Primroses

The Quarterly Of The American Primrose Society

Autumn 2012 | Vol. 70 | No. 4
Primroses
The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society
Volume 70 No 4  Autumn 2012

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

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Membership in the Society includes a subscription to Primroses, seed exchange privileges, password to the member’s only subscription to Primroses, seed exchange section of the APS web site (including the Pictorial Dictionary) and use of the slide library.

Dues for individual or household membership, domestic and Canada are: $25 per calendar year $70 for three years Overseas rates: $32 per calendar year $90 for three years. Membership renewals are due November 15 and are delinquent January 1. Submit payment to the treasurer. Advertising rates per issue:

Black and White:
Full page: $100
Half page: $50
1/4 page: $30
1/8 page: $15

Color:
Full page: $150
Half page: $75
Back Cover: $450
Contact the treasurer for details.

President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

One of the benefits of membership in the American Primrose Society is the annual seed exchange to look forward to as we head into winter. It is probably the most comprehensive source of Primula seed available in North America and each year continues to offer an amazing selection of seed to our members. We purchase some of our stock from specialist suppliers, such as Jellito and Barnhaven for example, but the majority of our selection is obtained from seed collected and sent in by members, for which the society is extremely grateful. I usually contribute seed from half a dozen species or so, but this year the seed from my garden is in extremely short supply. It simply forgot to rain on my garden this year - the worst drought for decades. This coupled with temperatures of 90F (27.5C) was fatal to many of my Primulas, particularly the younger seedlings, 95% of which did not survive. This year I think I will need to take advantage of the seed exchange as I have a lot of replacement to do.

As we head towards the end of the calendar, it’s coming up to membership renewal time for those of us whose membership expires this year. (Your expiration year is usually above your name on the Quarterly mailing envelope.) It is always difficult in these days of economic downturn to justify membership in a Society such as ours, and the Society itself is not immune from the realities of rising costs, particularly in the production and mailing costs of the Quarterly. We have made some economies to keep our costs affordable and maintain four issues a year without, I hope, too much of a reduction in the quality of the Quarterly. I believe it is well worth the cost of membership to receive 4 issues of the Quarterly each year (and inclusion in the Seed Exchange!)
and would encourage all of you to renew your membership for the coming year. Everyone involved in the production of the Quarterly puts in a lot of effort to keep it interesting and enjoyable for any Primula enthusiast. Your contributions by way of photos and commentary on your own gardening successes (and failures!) keeps the dialog open amongst our membership through the Quarterly.

As I write this message, it must be the end of summer for it will frost here today and tomorrow, to compound the weather woes. After the long, very dry summer, it is really fall, and I wonder what kind of winter we can look forward to. Perhaps you’d like to drop the Editor a line and let us know how your fall and winter are looking.

Innisfree Irish Primroses

BY JOAN HOEFFEL

Just down the road from John F. Kennedy’s old family home in Dunganstown, Ireland, Joe Kennedy, a collector of old Irish primrose cultivars, was busily hybridizing his collection, mainly for his own pleasure. Kennedy, who describes himself as “a bit of a recluse,” retired early from his profession as a dentist in order to devote himself to his private passion. He would breed about 2,000 new plants each year, and at least 1,900 would end up as compost. At first, he chose to pollinate randomly, but as the years progressed, he refined his choices in order to breed for darker leaves, flower shape and color, and hardiness.

At the end of the 19th century, a number of Irish lady gardeners were pursuing the popular pastime of breeding primroses. This continued into the first half of the 20th century, but since the 1950s, there have been few new introductions of primroses from Ireland. However, in 2005, Joe Kennedy took his primroses, hybrids of Primula vulgaris, to the Alpine Garden Show in Dublin. His display proclaimed, “New Irish Primrose Hybrids. All bred over the past 25 years by Joe Kennedy, Ballycastle.” The plants were not for sale. Kennedy had created them for his own pleasure. Still, the unexpected array of handsome, covetable plants was tremendously exciting.

Enter Pat FitzGerald of FitzGerald Nurseries in Kilkenny, who says, “My own first contact with primroses came as a child seeing drifts of them growing in the 2000 year old Rath (Celtic Ringfort) on our farm here in County Kilkenny.” The nursery specializes in producing garden-worthy, easy-to-grow plants (http://www.fitzgerald-nurseries.com/about). After reading an article written by Joe Kennedy in the Irish Plant Society journal, he contacted the breeder and convinced him to part with twenty or thirty of his better plants. The plants were evaluated in a selection process, and two dark-leaved varieties were singled out to be introduced in 2011. The introduction was to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the inauguration of John Fitzgerald Kennedy as President of the United States in January 1961. These very special primroses are ‘Innisfree,’ named for Irish poet W.B. Yeats’ mythical cabin at the Lake Isle of Innisfree, and ‘Drumcliff.’

The first attention-getting attribute of the “Kennedy Irish Primroses,” as they are now called, is the rosette of very dark, bronzy purple leaves, described by some as “near black.” ‘Innisfree’ has deep and vivid red flowers with a yellow eye, while ‘Drumcliff’ has lilac-tinted white flowers. Both hybrids have large blooms held proud above the foliage on robust stems and are fragrant. Bloom time is reported to be from March to May, depending on location. Spent flowers must be removed

Website Initiative

The APS website is a great resource for Primula lovers, and gets well over 1,000 hits a day! If you have something that is related to Primula, it should be on there!

The Website administrator, along with the editor, are working to develop an even better website with more storage, as the storage we have is pretty much maxed out. More storage doesn’t cost all that much extra per year, but it will cost a few hundred dollars.

The executive is asking that if you have any spare dollars to donate, perhaps they could go to the Website Initiative. If you have any links that would be helpful to other Primula growers, let the webmaster know. And if you would like to see something else on the website, tell us!

Check out the newest developments on the homepage of the website itself. There is a Primula forum where you could post a question. Note the article in this issue about ordering Primula books directly from the APS website. Watch the website for the seed list which will be posted in December.

And Primula nursery people: consider the number of visitors that stroll through the website on a daily basis. Contact the Advertising manager to get your link on the website - advertising@americanprimrosesociety.com
to prolong blooming. Plants require part to full shade and thrive in beds and borders as well as in containers and flower boxes. Moist but well-drained soil, rich in humus, is recommended with an average amount of water provided during hot spells. ‘Innisfree’ and ‘Drumcliff’ grow 5 to 8 inches high with a spread of 5 to 8 inches. The plants are hardy to Zone 5 (-20 degrees F).

The Kennedy Irish Primroses were featured on the television program Martha Stewart Living, and as a result of the 2011 St. Patrick’s Day primrose presentation by Mrs. Fionnuala Kenny to America’s First Lady Michelle Obama, word is spreading about these unique primroses.

This year, around 50,000 each of ‘Innisfree’ and ‘Drumcliff’ have been propagated and within the next year or two, they will be followed by the introduction of new Kennedy cultivars. Expect to find varieties with yellow, white, peach and pink flowers – all with the unusually dark purple-bronze foliage color.

The new Irish primroses are being sold across Europe: in France, Germany, Holland and Belgium; in Japan; and in America, where they were launched last year at the Philadelphia Flower Show. They’re also available in Ireland and the UK in selected garden centers.

In a separate program, FitzGerald Nurseries plans to revive the venerable old Irish cultivars that provided the genetic material for Kennedy’s new range. Pat FitzGerald adds, “many of the later varieties will introduce some of the old “Hose-in-Hose”, “Jack-in-the-Greens”, and various matt-forming stoloniferous types. Unique characteristics, just like Joe himself.” Nearly a century after their last heyday, Irish primroses are again center stage!

Editor’s note:

The following websites provided much of this information and are great resources for more information:

http://fitzgeraldnurseries.blogspot.ca/
http://onebeanrow.com/tag/innisfree/

Additional comments from Pat FitzGerald are from personal correspondence.

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Starting Primula seeds

A ROUND-UP OF INFORMATION BY MAEDYTHE MARTIN

It’s fall again, and pretty soon the seed lists will start to appear. In case you need a refresher on how to start seeds, or if you want to try a different method, here are some suggestions on starting Primula seeds.

The Barnhaven website (http://www.barnhaven.com/sowing) covers the topic very well. Barnhaven suggests starting seeds from February to April. Further down on the page they mention that Primula seedlings need to have some well established roots before being moved on into bigger seed pots. I always start my seeds in December and then move them on in May and they have developed good root systems by then. But I live on the mild West Coast.

Seedling composts of the right consistency are important. Only in the last year or two have I started to incorporate Perlite as a way to add more air to the mix. It seems to work as the Primula seedlings are growing on well in this mix. Lynn’s comments on the Barnhaven website point out that Primula seedlings need air at the roots, so anything you can do to accommodate that will help the tiny plants grow.

The Barnhaven website provides other useful warnings – grow the seedlings in a cool place, never let them dry out and never use a heated propagator. Now to just get some of those wonderful Barnhaven seeds from the APS seed exchange and get going!

Another one of our favorite Primula websites, http://www.primulaworld.com/pwweb/growingfromseed, has a step-by-step list of how Pam Eveleigh starts her seeds. As she is working mainly with species, as opposed to the hybrids often obtained from Barnhaven, her methods are slightly different. I find that hybrids will pop up in their seed pots on a cool windowsill quite readily, but now I generally put the seeds of species Primula outside to
experience whatever cold weather we get on the West Coast.

Look at the pictures on the PrimulaWorld website to see the seed planting process and the tiny seedlings. Pam often has seeds of Primula that are hard to germinate or grow, and her website page gives instruction of using gibberelic acid to start these more challenging seeds. This is a useful primer for those who would like to try this method.

For those of you who are print oriented, rather than dedicated users of cyberspace, you could look at the section in Allen Guest’s book The Auricula, History, Cultivation and Varieties p. 39 – 40 (Garden Art Press, 2009, listed on the APS website) to see pictures of how he starts his auricula seeds. His process again stresses light and air – “sprinkle the seed on the top of the compost” – Allen mentions fall sowing of seeds, which the British seem to do more often that we do in North America. I have on occasion tried this, but I tend to lose track of the pots, so now just stick to the one sowing time in winter/early spring.

Remember that where you live and your local climate make a huge difference for when and how you start your seeds. The important thing is to find a method that is easy for you and will produce healthy Primula plants to grow on and flower. Check out the sources for ideas and plant those seeds! 🌿

### Donating & Ordering Seeds

The 2012-2013 APS Seed Exchange list of available seeds will be on the homepage of the APS website in late December, with a link to Instructions and printable Order Forms. Members may also request a printed copy of the List, Instructions and Order Form by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Judith Sellers, 2297 Co Highway 18, South New Berlin, N.Y. 13843

**And remember - it's not too late to send in your seed donations!**

Send seed in **Canada** to:
M. Martin 951 Joan Crescent, Victoria, BC V8S3L3

Send seed in **USA** to:
Amy Olmsted 421 Birch Road, Hubbardton, VT 05733

### Books on primroses and auriculas available on the APS website

**MAEDYTHE MARTIN**

A new feature on the APS website allows you to move directly to Amazon Books to order a Primula book in the recommended list. In the menu on the APS website, look for “Resources” and then move down the drop-down menu to find “Recommended Reading.” Most of the books written on our topic are listed there, but ones currently for sale on Amazon are noted with an icon that will transport you instantly to the Amazon website where you can buy the book – or books. This also benefits the APS as it gets a small “thank-you” donation for the referral.

Just to review the basic and most desirable books for your Primula bookshelf, these are the five books I use the most and find the most helpful.

1. One of the first books I would chose, as a Primula grower, would be Mary Robinson’s Primulas, the Complete Guide. It is not new, published in 1990 by Crowood Press, but it has good information on starting and growing primroses and groups them into manageable chapters that make an easy way to think about Primulas that grow in similar conditions: the European Species, the Asian Species, the Primula marginata species and its hybrids, the smaller and larger growers in the Auriculastrum group, which include the smaller P. x pubescens and the core garden and show auriculas. This covers just about everything the Primula grower might want and is a great reference book for those expanding into some of the more challenging Primula. This title is now out of print but it is often available at Amazon.com for what I think is a bargain price for the useful book it is.

2. For the auricula grower, the newest book is always a “must-have” and when Allan Guest’s The Auricula: History, Cultivation and Varieties (Garden Art Press, 2009) came out a few years ago, this was the book to get. Allan introduces us to the exotic world of show auriculas with the history of their development, and gives cultural tips for growing them. His general section lists in alphabetical order some of the best auriculas grown in the UK at the time of writing. Some of the newest introductions are included, along with two sections on the “new” stripes by Derek Parsons and the “new” doubles by Derek Salt. In each case, these varieties were years in the making, but have now firmly established their place on the
show bench in England. This book is still too new to be found in the used book market, but it is available on-line and is a real treat.

3. A complete bargain at the present moment is *Primroses and Polyanthus: a Guide to the Species and Hybrids*, by Peter Ward. Having arrived on the *Primula* book scene more than a decade ago, it is a handy book that actually includes a number of plants grown or originating in North America as well as those from the author’s native England. The author contacted a few APS members for information on plants originating in the Pacific Northwest and some of the North American plants can be found in his list of cultivars.

This book is listed at the moment on Amazon Books at a ridiculously low price and ships from the UK. The prices online fluctuate, but this title is good value and helpful for the beginner.

4. My personal favorite for the auricula grower is Mary Robinson’s *Auriculas for Everyone* (Guild for Master Craftsmen Publications Ltd., 2000). One aspect of show auriculas is their eye-catching display in photographs, and Mary’s book contains lots of pictures. This is helpful in identifying a plant, as well as allowing one the pleasure of looking at these spectacular flowers. It is a British book, so the cultural directions are from a British perspective, but Mary presents eminently practical tips for watering and repotting. One section on “The Auricula Year” tells the grower what to do in each month to keep plants healthy. There is a good section on pests and diseases to help you identify a problem if one develops. This is a good down-to-earth survey of the subject and I use it every year when I want to look up something. It has been out of print for years and was for a while almost unobtainable, but now seems to be available on Amazon Books. Grab it up before it disappears again.

5. The classic book for *Primula* growers is John Richard’s *Primula* (Rev. edition, Timber Press, 2003) and for the grower interested in the species *Primula*, this is the book to have. It is an in depth reference book with considerable scientific information in the introduction to help with identifying *Primula*. Knowing where the species grows in the wild is key for the gardener trying to grow the plant in their garden, and all that information is here. I have seen copies of this book so well used by growers that they were literally falling apart! You will not find modern hybrid plants in here, but you will find information on all species and, for the most commonly grown, the natural hybrids are listed for information. The first edition is still available as well, and for the beginner starting with species *Primula* it is a very useful reference book. The color plates are very handsome paintings by Brigid Edwards and additional photographs show many plants in the wild.

A few reference books on our favorite topic can be gathered together so easily now by finding them on the web. Here are some suggestions to start with, and you can see others on the APS “Resources” page once you get truly hooked on *Primula*. And now with a click you can purchase them at once from the APS list. How easy is that? 😊

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**PrimulaWorld Enhancements**

**PAM EVELEIGH IN DISCUSSION WITH MAEDY THE MARTIN**

If *Primula* growers want to see what a particular species of *Primula* looks like, they just go to PrimulaWorld, a website that has pictures of many of the 450 species known today. *Primula* growers have been doing this for the past decade, but now Pam Eveleigh, the producer of this wonderful resource, is adding even more information as she includes new photos or updates a species. Take for example, the listing for *Primula rotundifolia*. Included in the 15 photos are ones from 2001 taken in situ in Nepal, and newer ones taken in a slightly different area of Nepal in 2012. The fantastic fuzzy bud scape is shown, as well as the seed capsules. Pam delights in photos with this scientific detail, as well as showing close-ups of the flowers which all *Primula* growers delight in – eye-candy from far away Nepal in the comfort of your own home. Photographers from around the world, as well as Pam herself, have contributed the photographs which save us the trouble of going to these far-flung places.

But now, not only is the plant shown, but the information Pam has included at the top of the listing tells you more about the plant – in this case the prickly difficulty over the name. Even more interesting, there are also links, where available, to take you to the exact information about the species as its naming and identification developed. What fascinates me is the link to the Edinburgh Botanical Garden’s botanical listing on-line. There, on the page, is the information about Wallich, who collected the plant in 1821 and the pressed specimen itself. You can zoom in to see the detail of the collected plant specimen and view the handwritten notes from the early 1800s. Pam assures me that seeing the herbarium specimen is often critical in plant identification and provides visual information that is invaluable. Most of us could not manage to see the herbarium specimen, even if we travelled to Edinburgh, but now, for all of us, there it is – as if it were in your very hand.

Also included for this and other species, are shots of the location of the plant in situ. There is a great picture, added this year, of a photographer taking a picture of *P. rotundifolia* under a dark looming overhang. It shows the place in which the plant has chosen to grow, very useful information for home gardeners attempting to grow the plant in their own garden, and is, at the same time, a super image to enjoy.

All this for one species, so far! There are many others. Another example is the listing for *P. melanantha*. Since the article in the APS quarterly in 2009 with pictures taken by Claire Cockcroft, the species then identified as *P. euprepes* has been most recently named *P. melanantha*. But what pictures! You have to go and look! The first visual image by Harry Jans from 2009 looks like something from a science fiction novel.

The species for which the enhanced information has been included are mainly ones with the “new” button attached to the name. Keep checking back as Pam updates frequently. On example for which there is new information is *P. wollastonii*. Here the links take you to the descriptions in the Flora of Nepal and in this listing, finally to a line drawing of the plant with delightful botanical detail. The pictures of the flowers themselves are fantastic.
One last suggestion for a visual feast: look at *Primula maximowiczii*. The red color of this Asian species always causes a stir in the *Primula* world, for few *Primula* are as scarlet-red. The photo by Lawrence Harder taken this year displays the flowers in amazing detail and catches the unusual color perfectly! One has to confess that some plants have a paler color and these are shown, along with the elongated seed capsules. The fascinating resting bud this plant develops can be seen in the photo by Ian Scott and the flower scape just emerging from this resting bud is captured in the photo by Pam Eveleigh in her garden. The text at the beginning of the page also directs one to a yellow relative of *P. maximowiczii* – *P. advena*. Detail on the development of the naming of the plant is fascinating, as is the specimen in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, collected by Ludlow and Sheriff in 1936. Imagine being able to examine the pressed herbarium specimen handled by these historical giants of the *Primula* world!

If you would like to see a picture of Pam herself, look under the top menu tab “Resources” on the homepage for PrimulaWorld and there is “The webmaster and her garden.” Calgary is not intuitively thought of as a hospitable climate for *Primula* but the variety of plants Pam grows in her garden and rockery have to make one rethink conventional wisdom. Taking advantage of the dry climate most of the year, Pam places plants beside rocks in the ground that more conventional growers in the UK would only grow under glass. And they thrive, as the pictures testify.

Pam has built an enormous, valuable resource in this PrimulaWorld website and the additional information just adds a further dimension. On a grey winter day a tour around the photographs of *Primula* on this website will take you to another fascinating, fantastic colorful world. Thank you, Pam. 😊

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**Renew with PayPal - now available!**

It’s renewal time again, and you can now use PayPal on the APS website to renew your membership.

We had a great response last year, and hope we will continue to increase the membership through the World Wide Web!

PayPal also allows you to use a variety of payments online, which means you don’t have to be signed up use this great feature!

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**Primroses Online**

JANE GUILD AND MAEDY THE MARTIN

Now-a-days you don’t need to have a book to look at articles about *Primula*. If you have a computer, there are lots of resources online. Here are some of the blogs we found recently, but a browser search of *Primula* at any time may turn up something different! Some of those mentioned here are general gardening blogs but they often mention *Primula* as these authors seem to have a soft spot for our favorite flower.

http://gardeningattheedge.wordpress.com is a blog written by a gardener in Central Scotland. As the heading on her website contains a marching band of pink candelabra *Primula* this is a clue that she likes the *Primula* species. Her blog on *P. melanantha* shares the story of her growing the plant. This is a nicely written spot that is worth checking out now and then.

Here’s another one: http://teaontheterrace.com/tag/primula/. Kat, the author, is interested in gardening and often talks about *Primula* which are sure to be found in her cottage garden. Her visit to the RHS Garden Harlow Carr documents some auriculas found growing there, along with lots of other plants.

For the auricula lover, the Abriachan Nursery has a blog on all the things gardener’s love, and there is a healthy dose of *Primula* and auricula posting. The address is: http://lochnessgarden.blogspot.ca/ But follow the prompts and look at the listing for auriculas in the nursery’s catalogue – it is an impressive list and provides some information on the plant. Imagine finding ‘Dale’s Red’ auricula, which originated with Dale Worthington in Oregon, in a Scottish nursery!

Another site we’ve mentioned before and one that deserves another look is Graham Rices’ website and his blogs: http://mygarden.rhs.org.uk/blogs/graham_rice/archive/2012/06/26/new-double-laced-polyanthus-new-from-hayloft-plants.aspx One of the newest posts is on double laced polyanthus – you have to look at these pictures! Graham lives in Michigan and in the UK and posts lots of gardening news. His other blog, http://www.transatlanticplantsman.com, also talks about the new Kennedy Irish Primroses!

For the species *Primula* grower here is a blog from Sikkim! Look at the postings: http://sujoyrdas.blogspot.ca/2012/09/primulas-and-north-sikkim.html#uds-search-results. In a recent posting the author tells us of finding a huge swath of rose-colored *Primula* in a meadow high in the mountains. I think this might be *P. rotundifolia*. The pictures are breath-taking.

So a trip around the world, including Britain, the Himalayas and a nursery tour in Scotland are all possible with the click of the mouse. Hope you have a nice trip! 😊
Pallas’ Oxlip

BY JAMES L. JONES

Pallas’ Oxlip (a currently unresolved name) is named for Peter Simon Pallas, a German scientist who explored West Siberia between 1768 and 1774 under the auspices of Catherine the Great. One of his finds was P. pallasii, which has a range from western Siberia to Georgia in the Caucasus. Little information on habitat is available on Google. It is worth noting that some references classify it as a subspecies of P. elatior but in the International Plant Name Index it is listed as a valid species.

P. pallasii is low-growing, rising to 15cm (6 in), bearing full scapes of pale yellow flowers in early spring, about one week ahead of P. veris (which meant the second week of April in the Boston area in this peculiar year). The foliage is deciduous and dense, and remaining in good shape through much of the season. The leaves are folded back and unobtrusive at flowering (a nice touch) and are of a substantially different shape from P. veris or P. vulgaris.

Mention of the plant is spotty on the Web and rare in publications: it is only referenced once in the index of the Alpine Garden Society Bulletin (volume 30, which would be 1962, well before my time), and not at all in the Scottish Rock Garden Club Journal. Two valuable websites, that include pictures, are www.wild-russia.org/bioregion9/9-kuznetsky.htm, which describes its habitat, and www.bgc.org, the site of the Central Siberian Botanic Garden.

Seed and plants do not seem to be widely available, though B&T World Seeds (b-&-t-world-seeds.com) lists it. My own acquisition was an unexpected perk of becoming a director of the NARGS Seed Exchange, which signaled the arrival on my doorstep of a number of “indices semina” from some pretty nifty institutions. Among those a consistent winner has been the Reykjavik Botanical Garden – who would have guessed? – from which I received seed of the plant in 2001. I sowed the seed on arrival in June in my usual sand/peat moss mix and germination occurred the next month; from that batch just one went on to bloom in 2008, and has proved itself a real winner.

Along with good looks it has an admirably easy-going nature, tolerating brighter and drier situations than other species I’ve grown, making it suitable for all sorts of unlikely niches -- year by year I’ve been edging it into ever more demanding conditions. It also increases at quite a clip, which is fortunate given that I have only the one plant to work with and there has been no sign of it setting more seed. So for now I have to content myself with passing it around to the locals one plant at a time -- unless someone can advise me on how to nudge it into seed set.

Pallas’ Oxlip

Shown above, in the author’s garden;
right, in the wild (Turkey)
photographed by Claire Cockcroft;
and below (also in Turkey)
photographed by Jeanie Jones
Top left: Primula melanantha, amazing photo by Harry Jans
Above: Primula wollastonii, showing off its beautiful spotted farina flowers, photo by Ian Scott
Left: Pretty Primula rotundifolia, photographed in Nepal by Marijn van den Brink

"...a photographer taking a picture of P. rotundifolia under a dark looming overhang. It shows the place in which the plant has chosen to grow, very useful information for home gardeners attempting to grow the plant in their garden..."

Photo by Marijn van den Brink

Top left: the amazing color of Primula maximowiczii captured by Lawrence Harder on Dongling Mountain in Beijing, China
Top right: the other side of Primula wollastonii - its fuzzy little leaves, shown here in a close-up by Ian Scott
Above left: Primula rotundifolia, not yet open, showing beautiful farina covered buds, by Marijn van den Brink
Above right: Primula wollastonii after the rain has washed off most of the farina, photographed by Harry Jans
Right: the astonishing variety of Primula that Pam Eveleigh grows, and in Calgary too!
Above: BBC Gardener’s World visited FitzGerald Nurseries to film a segment featuring the story behind the Kennedy Irish Primroses for Gardeners World programme presented by Carol Klein, shown here with Pat FitzGerald (middle) and Joe Kennedy.

Left: ‘Drumcliff’ with its pale lavender flowers
Below: ‘Innisfree’ with deep red flowers and the signature dark purple-red Irish Primrose leaves

Above: one of the as yet unnamed Kennedy Irish Primroses we can look forward to
Below left: ‘Avondale’ and Below right: ‘Carrigdale’: two new introductions that FitzGerald nurseries will be releasing soon
Photos courtesy of FitzGerald Nurseries
Joe Kennedy’s Irish Primroses

Left: one of Joe Kennedy’s plants, showing a beautiful hose-in-hose - a flower inside a flower.

Right: a Jack-in-the-Green, where the sepals resemble leaves

Right: Jack-a-napes, a type of primrose with a mix of flower and leaf tissue in the calyx

Above: Joe Kennedy in his garden, with dozens of pots in his breeding program

Photos by Joe Kennedy

Exciting Perennial varieties from seed

Jelitto

Photos by Joe Kennedy
The APS Seed Exchange: Q and A

JUDITH SELLERS

We occasionally have questions from members about how the seed exchange is organized and why we follow certain procedures. Here are answers to some of the more common enquiries ~

Q - Who 'does' the seed exchange?
A - Volunteers from any APS, often affiliated with a chapter, manage the seed exchange and do most of the work. For the past few years, four or five members of the New England Chapter have coordinated to complete the tasks. Because we try to keep the seeds cool (i.e. not in the mail) and we live scattered across the northeast, one person usually ends up doing most of the individual seed packaging, financial recording, and filling and mailing of the orders. Seeds from overseas are handled in Canada by our volunteer ‘intake’ person before being sent to the USA.

Q - Why does the APS need to buy seeds from commercial sources?
A - The APS wants to offer the best possible assortment of seeds as a benefit of membership. Unfortunately, there are many species which do not set much seed in our own gardens, so we order named varieties and choice species from those who produce or collect seeds professionally. We are always in need of more member-donated seeds, which often produce the most garden-worthy and beautiful plants.

Q - Why do some packages contain so few seeds?
A - Often, the seeds in greatest demand are those which we must purchase, and therefore must carefully ration to benefit the most growers. When we have a plentiful supply of seeds, such as those from Primula japonica or mixed polyanthus, the packets may contain several hundred seeds.

Q - Why does the list seldom contain the petiolarid section or allionii?
A - There are a number of obstacles causing that gap in our list. Some seeds are very difficult to obtain due to strict gathering and export regulations in countries where they grow; dead-heading to prevent rot; limited, if existent, seed set. In addition, the seeds from many petiolarids do not remain viable in storage, and will not germinate if sown weeks after harvest. If you know of sources where we might obtain these seeds, please let us know!

Q - How can members help with the seed exchange?
A – Order your full quota from the exchange (unsold seeds are a sad loss to growers, and to our treasury) and encourage friends to grow Primulas. Use a packet or two as a gift, or let a friend ‘share’ your own order. Donate seeds for as many varieties of Primulaceae as you can, as the more we receive, the more we can share. Volunteer to help with the Seed Exchange, as there is no better way to learn about the seeds, and even thinking about spring sowing helps the winter fly by. 😃
THE PRIMROSE OLYMPICS

JOAN FRASER

“Why do you have shows? I’ve never been to one.” Disappointing words to Maedythe Martin, chair of the APS editorial committee, who exhibits in Western Canada and the Western U.S. To answer the question she decided to ask friends Terry Mitchell of England. Jay Lunn of Oregon and Ed Buyarski of Alaska, who also enter shows, why the societies hold them and what benefits they enjoy from them. Their replies were handed to the compiler at the time when London’s Olympics were still underway. This led to the thought that primrose shows are in some way like primrose Olympics.

“Yes, gardening can be a competitive sport too,” says Ed. “Some of us like to show off that special plant that we have grown from seeds or divisions and others may lust to possess and flower them successfully.” Terry likes to see “superb plants, some varieties grown far better than I could ever grow them.” Maedythe looks for special hybrids, striped auriculas and unusual species. Going round a show encourages her to think of projects for the following spring. During the fall and winter all entrants have the challenge of growing with the chancy element of timing. Will the seed sprout? Is it true? Will it bloom too early? Will cold weather delay it? The goal is to have the plant at its best, at its full potential. And then, if a plant is to be shown, it helps if the grower has a good eye for presentation so the plant is well potted and displayed. This is something of an art in itself. Excellent display ideas can sometimes be picked up from show entries by other members.

Expert exhibitors’ challenges do not affect the pleasures and benefits that the shows bring to others. Jay likes “the camaraderie that goes along with setting up the show and putting it on.” A huge amount of organization is needed, choosing a date, finding a hall, advising growers, getting judges and volunteers, planning for the costs, arranging publicity, printing tickets and finding and shining the trophies. Should there be a conference with a speaker? When the day comes tables must be set up, chairs provided for workers and weary spectators; growers need to deliver and set up exhibits; the judges must have the time to judge, and inevitably there is some fallout from disappointed contestants. And, as Jay says, “If you win a trophy (say, a big copper kettle) what do you do with it for the year it is in your hands?”

Jay likes the shows for “a garden tour in pots”; seeing what others are growing and sharing with them what he is growing. Terry likes having the opportunity to question fellow enthusiasts and growers in person to get cultural tips “to improve your own skills and grow better plants.” He greatly appreciates the “generosity of fellow growers with advice, plants and offsets of new and very rare varieties often unobtainable elsewhere.” Personal introductions made at the shows are invaluable. At one of the NAPS Northern shows at Cheadle, Maedythe Martin met John Gibson, who made a point of introducing himself to new people looking at the show. From this contact John was eventually invited to come as a speaker to an APS show held in Vancouver. Everyone benefited from John’s many years of experience in showing and growing and judging Primula in England.

A show may also encourage new members to join. As Jay says, “you are showing the general public the range of plants in the Society’s arsenal.” Sale tables provide a chance for both enthusiasts and general spectators to purchase plants that add something new to their gardens.

A sort of euphoria sets in at the end of a good show. Old friends have been well met, new friends introduced, and the conversation has been amusing because news and gossip is on a shared theme. Both spectator and participant may go home with little notes and tantalizing snippets that have been picked up about must-read books and must-see databases. And when the hall is cleared once again, the growers, physically tired but spiritually refreshed, leave dreaming and scheming with ideas and plans for the next show.

Donations

Not your money - your time!

The Quarterly is only as good as the articles and photos we receive, and very often we only receive what we ask for. So we are asking you, the membership, to share yours.

A short letter to the editor, a few photos of what’s happening in your garden, the link to a blog you follow for Primula - these are the things that make for an interesting issue.

So please, let us know what you like, what you don’t like, what you want to see more of, and most importantly: contribute!
New Members

JULIA HALDORSON

A list of new members can be found on the inside of the back cover of each issue of the American Primrose Society quarterly journal Primroses. Our editor wondered why folks decide to join APS, and as the Membership Secretary, I have been curious as well. Recently, I sent an email message to a select few new members asking them why they joined APS. Two members were kind enough to respond to my inquiry.

Kingsley Butler gardens in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada. He states that one of the reasons he joined APS is because he is “just a ‘joiner’.” He says that he belongs “to a number of specialist societies,” but also indicated that a prime reason was to participate in the Seed Exchange. At one time, he said, he had quite a number of Primula but “they pretty much evaporated; got smothered by the invidious goutweed.” Kingsley says that it’s next to impossible to buy any but “florist Primulas locally in Nova Scotia.” To replace his lost primroses he will need to grow plants from seed.

The APS journal, Primroses, is another important reason Kingsley joined the society. He says that he thinks “it is definitely one of the best I receive.” Kingsley has taken advantage of the opportunity to purchase old issues of Primroses from APS Board Member and Librarian, Cheri Fluck. Kingsley feels that “there is more good meat in the old journals” but adds that the color photos in the newer issues are “definitely a plus.”

Catherine Mix lives and gardens in Sequim, Washington, U.S.A.; a continent away from Kingsley Butler. Catherine states that she has gardened for years but feels that “I am such a novice with auricula and primroses that I am hoping to find a virtual mentor who will help me be a successful grower of these beauties in short order.” Catherine recently purchased a few bare root plants from Barnhaven and successfully germinated about 10 varieties of Barnhaven seed. This year she collected seed from her volunteer Primula japonica and is looking forward to participating in the annual APS Seed Exchange. Catherine kindly included photographs of primroses that “come back each spring” saying that she started from seeds “years ago.” This year she identified the plants, divided them and hopes to offer them for sale in next year’s plant sale. Catherine said that she has recently retired from the wedding venue business and now plans to “focus on primulas and painting.”

When you are renewing your membership – if you have an extra dollar or two – please consider a donation along with your dues; the Society will be very grateful! You can designate how you want your donation allocated if you choose: supporting the quarterly, or the seed exchange or the National Show or the new Website Initiative. It all helps to keep the APS running.

Renewal Time Again

November and December is the time for renewals again at APS. This year we have a new way you can renew – by PayPal! Just go to the website and follow the prompts. This may be convenient for those of you who love to use the internet.

Unfortunately, the costs for the Quarterly are no longer covered by the membership fees. Rather than raise fees, the Society has asked for, and received, kind donations which have made possible the color pages in the quarterly – the biggest expense – for the last few years. In 2011 the cost was covered by donations from the B.C. Primula Group, the New England Chapter, the Doretta Klaber Chapter and particularly the Juneau Chapter – thank you to all these supporting groups! In addition there was a donation from an anonymous donor specifically for the quarterly, as well as many individual donations to help keep the Quarterly afloat. We are very grateful to all these people.

We are always interested in the reasons folks join the American Primrose Society. Please contact me at membership@americanprimrosesociety.com if you would like to share your story!
American Primrose Society
Minutes of the Board Meeting held on July 28th, 2012

The meeting was held online. It opened at 6:02 pm, Eastern Time.

Board members present: Rodney Barker (Director), Mark Dyen (Co-Chair of the New England Chapter), Cheri Fluck (Director), Julia Haldorson (Director and Membership Secretary), Jon Kawaguchi (Treasurer), Alan Lawrence (APS President), Michael Plumb (Secretary and Webmaster), Susan Schnare (Director), Rhondda Porter (APS Vice-President)

Regrets: Ed Buyarski (Director, and President of the Juneau Chapter), Amy Olmsted (Director, and Seed Exchange Coordinator), Ed Buyarski (Director, and President of the Juneau Chapter), Amy Olmsted (Director, and Seed Exchange Coordinator), Susan Schnare (Director), Rhondda Porter (APS Vice-President)

A. Approval of the Agenda (Rodney / Rhondda), with the addition of use of PayPal under Treasurer’s report and sponsorship for next year’s National Show under New Business.

B. The Minutes of April 7th 2012 – Accepted as presented (Michael / Rhondda)

C. Treasurer’s Report (Emailed before the meeting)
   1. Income less expenses April 1st 2012 to June 30th 2012: $250.35
   2. Total liabilities and equity as of June 30th, 2012: $28,189.96
   3. April’s National Show ended with a surplus of approx. $2,000 thanks to donations and the work of the show committee. Cheri, one of the show organizers, reported that one check for a substantial donation ($500) was still outstanding. ACTION: She and Jon will contact the people concerned.
   4. The Seed Exchange ended with $428.58 in the black. Sales were comparable to last year’s but expenses were nearly 30% higher.
   5. Membership dues are not enough to cover all of the Society’s expenses and we now rely on other sources of income to prevent annual losses.
   6. Rhondda confirmed with Jon that she was now responsible for finding advertisers.
   7. Julia expressed concern about the method of invoicing for advertisements in the quarterly. A total of only $120 from advertising in the quarterly had been received so far this year. However, it was established that the future revenue from at least one of our larger advertisers for the full year 2012 would be $300 for two half-page color ads plus $120 for two half-page black and white ads.
   8. MOTION (Cheri / Rhondda, following the recommendation of the Treasurer): to use PayPal exclusively for all credit card transactions. Carried. ACTION: This will mean the elimination of the space for credit card numbers on the membership application form and also on the seed exchange order form. The purpose is to increase security for members and reduce transaction costs.
   9. MOTION (Susan / Rodney): to accept the Treasurer’s report. Carried.

D. Committee Reports
   1. National Show:
      a) [For the National Show Report, see the summer quarterly, pages 5-7.]
      b) Some board members had not yet received the financial report for the 2012 show. ACTION: Cheri will resend today.
      c) See item C3 above. MOTION (Cheri / Susan): to designate $500 from the show donations as seed money for the next National Show, the remainder to be used for publishing the quarterly as needed. Carried.
   2. Seed Exchange: The final report had not yet been submitted to the board and Amy was unavailable.
   3. Editorial Committee: The summer issues went out on time. Timing looks good for fall and winter issues, too. MOTION (Michael / Rhondda) to accept the editorial report. Carried.
   4. Website:
      a) Michael had sent the report to the board by email.
      b) Over half a million people have visited the website since August 2010. (The website receives between one and two thousand hits a day.)
      c) Over 130 members are now registered for access to the members-only areas.
      d) The Forum has become difficult for posting photographs. ACTION: Michael will look for a new Forum system.
      e) Michael emphasized the importance of posting the electronic version of the quarterly on the website even before it is surface-mailed to members.
      f) There are always several people reading the Forum postings at any one time. Rhondda emphasized the need for board members to contribute even short articles. Michael said contributors could receive help in posting text and photos if needed.
      g) Alan suggested the website be used for web-casting next year’s show presentations. ACTION: Michael will consult Jane Guild.
      h) MOTION (Rhondda / Cheri): to accept website report. Carried.
   5. Membership:
      a) Total membership as of July 24th, 2012: 337
      b) There are 49 new members so far in 2012, but we still have seven fewer members compared with last year. Rhondda said this was remarkable given the current difficult economic climate.
      c) At least 40 members have renewed using PayPal, and 26 new members joined using PayPal.
      d) MOTION (Susan / Michael): to accept the Membership Report. Carried.

E. Chapters
   No regular reports submitted. [Summer is usually a slack season for chapters. For the New England Chapter Show Report see the summer quarterly, pages 23-25.]

F. New Business: Sponsorship and Venue for the 2013 National Show
   a) Rodney said that he would consult with the New England Chapter to confirm whether they are willing to hold the show.
   b) Susan said she would investigate the possibility of holding the show at the Canadian Botanical Garden in Kingston, Ontario. ACTION: Julia will inform Susan of the members living in that area, who may be able to help.
   c) The matter was therefore TABLED for the next board meeting.

G. Adjournment (Rhondda) at 7:30 pm EDT.

Next meeting: Saturday, October 27th, at 6:00 pm Eastern.

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

Midland & West Section

www.auriculaandprimula.org.uk

£10.00 Overseas Membership.
to: The Honorary Treasurer, Roger Woods,
44 Tansey Crescent, Stoney Stanton,
Leicestershire, LE9 4BT United Kingdom.

New Members
from January 21 - April 3, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Expiry</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Year of Expiry</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Patricia K. Apgar</td>
<td>3 Howard Drive, Newton, New Jersey 07860-6017 USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Jacqueline Bassett</td>
<td>8630 Palmer Road, Presque Isle, Wisconsin 54557 USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Steve Carter</td>
<td>5145 Waymire Road, Dallas, Oregon 97338 USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Kat Chiba</td>
<td>3740 State Highway, Cherry Valley, New York 13320 USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Aase Garstad</td>
<td>66 South Shaker Road, Harvard, Massachusetts 01451 USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Aase Garstad</td>
<td>8218 Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Jeffrey Hartman</td>
<td>Dalanesvegen 110, Kallevik, Forresforden NO-5563 Norway</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Sonia Kellice</td>
<td>3479 Hansville Road, Kingston, Washington 98346-8863 USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Marjorie Klingholl</td>
<td>N4863 Sackett Drive, Medford, Wisconsin 54451 USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Harold Koopowitz</td>
<td>14081 Bremen Way, Santa Ana, California 92705 USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Larry Litten</td>
<td>40 School Street, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755 USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Michael Mizin</td>
<td>120 Sickler Pond Road, Jerryn, Pennsylvania 18433 USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Maureen Newman</td>
<td>332 Rezen Road, Roseboom, New York 13400 USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Peni Petersen</td>
<td>2339 Niles Avenue, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085 USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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membership@americanprimrosesociety.org

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