

*Washington State Primrose Society*



Quarterly of the American

# PRIMROSE

Society

winter 1977

# American Primrose Society

VOLUME XXXV

WINTER, 1977

NUMBER 1

Photo ..... Mrs. A.C.U. Berry

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Florence Bellis

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## President's Message



Family responsibilities and a major commitment elsewhere have combined to create a real need, Mrs. Dorothy Springer believes, to resign from the Editorship of the **Quarterly**. We owe a tremendous vote of thanks to Mrs. Springer for the time she has expended on our behalf and her achievement during these five busy years of Editorship. One can only hope that the few who do so much for so many reap great benefits in knowledge gained and in many personal satisfactions.

Mrs. Florence Bellis, our Editor Emeritus, has helped tremendously with this issue and will stand by until the Board finds another Editor. In the meantime, we are conducting an Editor Search. Our hope is that many will volunteer to enable the Board to search diligently among the candidates for the one who best meets the needs of a specialty Society.

The Board will not expect a candidate to be an expert in all fields of Primula knowledge. There is ample background material in previously published **Quarterlies**, and in certain other references, to provide a working competence. An increase in knowledge is part of the compensation we offer! The Editor needs contact with good growers and Primula specialists wherever Primulas are being grown in order to personally solicit articles; has to be willing to work for no compensation other than personal satisfaction and experience; must be able and willing to write and rewrite; and to expend much time and effort generally. A good working relationship with a competent printer whose costs we can manage is a big part of the total enterprise. Please give this urgent matter your serious attention. We would like to start a dialogue with those of you who see this as a challenge and an opportunity. An informative, interesting, fresh material publication is the lifeblood of a specialty Society.

.....

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Baldwin's new Index can provide many leads for good winter reading. Additional copies of the Index are available as a single publication. Back copies of many **Quarterlies** are available from Herbert Dickson, 2568 Jackson Hiway, Chehalis, Wa. 98532.

.....

This issue is featuring a friend of all Primula enthusiasts of the present and future. Additional information about Rae Selling Berry and the creative fascinating haven for "new" plants she created can be found in many previous issues of the **Quarterly**. The seeker will find specific information about various Primula, accounts

of plant hunting trips, of special exhibits at shows. V. 14, #1 and #2 contain much about methods of culture, and learning how to grow plants newly introduced into cultivation. V. 25, #2 lists the previous references in the **Quarterlies**, contains several tributes, and a listing of all the Primula grown in her garden up to and including 1967. The last **Quarterly** contained a good obituary by Margaret Mason. The family of Mrs. Berry has given the A.P.S. a Perpetual Trophy to be used for "Best of Species" in the National Show. We deeply appreciate this memorial to her leadership.

Anita Alexander.

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### Judging Schools:

There will be two in February to recertify all judges and to increase the general knowledge of the Primula. February 19, 1977, Far West Federal Savings and Loan Building, Raleigh Hills Shopping Center, Beaverton, Or. **Time** 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday. For the Tacoma-Seattle area, February 26, 1977, Tenzler Branch Library, Lakewood, 6300 Wildaire Rd., S.W. **Time** 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.

Tuition for the course is \$5.00. Those wishing to take the examinations for certified judges will be asked to pay an additional dollar. We will not turn away unregistered folk, but preplanning will be better if you will send in the registration form (in the Fall **Quarterly**) to Mrs. Loie Benedict soon. This is an excellent opportunity to become more knowledgeable about Primulas. Classes will be taught in three divisions: Species, taught by Dorothy Dickson; Auriculas, taught by Cyrus Happy III; Vernales Section, taught in the Tacoma area by Loie Benedict and in the Beaverton area by Rusty Gates. The general chairman is Mrs. Florence Bellis.

### Officers for 1977:

The nominating committee has selected a slate of officers to be considered by the membership at the next annual meeting, April 23 and 24, to be hosted by the Washington State Primrose Society. Members who are certain they cannot attend may send their ballots to the secretary prior to the meeting. Nominations will be taken from the floor. The committee report follows: President, Anita Alexander, Oregon. Vice-President, Ethel Balla, Connecticut. Secretary, Rosemary Peterson, Oregon. Treasurer, Edward Pincus, Washington. Corresponding Secretary East, Alice Hills Baylor, Vermont. Corresponding Secretary West, Gus Arneson, Washington. Directors, two to be elected, Mildred Washburn, Oregon, and Dr. Ralph Benedict, Michigan. Dorothy Springer to fill unexpired term of Edward Pincus. Please note the news of the resignation of the Editor elsewhere in this issue. A future Editor will be chosen by the Board. In the meantime, our Editor Emeritus, Florence Bellis, will provide information and inspiration through the pages of the **Quarterly** she will edit until such time as a permanent Editor is chosen.

### Seed Exchange

The seed lists will be sent out by Ross and Helen Willingham in a separate mailing. Members must have their 1977 dues paid in order to participate. This is a good opportunity to obtain a few seeds of a wide variety of Primulas.

### Memberships

Dues of \$7.00 per year were payable November 15. Please help yourself and the Society by prompt payment to the Treasurer, Thelma Genheimer. The Editor Emeritus and officers will make every effort to make this coming year one of value for the membership. There is a need to improve and stabilize our financial position in order to publish a good **Quarterly** in the face of rising printing costs. Some volunteers are expending a great deal of time and effort. Help yourself and the Society by increasing the membership base—give a **Quarterly** and/or a plant and gain another member. One does not need to live in any particular place to be one of the winners of the contest to gain members. On the back of one of Mrs. Berry's pictures of a lovely Primula is a note, "This is the plant that got me started with them." Give a plant, increase a friendship, gain a broader working base for our Society.

### Meeting Notice:

The Eastern Chapter Number One will meet May 21, in Scotland, Ct. Richard and Herbert Redfield will host the meeting.

## Copper Jug Presentation



Mrs. Rae Berry's daughter, Elsa Reid, has presented this Irish jug to be used as a "Best of Species" trophy for each National Show. It is to be a revolving Trophy, remaining the property of the A.P.S. The copper jug was used long ago in Ireland as a container for milk or whiskey. Mrs. Berry purchased it in a narrow alley, around the corner from Hyde Park, when in London to attend the "Original Alpine Plant Conference." It remained a favorite piece in a large collection of copper artifacts. So this was the piece chosen for the A.P.S., dear to her because it was created to expand the knowledge and love of Primulas, her favorite of favorites in the flowering world.

Rae Berry created one of the great Primula Gardens of our time. January 21, 1881 to October 9, 1976 is a fitting life span for a truly magnificent gardener. Primula enthusiasts everywhere turned to Rae Berry's garden as a storehouse filled with beautiful examples and knowledge about them. It was a bridge linking Oregon to plant hunters and their expeditions, to American and British and continental gardeners and their gardens. We can thank her, we who rejoice before precise green Auriculas, silvered pink pulverulentas, the vigorous and many-hued pubescens, bright rosea seeding into nearby paths, the capricious "miffs and mimps" of less familiar and much more difficult Primulas. The miffy ones appealed to her creativity and imagination, and many which refused to thrive elsewhere thrived under her nurture. Now it is much easier to move plants from gardens on one island or continent to another. But the introduction to these gardens of plants from the wilds would never have been accomplished without specialists such as Rae Selling Berry.

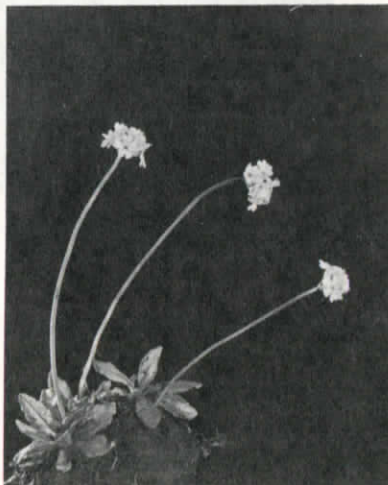


## Letter from Mr. and Mrs. E.H. Lohbrunner

Victoria, B.C. Canada

It is with a great sense of loss that we have learned of the death of Mrs. A.C.U. Berry of Portland, Oregon on November 9, 1976 at the age of 95.

Her life was dedicated to the growing of beautiful and rare Rhododendrons, trees, shrubs, rock-garden and alpine plants in her five acre garden on S.W. Summerville Ave. Many were grown for the first time on this continent. Her favorites were the alpine plants, especially members of the Primulaceae which were her first love.



"P. incana, American native in Rocky Mountains."

Many plant collecting expeditions to various parts of the world received her generous support. Her skill in growing and flowering the seeds and plants that were collected was unparalleled. This ability was recognized by Kew, the Royal Botanical Gardens and others, who sent seed of rare and difficult plants to Mrs. Berry as an insurance, that if they failed, she might succeed. Her successes were phenomenal.

Rae-Berry made many collecting trips in search of plants. My wife Ethel and I had the good fortune and pleasure of accompanying her on many of these expeditions. Over the years she became one of our dearest friends and we learned to love and admire her. Her keen appreciation of plants, her cheerful acceptance of unforeseen circumstances and her generosity in sharing her knowledge and her treasures was appreciated not only by us but by all who knew her.

Among the many personal memories of our collecting trips with Rae, space permits us to mention only a few. On one of the expeditions to the Wallowa Mts., will we ever forget the Persian carpet of color flowing down a hillside. The azure blue of thousands of Mertensia pulchella, the yellow nodding bells of Fritillaria pudica, flashing accents of Castilleja, Sisyrinchium and other plants. An inch high tiny white Allium dotted the whole area like fallen snowflakes. We spread out in several directions hoping to find Primula Cusickiana in bloom. Rae's pet name for this was "Cookie" as was "Stuffy" for Primula suffrutescens from the Sierra Nevadas, Ethel called out "Here it is!", Rae and I came running over, there, under a stunted pine were several magnificent plants of "Cookie," their golden-eyed rich violet flowers in perfect bloom. Slowly Rae knelt down, cupping the flowers in her hands, enjoying the lovely fragrance of violets. Then just sat back in quiet adoration of their serene beauty. She is one of the few people who have managed to grow and flower Primula Cusickiana.

On another trip to Alaska and the Yukon her ability to take things in her stride became evident. At times our accommodations were very primitive. Bathing meant bringing water from the creek, heated on an old-fashioned stove. A vacant log cabin with a galvanized wash tub served as a bathroom. Mosquitos, gnats and black-flies were abundant. Rae who was used to better things, took all this with a smile and said "Better luck next time." Next time turned out to be the Chateau Mayo in the Yukon where there was a spotlessly clean bath room. One tap with steaming hot water and one marked cold—from which no water emerged. Again, this was taken in good spirit, as were numerous other inconveniences.

Although we were collecting plants, it was always done with conservation in mind. When digging small plants such as Diapensia, Loiseleuria etc. from the thousands encountered, Rae and Ethel would carefully replace the sod back into the shallow tundra that covered the stony permafrost.

Mrs. Berry was known and recognized by the gardening fraternity, the world over. She was the recipient of numerous awards including the first life-time membership of the American Primrose Society, the gold medal of the Rhododendron Society, and the Florens de Bevoise Medal of the Garden Clubs of America. Her passing leaves a great void and she will be dearly remembered by all who knew her.



## Mrs. Berry's Treasure Box of Primulas

Louise H. Lucas

As I look back on the many lovely Primulas I saw in Mrs. Berry's garden for the first time, I realize what luck I had in helping to cultivate them and the marvelous gardening lessons I learned.

Many are no longer there, as our rainy climate eventually catches up with mountain plants (not to mention slugs!).

The peak of bloom is usually March, April and early May. The earliest are the Petiolares group which strongly resemble the English *P. vulgaris* and bloom in just such profusion, covering the leaves.



*P. Rockii*

*Primula sessilis* is a lovely almost pure light pink with a slight orchid tint and a yellow eye. This is the first to bloom often in January of an "open winter." *Primula bracteosa*, a luscious bright rose, is next more brilliant than any of the others. Once I counted over thirty flowers on a plant and later it had even more!

About the same time comes the queen of this group, *Primula Butanica*, a hard-to-describe shade of blue with a chartreuse eye and fringed edge. Almost as lovely and easier, is *P. Edgeworthii*, an almost-blue. *Primula Scapigera* and its hybrid with *bracteosa*, are also little aristocrats. These Primulas are alpine and while they have the tufted habit of *P. vulgaris* and rough leaves in a rosette close to the ground, their growing conditions are very different in the Himalayas from Europe. Mrs. Berry solved the conditions of dry winters under the snow and cool moist summers, by using a north facing cold frame shaded South and West and covered by slats in summer afternoons and by glass in winter. Always they had good ventilation and good drainage. This bed also accommodated many of the Belled Primulas such as *Primula Reidii*, *Primula Wattii*, *Primula Reidii Williamsii* (my own idea of the perfect Primula) and the now lost *Primula Wigramiana* (ethereal white), *Primula eburnea* and the white form of *P. Reidii Williamsii* (crossed with *P. Reidii*). *Primula nutans* and *P. Viali* thrive here too and *Omphalogrammas*, tiny rare *Farinosa* forms such as *P. sapphirina* and *P. scotica*. Our own American Primulas *Prim. Ellisae Parryi* and *suffrutescens* were also here and tiny European alpine such as *P. allionii* and *P. minima* and the small Alaskan *P. cuneifolia* var. *saxifragifolia*.



*P. scapigera*

All of them rare and "endangered" probably in their native haunts, due to population explosion and oil. *Primula Sheriffae*, that elegant long tubed lilac colored flower covered with white meal, was one of the rarest and most difficult and had to be put in the cold house in winter. Even so it has since been lost. A real treasure, as so many things in her garden are. Not a Primula but one of the most beautiful flowers I have ever seen, now almost unobtainable is the lovely Gentician blue *Tecophilaea* from the Andes. This too grew in a frame, but a sunny one as it is a bulb.

The Primulas were planted right in the shaded frames with a few rocks for them to nestle against. This helped the moisture retention. The soil below the frame was dug out to about 3 feet (terrible hard pan) then the following mixture was put in on top of a foot of large rounded pebbles. A layer of moss was put over the drainage to preserve moisture and prevent washing down of the soil mixture. Finally the compost was put in to a little above ground level and allowed to settle before planting. The mixture is:

- 2 parts well rotted leaf mold
- 1 part loose crumbly loam
- 2 parts coarse washed river sand (not builders sand as this packs)



*P. glaucescens* (she was proud of the amount of bloom on this)

Only morning sun came to this frame and it certainly seemed to work and even now years later some of the plants are still growing.

Mrs. Berry was no magician and even she lost many treasures, but she profited from her losses and never gave up. What appealed to her was the great challenge of growing rare plants from seed, watching them grow and finally flower. The harder they were to grow, the more challenge and if they appealed to her she'd do anything to get them to grow. She did not grow things just because they were rare, but for their beauty too and all rare things did not appeal to her.

We owe her a great tribute for her pioneering in growing these plants and in sharing them with those she thought loved them and could succeed in growing and propagating them. She did not keep them just to herself. She did research on growing conditions of all her plants and most of her rare Primulas and Rhododendrons she originally got from expeditions to the Himalayas which she subscribed to. One thing she taught us is that one should not slavishly follow the growing conditions of the plant's natural habitat, one has to allow for lower altitude conditions here, and adaptation is the secret not copying. Also infinite attention and care are necessary, just "talking to plants" does not make them grow. They need certain elements: patience, intelligence and care are better than talk, as most plants will agree!



P. Allionii

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## RAE BERRY — A Personal Vignette

By Florence Bellis

There is Rae Berry, the personage, and then there is Rae Berry, the person. I say this in the present tense for she will be gardening right along with the rest of us until each one who knew her gardens no more. For some she will remain a legend, someone unreachable on the heights of experience, knowledge, and wisdom. For those who knew her intimately, she will always be a totally delightful person, warm and outgoing, whose natural graciousness lived side by side with a little girl's mischievousness.

Her world was not diluted by sound. Perhaps the absence of this perception expanded others into an identification with nature both glorious and humble. She was one with the birds, animals and plants, loving them all with a great tenderness. She loved plants not as ego acquisitions, not as something to show for a ribbon or show off in the garden. She showed to share with others her joy in them, and she showed them with a parent's pride for they were in truth her soil children.



Mrs. Berry

Had she not brought them forth from the seed, often against their inclination: encouraged them and cared for them; cajoled them from infancy to flowering maturity when they did not particularly wish to live in a foreign land? She loved them as well in their native stands here, in the Rockies and the Willows, in Alaska, collecting judiciously, growing and taming them, sending specimens to the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. And she loved the trips for themselves—gathering firewood and cooking over it, hauling water from mountain streams, making her bed on the grasses and herbage of the earth.

She loved the trips to British Columbia to visit friends, nurserymen mostly, and to bring back British Primula imports. Among them were some of the old and weary Bon Accord doubles and the fabled Golden Pheasant (a double Gold Lace I believe), and that old impostor, Prince Silverwings, seldom if ever fully double. How frail with age they were and how thinly sliced to go around the table of antique plant collectors. She loved to tell of her mishaps, going and coming, rocking with laughter in the remembering, misadventures that could happen only to Rae Berry.

She loved a good baseball game. When we went to watch the Portland Beavers we told tall tales of our tomboy days on the diamond—hers in the Park Blocks of downtown Portland in the 90s, long black braids whipping the wind, the only girl on the team. She was the daughter of Ben Selling, one of Portland's foremost philanthropists of the day; the wife of A.C.U. Berry, British engineer from India; mother of two sons and a daughter. She was a superlative cook. Her dinners are as memorable as her garden. She was a voracious reader—everything horticultural, and English newspapers and magazines, and Plato and Aristotle, and a great deal of everything in between.

She had two gardens. Her first one was small, in a residential district on Portland's east side where neighbors complained about the loads of manure. Her second is an estate of boundless beauty to the south of Portland among the west hills along the Willamette River. Here come her friends and visitors from far-off lands to see her species Magnolias and Rhododendrons grown from seed—now great, wide-branching trees—her Show Auriculas, her species Primulas, *Nomocharis*, her alpines from North and South America and from Europe and Asia.

Many of these, and others, she grew from seed collected by plant hunters whose expeditions she helped make possible. Hers is not a garden of the beautiful known. It is a garden of the beautiful unknown or not generally grown. Here are exotics from Chile and Peru and South Africa; alpines from the high slopes and meadows of the European Alps; wild flowers and trees and shrubs from Upper Burma, southeastern Tibet and southwestern China—the flower basket of the world.

Along the paths winding through Magnolia and Rhododendron woods are Asian lilies; and *Nomocharis* whose family members look like lilies with fritillaria blood in them; and some of our own western natives. Bold masses of Candelabras and Belled Primulas stand in wet places. In sunny raised beds European Primulas sit among rock chips to catch the warmth of Oregon's springs and summers and avoid the mud of its winters. Potted Auriculas are in frames facing the sun. Primula gems, tiny and hairy to stand the rigors of the Mekong-Salween Divide, shelter from the summer sun in shady frames. Colonies of hot-pink *P. rosea* crowd the swampy edges. Rosettes of Ramondas, violet bells flaring, fatten in the cool and nutritious cracks of a rock wall wet with its own shadiness. Gentians blanket sunny spots with the electric ball-bluing blue of the tropics. And so many other plants I cannot tell you of.

But this I can tell you. Rae Berry cherished each and everyone of these plants as a special gift of creation. She lived in the heart of stillness and in the heart of her plants' still beauty. She reckoned the years of her life by their flowering.

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## Mrs. Berry in the Field

By Dorothy Marshall

It was in the summer of 1958 that I had the pleasure of taking Mrs. Rae Berry to the Steens Mountain. While we had surprising weather, she accepted any discomforts with no complaints, and from what she said later, she apparently enjoyed herself completely.

The Steens Mountain is a very unusual geological feature. It is in the southeastern corner of Oregon, in a near desert country, which is around 4,000 feet altitude. The Steens rises to almost 10,000 feet. It is a huge fault in the great lava formations, and on the west approach it is around 23 miles to the summit, with the incline smooth enough, by avoiding the several gorges, for a fair road to the top. The east side is an abrupt and rugged drop to the plains some 5,000 feet below. This makes for a great variation in the flora. On the lower slopes are scattered juniper, and higher, around the small lakes and streams there are the lovely quaking aspen groves. On the lower slopes the flowers of the high desert country are found. As one travels to higher levels, of course species change. On the summit ridge, with the late lying snow to help moisture conditions for flowers in the short season, the change is even more dramatic.

As we drove across the state the weather was not promising. Rain in July is not common to any extent here, and when we stopped in Burns for Mrs. Berry to try to buy a raincoat, the shop keepers thought it a real joke. We had supper at the Malheur Refuge, then drove south to the settlement of French Glen, where we had rooms in the old country hotel, primitive but satisfactory. We found the forty mile drive wonderful, through the wide country, with the twilight on the snow on the Steens, and owls, night hawks and jack rabbits out, oblivious to the showers. It was a long vacant road, where we met only one pickup truck. One felt very remote in the vague light.

Next morning the weather was still unpromising, and after hearing reports of road conditions above I felt I didn't wish to drive on unescorted. However we were in luck, as a group of Mazamas were going up, which brought the Refuge Manager, John Scharff, out to help if needed. While waiting for them, Mrs. Berry played with the dog and cats at the hotel, and we drove about in the vicinity where we had views of quail, partridge and geese. We also noted that the flowers we found, a few *Clarkia* and *Mariposa*, indicated the season there was about over. Then the Mazamas appeared, and after a wonderful lunch at the hotel we started up, especially as the blue in the sky was enlarging. As we ascended we found the hail storms had even cut off many leaves of the aspens and sage. In some places some flowers, maybe lupine, were still in display; then again we found *Arnica* and *Gilia aggregata* were badly beaten. However we had companions with whom to camp, and only an occasional mist fell in the night.

Next morning the weather at first seemed to have improved, and we walked up the road a bit and found *Lewisia*, perhaps *L. nevadensis*, in profusion. I had hoped to see *Hesperochiron*, but no luck. We had one report that *Dicentra uniflora* had been found, but no flowers or seeds. Roads were not in condition for my large station wagon to go farther, and I had started packing to leave when Mr. Scharff came with Mazamas he had brought from above. He was returning to get more of them, and offered to take us up to the summit.

The road was very rough, rocky and steep, and in some places, muddy. The sun was now out, but the sky was black in the east. As we approached the summit, the slopes, at the angle we were viewing them, were sheets of blue, from the low Lupine species. As we came up to the crest it thundered and flashed almost simultaneously. We stopped a few feet from the break-off, where we could look over the crest, and could barely see the fields and road far below. It was intensely dark there, while the sun was on us: very thrilling and awesome. Mrs. Berry said she would not have missed it for anything.

Various small plants live here: Phlox, Penstemons, Antennaria, and various small daisies. Among the Lupine were several white and one pink specimen. Mrs. Berry was pleased with a small pink Eriogonum, an *E. ovalifolium* probably. Mr. Scharff, who knows his plants, helped her dig. This was before the times of concern for endangered species, but Mrs. Berry insisted, "Don't take all of these special things. Always leave some where you collect." Would everyone follow that policy?

Our trip down was uneventful, as was the return drive.

I have heard that the small Eriogonum she brought home is still thriving in her garden.

## Past and Present

By Ronald J. Poff

Rarely does the perfect location fall into the hands of the right gardener—one who is a real plantsman with imagination and skill, plus enthusiasm for new and interesting plant material. Couple this with a time in history when daring explorers like K. Ward, Forrest, and Rock were introducing to the world their new plant discoveries and you have the beginning of Mrs. Berry's garden.

Mrs. Berry's selection of sites and skillful association of plants has created a perfect and harmonious blend of the wild and the tame. As the garden matures this becomes more and more evident. More than 200 species of rhododendrons are carpeted beneath by nearly 100 species of native wild flowers. All are thriving and



The garden as it was long ago

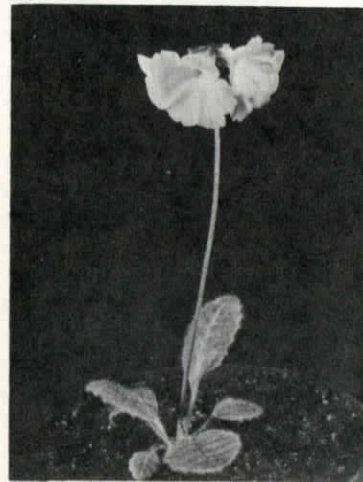


and now.

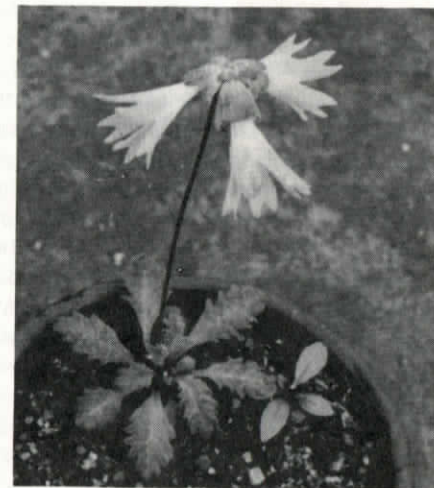
increasing. Thirty nine of these are now listed as rare and endangered species of Oregon, alone. The unique micro-climate here with the varied soil and underground water features have contributed greatly to the magnificent size and stature of many of the plants.

Over the past few years we have watched with interest the gradual transformation and development of the closely planted Rhododendrons (Perhaps too closely planted, for some observers.) There is a curious and pleasing fascination connected with their gnarled and slowly twisting trunks—some nearly like corkscrews from the weight of winter ice storms. Each plant shows great beauty and individual charm. I like to imagine that this is how they might look in their ancestral homes in Asia. This adds interest during the long periods of the year when they are not in bloom.

Mrs. Berry gave much thought to planting for foliage. Seldom would a day pass when she would not comment on how fascinated she was by the different



*R. Reidii* "One of the loveliest jewels—as hard to keep as love"  
Reginald Farrer.



*P. Cawdoriana*, first found by  
Kingdon Ward in Tibet.

shades of green. Because of this, the Rhododendrons gave her year around pleasure. Her daily walks through the planting were extended by her slow and careful search for individual plants which interested her for the beauty of their leaves.

I believe her real love was Primulas. No garden flower was as beautiful to her as *Primula cawdoriana* or *Primula Reidii*; but she cherished them all. Her final days of working in the garden were absorbed in caring for her *Auricula* species. (A listing of the species she grew is in *V. 25: #2, p. 46-47. Ed. Note.*)

Now the fate of the garden is uncertain. New owners seldom share the interest of the former. Though the garden is not yet on the market there have been offers by housing developers. It would be a shame to lose the garden now. A few hours with a bull-dozer would destroy fifty years of accumulation of one of the most extensive private collections of Rhododendrons, alpines, and Primulas in the country. Also lost would be a unique link to the explorations into China and Tibet. If these countries were to be re-opened today for new seed collecting, few of us could live long enough to see a gathering of plants in one garden grown so expertly to such numbers and proportions.



## In Memory



Nancy (Mrs. Robert M.) Ford, deceased November 2, 1976. **Quarterly** readers, all Primula enthusiasts who had the good fortune to contact her, families and children from her classrooms, and many others join in this bereavement. Nancy Ford was the Editor of the **Quarterly**, V 18: #3, 1960 through Vol. 21: #2, 1964. She was a creative, imaginative Editor, particularly skilled in maintaining close, supportive relationships with people. She was a dedicated and knowledgeable grower of Primulas, having won many trophies for species and for Auriculas. She enjoyed hybridizing and growing double Auriculas, and shared seeds and plants by advertising her stock for sale to A.P.S. members. Depending in part upon her location, she had mountain, bog, and woodland Primulas all carefully raised from seed. Her garden was a joy to visit, for she knew each plant, as one might know a dear friend. During the many years she was active in the A.P.S. she gave most generously of her time and talents, thereby enriching the lives of many.

She has written childrens' plays, and directed childrens' theater; and had a teaching certificate from the University of Washington. Her warm, loving, and skilled personality was put to good use teaching classes in Special Education for many years.

Life is sometimes too brief a gift. Nancy Ford compensated for that by accomplishing much that was often arduous and complicated, but interesting and of value to herself and others. She helped others to grow in experience and understanding, as well as making the world about her enriched with her gardens. The officers and members of A.P.S. extend their sympathy and appreciation to her family.

Anita Alexander.

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## The Birds-Eye Primroses

Alice Hills Baylor

The beloved members of the Farinosae group in the Primula family are called "Birds-eye" because the flowers which include pink, lilac, yellow and white have a distinct yellow eye. They are found growing in native habitat in many parts of the Northern hemisphere; The Falkland Islands, Scotland, England, mountain meadows of Southern Europe, the lowlands of Labrador, British Columbia, the Grand Canyon and I have collected one member, *P. mistassinica*, from the lime stone bluffs in Northern Illinois and in the moraine above Lake Willoughby in Vermont.

The most familiar members of this group of Primroses have one characteristic with which most of us associate them, heavy farina on the underside of the foliage. This gives the plant a silver lining with the upper leaf green and shining. The best effect from this group is to plant en masse or in drifts. This is easily accomplished as all come readily from seed. The seeds may be planted in a cold frame in fall, lightly sprinkled with sand, or in a flat indoors in February or March. We planted in February allowing the flats to have a week outside covered with snow. They are brought in and given the hot water treatment. Germination begins in about ten days and then the flats are placed under fluorescent lights on benches in the cool basement. When the seedlings are very small, in first leaf, they are planted into peat pots in a mixture of three fourths humus and one part clean sand. The flats or pots are left under fluorescent lights until April when they are moved to our cool plant room. By June the roots may be showing through the pots and planting outside is facilitated by simply sinking the pots into the prepared beds so the roots are not disturbed. The roots of all the Farinosae group are extremely fine and care must be taken in handling. Humus is the most important element for the success of this group. A mulch of stone chips is used to keep the farina coated foliage from being earth splashed in a heavy rain.

*P. farinosa* was first discovered by Clusius in 1583 from the mountains near Vienna and also collected from the Pyrenees and European Alps and is the meadow beauty of Great Britain. The rosette is about five inches across and the scapes four inches high bearing five to ten pink or white flowers. "Moist meadow banks" is the description of its native home which is difficult to duplicate in one's garden. It is best grown in a raised location with quantities of humus incorporated into the soil and a top dressing of stone chips in a location that is moist or where it can be kept moist.

*P. frondosa* is a beautiful miniature from the Balkan mountain bogs. It is very much like *P. farinosa* except that it is larger in all respects. The foliage is broader but shorter, glabrous above and thickly coated with farina beneath, the flowers are larger and deeper pink. The winter buds, heavily coated, are formed in autumn. It enjoys a moist gravelly soil for good drainage. *PP. farinosa* and *frondosa* are perhaps the better known and most widely grown. They are unfortunately not too long lived and need to be replenished by seed.

*P. modesta* is a true miniature and from my experience the most satisfactory of the tribe. In 1958 the late Harold Rugg of Dartmouth gave me seed of *P. modesta* that had been sent to him from India. There are today many plants in my garden that were germinated from that seed. Its native home occurs on the Japanese Islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, and Shikoku growing in alpine and sub-alpine gravel

ravines. When the snow melts in early spring I eagerly watch for the winter buds of *P. modesta* for they appear as wads of white cotton on the gravel top dressing. The foliage quickly unfolds into a rosette three inches across heavily powdered with farina on the underside of the leaves. The three inch scape bears umbels of five to eight half inch pink flowers with a distinct yellow eye. It is an excellent seed bearer but there is no need to reseed as the plants should be divided every two or three years giving a permanent supply. The flowers last a long time and when the plants are out of bloom it gives a fine appearance to the area in which they are planted.

The variety of *P. modesta* *Fauriae alba*, is a conversation piece. It is smaller than the type having only about an inch and a half rosette. The pure white flowers are born on an inch stem. I have it planted on the edge of a raised bed with the soil at least three fourths leaf mold. This little plant hails from the Hokkaido and Kurile Islands and is perfectly hardy here in Vermont.

*P. scotica* is a sub-species from the Scotland and Orkney Islands and a true miniature. Its leaves are shorter and broader than *P. farinosa* and the scape shorter and the umbels of flowers a deeper pink. It is not as amiable as *P. farinosa* and is more difficult to keep as a garden subject. I have heard complaints of seedlings damping off. I believe this is caused by keeping the seedlings in the germinating flat too long. A mild solution of potassium permanganate will prevent this.

*P. darialica* is the most robust of this group of miniature Primroses and remain in flower for a much longer period of time. The rosette is five to six inches across, the narrow lanceolate leaves are three to four inches long and heavily coated with white farina beneath. It is a prodigious grower and will exhaust itself with side shoots if not divided every second year. The root system of the majority of the Birdseye Primroses are short so that if left alone will absorb all plant food quickly. Quantities of humus should be worked into the soil when new divisions are planted. This should be done as soon as possible after flowering. However, *P. darialica* continues to bloom from its first opening in April for six to eight weeks so it is often July before I divide the plants. So heavily are the under sides of the leaves coated with white farina that when dividing the water in which I wash the roots to separate them is milky white.

From China come two members of the Farinosae group, *P. involucrata* and its near relative *P. yargongensis*. The first has pure white flowers on a six inch stem which is tall for the three to four inch rosette while *P. yargongensis* (syn. *P. Wardii*) has lilac flowers. Both demand moisture in a peat soil. I have had *P. involucrata* for several years at the base of my auricula terrace where the fragrant flowers are greatly appreciated. Because the stems are tall and wiry several plants are needed placed close together to give a pleasing effect.

*P. siberica* is similar to the foregoing two and is found in central Asia, Alaska and the Yukon area. I germinated it in 1959 and had a good stand but must confess it lasted only the one blooming season. The flowers are a pale lilac and not nearly as lovely as its near cousin *P. yargongensis*.

*P. Halleri* (syn. *longifolia*) is a much taller plant than those we have been discussing. The scape is eight to ten inches high and the umbel of rose colored flowers is outstanding. (Purple has been mentioned but all I have ever raised were a lovely rose). In 1959 I had a most beautiful stand of *P. Halleri* which I have not been able to duplicate since. The seed I have had does not germinate well and those plants I have brought to maturity have not been as lovely as the 1959 stand. This plant can be distinguished from the related species by the longer corolla tube.

*P. Cammifera* var. *Zambalensis* (syn. *chrysopa*) which I germinated in 1958 proved the following year to be a most spectacular Primrose with mauve flower heads held on ten to twelve inch powdered scape. It unfortunately is not long lived. It was introduced by Kingdom Ward from China and may be a splendid garden Primrose if one could reseed it every two years. I have not been able to obtain seed since. The name refers to the bulb-like root. It is very similar to *P. conspersa* which is more delicate and graceful. The rosette of *conspersa* is tufted and the under leaves, flower stem and a portion of the corella are covered with farina. The scape is unusual for a Farinosae as it is two whorled. I have not grown either of these Primroses for several years now.

*P. luteola* is the stunning yellow flowered member of this tribe and is a most valuable garden subject. The large rosettes are eight to ten inches across, the leaves are lanceolate, coarsely dentate, light green with no farina. Above this rosette rises a stout stalk bearing an umbel of from twelve to eighteen fragrant yellow flowers in July. Blooming at this time of the season is certainly a boom and this Primrose deserves greater popularity. I have found it in no way difficult and to my knowledge have never lost a plant. *P. luteola* is multiplied by division after it has been established by seed. The roots are long and stout for a Birdseye. Divided in August after it has bloomed and replanted in an extremely rich soil in a bed which is raised above the path four inches for drainage, it thrives year after year. There would certainly be a lull in the garden without *P. luteola*. It, like *P. darialica*, needs dividing or the side shoots will exhaust the plant. It is in the auriculate section of this group due to the lack of farina as is the truly treasured *P. rosea*.

To be without the very early brilliant flowers of *P. rosea* in spring would be like having a ring without a jewel! The plants in my garden were germinated twenty-three years ago, which proves its hardiness, permanence and longevity. The neat rosette of dark green foliage is small and undeveloped when the flower stem is thrust up four inches and topped with startlingly brilliant carmine flowers in a bunch of five to seven. This miniature from the Himalayas often flaunts its clear ruby flowers against winter's white blanket. For that reason they should be planted where they may be seen and appreciated when it may be difficult to venture far into the garden. When several plants of *P. rosea* are massed together the clusters of flowers merge completely, hiding the dark pointed foliage. A humus filled pocket in the rock garden, with a northeast or northwest exposure and filled with *P. rosea* will make an unforgettable picture in early spring.

On a steep slope topped by an apple tree I have a planting of several hundred *P. rosea* to make early spring long remembered. The exposure is northwest so they have afternoon sun. There is plenty of underground moisture where they are planted en masse in rich leaf mold soil. *P. rosea* is also used as a border for paths where later blooming Primroses are planted that take over the color parade and where they have morning sun. The variety *grandiflora* is the largest of the roseas with a fully developed rosette of four to five inches and the flowers are the brightest with fringed edges. It seeds in abundance. *P. rosea* PETITE PINK, is my own introduction and is smaller in all respects. The foliage is a dainty two to three inches long and the flowers stem two to three inches high topped by fringed shell pink flowers. *P. Kleinii* is a cross between *P. rosea grandiflora* and *P. Clarkii* made by the late Peter Klein. It is dainty and the smallest of the clan, clear pink, and claims the border of the blue *P. auriculas* (garden) where it is greatly admired. The roseas should be divided every two years or the wiry roots will strangle the plant causing the center to deteriorate.

The Birds-eye Primroses give flowers from early spring soon after the snow melts until into July when the yellow *P. luteola* blooms. They have endeared themselves to gardeners. Some members of this group are difficult to retain long but can be had by seeding often, others are enduring and only need to be divided to have them remain in the garden for years. To be without the Birds-eyes would be a great loss.

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Apr. 1976

## Book Review

### *A Quest of Flowers*

By Harold R. Fletcher

Edinburgh University Press 1975

This is the story of two men, Frank Ludlow and George Sherriff, who travelled the Himalaya of Bhutan and Southeastern Tibet, in quest of flowers.

Their rich and varied finds, from 1933 to 1949, have enlarged botanical knowledge, and delighted gardeners with many new and vivid plants.

The story of their plant explorations is told from the travelers' diaries and illustrated from their photographs by their friend and colleague Dr. Harold Fletcher, former Keeper of The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. The detail and accuracy of the book will satisfy the professional botanist as well as the armchair traveler, with a narrative of exotic lands, scenes, peoples and plants.

## More malacoides

### *Primula malacoides* Franch. selection in Lithuania

Ona Skeiviene, Kaunas Botanical Gardens

*Primula malacoides* was first introduced to Lithuania from Germany in 1926 and at that time was first propagated at the Kaunas Botanical Gardens. The plant blossoms in winter when flowering plants are few. The light lilac colour, pleasant fragrance, long blooming period, resistance to disease and general ease of growing indicated that it was a good house pot plant. However, the research that I have completed has brought out both good and bad in these plants. The height (38-40 cm), spindly and flopping flower stalks, rather far spaced and sparse umbels and also insufficient foliage diminished the worth of this otherwise interesting plant.

Therefore in 1945 I decided through selection to improve the existing varieties of *P. malacoides* working with the material already available at the Kaunas Botanical Gardens. My aim particularly was to develop dwarf, compact forms that are prolific bloomers with bright colours and good foliage. For this purpose I have used cross-breeding, selection and temperature shock treatment. The results showed that *P. malacoides* has sufficient plasticity, sensitivity to surrounding conditions and is very variable. This way during 1945-1966 I developed the following *P. malacoides* varieties.

'Jadvyga' ('Hedwig') Plants 26-28 cm high, 18-20 cm wide. Leaf rosette dense, low. At one time there are 7-8 blooming stalks. Flower umbels on 12 cm of the stem. Flowers light pink (HCC 627/2), eye greenish yellow (HCC605), diameter of the flower 2.8-3 cm. Flowering prolific, lasting 135 days. Plant decorative and very disease resistant.

'Jaunyste' ('Youth') Plants 20-25 cm high, 18-20 cm wide. Leaves medium size. At one time there are 5-6 blooming stalks. Flower umbels on 10-12 cm of the stem. Flowers light red (HCC 27), eye greenish yellow (HCC 605), diameter of the flower 3 cm. Flowering prolific, lasting 120 days, the variety is distinct and has good decorative qualities.

'Lietuvaite' ('Lithuanian girl'). Plants 28-30 cm high, compact, 22 cm wide. Leaves large, dark green. At one time there are 5-6 blooming stalks. Flower

umbels on 11-12 cm of the stem. Flowers purplish violet (HCC 31), eye greenish yellow (HCC 605), diameter of the flower 3.2-3.5 cm. Flowering prolific, lasting 140 days. Plants highly decorative, resistant to disease.

'Pasaka' ('Fairy Tale'). Plants 35-38 cm high, 18 cm wide. Leaf rosette loose, open. At one time there are 6-7 blooming stalks. Flower umbels on 10-11 cm of the stem. All blossoms completely double, light violet with pinkish inside petals (HCC 39/3), diameter of the flower 2 cm. Flowering prolific, lasting 130 days. The variety is distinct and is self-fertile.

'Linkejimai Latvijai.' ('Greetings to Latvia')—Plants 22-25 cm high, compact, 28-28 cm in diameter. Leaves large. At one time there are 8-10 blooming stalks. Flower umbels on 12 cm of the stem. Flowers bright pink (HCC 623/2), eye yellow (HCC 1/1). Diameter of the flower 3.2 cm. Flowering prolific, lasting 140 days. Variety very decorative and resistant to disease.

All of the above described *P. malacoides* varieties have been given variety status by the Ministry of Agriculture and are included in the commercial varieties listing. The breeder has been granted author's rights. Besides these varieties I have made numerous other selections of *P. malacoides*, all possible candidates to become varieties—they are 'Sigute,' 'Sveikinimas Kosmonautams' and nos. 20, 40, 42, 49, 57.

The newly developed *P. malacoides* varieties and hybrids are grown in a humid, cool greenhouse, in full light, but away from the sun. The soil is neutral (pH 6.0-6.2), made up of composted sod, old leaf mold, decayed cow manure and sand (1:2; 1:1). Grows and develops best at temperature of 5 degrees-6 degrees C. Seeds are sown in June/July and the plants bloom in six to seven months.

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