Primroses

The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

Volume 71 No 2 Spring 2013

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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Editorial Deadlines
Winter issue - October 15
Spring issue - January 15
Summer issue - April 15
Autumn issue - July 15

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

Dues for individuals or household membership, domestic and Canada are:
$25 per calendar year
$70 for three years
Overseas rates are:
$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
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Color:
Half page: $150
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Back Cover: $450
Contact the treasurer for details.

President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

The calendar says it is Spring, but here in the Upper MidWest it is definitely still Winter.

Everything is still snowbound, although slowly the temperatures are creeping upwards; the forecast is that we may get a few days in the lower 40F, before dropping back down to subfreezing with a few snow showers. At this time last year I had primroses in bloom! This means the arrival of early Spring, or “mud-season”, will likely be delayed for another week or so. Most primroses seem to like mud-season. It wakes them up from their winter slumbers under the snow, and gives them a burst of moisture to get the year going.

It’s been another good year for the Seed Exchange, well managed again by the New England Chapter. Without hard working and dedicated members none of this Society’s activities would be successful and we are grateful to them. We can all contribute to the Seed Exchange and so I ask those of you that have those special plants that you are amazed at every year to take a little time to raise some seed to contribute to next year’s Seed Exchange. Share the joy; we can never have too much seed.

It’s Show Time! This year our Annual Show is returning to Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boylston, MA, the first weekend in May, hosted by the New England Chapter. The show is always a great time, with a host of great plants on display; high quality plants for sale; interesting and informative talks and discussions; and lots of Primula People to chat with. I hope as many of you as possible will attend, and for those that can’t there will be reports with lots of pictures in the summer issue of the quarterly.

Credits: Photos and text reproduced with permission.

Front Cover: 2012 Photo Contest overall winner, ‘Arctic Series’ in the category of “My Garden” from Jan Sacks’ garden.

Back Cover: Rodney Barker’s silver-laced polyanthus, sent in by Matt Mattus.

American Primrose Society  Spring 2013
**2012 Photo Contest a Great Success!**

The APS Photo Contest for 2012 was one of the most successful ever! The response was great – many wonderful photos from a variety of growers - seventeen in all! Thanks to all those who sent pictures!

It is hard to pick an over-all winner, but a classic primrose always seems to strike a chord - as seen on this issue’s cover! Jan Sacks, the over-all winner, sent us a picture of a primrose from the ‘Arctic Series’ entered in the section ‘From My Garden’.

The winner of the category ‘Grown from Seed’, and cover photo for the Summer cover, is David Jones’ photo of *P. denticulata* grown from APS Seed Exchange seed.

Our Fall cover will feature Barrie Porteous’s photo of *P. augustifolia* from Pike’s Peak, Colorado, winner in the category ‘Other Gardens.’ The back cover will feature an Editor’s Pick: Merrill Jensen’s picture of ‘Jay Jay’ from the Jensen Olson Botanical Garden.

With so many great entries, we’ve been introduced to lots of new growers, and we will be featuring their photos in upcoming issues, along with short articles on their gardens. We have one such article in this issue - Trond Hoy’s rockery on his garden shed roof - all the way from Norway!

And while we’re on the subject of all these great flowers, please remember to save seed once the flowers are spent, and send it to the Seed Exchange.

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**Primula Relations: All the Cousins**

**NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE BC PRIMULA GROUP BY MAEDYTHE MARTIN**

At one of our recent meetings, the BC Primula Group studied the relationships of the sections of the Genus Primula. We were primarily looking to see where all the “cousins” of *Primula* fit into an evolutionary scheme and how they are related: *Cortusa*, *Dodecatheon*, *Omphalogramma*, *Androsace* and *Dionysia*.

Initially, classification of the sections of *Primula* was based on characteristics such as the number of chromosomes and the pollen type. A third factor was also considered: leaf vernation. Do the leaves emerge involute (like brackets) or revolute (like back to back brackets?) Most *Primula* leaves emerge revolute. These characteristics are known as high information biological characters. Based on these characters, the place for *Cortusa*, *Dodecatheon*, *Omphalogramma*, *Androsace* and *Dionysia* can be tentatively placed on the family tree in relation to the other sections of *Primula*.

But two important genetic studies which came out in the mid-1990s identify more correctly the place of some of these cousins based on DNA analysis which supercedes earlier methods for determining relationships. Based on these studies we now know that the evidence supports a relationship between *Primula* and three cousins: *Dodecatheon*, *Dionysia* and *Cortusa*, which evolved within the genus *Primula* as it began to diversify. Nevertheless, John Richards believes them each to be “distinctive, well-defined and very probably monophyletic” genera and thus recommends keeping *Dionysia* and *Dodecatheon* separate. ([*Primula*, J. Richards, 2nd ed. Timber Press, 2003, p. 38.])

All the sections in the Genus Primula evolved from a hypothetical archetypical *Primula* which John Richards calls “Archaeprimula” and *Androsace* also stems...
from this primitive group. It is fascinating to see where the various sections we are most familiar with fall in this scheme of relationships. Who would have thought that morphologically *P. parryi* and *P. auricula* were closely related? The various sections evolved through time as they migrated to the mountain locations where they are found today.

The hypothetical most primitive of *Primula*, the Archaeprimula, would have been found in the Eastern Himalayan Mountains. It would be represented today by plants in the section Proliferae: *P. cockburniana*, *P. chungensis*, *P. prolifera* itself and *P. miyabeana*. These plants have hairs on the leaves, no meal, and superimposed whorls with which we are all familiar from the candelabra *Primula* of gardens.

In the evolutionary scheme, *Dodecatheon* evolved from section Parryi forerunners early on. *Cortusa* is now found within Primula section Cortusoides and is, in fact, regarded as a *Primula*, *P. matthioli*.

Of the first cousins, *Androsace* evolved in China. The other cousin, *Dionysia*, are found in the Middle East, mostly Iran. Of the other two cousins, *Omphalogramma* which is more closely related to *Soldanella* than to *Primula*, is found in the Eastern Himalayan Mountains while *Soldanella* is found in the mountains of Europe.

Our discussion was enlivened by a quote from, I believe, R. Farrer, (though I can’t now find it) on *Omphalogramma*: “I grow it (*O. vincaeflorum*) with *P. calliantha*… among Cassiopes for protection.” We all marveled that he could grow it at all!

As always we were very indebted to John Richards for the information that formed the basis of our discussion, and though this topic is not something that crops up in the normal course of events, we all felt pleased to know a bit more about the genus and the various “cousins.”

When I was preparing my talk “Glancing Back,” for the 2012 American Primrose Society National Show, I went through many of the old Quarterlies. One of the things I was searching for was the names of individuals who were charter members of our organization. I couldn’t find their names listed anywhere! Who were these enthusiastic people who wanted an organization devoted to growing primroses?

The *Oregon Journal* published an article on April 20, 1941 with the heading “Portland Primrose Society Formed.” It stated that “Portland will have the distinction of having the first primrose society on the Pacific Coast and – so it is believed, while further investigations are being made – the first one formally organized in this country.” It went on to say that “A group of amateur and professional primrose growers met Tuesday [April 15, 1941] night at the Portland Central Library and appointed a committee to draw up constitution, by-laws and submit plans for permanent organization at a second meeting to be held April 29.”

Captain E. S. Bradford was named temporary chairman at that second meeting and R. W. Ewell was chosen temporary secretary. Captain Bradford appointed Dean Collins chairman of the organization committee along with A. E. Brooke, Mrs. R. P. McHenry, Mrs. H. A. Templeton and Mrs. R. M. McClary as the other members. This committee was to meet in a few days and prepare a plan for a permanent organization.

Captain Elmo S. Bradford was not only the temporary chairman, but he would serve three more years as President of the fledgling organization. Elmo was Captain of Engine Company 15 in the Portland Fire Department. He suffered a heart attack October 25, 1945 while returning to the fire station from a fire and died shortly thereafter.

Dean Collins, chairman of the organization committee, was the Garden Editor of the *Oregon Journal* and a friend of Florence (Hurtig) Levy. Florence, along with her husband Lew, were proprietors of Barnhaven, which specialized in growing primroses. Dean had convinced Florence to write garden articles for the *Oregon Journal* and these were instrumental in fostering interest in the formation of a society devoted to growing primroses.

The *Oregon Journal* listed the names and addresses of those present at the preliminary meeting. As one would expect, these were individuals who lived in northwest Oregon and southwest Washington. The people who were present are listed below in the order they were listed in the newspaper with their place of residence in parentheses.
Charter Members - Captain E. S. Bradford (Portland); C. M. Ferris (Portland); Mrs. Raymond Gill (Portland); Allen W. Davis (Multnomah); Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Lawrence (Multnomah); Mrs. J. A. Hazelwood, (Portland).

Following are the charter members whose names went on the roll at the founding meeting, Tuesday night (April 22, 1941):

Alfred E. Brooke (Portland); Mrs. John L. Karnopp (Portland); Mr. and Mrs. Lester Pepper (Milwaukie); Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Kershisnik (Portland); Mrs. Florence Levy (Gresham); Mrs. A. D. House (Portland); Mrs. S. R. Smith (Portland); Edwin F. Brown (Vancouver, WA); Mrs. John A. Meeker (Portland); R. P. McHenry (Portland); Mrs. L. J. Sherrill (Portland); Mrs. R. P. McHenry (Portland) and L. J. Sherrill (Portland).

Mrs. H. G. Staton (Portland); Mrs. John M. Young (Portland); Mrs. H. B. Isom (Portland); Lois Land (Portland); Helen A. Jones (Portland); Lou Roberts, (Milwaukie); Dean Collins (Portland); Audra Link (Milwaukie); Mrs. Edna J. Ringe (Portland); Livette L. Bellah (Oswego); Mrs. L. O. Gregory (Portland).

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Standish (Milwaukie); Mrs. R. M. McClary (Multnomah); Lewis N. Levy (Gresham); Mrs. L. M. Moyer (Portland); Mrs. W. A. Moore (Portland); Frances Collins, (Portland); Marguerite R. Clarke (Clackamas); Mrs. E. Connaway (Multnomah); Mrs. Alfred S. Wilcox (Portland); Rev. Peter S. Grimstead (Portland); Mrs. Herbert Templeton (Portland).

Mrs. Oliver Goodspeed (Milwaukie); Carl Maskey (Milwaukie); R. Pugh and Mrs. M. Pugh (Portland); Mrs. P. F. Middlebrook (Lebanon).

ARTICLE I of the draft of constitution stated that the name of this organization shall be The Primrose Society of Portland, Oregon. The question arose as to whether there was a national organization with which the Portland group might affiliate, and President E. S. Bradford directed Corresponding Secretary Mrs. Livette Bellah to make inquiries. Assurances were received from E. I. Farrington, Editor of Horticulture that he knew of no other national primrose society having yet been formed. This was confirmed by a flood of letters of inquiry from other states following the news announcement of the formation of the Portland group.

At the April 29, 1941 meeting, constitution and by-laws developed by the organization committee were adopted and the first corps of officers elected which included: President, Captain E. S. Bradford; Vice-president, A. E. Brooke; Secretary-Treasurer, R. W. Ewell; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Livette Bellah; Directors, Mrs. R. M. McClary, Mrs. Herbert Templeton and Dean Collins.

The executive committee met May 6, 1941 at the Y.M.C.A. to lay plans for the expansion of the Portland society’s activities to the scope necessary to make it a serviceable national society. That would require modification of the constitution to provide for out-of-state memberships and for the chartering of affiliate societies in other states and cities. It would also require the issuance of some sort of bulletin for the provision of information as to proceedings, to be sent to out-of-Portland members.

The Oregon Journal published an article on May 25, 1941 entitled Primrose Society To Become National and stated in part – “Publication Planned – The probable plan will be for a quarterly bulletin and an annual year book. Plans for the method of financing these will be made at the meeting Tuesday. Promises of contributions to the fund necessary for the maintenance of the quarterly and the year book have already been made by several prominent citizens – these contributions of course being contingent upon additional pledges sufficient to make up the full sum necessary for the work. As soon as this can be done the announcement of the national status of the society will be made.”

On June 20, 1943, the Oregon Journal published an article entitled New Primrose Quarterly Out For Members. It indicated that – “Members of the American Primrose Society welcomed the first quarterly issued by the society since its organization, at the monthly meeting at the Public Service building, Tuesday night, June 15. The initial number is a 24-page, mimeographed booklet, edited by Florence Levy, primrose grower and author of many primrose articles that have appeared in Garden, The Home Magazine. Rapid changes of conditions during the last year delayed the publication of the initial copy but arrangement has now been made for its regular appearance in the future. It will be brought out in mimeograph form for the duration of the war.” The mimeograph pages of the first three issues were hand collated by Florence going around and around the round dining room table of her friend, Mrs. Lou Roberts. Lou would then fold them into booklets on her kitchen table. These three issues would subsequently be reissued in typeset form combined into one issue.

Not only was Florence Levy the first editor, but she would continue in that position until the fall 1952.

I guess you could say that the rest is history!

1 The Oregon Journal was Portland, Oregon’s daily afternoon newspaper from 1902 to 1982. The Journal was purchased by S. I. Newhouse and Advance Publications, owners also of The Oregonian, the city’s morning newspaper.
2 Titles of articles found that Florence authored which appeared in the *Oregon Journal*, along with the date of their publication were:

Primrose Path Begins Calling to Gardeners, January 26, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 6-7);

Many Legends Cling Around Primroses, February 9, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 16-17);

How to Plant and Feed Primroses, February 16, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 17-18);

Double Primrose Culture Described, February 23, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 37-38);

Primroses From Roof of World, March 2, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 67-68);

China Gives New Primulae to World, March 9, 1941 (Editor, Richard Critz, reprinted what appears to be a continuation of this article in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 45, No. 1, p. 15, titled Chinese Primulae. This was not found in the Journal archives);

Sturdy Primroses From Japan and Korea, March 16, 1941;

Juliae Hybrids Enrich Primulae, March 23, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 109-111);


Only One Primrose Poisons, April 6, 1941;

How to Handle Seed Raising Primroses, April 6, 1961;

Did You Know About The Primrose League?, April 13, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 45, No. 4, p. 132);

Auricula Brings Velvet, Perfume to Garden, April 20, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 103-105);

Freak Primrose for Collector’s Fun, April 27, 1941 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 45, No. 4, pp. 132-133);

Now Is the Time to Divide Primroses, June 1, 1941;

Primrose Season Continues Still, July 27, 1941;

Fall Care of Primroses Now in Oregon Country, September 19, 1941;

Primrose Grower Tells What to Do With Your Primulae Pets Just Now, February 22, 1942;

American Primroses Few But Species Hold Lure for Primula Hobbyist, July 19, 1942;

Fall and Winter Care For Primula Outlined By Experienced Grower, October 11, 1942 (reprinted in the *Quarterly of the American Primrose Society*, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 117);

Primula Grower-Writer Discusses Present Care Of Primulae in Oregon, January 24, 1943;

Water the Primroses, February 6, 1944.

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Puzzles from the Past

We were going through old Quarterlies recently, and discovered a gem! In 1966, a series of three crossword puzzles were submitted by member Ralph Balcolm and a contest run - winners to receive seed packets. We thought this was such a great idea that we’d run it again, so here is puzzle number one:

Across:
1. Auricula blossom (colloq.)
4. Maple genera
9. Period of time
12. Greek goddess of mischief
13. Beverage of honey and mulberries
14. Heard at a bullfight
15. Candelabra *Primula* species
18. Plants of the sea
19. African antelope
20. Sheeplike
22. Tomato X potato (Pl.)
26. Liquid measure
27. Turnips (colloq.)
28. College degree (abbr.)
29. Loose end
30. Twisted metal thread
31. African antelope
32. Spanish article
33. ________ Laurie
34. Liver secretion
35. Fishing accessories
36. Region in ancient Greece
37. International Trade Union (abbr.)
38. Primula species (Littoniana)
39. Iris
40. Nivilid Primula species (Pl.)
41. Friend in Paris
42. ____ ____ pony (two words)
43. _________ Magnus (loyal APS member)*
44. American poet
45. Plant pore
46. Down

1. Moccasin
2. Japanese statesman
3. Nagging
4. Move slowly
5. Mistake
6. Sped
7. Pins (Primrose parlance)
8. Cruller
9. A side petal
10. Affirmative
11. England county
12. Writings
13. Chosen
14. French city
15. Eye
16. England county
17. Primula species (Amethystina Sec. Pl.)
18. Positive
19. Husband of Ruth
20. Fairy
21. Ancient Greek coins
22. Ancient Arabian kingdom
23. Aluminum Company of America
24. Chart
25. I love (Latin)
26. Wish
27. Court
28. Artificial language
29. Plant juice
30. Spirits
31. Sedum spurium
32. S. acre
33. S. album
34. S. rupestre
35. S. anglicum
36. Sempervivum tectorum

Plants on the Roof

TROND HOY, NORWAY

I needed more space for my plants!

My garden is about 0.22 hectare (1/2 acre) and it is mostly covered by woody plants. The eastward facing property with unrestricted view of the fjord (except for my trees) has a climate which favors woody evergreen plants and accompanying perennials. When we moved in, the property was covered with birch trees and overgrown spruce hedges. I removed almost all of those and have planted lots more exciting trees and shrubs. Unfortunately they create a lot of shade. The last few years I have cut down several valuable specimens but the remaining ones quickly fill in the space with new growth.

As I also do like plants that grow in open sunny locations I had a problem! Such places do not exist on the property.

When I was a kid at our summerhouse I learned from my older cousins how to grow sun- and drought-tolerant Sedums and Sempervivums on almost bare rock. We prepared a bed with a layer consisting of not more than 3cm (1 inch) soil where we planted cuttings of Sedum spurium, S. acre, S. album, S. rupestre, S anglicum and Sempervivum tectorum which we collected on the skerries in the fjord and rocky outcroppings on the island. They all always survived and established mats of colourful plants on the grey rock in a short time. Over the years several square meters were transformed this way.

So for some time I had looked for a place to grow more sun-loving plants at home. The answer was of course to use the roof! In Norway, roofs covered with turf are common. Nowadays it is used especially on chalets and cabins but in older times the farmhouses were often thatched with birch bark and turf. They often grew Sempervivum, which is called takløk (lit. roof-onion) and Sedums around the chimneys to avoid fire catching in the dry grass in spring.

Unfortunately for me, it is impractical to use the roof of the main house. It is difficult to access and difficult to view from the ground and the consequences if anything goes wrong are worse. Therefore I chose the smaller shed roof. Should the roof be damaged it is no big deal and it is easily accessed and viewed as the building is partly set into a bank.

When I started making the bed I did not cover the tiles or change anything but just filled in with soil and small rocks. I made a mixture of ordinary garden soil, sand, pebbles and small stones, which I distributed over the roof. I also placed bigger stones as a kind of frame and several smaller ones were spaced on the mixture to
Growing Auriculas on a Roof

“I needed more space for my plants!”

Seen below, Trond Hoy’s shed in Norway, where he created more growing space for his sun-loving auriculas and other alpines.

Using rocks to hold soil in place, he planted auriculas and P x pubescens cultivars, among many others such as *Lewisia* and *Potentilla*, creating a garden area that he says is mostly maintenance free!

Photos: Trond Hoy

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keep the soil in place and also to plant among. The biggest stones are the size of small shoeboxes. The rocks are of different types, from quartzite to basalt chosen for color and form. The garden soil is home made. The original soil covering the rocky underground here is black light peat with pH about 5. I mixed this with a lot of rock flour and sand which I bought, garden waste, wood ash, compost made from kitchen waste and everything decomposable!

The climate here is much more humid than where I learned gardening as a kid so even a rather thin layer of soil (about 10cm/4inches) usually is enough to grow most plants and not only *Sedum*. Almost all the plants I have put there also can tolerate longer or shorter periods of drought. Most years I have to water the roof bed a couple of times in May or early June as it is the driest time of the year here and the plants are in flower. Later I never water and the plants have to take what they get from heaven.

I have tried to and still try to make the planting as diverse as possible. Then I hope at least some will cope with whatever the weather throws upon them. I am no good at keeping files of what I have but the plant list includes *Acantholimon*, *Lewisia*, *Arabis*, *Draba*, *Thlaspi*, *Potentilla* and a lot more, even some small bulbs. I had to include some *Sedum* too, of course! However, two plant genera (*Primula* and *Saxifraga*) dominate the scene. The best plants have so far been *Primula auricula* and different *P x pubescens* cultivars. These are often sold as nameless seedlings and I have chosen a handful of different colors.

Not all plants have flowered as well as hoped, partly due to bad weather the last two years and also too much shade from a couple of trees standing too close. Now I have cut down the trees and hope for better flowering this spring!

This article on Trond’s garden is the first in a mini-series on *Primulas* in unusual gardens. The photo contest this year resulted in many interesting images and some were of *Primula* in unusual spots: not where you would think of them being grown. There are a couple more articles in this series yet to come.
More on the Roof

Right: an impressive specimen of garden auricula, thriving among the roof tiles and rockery.

Above: what initially looks like a hillside planting of *Primula* and other alpines, reveals itself as a roof planting - note the roof tiles in the upper left.

Right: a classic yellow auricula, similar to auriculas found in the wild in the Alps.

Rodney Barker, co-president of the New England Chapter, in his greenhouse in Brookline, MA, holding one of his favorites: a silver-laced polyanthus; closeup seen on the back cover. Photos by Matt Mattus.
Sakata Ornamentals
seed supplier for your spring primroses

Above: 'SuperNova's amazing variety of colors in beautifully uniform plants stretch as far as the eye can see
Below: Sweet 'Rosanna' with its double rosebud-like blooms comes in mixed pinks and reds, yellow, apricot and white

Above: a collage of faces from the ‘Danova’ series demonstrating impressive color breadth
Below, left: ‘Daniella’s “Fairydust Mix” with clear, warm colors from palest apricot to deep brick-red, including bicolors
Below, center: ‘Daniella’s ’09 Mix
Below, right: ‘Danova’s “Wishing Well Mix” showing colors from pure white, through various mauves and purples, to rich, clear blue

All photos courtesy of Sakata Ornamentals
http://www.sakataornamentals.com
Soldanelloides or the “Wee Hairy Jobs”

Seen above, Ian Scott’s Primula reidii in its white form with lovely bell-shaped flowers over fuzzy leaves

Above, P. buryana’s clear, flat-faced blooms on hairy stems
Below, Terry Mitchell’s photo of P. reidii, showing its blue form

Terry Mitchell © 2009
Growing the ‘Wee Hairy Jobs’

BY IAN SCOTT, SCOTLAND

Soldanelloid primulae are amongst the most beautiful of flowers, but also the most challenging of plants in cultivation. This is borne out by the fact that sixteen of the eighteen species have been flowered in cultivation, yet only *P. reidii* is commonly grown - and that with difficulty (Richards, *Primula*, 2002).

The first problem is where to obtain seed or plants. With the exception of *P. reidii*, they are seldom encountered in the various seed exchanges, and with the gradual decline of specialist alpine nurseries, offers by the trade are few and far between. Living in Scotland, I was fortunate in being able to buy some of my first plants from John Lawson at Inshriach in the Scottish Highlands. His plants of *P. cawdoriana* were a sight to behold – crystalline blue flowers and leaves like soft velvet. With my inexperience, they didn’t survive the first winter, which is a great regret.

*Primula klattii* (syn. *P. unifora*) which had been collected in 1991 on the Edinburgh – Makalu expedition (EMAK) went the same way. Water got into the crown and the centre of the plant rotted away despite my best attempts to revive it. However, the following spring, the four remaining roots each started to produce new leaves at their tips, like root-cuttings. Unfortunately a blistering summer terminated this valiant effort, but this means of propagation is worth remembering if ever it is re-introduced. There are some fine photographs of these beauties in Jim Jermyn’s book ‘The Himalayan Garden’, which is available to read on-line at http://www.scribd.com/doc/19233485/The-Himalayan-Garden-Growing-Plants-From-the-Roof-of-the-World

My third purchase from John Lawson was *P. reidii*. This is said to be the easiest to grow as it is the western-most member of the section, and thrives in more moderate conditions compared to its monsoon-deluged cousins. Even so, a plant is unlikely to live for more than four years, making seed production a prime concern. The type species has pure white flowers but most growers are more familiar with *P. reidii* var. *williamsii*. This variation was probably the finest introduction from the 1954 expedition to Dhaulagiri in Central Nepal sponsored by the British Museum and the Royal Horticultural Society. The best plants produce a tight rosette of hairy leaves and a scape of up to eight bell-shaped flowers with a deep blue corolla, fading to white towards the base. To crown it all, they fill the still evening air with a nearly over-powering fragrance of musk. Undoubtedly this attracts pollinators and, if several plants are grown together, there is no need for hand pollination.
We collect mature seed-heads in early autumn when the scapes have turned brown and the seed capsules feel hard when gently squeezed. After a few days in the warmth of our kitchen the capsules split to release the seed, with little need for cleaning, and it is stored in a sealed container in the fridge until spring-time.

John Richards describes *P. reidii* as “a very beautiful but rather temperamental plant ….. which appears to favour some gardens (or growers?)! at the expense of others”. I can’t tell you how to grow *P. reidii*. All I can do is relate how we raise our plants, and hope that by trial and error, you come up with a system which suits your conditions.

Seed is thinly surface-sown onto a seed tray of compost in the first week of March, gently watered and left on a lower shelf in the greenhouse, out of direct sunlight. Germination normally takes place within three weeks and seedling growth can be quite rapid. We use peat-based commercial compost which has been passed through a sieve to remove the larger fibres because the next stage is the most difficult part. When the seedlings are still only about 5mm in height they are individually teased out and transplanted into plug trays of 15ml cells. Now, although the surface portion may only be 5mm in size, the roots can be 2cm long and divided, so sieving the compost allows the roots to be removed with minimal damage. Soaking the compost from below also helps the extraction process.

We purchase sheets of plug trays and cut blocks of about 70 cells (7 x 10) which fit our hole-less seed trays. Basically the cells now stand in 5mm of water and remain in the shade, which is probably similar to their natural humid, humus-rich habitat. Growing in plug cells has a number of advantages: a firm root-ball is established without competition from other seedlings; there is virtually no root damage when the seedlings are potted up; large numbers of seedlings can be raised in a relatively small space; and any infection or disease is confined to single cells.

By June the small plants are ready for potting up as their roots are starting to come out from the bottom of the cells. They are easily pushed out from their plug tray with a small wooden peg, and transferred to 7cm square pots filled with a mixture of peat-based compost, sterilised soil and 2mm chicken grit (2:1:1) with a slow release fertiliser. Finally the pots are watered and left in the shade until it is obvious that the root system has expanded into the new compost.

When the plants are ready to leave the greenhouse they are moved to our outside stock-bed where the pots sit on a layer of moist sand. Although the stock-bed is facing south, directly into the summer sun, the moisture in the sand and a trellis of roses and sweet peas keeps it dappled and humid. The plants are hosed with a fine mist most evenings until the compost is damp. This encourages the roots to work down towards the damp sand, rather than staying near the surface of the compost where they are liable to dry out.

Using this method some plants flower the same autumn, but generally we are trying to build up strong crowns to survive the full Scottish winter. A good foot of snow would probably be ideal for them, but our winters tend to be very wet with freezing, thawing and hard frosts in rapid succession. Just a trace of water on the crown spells disaster and an empty pot by spring-time. To over-come this problem we stop watering the plants in October and cover the stock-bed with glass lights for the winter. The compost becomes fairly dry, but not completely, as the sand beneath the pots remains damp.

There is no need to worry about when to start watering the pots again, as the plants will tell you. In mid-February the first of the crowns start to swell with the onset of leaf development, and it is at this point that we flood the sand on a suitably warm day, to waken up the more lethargic plants. Even so, the glass protection will stay in place until the risk of frost is no longer a danger.

So what are the key elements of our strategy?

1. Minimising root damage to seedlings.
2. Providing humid, buoyant air conditions for young plants.
4. Keeping the crowns dry in winter.

The same approach has been used, with some success, for others in the Soldanelloid section, including *P. buryana*, *P. wigramiana* and *P. wollastonii*. We have subscribed to Chris Chadwell’s seed collecting expeditions to the Himalayas since 1992, and have always been rewarded with something of interest for a modest outlay. It is extremely difficult to identify individual *Primula* species when they are in seed in the autumn, so the seed packets tend to be labelled merely as ‘unidentified *Primula*’, together with a Chadwell collection number. However if the field notes say that it was a high altitude collection (e.g. over 4,000m), and the seed is very small, we assume that it might be something special. The actual identity will probably not be revealed until it blooms, eighteen month later.

*Primula wigramiana* was one such example. Seed was collected on the Rolwaling Himal in 2004 as CC 4940, but through an over-sight it was not included in the allocation list. However the field notes showed that it had been collected at 4,200m in close proximity to *Primula wollastonii* and other unidentified *Primula* species. As there had been an incredible haul of seed that year - over 20 different unidentified collections – the seed was not sown until March 2006. Obviously, storing the seed in the fridge had no detrimental effect as it germinated three weeks later, and by summer the distinctive rosette of soft hairy leaves indicated that it was a Soldanelloid *Primula*.
Which one it might be, was hard to establish but it was different from our *P. reidii* plants. The leaves were a slightly darker shade of green and lacked a defined stalk. In addition they appeared to be more densely covered with fine hairs. When the flower head started to develop, it was noticed that the calyx was purple although the flower buds were white. Finally the first bud opened to show that the tips of the white petals were irregularly toothed, which Richards states as diagnostic for *P. wigramiana*.

Those of you who drool over the unobtainable primulas illustrated on Pam Eveleigh’s PrimulaWorld website might question this last statement, as most of the photographs taken in Nepal show plants of *P. wigramiana* which do not have toothed petals. It is possible that some of these are hybridised with *P. wollastonii*, but the situation merits investigation.

Unidentified *Primula*, CC 6639, was collected at 4,200m on the Khumbu Himal, Nepal, in 2009. It was sown in March 2010 and germinated a month later. This ‘wee hairy job’, as one of my colleagues calls them, was a slow grower. It refused to flower the following year, but was demanding a larger pot by the summer. The following year it came up as a multi-crowned specimen. The leaves were similar to those of *P. wollastonii*, but the flower scape was hairy and the calyx was pale green. Obviously this was something different. Eventually five scapes of white, flat-faced flowers were produced with petals which were deeply notched at the tip, and we recognised it as *P. buryana*. Richards, like earlier writers, describes the flower as funnel-shaped but does add that *P. buryana var. purpurea*, which is faintly lilac with a white eye, has flowers which are more open, and even flat-faced. Ominously, he also adds that few plants flower a second time in cultivation. At the present time (March 2013) the plants appear to be in excellent health and we await events.

My previous experiences with *Primula wollastonii* had been lamentable, therefore I was delighted to realise that several of the unidentified collections from Chris Chadwell’s 2010 Himalayan seed gathering expedition were of that species (CC. 6741, 6766, 7100, 7107).

*Primula wollastonii* is named after Dr ‘Sandy’ Wollaston, a Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge and all-round naturalist. Although Wollaston was medically qualified, he never saw this as his vocation, preferring the role of medical officer for several scientific expeditions in the early 1900s. In 1921 he accompanied Harold Raeburn, Guy Bullock and the young George Mallory on the Everest Reconnaissance Expedition and found this new species at 5,000m in Southern Tibet. Later collections were made by Major Lal Dhwoji in Eastern Nepal, but this has always been a plant of fleeting introduction. Even in the 1970s Roy Green was complaining that “in cultivation, *Primula wollastonii* rarely sets seed and is probably not now in cultivation” (Green, 1976).

Luckily there is another method of propagation - root cuttings. The roots spread out just below the surface of the potting medium, much more so than with other Soldanelloid species, and this may be an adaptation to their normal virtually soilless habitat. When the roots come into contact with the edge of the pot, they are forced to bend and at this point start to produce rootlet plants. This process can be encouraged by restricting root spread in a 7cm pot rather than potting on into something larger. The same effect can be produced in the garden using a few well-placed rocks or pieces of slate.

The natural temptation is to try to separate these rootlet plants at too early a stage when their attachment is still brittle. Waiting until late summer is likely to be more rewarding as, by that time, the small plants will have established their own root system. The young plantlets are easy to remove using a pair of sharp scissors and, if transferred to a fairly gritty medium containing a slow release fertiliser, growth should be rapid enough for the new plants to survive the following winter.

A fuller discussion of *P. wollastonii* can be found in the Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club, January 2013.

Further Reading:

Green, R. (1976) *Asian Primulas*, published by The Alpine Garden Society
Primula Season Primer

SAKATA ORNAMENTALS

Every spring thousands of cheerful primrose plants flood the supermarket stores and nurseries, but do you ever wonder where the nurserymen who raise these myriad plants get their seeds? One of the wholesale seed companies that produce these seed strains is Sakata Ornamentals, and they have a marvelous webpage that outlines the varieties available. They sell seed to nurserymen and thus the colorful plants find their way into our hands. The seed seems to be produced mainly in Japan and in Denmark. Here are some notes from their Primula Season Primer on their website about the various primroses available and many more bright and cheerful pictures: http://www.sakataornamentals.com/primula or just Google “Sakata Primula Season Primer” to see the PDF.

“Many of the flower activities, including breeding, product development and production, take place globally with close integration between the headquarter office in Yokohama, Japan, and offices in Holland and Denmark.

“Sakata Seed Corporation was the first Japanese company to export seed and has since been actively involved in the development of new and improved plant varieties around the world. Sakata’s overseas activities have earned it a reputation for quality in over 130 countries.”

~ Sakata Ornamentals website

On their Primula webpage, not only will you find the 100+ page PDF outlining varieties, growing conditions and lots of lovely colorful photos, but there are also a number of videos aimed at nurseries going over everything from choosing the right primrose for the market to keeping pests at bay. While these are aimed at commercial growers, they are quite interesting for the home consumer. The rigorous scientific approach to perfecting form and timing in producing these plants is quite amazing.

On their Products webpage, by searching for Primula, one finds 8 strains that Sakata offers: Daniella, Danova, Delight, Pageant, Rosanna, Prima (malacoides), Fire and Supernova. Clicking on each of these brings up cultivation information such as you can see below, along with lots more color photos. Check out the Danova page in particular: 27 distinct faces, plus three mixes - just amazing!

Below are some excerpts from the Sakata Primula Season Primer PDF, outlining some interesting tidbits as well as the varieties we have fetured in our color pages. We hope you will enjoy learning more about the ubiquitous “supermarket” primrose.

Primrose Trivia: Native to western and southern Europe. Usually heralding spring, the primrose often signifies eternal love, youth and purity. They were sometimes used in love potions.

Sakata Seed Primula Genetics
- Sakata offers a wide selection of Primula acaulis and polyanthus with outstanding features and benefits.
- More than 50 years of breeding experience with research stations in both Japan and Denmark, offering options to growers in both warm and cool climate areas.

Primula Breeding Goals
- Uniformity in plant habit
- Excellent seed quality
- Compact, strong and healthy plants
- Dark green leaves
- A uniform rosette without side shoots
- Large flowers
- Clear colors
- Non-stretching flower stems
- Short flowering window

Sakata Seed Primula polyanthus SuperNova Series
- Early season F1 hybrid, bred in Denmark, that flowers along with the Dawn series.
- Earliest series on the market
- Highest number of marketable plants.
- Large showy umbels on strong, multiple stems.
- Wide range of color choice.
- Continuous, colorful flowering.
- Multiple uses, including pot plants, patio containers and garden plants.
- Well suited for landscaping and winter flowering in moderate climatic regions.
- Easy maintenance for landscape gardening.
- Makes colorful autumn sales possible.
- Flowers are held higher on the plant so they do not get splashed with mud from heavy rains.
- Highly visible from a distance or in a fast moving vehicle.
- SuperNova was developed for the early fall season and requires 2 weeks less than Danova for flower bud initiation.
• SuperNova is less sensitive to higher temperatures (65-70°F/18-21°C nights) during the initiation phase.
• Being an F1 hybrid, it features larger flowers, wider color range and more abundant flowering.
• Developed in northern Europe under lower light levels. Pacific Giants was selected under higher light levels in Japan.
• Recommended to flower under 3,000 foot candles/32,000 lux to maximize stem length.

Sakata Seed Primula acaulis Danova Series (see photos)
• World market leading series bred in Denmark for the early to mid-early sales season.
• Offers the highest percentage of marketable plants
• Extremely uniform in plant habit
• Consistent, large flower size, 2-2½ inches/5-6 cm. in diameter
• Largest assortment of pure, bold colors making it easy to compose highly saleable mixes
• Very high germination
• Colorful pot and bedding plant for patio containers and garden displays
• Center flowering for a beautiful bouquet of gorgeous large flowers.
• Unbeatable impact for impulse sales!

Sakata Seed Primula acaulis Daniella Series (see photos)
• A quality leading series for mid-season to late-season sales bred in Denmark.
• Targeted to flower 2 weeks after Danova
• For growers with single temperature greenhouses, can be planted with Danova for staggered flowering
• Same excellent seed quality as Danova
• Same outstanding uniformity and plant habit as Danova
• Consistent, large flower size, 2-2½ inches/5-6 cm. in diameter
• Eye-catching color range.

Sakata Seed Primula acaulis Rosanna Series (see photos)
• Mid-season type bred in Japan that flowers along with Daniella.
• Highest number of marketable plants
• Beautiful, large rose bud flowers sure to create impulse sales
• Unique eye-catcher for patio plantings and gift plant sales
• Vibrant, attractive color range.

Thanks again to Sakata Oramentals for providing photos and text: http://www.sakataornamentals.com

Anita Mabel Alexander
April 11, 1918 – January 30, 2013

It is with great sadness that the American Primrose Society acknowledges the passing of one of our long-time members. Anita Alexander, a longtime resident of Sandy, Oregon died January 30, 2013 at age 94. Anita was born in Soda Springs Idaho to Almon John Gronewald (“Jack”) and Stella Henrietta (Peck) Gronewald. She graduated from Mosier High School, and in 1954 obtained a BS in Home Economics from Washington State University. Anita was a member and volunteer in many regional and national societies, including the Oregon State Beekeepers Association, the Pacific Northwest Lily Society and the North American Lily Society, life member of the American Primrose Society, the Hardy Plant Society, the Sandy Garden Club, life member of the Oregon Federation of Garden Clubs, Five Senses Garden at the Oral Hull Federation for the Blind, Geological Society of the Oregon Country, Euthenics (retired home economics teachers), and Friends of the Leach Botanic Garden.

Anita was a home economics educator, past editor of the Primrose Quarterly, and author of many publications including magazine articles and book chapters. She was particularly proud of her Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs hybridizing award. Her most recent garden show award was the Sweepstakes in Horticulture from the Far West Show in Portland OR, and she also won many other ribbons and awards too numerous to mention at local and regional flower and garden shows.

Anita worked for social justice in many ways, including being a volunteer at the Portland YWCA, and sponsoring and supporting students and families from Africa, Mexico, and Tibet. Anita had friends and loved ones worldwide. She had a lively intellect and was often not afraid to let people know her opinions. She will be missed.
American Primrose Society
Minutes of the Board Meeting held on January 27th, 2013

The meeting was held online. It opened at 6:05 pm, Eastern Time.

Board members present: Ed Buyarski (Director, and President of the Juneau Chapter), Julia Haldorson (Director and Membership Secretary), Jon Kawaguchi (Treasurer), Alan Lawrence (APS President), Amy Olmsted (Director and Seed Exchange Coordinator), Michael Plumb (Secretary and Webmaster), Susan Schnare (Director), Rhondda Porter (APS Vice-President)

Regrets: Rodney Barker (Director, Co-Chair of the New England Chapter), Cheri Fluck (Director), Maedlythe Martin (Editor)

A. Approval of the Agenda (Rhondda / Susan)

B. The Minutes of November 18th 2012 – Accepted as presented (Ed / Michael)

C. Treasurer’s Report (Email before the meeting)

1. Income less expenses September 1st, 2012 to December 31st, 2012: $583.45
2. Income less expenses January 1st, 2012 to December 31st, 2012: $2,018.16
3. Total liabilities and equity as of December 31st, 2012: $28,558.40

4. The profit made from the 2012 National Show was unusual, and future shows should not be counted on to turn such a profit. Without the profit from the 2012 National Show, there would have been a net gain of $766.70 for the year 2012.
   a. All credit card payments are now accepted only via PayPal.
   b. Membership donations for 2012 now total $890, plus $200 from the New England Chapter and $500 from the Juneau Chapter to support the National Show. All much appreciated!
   c. Now only 18 sets of back quarterly journals left. Members are encouraged to purchase this exceptional Primula resource [Contact information is on website].
   d. A member has donated the money for the transfer of the website to a new hosting service. The hosting fee is renewable January 2014 @ approximately $100.

9. MOTION (Rhondda / Amy): to accept the Treasurer’s report. Carried.

D. Committee Reports

1. Seed Exchange (Amy):
   a) MOTION (Amy / Michael): to charge overseas members for seed in future seed exchanges. Carried. (Overseas members currently pay nothing for seed. Seed is mailed postage free to all participants, whether in North America or overseas. The new decision will put all members on the same footing and help defray rising costs while still providing a benefit to all members.)
   b) As of January 26th 2013 a total of 75 people (domestic and overseas) have ordered seed.
   c) Total income so far is $760.50
   d) Total expenditure so far is $1187.69
   e) MOTION (Rhondda / Michael) to accept the Seed Exchange Committee report. Carried.

2. Editorial Committee (Maedlythe Martin, report sent by email): The winter issue has already been proof-read and is almost ready to go to the printer. MOTION (Susan / Ed) to accept the editorial report. Carried.

3. Website (Michael):
   a) The number of fake registration applications had recently become unmanageable. In addition, a hacker had deleted all members’ codes, thereby making the members-only areas inaccessible.
   b) Accordingly, a new technical consultant was found and the website has been made secure again. The registration process for accessing the members-only areas has also been completely scrapped to help prevent further fake registrations. In future, Michael will assign every member who has email a user name and password. This will be announced in the Quarterly.
   c) Michael will investigate ways for members to change their password if they wish to do this.
   d) The new consultant has transferred the website to a new host. He will now have better access to deal with any concerns.
   e) The consultant has set up an online ordering system for the seed exchange which has attracted a lot of use. However, thanks to Jacques Mommens and Amy, it was discovered that about twenty online seed orders were temporarily mislaid by the old host early in the exchange, which was the reason for changing the host right at the peak of the seed exchange. PayPal payments were unaffected. The ordering system should be much smoother from now on and in future seed exchanges.
   f) Amy and Michael have been liaising well in keeping the seed list updated.
   g) Rhondda has drawn attention to the urgent need to improve the Advertising Section, which is being revised this week (January 21st).
   h) The new technician will be working on improving the Forum and Photo Gallery areas.
   i) Michael thanked Jane Guild for all her technical help, without which the website would not exist. The new consultant is Kevin Gosling.

j) MOTION (Rhondda / Susan): to accept the website report. Carried.

4. Membership (Julia):
   a) Total number of paid-up members as of January 24th, 2013: 285 (266 at this time a year ago)
   b) Members still not paid: 72
   c) PayPal makes joining and payment of dues much easier.
   d) MOTION (Michael / Amy): to accept the Membership Report. Carried.

5. Trophy Committee (Susan):
   a) MOTION (Susan / Ed, amended by Susan / Amy): to make the President ultimately responsible for the care, cleaning, and storage of the trophies, and for their transportation to the National Show; these duties to be added to the list of the President’s duties which are posted on the website. Carried.
   b) MOTION (Susan / Michael): to send copies of the Trophy Report and the document entitled “APS Trophies” to the members of the Judging Committee for them a) to decide on trophies not clearly relating to any award; b) to suggest awards that better represent the plants being benched; c) to look at the specific problems concerning the Dickson, Haddock and Hill trophies and make recommendations (See item #6 in the Report). Carried.

E. Chapters
   a) New England: 2013 National Show dates are May 3rd (benching), 4th and 5th.
   ACTION: New England (Susan/Judy) will send Michael information on the Show and registration details for him to post on the website.
   b) Juneau is planning to have Chris Chadwell visit in early June. Expenses will be shared with other local clubs. NARGS is sponsoring him.

F. Business Arising from the Minutes: Nominations
   a) There are currently three candidates for two directors’ posts. Michael is standing again for Secretary, and Alan is standing again for President.
   b) The ballot will be sent to Alan for inserting in the Winter Quarterly.

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

Next meeting: Alan asked the National Show Committee to set a time in the show program for the Annual General Meeting (between May 4th and 6th).

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Plumb, Secretary
North American Rock Garden Society

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

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

Please contact:
Mr. Bobby Ward
Executive Secretary, NARGS
PO Box 18604
Raleigh, NC 27619-8604

Mr. Bobby Ward
Executive Secretary, NARGS
PO Box 18604
Raleigh, NC 27619-8604

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

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

Join the National Auricula & Primula Society
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www.auriculaandprimula.org.uk

£10.00 Overseas Membership.

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

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New Members
January 18 - April 1, 2013

Year of Expiry  Name  Address
2013  Christopher Baswell  98 Second Street, Athens, New York 12015  USA
2013  Blitheword, Inc  % Gail Reed, 101 Ferry Road, Bristol, Rhode Island 02809  USA
2013  Beth Burman  43310 SE 151st Street, North Bend, Washington 98045  USA
2013  Susan Ann Fredricks  P. O. Box 272, Skagway, Alaska 99840  USA
2013  Anne Hill  279 Spurwink Avenue, Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107  USA
2013  Ellen Horning  212 Grafton Street, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5426 USA
2013  Lynn Makela  1216 Jasmine Creek Court, Sun City Center, Florida 33570  USA
2013  Shelby D. Mellick  P. O. Box 56, Oldwick, New Jersey 08858-0058  USA
2013  Crystal Reeve  17422 Laoana Court, Eagle River, Alaska 99577  USA
2013  Kathleen Smith  5 Court Square, Montague, Massachusetts 01351  USA
2013  Gary Whitworth  41 Langdale, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE259BB  UK