President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

The Annual Show was hosted this year by the New England Chapter at Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Massachusetts. As usual the organizers did a great job in putting the show together, and we are indebted to them and to the guest speaker, Merrill Jensen, for all of their endeavors in making this year’s show a success. Certainly the cold, late Spring did not cooperate, providing a limited supply of show-worthy plants, I don’t remember seeing a single edged auricula, but there were sufficient plants to put on a great display for the benefit of the visitors to Tower Hill that weekend. Congratulations to Judith Sellers who won Best in Show for a really nice hose-in-hose polyanthus.

Just prior to the show, I was able to purchase 22 printer’s proofs of the illustrations in Doretta Klaber’s book “Primroses and Spring”. These were drawn by the author, and are intialled and dated, although these components were removed in the illustrations in the book. I am donating these to the Society, and hope to be able to establish a more formal Society archive as there are other Society historical items I am aware of which need to be saved as part of the history of the Society.

I was pleased to see that the US Post Office has included a stamp bearing a rather nice picture of Primula vulgaris in their garden flower series or forever first class stamps. Its caption simply says “Primrose”.

It’s time to start collecting seeds for the 2013-2014 Seed Exchange. Information on where to send seed will be included in the fall issue, but if you don’t save the seed now, it will be gone when you go to gather and send it! The most desirable seed is the hand-pollinated donations from member’s special plants! My own seed production this year has been...
seriously compromised by the plant losses caused by last year’s drought and heat wave in the Mid West, and by this year’s cold Spring. Hopefully many of you will have better success, so please collect and contribute all that you can. Finally I would like to wish our hard-working secretary and webmaster, Michael Plumb, a speedy recovery from a rather nasty bout of Shingles. We all appreciate how much Michael does for the Society and I am sure you will all echo my best wishes.

Your Donations are So Important!

This year, to date, the donations for APS total almost $700. Thank you, everyone who sent in a little something extra for the Society! Your kind efforts help to keep the Quarterly going, with lovely color pictures, and make it possible for the Society to balance its budget.

And remember to encourage friends to join APS or to give the gift of a subscription to a fellow primrose fancier! Every new subscription helps the Society and keeps it’s budget healthy. All your efforts make a difference, no matter how small. Thank you!

Please remember . . .

. . . to save seed.

Donating seed to the APS Seed Exchange is not only a good way to obtain new varieties for your own garden, it’s also a great way to ensure the future of Primula everywhere.

APS 2013 National Show Adventure

CRYSTAL BRINSON

Brisk, sunny, and in the midst of spring! What more could we want? Two fellow gardeners and I, eager to unravel the mystery of the Primula, headed north to Boylston, MA. Upon our arrival at Tower Hill Botanic Garden we quickly entered the main entrance and located the plant sale. To our delight we discovered tables packed with assorted Primulas, Hepaticas, and woodland beauties.

After filling many trays with plants, we decided our need to shop was fulfilled; besides we had to consider transportation issues with only one vehicle. While waiting for the show to open we enjoyed strolling through the Orangerie. Citrus standards, heavy with ripe fruit, one very large climbing rose, and an aloe in full bloom joined the eclectic display. As we wandered through the space I noticed, tucked away at the far end of the corridor, an exquisite Pan sculpture. Wondering why he was all alone I looked out the large glass windows to discover another open space. The Winter Garden beckoned: this area was nice and toasty and what a surprise to see two huge bronze turtle fountains flanking a Domitian Pool. I was smitten to see they were the eastern box turtle.

The other side of the Orangerie marks the entry into the Systematic Garden. Classically designed, the Italianate style garden was punctuated with beautiful sculptures, benches, pergola, fountains, and even darling cupids dancing in the open air.

Back into the show corridor I went. Eager to see how the show was being put together I took it all in. I was a bit shy because everyone was hustling to get table cloths on, plants benched, labels attached, and then, finally, get everything ready to be judged! As I watched, I was wondering the correct or proper way to show Primulas. What size container? Plastic or clay? One flower open or many? Forget the classification, for it was a bit overwhelming to me, but I was there to observe and so I did. It seemed that the containers were either clay or green plastic, generally four to six inches in diameter with a few exceptions. Flowers were mostly open, foliage cleaned, no moss on top of the soil, and a simple white tag to provide information. All plants were placed on raised benches according to their classification, with a perfectly colored green table cloth to show off the fabulous blooms.

One of the most helpful things we discovered at this event was the Primula wall of explanation!

Yes, here was a wonderful photo display created by the late Elaine Malloy which explained the various species and cultivars of this elusive genus. While we were inspecting this board one member from New York patiently helped us out by
explaining all the minuscule differences among the Primulas. I was relieved to finally have a sense of understanding these varieties and the needs of particular species. The three of us were all nodding in unison as the eureka-moment closed in. I now know why Primulas can be temperamental. The first thing I discovered is that they are generally found growing at very high elevations which explains their liking cool temperatures, high light levels, stony soil, and constant air flow. Then with his explanation of the various species still ringing in our ears, we wrote it all down. Valuable information such as the fact that true Primula juliana typically has no yellow flowers. Primula denticulata, P. kisoana, and P. japonica prefer year round moisture. Primula sieboldii, native to Japan, tends to go dormant in summer and does very well in woodland conditions. Primula vulgaris is also a good choice for woodlands and can take dry spells as well. How to tell the difference between Primula veris and Primula elatior? No problem, P. veris typically has lower flower clusters that are more downward facing, and most importantly, P. veris has dark bars that surround the eye. Primula elatior typically has larger flowers with no distinctive bar marking the opening of the eye, and the flowers lean slightly to one side of each stem. Primula auricula, I now realize, are native to the mountains of Europe so that explains their succulent texture. But what about the fantastic flower colors? Guess I will have to wait until the next encounter with our mentor!

The most valuable information I took home with me was understanding what Primulas in general do not like: high temperatures (particularly at night), high levels of humidity that summer can bring, poor drainage which is sure death to most species, and hot scorching sun that can be experienced at lower altitudes. With this overload of information I finally realized that, hey, I too, can grow these mysterious beauties. Perhaps next spring we will jump into the excitement of entering some Primulas in the show?

Once judging was completed and the ribbons laid out I took my time enjoying all the plants. While many entries had won the red, white, or blue ribbons, the diversity of this amazing genus, the Primula was truly amazing to me. Some notable winners include:

Judith Sellers from upstate N.Y. with her Best in Show, Best of Division, and of course first with her outstanding example of a Hose-in-hose Primula. Judy also took the house in the auricula division with three blue ribbons and another Best in Display award.

Dorothy Swift of Wickford, R.I. had a huge clay pot of the most dazzling orange/red example of Primula veris gaining her a blue ribbon.

Deborah Wheeler of Colrain, MA. also had some beautiful entries with her precious double Primrose called ‘Belarina Pink Ice’ which won a blue ribbon and Best in Division.

Marion Stafford, too, had many entries with one in particular being my personal favorite: a single pot of ‘Early Girl’ a stalked Juliana hybrid. This beauty won a blue ribbon and Best in Division with it’s dark stems rising above deep green foliage, and flowers were the perfect shade of creamy white with yellow eyes.

Elisabeth Zander, a novice exhibitor with many entries, earned an assortment of blue ribbons and rosettes, including runner up for Best in Show with an acid yellow auricula to die for. She also showed a tiny purple Primula hirsuta which was smaller than the blue ribbon!

Amy Olmsted, who is also a vendor with fantastic and unusual plant offerings, enjoyed her blue ribbon won for a large pot of Primula denticulata. It displayed the softest purple/blue spheres floating above a swath of green.

Susan Schnare, another vendor with great Primula offerings, entered a number of winning entries as well. One that I found particularly intoxicating was the deep garnet Cowichan polyanthus, and even though it won only a red ribbon (second) I was in love. She also enjoyed taking a blue ribbon with her entry of a yellow Jack-in-the-Green!

Mary Malloy of Delmar, N.Y. also gained bragging rights with her winning example of Primula veris.

Rodney Barker of MA., who is always so generous with bringing the sweetest little seedlings to share at the winter meeting, displayed a beautiful huge container of white Primula polyanthus.

While this is only a sampling of the winning plant entries, all were exquisite. With such great examples to showcase this wonderful genus I was very much in Primula heaven!
National Show 2013, New England

There were 10 exhibitors this year, with excellent quality displays, but fewer plants benched because of the very late arrival of spring in New England.

New England Chapter Trophies

Elaine C. Malloy Award for Best Garden Grown Primula - Judith Sellers, yellow Hose-in-Hose

Richard Redfield Trophy for Best Plant in Show - Judith Sellers, yellow Hose-in-Hose

National Awards and Trophies

Ivanel Agee Award for Best Hybrid Julie - Marion Stafford, ‘Early Girl’ white with dark foliage and stems

Rae Berry Award for Best Species Primula - Elisabeth Zander for a yellow Primula pubescens. Runner up (second) for Best in Show

Bamford Award for Best Show Auricula Seedling - Judith Sellers for a bright pink self

Etha Tate Award for Best Acaulis Primrose - Deborah Wheeler, ‘Belarina, Pink Ice’

Captain Comely Hawkes Award for Best Gold-laced Polyanthus - Rodney Barker

Frank Michaud Award for Best Named Show Auricula - Judith Sellers, for ‘Erica’

Mary Zach Award for Best Acaulis Primrose - Deborah Wheeler, ‘Belarina, Pink Ice’

Ellen Page Hayden Award for Best Double Auricula - Judith Sellers for a beige seedling

John Kerridge Award for Most Species in Bloom - Judith Sellers

John Kerridge Memorial Award for Best Cowichan - Rodney Barker for a dark red

Wesley Bottom Award for Best Hose-in-Hose - Judith Sellers for a yellow Hose-in-Hose

Novice Award for Best Plant Entered by a First Time APS Ribbon Winner - Elisabeth Zander, Soldanella, also for second and third runners up for Best in Show and several other ribbon-winning plants

Sweepstakes Award for Most Points in Show - Elisabeth Zander

Caroline Jensen and Merrill Jensen: A History of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum and Primula Collection

PRESENTATIONS RECOUNTED BY JUDITH SELLERS

Merrill Jensen accidentally has the same surname as a prominent Primula grower who lived in Juneau, Alaska, and he has become the curator of the garden which once belonged to Caroline Jensen. At the National APS Show at Tower Hill during the first weekend in May, Merrill shared some of the history and mission of this wonderful garden, now the Jensen-Olson Arboretum, through a slide presentation unlike most offered to gardening groups. With none of the endless photos of plants with names pronounced by someone who did not have the same Latin teacher as you or I, this presentation had interesting information to share in a novel way.

Merrill’s wife, Kelly, has done extensive research to enable him to include pictures of the garden, family members, old birth and marriage certificates, diaries, maps, and a hand-written legal claim in his two presentations.

On Saturday in “The History of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum: from Gold Mine to Primula Collection”, we were introduced to the two intrepid teenaged sisters, Irma and Margaret Peterson, who with only help from their mother Marie, took over their father’s gold mine following his death in 1913. Their Herculean efforts to succeed on a primitive and isolated Alaskan bush homestead were astounding. Their log cabin was built on the shore of Pearl Harbor almost 25 miles north of the city of Juneau where the summers are short and wet, and winters are very long and dark. Shooting wolves, blacksmithing, shake splitting, hand drilling and blasting ore in the hard-rock mine and hauling the rock a mile and a half by mule and cart to the smelter to crush and then concentrate it with cyanide and mercury were not the usual activities for young ladies, so the Peterson sisters gained national magazine publicity for their endeavors. They took a full day off work to travel to Juneau to vote, and read engineering journals and other technical manuals during their ‘leisure’ hours. In the coming years, they added another claim of six acres of hay land to increase the homestead to roughly 65 acres.

In 1922, Irma married Charlie Olson, a worker on the Eagle River Road. In 1923 the family decided to give up the over taxing work of the mine and raise mink, grow vegetables and fruit, pick berries, fish commercially and deliver mail to outlying islands to earn money. Their vegetable plot produced a great deal of food, which they transported and sold to markets at least 20 miles away. Six pounds of
peas were sold for 75 cents, and in one year their vegetables and potatoes brought in $779 (equivalent to about $13,000 today) according to the accounts in the diary. They built a new house with an electricity generator, and added livestock, which grazed on the beach. They could afford to travel to Germany to revisit family roots for over four months.

Of particular interest to us was information about the growing techniques used by Irma and Charlie to transform the stony land bordering the inlet into a rich growing plot. Brown algae seaweed, fish guts, and animal manures were not pleasant loads to haul to the garden, but they certainly were effective in creating productive earth.

Many non-native plants considered invasive today were originally introduced as food or ornamentals into the garden, and were “well-behaved” for many years before it became necessary to limit their spread. Dame’s rocket eventually claimed most of the shore and had to be removed by hand. European Mountain Ash berries are attractive to bears, which also break the branches of the apple trees and other plants while ‘harvesting’ their food.

By 1960, the log cabin was gone, and the herring the Olsons used to net in their harbor had all vanished, but the vegetable garden space and the apple tree by the original back door, landmarks through the years, remained.

In 1928 Margaret died of pneumonia while in Portland, Oregon. Irma and Charlie had only one son, Eddie Olson, born in 1933 who died after a short illness caused by a tick bite which he sustained while traveling inland, in 1949.

As the Peterson girls left no direct heirs, the property fell to a cousin, Carl Jensen, following Irma’s death in 1966. Carl had married Caroline Hoff, a USGS employee from San Francisco, in 1951. They built a new house on their inherited property and both had retired from business by 1969. It was Caroline Jensen, Master Gardener extraordinaire, who transformed several acres of the homestead land into a dene extraordinaire, who transformed several acres of the homestead land into a

Caroline sowed a packet of seeds for ‘Pacific Giant’ primroses in 1971 which grew amazingly well, and so began the tradition of growing Primulas on the property. Her curved flower beds, with the waters of Pearl Harbor in the background, were filled with massed primroses in all available colors, which she generously shared with friends and neighbors. She conducted annual plant sales from her garden, with yards of polyanthus and other seedlings and divisions displayed on trestle tables, which became so popular that a plant sale is still held every year in late April by the Juneau Garden Club.

After becoming enthused by her first ‘Pacific Giants’, Caroline added many more colors of polyanthus, including the newer blue ones and named plants such as ‘City of Bellevue’ and ‘Guinevere’. She also added many Julians, Cowichans, and other species of Primula. P. pulverulenta, P. bulleyana, P. denticulata, P. japonica, P. chionantha, P. sieboldii, P. sikkimensis, P. sinopurpurea, P. saxatilis, P. alpicola, P. vialii, and P. luteola thrived, many of them in time becoming great swaths of plants and surviving for over two decades.

When not actually working in the garden, Caroline expressed her passion for horticulture by writing many articles (one extended to 27 hand-written pages) and teaching others which plants would grow well in Alaska and how to make them do so. She hybridized her Primulas, and among those she most prized was a yellow polyanthus, larger flowered than the parent, ‘Dorothy’, which grew particularly well in her garden in the late ‘80’s and became known and frequently shared as ‘Caroline’s Dorothy’.

A picture of Caroline beside a huge circular bed devoted entirely to dahlias, which she must have dug, stored, and replaced every year, attests to her hard work and determination, even into her later years. Carl Jensen died in 1986 at the age of 74. Caroline continued to live at their home and to participate in activities with the Master Gardeners, the APS, and various civic organizations. A photograph of her taken in 2005 shows her using a walker to approach an impressive bed of Primula denticulata, which she often weeded on her hands and knees before crawling to her next gratifying task.

In April of 1992, she had attended The International Primula Symposium held near Portland, Oregon, and visited the Berry Botanic Garden which held large collections of alpine plants, rhododendrons, lilies, and Primulas. The garden that Rae Selling Berry gave to Portland inspired Caroline to plan a future for her own Juneau garden. She set up a trust and bequeathed her home and the 17 acre garden to the City and Borough of Juneau, and when she died in 2006, aged 89, the citizens of Juneau became beneficiaries of her will.

Part of the mission statement she wrote for the garden states that “The vision of the
Arboretum is to provide the people of Juneau a place that both teaches and inspires learning in horticulture, natural sciences and landscaping - to preserve the beauty of the landscape for pure aesthetic enjoyment – to maintain the historical and cultural context of the place and its people.” As Merrill pointed out, her addition of the phrases about aesthetic enjoyment and history of place was unique for public gardens and adds an interesting dimension to his work.

Merrill has been manager of the Arboretum since 2007, and the task of rebuilding the garden seems to be more than a full time job. Aside from garden design, planting and maintenance, he applies for grants and other funding for the Arboretum. Activities connected with the garden are varied and frequent: there are student learning projects coordinated with area schools, exchanges of seeds and plants with other institutions worldwide, special events such as wine-tastings and weddings, contributions for the annual plant sale, and donations to the local food-bank of vegetables grown in the plot which has been under cultivation for over a hundred years.

He was not always a Primula addict, but Merrill has discovered the fascination of this genus through working in the Arboretum, and now enjoys occasional visits from Juneau APS members who knew Caroline to clarify points about the history of the Garden or to verify the identification of specific hybrid Primulas.

He has added many Primula species to those grown by Caroline, including ‘Chehalis Blue’, from Herb Dickson’s breeding program. Named primrose hybrids as well as many of the Alaskan and Asian species which were not readily available to her have been introduced, and the blue primroses, which had all vanished, were replaced. Among his favorites are the tiny flowered P. veris ssp. veris, P. sikkimensis and a variety of P. secundiflora called ‘Rowalene Rose’. The plant that he will wax lyrical about is P. maximovicii, with its unique mop of scarlet flowers atop straight stems. Merrill just calls his ‘Max.’

The Arboretum now houses the largest collection of Primula species in North America with well over 70 species and working towards 150. The unique preponderance of Primula growing there prompted Merrill to apply to the North American Plants Collections Consortium, part of the American Public Gardens Association, for the official designation of ‘Primula Collection’. The designation is not easily earned, and Merrill had to work with an inspector from the Consortium to list all the species and then label them with names and acquisition information as well as count them. Just the tallying of denticulata plants (5500) took an entire day!

September 17, 2012 was a milestone day for the Arboretum, as the N.A.P.C.C. approved the application, naming the Jensen- Olson Arboretum as the official holder of the National Collection of Primula.

Merrill has further goals to meet: he wants to establish the Southeast Alaska Horticultural Education Center, including multi-purpose classrooms and a library as well as a greenhouse/conservatory within the grounds to enable the Arboretum to better meet the mission entrusted by Caroline of teaching others about horticulture, natural sciences, landscaping and the cultural context of the garden.

We have all gained a fresh perspective on gardening with Primulas, and look forward to hearing more about the progress of this outstanding garden from Merrill and Kelly. We would surely visit if given the chance.

Here, we provide you with the answers to the crossword puzzle we re-printed in the last issue, from days gone by.

Sadly, no one answered our call for entries, so we have no winners, unlike the original which ended up having seven winners for only six prizes - good thing the “erudite Mr. Balcolm donated still another prize.”

Puzzles 2 and 3 are available if you are interested - just drop a line to editor@americanprimrosesociety.com

And if you liked this inclusion, but just didn’t get around to sending your answers, please let us know, so we can include others in upcoming issues.
Captured by Primroses

JEAN MACKENZIE, NEW ENGLAND

The following comments and the accompanying photos give a peek into Jean MacKenzie’s primrose garden in Brewster, Massachusetts, the second garden featuring photos from the 2012 APS Photo Contest. The first was Trond Hoy’s roof-top garden, and in Jean’s garden, the graceful sweeps of color show an equal, if different, interpretation of a love of Primula. There are still more members’ gardens yet to be featured. I know you will be interested in seeing them all.

My interest in growing primroses was sparked by my time after college living in Cornwall, England with an aunt and uncle, where primroses were a natural. When I came home and married, I was determined to see if I could grow them on our Cape Cod property. While taking care of our three children I managed to find time to get started. (I think I first got plants or seeds from a nursery in Livonia, Michigan?)

About ten years ago, my husband and I bought a nearby defunct marine aquarium. After removing the buildings, parking lot etc., building a house, and returning the grounds to a more natural state, I had a blank slate on which to garden. We had built a stone retaining wall in front of the house, so I decided that would be where the primroses would go. I had brought some plants from our previous home, bought plants here and there, and then started growing some from the APS seed exchange. Cape Cod soil is traditionally very sandy, but our soil is heavier. I amend the primrose soil often with compost to improve its quality. Because it can get quite hot here in the summer, I have buried a drip hose under the primroses and turn it on during hot, dry spells. I really do think that has been instrumental in keeping the plants happy. I try to cover them with pine boughs in winter for protection.

So that’s my primrose story. I credit my Scottish parents who gardened, my time in Cornwall, and just my romantic notion of primroses for inspiring me to keep growing this charming plant.
A soaker hose buried under the plants keeps them going during hot, dry spells in the summer. The result is certainly worth the effort, as the plants renew and flourish every spring.

Oak Leaf *Primula* Seed from

**OWL’S ACRE PRIMULAS**

Seed for these unusual *Primula* can be found at Owl’s Acres specialty nursery in England. A fairly recent introduction, these polyanthus have oak-leaf shaped leaves and quilled petals on many of the flowers – very different than most polys. Something for the collector! And check out other unusual *Primula* seed offered on their website: www.sweetpea-seed.com.

Photo from the Owl’s Acres website.
From top to bottom:


Marion Stafford’s ‘Early Girl’ - a delicate pale flower over dark bronzy foliage.

A firey-orange poly - taking a first.

A trough entered by Elisabeth Zander in the 6 Primula Plants in any Container Division -- marginatas earning the blue centered rosette for Best of Division. All photos by Judith Sellers.

Clockwise from top left:
Delicate violet-blue flowers on *P. ellisiae* shown by John Sheridan

*Primula pedemontana alba* by Maedythe Martin

Gold-laced Poly by Maedythe Martin
Lovely trio of *P. veris* showing its wide range of colors.

Top left: ‘Koenegan der Nacht’, an impressive striped auricula, benched by Maedythe Martin.
**Alpine Garden Club of BC spring show**

Left, top: one of Rhondda Porter's tiny treasures - a dainty picotee which Rhondda has had for years.

Left, bottom: Michael Plumb has raised a number of plants from the Barnhaven strain 'Vera Maud' showing delicate shading.

Right: The over-all winner was a fine specimen of *P. maximowiczii* entered by an alpine grower.

**Left: Barrie Porteous, with Andrew Osyany, Bodil Leamy and Marion Jarvie; fellow adventurers attending the Interim Conference in Boulder, Colorado in 1968, followed by exploration in Wyoming and Montana.**

**Photos from Barrie Porteous.**

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**Candelabras in a Friend’s Garden**

**BARRIE PORTEOUS**

Photos sent to the Photo Contest last year showed an impressive drift of candelabra primroses in Barrie’s friends’ garden, the garden of Andrew and Sue Osyany as it turns out! Barrie actually found a picture of the four intrepid plant hunters and friends mentioned below and sent that along later. Thanks Barrie!

In 1985, rumors abounded in relation to the American Rock Garden Society starting up a chapter in Ontario. I, and many of my friends, felt this was nonsense as we were all keen rock gardeners and had heard nothing about this initiative, but, apparently, we were wrong. In due course, a letter arrived, from the late Norm Singer and someone called Andrew Osyany, requesting our presence at a meeting to be held at the Civic Garden Centre in Toronto, now the Toronto Botanical Garden. And indeed, a club was formed. Since then our chapter, the Ontario Rock Garden & Hardy Plant Society has grown from strength to strength with our own seed exchange, library, a major yearly plant sale, an excellent newsletter and a brand new website. We are also fortunate to be able to attract speakers from Europe, the USA and other parts of Canada as well as having many local experts to call on. Throughout this time Andrew served in almost every position and was the guiding light in our group.

This Osyany fellow turned out to be a great guy and in 1986 he, Marion Jarvie, Bodil Leamy and I set off for the Interim Conference in Boulder to be followed by a week-long adventure into Wyoming and Montana. This was the first of many yearly trips, made even more pleasant by Andrew telling us all sorts of hilarious jokes after lunch as we made our way between various mountain ranges. Sadly, this all changed when Andrew, a happy bachelor, met Sue. No more jokes from the back seat, just a lot of hand holding and much gazing longingly into Sue’s eyes. Inevitably, marriage followed. Both sold their houses and moved to a new property located east of Shelburne, Ontario in a zone 4a/4b where they began a series of new gardens.

The property is well wooded and steeply sloped with a pond at the bottom, the overflow from which feeds a small stream. Andrew and Sue decided that this was a perfect spot, with its damp boggy conditions and dappled shade, to create a *Primula* garden. They began with *P. japonica* ‘Postford White’ and *P. japonica* ‘Miller’s Crimson’ which subsequently crossed to create some interesting hybrids. In due course these spread throughout the entire garden as seen in the picture.
Oak Leaf *Primula* Seed

**OWL’S ACRE PRIMULAS**

In exploring new Primula offerings, we stumbled upon these strangely captivating Oak Leaf Primulas. The following information is taken from Owl’s Acre Primulas, “offering seeds of ... choice strains of Primula sourced directly from specialist breeders.” Owl’s Acre was the only provider we could find that actually had seed in stock, so if you are interested in adding this 2011 new introduction to your garden, visit them at http://www.sweetpea-seed.com/primula/oakleaf.html

Their website describes them as follows:

**Oak Leaf Primulas**

An exciting new development in hardy *Primulas*. Discovered in 1999 by Dr Richard Brumpton, and first exhibited to the public by Dr Margaret Webster on the 21st April 2001 at the Saltford Primula Show, Oak Leaf *Primulas* are little known in Europe, and virtually unknown in the rest of the world. Now back in stock.

These charming *Primulas* have scalloped or lobed leaves similar to those of an oak leaf. The flowers are borne in clusters of 15-30 on single stems about 10 inches tall. Each plant can produce up to 10 flower stems a year between the months of February and April, depending on the hardiness zone, and provide a display for six to eight weeks. The elegant star shaped flowers provide a colorful display and withstand heavy rainfall and frosts to 20°F. These unique *Primulas* can be used in borders or in patio containers and are perennial to zone 6. Ideally suited to shaded areas or woodland plantings these oak leaf *Primulas* prefer a slightly acid soil and moist but not boggy conditions. Please note that oak leaf *Primula* seed will produce about 75% oak leaf plants and 25% ordinary *Primulas*.

Have you ever seen these plants? Maybe even grown them? If you have pictures of your own, we would love to hear from you! Let us know at: editor@americanprimrosesociety.com

Western Shows 2013

**A REPORT BY MAEDYTHE MARTIN**

At the West Coast, there are two shows each spring in which *Primula* growers can enter their plants. Sadly, the large *Primula* shows which were held for years in the Seattle/Tacoma area and in Oregon are no more. In fact the Chapters there have faded away. It is a long way to come for the US growers, but occasionally one makes the effort: this year Ian MacGowan came up from Washington State to enter plants in the show in Victoria. It is hoped to have an APS show in Portland again next spring – date still to be announced. Maybe we will see some of you there. Meantime, here is a report on the two Canadian shows this year.

**Alpine Garden Club of BC spring show and sale**

A new experience for me this year, visiting the one-day Alpine Garden Club of BC spring show and sale, in the Floral Hall at the Van Dusen Garden, in Vancouver, B.C. In the interest of efficiency, the show and sale organizers have chosen to have a one-day event, so that exhibitors can come to the Hall in the morning, go to the sale while the judges judge, admire the show results and then pack up and go home, all in one trip. (Up until last year, the show had been a two day show.) The show was held April 6 this year and the season was in full splendor. A fine array of *Primula* adorned the bench.

*Primula marginata* shows well this early in the season and there were some fine polyanthus, including some of the mysterious dark Cowichans. The show was graced by many entries from Michael Plumb and Rhondda Porter. It was a treat to see some of Rhondha’s tiny treasures, including a dainty picotee which Rhondda has had for years. It was perfect on the day. Michael has raised a number of plants from the Barnhaven strain ‘Vera Maud’. The delicate shading makes these pretty primroses a visual treat! The over-all winner was a fine specimen of *P. maximowiczii* entered by an alpine grower.

And of course the sale was the perfect indulgence for the plant lover! I saw some fine examples of *Primula* ‘Wharfedale Bluebell’ which is a striking blue with a fine wire edge of silver. Not only is this a super, reliable plant for display in the garden, but for me it has produced some fine progeny. It must have some *P. marginata* blood but the hybridizer is not willing to share who the parents were.

The BC Primula Group took Ed and Jan Buyarski out for a delicious Chinese
food lunch after everyone had made the rounds of the sale. Ed was down visiting from Alaska and it was a treat to chat with him and catch up. One of the topics of discussion was holding a Western Show next year for the APS. This will likely take place in Portland again, in conjunction with the HPSO spring plant sale next April.

Satisfied with our finds at the plant sale, a pleasant chat and the succulent lunch, we all found our way home, pleased with the day.

**VIRAGS Show, Victoria**

The second show at the West Coast is the alpine garden show held in Victoria April 12 and 13 this year by the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society. With one more week behind us after the Vancouver show, we found the additional time had resulted in quite a few more plants in bloom! The show had a respectable 60 pots of *Primula* on the show benches.

We were fortunate this year in Victoria for Ian MacGowan was able to come up from Whidbey Island, Washington State, to the show here with some of his plants. But then, as a reward for his efforts, the trophy for Best Primula in Show went to him for his fine example of ‘Argus’. Seen on show benches ever since it was introduced in 1896 in England, ‘Argus’ still performs well and is a delight, with the strong purple/magenta flowers and its clear white eye. Another new auricula grower in Victoria, Lloyd Gilmore, brought some of the auriculas he has been growing over the past year or so. He has imported plants from Pop’s Plants in England, and it was a treat to see some of the British plants on the bench here in Victoria. These included two exhibition alpine plants, ‘Gail Atkinson’ and ‘Woodmill’, among others.

One cheerful entry was a three pot presentation of the cowslip, *Primula veris*. One red, one yellow and one an intermediate rusty orange gave a good indication of what colors this classic plant can display.

The award for Best Polyanthus went to Maedythe Martin for a pin-eyed gold-laced poly, showing good lacing, but alas not to show standard as an exhibition GLP. She has been raising some GLP plants for the last couple of years from some seed from the NAPS Northern seed exchange with great results. Hopefully this plant can be pollinated to raise more plants, some of which will have the more desirable thrum eye.

One treat to see was an entry of a North American plant: *P. ellisiae* by John Sheridan. Seldom seen on the show bench, its delicate violet-blue flower represents one of the few species to be found in our own continent. This one grows in central New Mexico and is considered by some to be a subspecies of *P. rusbyi*, according to Richards (Primula, 2nd ed. 2003).

There were many entries in the European *Primula* class, but one small, delicate white entry was very appealing and took a first. *Primula pedemontana alba* is from the French Alps and is more difficult in cultivation than some from this group. It has the slightly sticky leaf texture that is found in the *P. hirsuta* group but the small crystalline white flowers of this plant are very attractive. It was staged by Maedythe Martin.

There were a few plants of the classic yellow wild auricula. One staged by Maedythe Martin was a plant raised from Jellito seed. Their strain is called “x pubescens” but this plant is very like the wild auricula, with mealy leaves, though the chrome yellow of the flower is perhaps brighter than any found in nature. Another plant staged by Atholl Sutherland-Brown was the selected form of the wild plant introduced by April Boettger from Herb Dickson stock, called “Austrian Form”. This has been around for more than a decade but the fine, flat face of the flowers make a wonderful display. It is a great show plant.

The Irish primroses, the Drumcliff series, have been found in the nurseries here the past couple of years. In fact, the APS quarterly featured their introductions last year in an article. One of the pink forms appeared at the show this year, entered by Sue Lee, and one can see why they are so desirable. The soft pink flowers are set off by the dark purple leaves to perfection. And the form of this lovely mature plant, which took a first, was perfection!

After we all had toured the primrose and auricula tables at least three times, finding something new and interesting to admire, we spent time admiring the other fine entries in the show and then rested our weary feet under the tea tables. Another great show and another fine spring display!
Cooper: Plant Hunter and Regional Editor for the APS in the 1950s

EXCERPTS FROM AN ARTICLE BY ALAN ELLIOTT, RBGE, WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MAEDYTEHE MARTIN

In December of 2012 the APS received a general request from Alan Elliott, working at the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh about Roland E. Cooper. Cooper wrote a number of articles in the APS quarterly, starting in 1955. Turns out he was a serious plant hunter and later became a curator of the RBGE himself.

No one seemed to know anything about Cooper, but I remembered that Pam Eveleigh had asked for a copy of an article by him earlier in 2012. When you look, there are about 8 or 9 articles written by Cooper, and in fact he was the “English Regional Editor” for APS for about 6 years. The society at that time had a system of “regional editors” that would scout out and send in articles from around the world! There was, besides the English regional editor, one for Germany, Switzerland, Canada and three in the US. There was even a US Research Editor! And an Editor in Charge of Translations! The editor of the APS quarterly at the time was Susan Worthington who lived in Portland, Oregon. (She later moved to Vancouver, BC with her second husband, Mr. Watson, but that is another story). It is Susan who organized and produced the Pictorial Dictionary of Primula Species for the Society in 1954.

But back to Cooper. Alan Elliott had been working on an article about his life and discoveries and had found the articles by him in the APS quarterly. The RBGE has a set of the old APS quarterlies and Alan lists the articles about Cooper in his references for his paper. Some of the pictures printed in the quarterly are the only ones extant from Cooper’s travels! Alan was looking for any other material APS might have from Cooper – letters or other photos. I asked a few other APS members who are interested in the history of APS but no one had anything about Cooper. Wonder where the APS correspondence from the 1950s is?

Alan has now had his article published by the Scottish Rock Garden Society and it is available on-line to anyone interested in reading about Cooper. It is a thorough and interesting piece of research, and at 12 pages cannot be reproduced here, but Alan has granted permission for us to reprint a few excerpts. I hope you find this as interesting as I do, and we will list the APS articles by Cooper at the end. The link to the complete article is: http://files.srgc.net/fund/RECooper.pdf

The first page of the article is reproduced here with permission:

A Founder Member: Roland Edgar Cooper (1890-1962)

Alan Elliott

I have been working in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) as a member of the Global Type Initiative team funded by the Mellon Foundation. More than 150 herbaria are creating an online database of high resolution images of type specimens. A ‘type’ is a herbarium specimen used when describing a new species; it becomes permanently linked with the given plant name. In six years we have processed 47000 specimens, all to be accessible via the RBGE’s herbarium catalogue at www.rbge.org.uk.

While working on Bhutanese types I came across material collected by Roland Edgar Cooper in 1914 and 1915. Cooper has not received such a fanfare of recognition as the Himalayan giants Forrest, Kingdon-Ward, and Ludlow & Sherriff but he deserves our attention. The literature and his RBGE archive reveal new details about his collecting trip to Kullu and Lahoul (I have modernized the spelling of place names). He wrote very little about this trip and the resulting herbarium collections have been largely ignored relative to his specimens from Sikkim and Bhutan, which were extensively used in the writing of Long’s Flora of Bhutan.

Cooper was born in 1890 and orphaned by the age of four. At sixteen he came under the guardianship of his aunt Emma Smith (née Wiedhoft), his mother Jessie’s half-sister, and her husband, the botanist William Wright Smith. Cooper ended up in India when his uncle became keeper of the herbarium at the Royal Botanic Garden Calcutta in 1907. Here, and later in the Lloyd Botanic Garden Darjeeling, he studied botany and horticulture under the tutelage of George Thomas Lane, curator in Calcutta. He accompanied his uncle on collecting trips to Sikkim and the borders of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, gaining early experience of the diversity of the Himalaya.

Elliott goes on to give a history of Cooper’s early life and how he became interested in botany and horticulture. More details are revealed about the collecting trips
to Sikkim in 1913 and Bhutan in 1914 and 15. There are tables of the various plants collected. Some of the pictures in Elliott’s history are taken from Cooper’s articles in the early APS quarterlies. Cooper’s subsequent trips are described, with anecdotes about Cooper’s interest in the people where he travelled. Cooper held positions as director of various Botanical Gardens, first in Burma and then in Edinburgh, Scotland (RBGE). Elliott explains how these appointments came about. Plants Cooper collected are still grown at RBGE.

Rounding out his tale of the life of Cooper, Elliott says in his final paragraph:

_After retiring from the RBGE, Cooper moved to the Essex resort of Westcliff-on-Sea. His retirement became his most prolific period of articles for the SRGC, the American Rhododendron Society and the American Primrose Society (APS); in 1955 he became the ‘English Editor’ for the APS. He died at Southend-on-Sea in 1962 aged 71. Some of his papers remain at RBGE, but unfortunately the whereabouts of his pioneering photographs of Bhutan is unknown._

The following are selected references from Elliott’s article - specifically the ones that Cooper wrote and were published in the Quarterly for the American Primrose Society. If you happen to have a set of old quarterlies, it might be interesting to read them through.

**References**

Cooper R.E. 1955b The Story of a Flower, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 13(2): 46-49

Cooper R.E. 1955c Dear Editor, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 13(2): 50


Cooper R.E. 1958a Plant Hunter in Alaska, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 16(1):4-6

Cooper R.E. 1958b The Men Who Gave Us Auricularias, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 16(3):86-88

Cooper R.E. 1960a Cowslips for Wine, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 18(2):54-56

Cooper R.E. 1960b The Primulas of Central Asia, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 18(1):9-14 cont. p.17

Cooper R.E. 1960c Leaf-Folding In Amethystinae Primulas: Its Value to the Gardener, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 18(3):94-96

Cooper R.E. 1960d Strawberry Primroses or Stoloniferous Primulas, Quarterly of the American Primrose Society, 18(4):114-115


Images of Cooper reproduced courtesy of RBGE Library Archive

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American Primrose Society
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on May 5th, 2013

The meeting was held online. It opened at 2.30 pm EDST.

Board members present: Ed Buyarski (Director, representing Juneau Chapter), Cheri Fluck (Director), Julia Haldorson (Director, Membership Secretary), Jon Kawaguchi (Treasurer), Amy Olmsted (Director, Seed Exchange Coordinator), Michael Plumb (APS Secretary and Webmaster), Rhondda Porter (APS Vice-President).

Regrets: Alan Lawrence (APS President), Maedeythe Martin (Editor, President of BC Group), Rodney Barker (Director, New England Chapter Co-Chair), Susan Schnare (Director).

Other APS members in attendance: Merrill Jensen.
Most members at the show were unable to attend owing to technical difficulties.

A. Approval of the Agenda (Michael / Ed)

B. The Minutes of January 27th, 2013 Accepted as presented (Michael / Ed)

C. Treasurer’s Report (Emailed before the meeting): Summary
Society’s Assets as of March 31st, 2013: Total $28,395.13, consisting of $15,000.00 in Money Market Savings plus $5,000 in CD (US Bank) plus $8,395.13 in checking account
Quarterly Income Statement as of March 31, 2013: Revenues: $2,636.06; Expenses: ($2,246.78) = net gain of $389.28.
For the first quarter of 2013, advertising income and membership donations are down.
The Seed Exchange Report has not yet been submitted, so total revenue is still unknown.
We have received through PayPal revenues of $395.75.
Continued efforts are needed for the reduction of expenses and to raise revenues.
It is recommended that no increase in spending for 2013 be approved.
The membership dues are not enough to cover all of the Society’s expenses. We rely on other sources of income to prevent annual losses.
MOTION (Ed / Cheri): to accept the report - carried.

D. Committee Reports
1. Seed Exchange: Because the Exchange had been very successful it finished late this year, so the final expense report was unavailable at the time of the meeting. However, Amy reported that finances are in the black.
2. Editorial Committee: Report still to come.
3. Website: Michael explained that he had been unable to prepare a full written report yet owing to eyesight trouble. The website has a totally new appearance and a better arrangement of menu buttons which is more in line with standard website protocol. He called on board members to submit material for the website, as their collective expertise is invaluable.
4. Membership:

E. Chapters
1. Ed reported that the Juneau Chapter had $4,093 in reserves. They had had their own seed and plant exchange this quarter. Presentations included one by Merrill Jensen and one by himself. Chris Chadwell is due to visit in June. The National Primula Collection is now being developed at the Jensen Arboretum.
2. The New England Chapter has been busy preparing for and hosting the National Show, so their report is still to come, including the 2013 Show Report.

D/E MOTION (Michael / Ed) to table the missing reports (Seed Exchange, Editorial Committee, Website, New England Chapter) at the next board meeting.
Carried

MOTION (Michael / Julia) to accept Membership and Juneau Reports.
Carried

F. Business Arising / New Business:
1. Dorothy Dickson Award for Outstanding Service to the APS: The board had not received any nominations. It was agreed that the award does not have to be awarded every year (There are years in which it has not been awarded.).
MOTION (Michael / Cheri) not to present the Dorothy Dickson Award this year. Carried.
2. Election Results:
Michael gave the results. There were 23 ballots returned. As there were no write-in candidates, all candidates on the ballot were elected as follows:
President: Alan Lawrence
Secretary: Michael Plumb
Director: Merrill Jensen
The members congratulated Merrill and welcomed him to the board

G. Adjournment (Ed) at 3.35 pm EDST

Next meeting: TBA: Aug 3 or 4, Nov 2 or 3, Jan 25 or 26, depending on whether Saturday or Sunday is preferred.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Plumb, Secretary

American Primrose Society  Summer 2013
North American Rock Garden Society

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

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

Mark Dyen, Co-President
132 Church Street Newton, MA 02158
(250) 370-2951
martin951@shaw.ca

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

Overseas membership £7.50 ($10.00 US)

NOVEMBER 2013 NEW MEMBERS

April 2 - June 10, 2013

Year Name Address
2013 Kelly Olson 249 Wychwood Park, London, Ontario N6G 1S5 Canada
2013 Paul Otto 17568 Bray Lane, Brookings, Oregon 97415 USA
2013 Daniel P. Sheehy 95 Cross Cart Way, Eastham, Massachusetts 02651 USA
2015 Richard Steffen 1825 South 298th Street, Federal Way, Washington 98003 USA

Should there ever be a question about your membership, please contact:
Julia L. Haldorson, APS Membership
P.O. Box 292
Greenbank, Washington 98253 USA
julia-haldorson@ak.net

New Members

OFFICERS OF THE CHAPTERS

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

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

New England Chapter
Mark Dyen, Co-President
132 Church Street Newton, MA 02158
mark.dyen@csgrp.com

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

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American Primrose Society Summer 2013