highest growing Primula.

We all enjoyed meeting and listening to Chris, and now have a fuller understanding and appreciation of how and why he goes so far to find and bring home those valuable tiny objects to share --- seeds: ‘big promises in very small packages.’

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Auriculas Through the Ages: Book Review

MAEDYTHE MARTIN

Here is a book for all auricula history buffs, or for anyone interested in the past – or the future – of our favorite flower: the auricula. Patricia Cleveland-Peck’s survey tells us of “the men and women who have felt passionate” about our favorite, velvety flower, setting it in its social and historical context through-out the ages.

Many of us will have heard of Parkinson in the early 17th century because of the pages on anomalous primroses. Or maybe we’ve seen Furber’s glorious plates of early 18th century flowers, which include auriculas of the day. But did you know that Clusius (Charles de l’Ecluse, 1526 – 1699) set out what is perhaps the first list of known auriculas? An early member of the “Botanical Renaissance” and a protagonist in a time of intense religious strife, he none the less travelled throughout Europe in his quest to identify and name plants, and in his book Rariorium aliquot stirpium par Pannianium Austrian a & vicini Patricia finds the seminal list of auriculas. These she sets out in a “sidebar” for the reader’s ease, summarizing in these highlighted tables time and again the most important information.

Like an orchestra conductor, Patricia gestures to Vienna, to England, to the Continent and even to America for the historical auricula themes and adds grace-notes to weave together a splendid picture of our most beloved plant throughout recent known time. Examining many original sources, and talking to many experts, Patricia pulls together facts from the past that illuminate the story of how the auricula got from high alpine meadows to auricula theatres. I envy her the trips to various institutions to see the pages of herbariums or the painting on parchment – all depicting auriculas! And am delighted to know of other sources I was not aware of, where early representations of auriculas let us know that the auricula flower has stood the test of time, and some of them are not unlike what we still see today at the shows.

As well as the history of the plant, we get a glimpse of the times in which it was grown, the development of gardens when the decorative use of plants became as important to the grower as its curative properties. The term “florist,” she tells us, was likely first used in 1623 by John Trandescant – by growers “perfecting their flowers.”

Counterpointing the text are the 60 excellent detailed plates by Elizabeth Dowling, depicting auriculas grown today – some old, some recent. I have friends who say that painting of an auricula more clearly captures its character, and in a plate such as the one of ‘Lord Saye en Sele’ where the leaves are crisp enough to want to touch, I have to agree.
Not only are the British historical sources surveyed, but a chapter on Continental developments reveals another historical dimension. The rise of the “edged” plants, and of the now called alpine auriculas and even the use of auricula theatres in France, Flanders and Germany all show how much the plant was revered throughout Europe.

All our favorite authors are surveyed, and their comments are woven into the story: Biffen, Moreton, Halda, Genders, are all quoted in this story told with a breezy, informal and highly readable style.

Patricia takes us from the earliest of days up to the present, and even makes some predictions for future development of the plant by current hybridizers. Will we again see the Painted Ladies, or the Laced Alpines? The possibilities are there. Perhaps the fascination of the devoted auricula grower is best identified by Derek Parsons, one of the nine Auricula Enthusiasts invited to contribute a word on their passion in the Appendix: “If you let them [auriculas] will lead you into history, photography, computers, giving slide shows and making friends.” Patricia in this book opens doors into the past, and hints at the future – how can you not want to devour this book from cover to cover?

**Seed Exchange 2011**

To donate, carefully collect and clean seeds from three or more different Primulaceae species or hybrids. Package separately in well-sealed glassine or paper envelopes in amounts from 30 seeds up to a tablespoon full. Label with your name, location where collected, and the appropriate botanical identification (species or cultivar name) and color. Please send seed by Oct. 31, 2011

Remember to check on-line for seed exchange list and order form.

Send seed in Canada to: M. Martin 951 Joan Crescent, Victoria, BC V8S3L3
In USA send seed to: Amy Olmstead 421 Birch Road, Hubbardton, VT 05733

If you want a copy of the seed list mailed to you in January, send your request and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:
Judith Sellers 2297 Co Hwy 18, South New Berlin NY 13843

**American Primrose Society**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting** held on May 1st, 2011

The meeting was held in person and online. It opened at 2:13 pm, Eastern Time.

Board members present: Rodney Barker (Director), Ed Buyarski (President, Juneau Chapter), Mark Dyen (President, New England Chapter), Cheri Fluck (Director), 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: Jon Kawaguchi (Treasurer), Maedythe Martin (Editor, President BC Group)

A. **Approval of the Agenda** Approved (Michael / Ed)

B. **The Minutes of January 30th, 2011** Accepted (Michael / Amy)

C. **Treasurer’s Report** (Emailed before the meeting)

1. Income less expenses January 1st to March 31st, 2011: $1,067.92
2. Total liabilities and equity as of March 31st, 2011: $27,716.83, compared with $27,914.64 for the same time last year.
3. Overall loss for 2010: ($2,109.35)
4. Donations so far for 2011: $2,444. Gratefully accepted, but more needed.
5. Costs of new printer and US mailing still to be evaluated, but definitely lower.
6. Sets of back issues netted $201.05 this quarter (January 1st to March 31st 2011)
7. For the time being, it was decided to leave the investment savings of $10,365.31 in the checking account (General Fund), as interest rates are very low. **ACTION:** The board decided that Jon should continue looking for an account which pays a decent rate of interest.
8. **MOTION** (Ed / Cheri) to accept the report - carried.

D. **Committee Reports**

1. **Seed Exchange**
   a. Another successful year. Seed Exchange net income still to be finalized, but in the region of $700.00. More accurate figure by next meeting. Seed Exchange Report accepted (Michael / Rodney).
   b. Amy agreed to write up successful ideas for the next committee.

2. **Quarterly Editorial Committee (Summary of Editor’s email report)**
   a. Some incompatibility of software versions has been experienced between our editorial staff and the new printer in Michigan, but hopefully this will be resolved soon.
   b. Changing to the new printer will result in huge savings. Maedythe expressed many thanks to Alan Lawrence for arranging the change.
   c. Sufficient material can usually be found for a quarterly issue, but the Editor requests articles to help fill it out even more. For example, the

**National Show 2012**

The commemorative 70th National Show will be held in Portland, Oregon on April 7 and 8, 2012 in conjunction with the Portland Hardy Plant Society’s giant spring sale. More information in the fall issue.
Doretta Klaber Chapter would like information from APS members on growing primulas in their area.

d. The cost of the color pages is covered by donations for the next few issues. Many thanks to donors.

e. Report accepted (Ed / Linda)

3. Website

a. Two full quarterlies can now be read by members on the website: the current issue and the previous one. Eventually there will be four issues. This extra service will benefit everyone who registers, particularly new members, who will in effect receive a full year’s issues on joining.

b. The website has been visited by over 101,000 people since last August.

c. Nearly a quarter of the society’s members are now registered to use the members-only areas of the website. Michael has submitted an article in the Spring Quarterly to encourage more members to take advantage of this members’ benefit.

d. During the Seed Exchange some members had difficulty obtaining forms and information from the website. Michael resolved this problem by making the Seed Exchange areas fully public and adjusting the layout of the home page.

e. The website will be charging $25.00 per year for commercial operations to have their link posted on our website. The link will be augmented with a brief description of what is available on the linked site. Operations which already advertise in the Quarterly or which are institutional members will be provided a link free of charge. ACTION: Marianne will inform all advertisers of these facts.

f. Plans are to adopt PayPal or similar for online payment.

g. Michael asked for more article contributions, however short.

h. Report accepted (Linda / ed)

4. National Show

Report POSTPONED to the next board meeting.

5. Membership

a. At least five new members have joined during this National Show.

b. Recently, Alan Lawrence sent out complimentary quarterlies at his own expense to encourage members to renew. This, combined with Julia Haldorson’s efforts in sending reminders by various means, resulted in 150 renewals of lapsed memberships. The board expressed thanks to Alan and Julia.

c. As of April 23rd, 2011, membership stood at 327.

d. Membership report accepted (Amy / Ed)

6. Judging Committee

a. No revisions have been made to the APS Judging Standards for many years. ACTION: Ed will contact Kris Fenderson for help with revising the rules.

b. Judith Sellers recently sent Michael hard copies of the 2002 version of the Standards. Michael has converted these to electronic files and has posted them on the website. ACTION: He will send copies of the Judging Standards by email to Ed and Cheri.

c. Cheri has a copy of the test for would-be judges.

d. No formal report as yet.

E. Chapter Reports (Chapters are required to supply a brief report of finances and membership)

1. Juneau, Alaska

   Membership is currently around 25. The chapter has funds of $5,162, earned from local garden activities (Juneau does not charge membership dues.). Juneau has voted to donate $500 to help with the quarterly publishing.

2. Doretta Klaber

   No report. ACTION: Michael will contact the chapter for information.

3. New England

   a. Membership is currently 56. The chapter has funds of $4,591.28.

   b. Cheri suggested that this strong group split into new chapters.

2. Tacoma, Washington

   No report. ACTION: Michael will contact the chapter for information.

F. Business Arising and Old Business

1. Dorothy Dickson Award (for exceptional service to the APS)

   No decision has yet been made. MOTION (Ed / Michael): to POSTPONE this decision to the next board meeting. Carried.

2. Election Results

   Twenty-six ballots were returned. There were no write-in candidates. All slated candidates were elected:

   Directors (3-year term): Cheri Fluck, Rhondda Porter

   President (2-year term): Alan Lawrence

   Secretary (2-year term): Michael Plumb

   Treasurer (1-year term by request): Jon Kawaguchi

   The board thanked Linda Bailey, retiring director, for her long service on the board.

3. Membership Dues

   MOTION (Cheri / Ed): to increase dues in small increments of 50 cents. Nine against, one in favor. Motion failed.

   MOTION (Amy / Marianne): to keep membership dues the same until a review in January 2012. Carried.

F. Provisional dates of the next three board meetings

   Alan sent these dates by email shortly after the meeting:

   July 31st 2011, October 30th 2011, January 29th 2012

G. Adjournment (Amy) at 3:10 Eastern.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Plumb, Secretary
A passionate *Primula* grower and gifted hybridizer, Bryan Davies is a very quiet person, not often seen. But once a year he brings his plants to the VIRAGS show in Victoria and fills the *Primula* benches. Each year they get better and better. One outstanding seedling he showed this year is a delicate pink/apricot shade with leaves that indicate some *P. marginata* in the background somewhere.

The seed package was labeled *P. allionii* x but whatever its heritage, this seedling is worth the first it gained in the show and now a name as well. We are working on that.

**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., Elverson, 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
  - mark.dyen@csgrp.com

- Rodney Barker, Co-President
  - 49 Woodcliff Road Newton Highlands, MA 02461
  - rodneybrkr@gmail.com

**New Members this Quarter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expiry</th>
<th>Member</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Patti Claffin P. O. Box 1420  Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Raphaella Consigil 1599 County Highway 33 Coopersville, New York 13326 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Ruth Faass 25400 SW Harmony Road Sheridan, Oregon 97378 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Gardiner Museum, Landscape Department 2 Palace Road Boston, Massachusetts 02115 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Peter George 2011 P. O. Box 833 Petersham, Massachusetts 01366 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Linda Hamm 1 Fox Run Road Upton, Massachusetts 01568 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Kathleen M. Liners 4039 Tonkawood Road Minnetonka, Minnesota 55345 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Alex Pantos P. O. Box 464 Upton, Massachusetts 01568 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Elizabeth Peters Beier 5 Fallen Street Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 U.S.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>David Simmons 976 Marine Drive Gibbons, British Columbia VON 1V1 Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Anne Stewart 31 Shire Oaks Drive Pittsford, New York 14534 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Any Weinstein 3005 Normanton Drive Northwest Washington, D.C. 20008 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>E. Zander 127 North Street Goshen, Connecticut 06756 U.S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Patricia L. Anderson 3849 Apollo Drive Anchorage, Alaska 99504 U.S.A.</td>
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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